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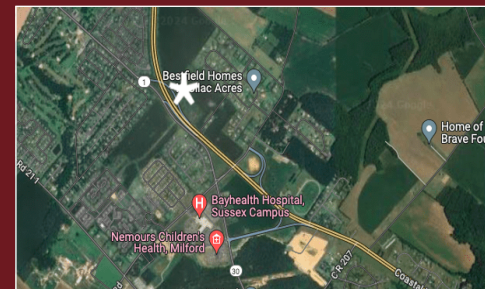
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photo link: [Rosemary Connelly](#)



Changes to Milford City Council



Key Properties Pulls Zoning Request



Students Recognized as Secretary of Education Scholars

HEADLINES



photo link: [Milford Parks and Recreation Department](#)



CHANGES COME TO MILFORD CITY COUNCIL

BY TERRY ROGERS

On Saturday, April 27, the city of Milford had one of the highest voter turnouts in recent history as residents traveled to the polls to select a mayor and four council people. There were, 1,312 votes cast in the election. All election results are unofficial.

For the office of mayor, incumbent Archie Campbell received 606 (46%) votes while his opponent Todd Culotta received 706 (54%).

“I wish Mr. Culotta well as he serves his term in office,” Mayor Campbell said. “I am proud to have served the city of Milford and am especially proud of the things we accomplished while I was in office. I look forward to spending more time with my wife and children now.”

Culotta stated there were “too many people to thank.”

“My heart is full, thanks to everyone who came out to vote! Your voices have been heard and it’s time to move Milford forward! Congratulations to all the candidates,” Culotta said. “I want to thank my opponent Archie Campbell and congratulate him for his service to the city.”

The most surprising result in the election was in Ward 1 which ended in a tie. Michael Boyle and Diamonte “Madula” Kalesis both received 224 votes. A special election will be scheduled to determine the winner. Per the city charter, the special election will be held within 30 days.

There was no incumbent running for the second ward during this election. Nadia Zychal received 194 (47%) votes while Lori Connor received 226 (53%).

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Milford Delaware Annual Memorial Day Ceremony

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“I’d like to thank all my neighbors in having faith in my ability to represent them and in encouraging me to run to bring their concerns to the table. I congratulate my opponent and all the other candidates, incumbents as well as people completely new to the political arena, for having the courage of their convictions and for stepping up to serve,” Zychal said. “I wish the winners well and hope they make Milford proud. I wish everyone else the best—they already have. This campaign has been a learning experience, but more than that it has been an honor.”

Connor also thanked her opponent for stepping up and running for office.

“First, I would like to thank my opponent, Nadia Zychal, for her hard work during her campaign and the service she has given our community for many years. I would like to thank the many people who supported me and the Ward 2 residents that showed up to vote on Saturday,” Connor said. “It was incredible watching people come in all day to exercise their right to vote. I am humbled and grateful for this opportunity to bring fresh perspective and to continue making Milford a great place to live.”

Because Culotta won the mayoral race, his seat will now be open and will require a special election. Ward 3 also had no incumbent running. Danny Perez received 93 (39%) votes while Michael Stewart received 147 (61%).

“I believe we had an awesome election by the outstanding number of folks who came out to vote,” Perez said. “It shows the electorate is listening and will be

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looking at their officials for a more responsive governance.”

Stewart also felt the turnout was an indication that the people were active in this election.

“I loved seeing how many people came out to vote,” Stewart said. “It shows people still want their voices heard. Going forward, that’s what I intend to do to the best of my ability, listen to their voice and vote how they feel.”

In Ward 4, Philip Ruiz received 74 (41%) votes while incumbent Katrina Wilson received 104 (59%) votes.

“In the wake of elections, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mrs. Katrina Wilson. The journey we embarked on was not merely a race for city council; it was a testament to our shared commitment to bettering our community. As the dust settles, I find peace in knowing that Councilwoman Wilson, with 32 years of service on Milford City Council, will continue to serve our community and that our collective efforts have stirred the winds of change,” Ruiz said. “To my supporters and the residents of the Fourth Ward, I say this: Our campaign may have not produced a seat for me on City Council, but the bigger vision of change was planted in all those who participated. I have the utmost confidence that Mrs. Katrina Wilson will continue to represent us with integrity—for all that live in our ward.”

Ruiz continued. “Moving forward, let us channel our efforts into renewed determination for the seeds we’ve sown will one day bloom into a more vibrant and compassionate city,” he said. “To each individual candidate,

I respect you for standing up when the people sought for a voice! It was challenging, but each candidate was determined to ensure Milford remains strong and that the people remain the foundation of our city. God bless Milford, Delaware! Thank you for allowing me the chance to demonstrate the price we all share—We Are Milford!”

Wilson, who has served on city council for more than 30 years was also pleased with the turnout.

“First of all, I was glad, very thankful that the people came out. So, very thankful for all of the people in all of the wards that came out, you know, because it shows that people are concerned and they care, Wilson said. “I’m also very grateful that the people have trusted me for all these years and they have trusted me again to represent them. It shows they know I’ve always put Milford first and I would like to continue with my journey, being a responsible person, and helping Milford to be the great town that it is.”

All council members and the mayor will be sworn in on May 6 at Milford City Hall.



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CULTURE



photo link: [Second Street Players](#)



THOUSANDS VISIT DOWNTOWN MILFORD FOR FESTIVAL

BY TERRY ROGERS

The first large festival of the year took place on Saturday, April 27, and almost 10,000 people packed the downtown area. The festival included over 200 vendors, a free Kid’s Zone, a train and petting zoo plus much more.

“We could not be happier at how well this day turned out,” Shelby DiCostanzo, president of DMI said. “Despite the cool weather, downtown was packed with people visiting our downtown merchants and simply enjoying what our downtown has to offer.”

The event kicked off with the Pet and People Parade sponsored by Fur Baby. Mayor Archie Campbell and his wife, Ronni, who was dressed in her ladybug attire,

were the grand marshals of the parade which traveled from Bicentennial Park to the library amphitheater.

“This event is a great showcase of our downtown,” Rep. Bryan Shupe said. “This year is especially exciting since we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the naming of the ladybug as the state bug. This came about because a second grade class at Lulu Ross School petitioned the legislature to make it happen and they were successful.”

After a short history of how the ladybug became the state bug, Amy Stratton, executive director of the Milford Senior Center presented Mayor Campbell with an

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honorary lifetime membership to the senior center for the ladybug.

“Because we require members to be 50 years old or older, we knew we had to offer the ladybug her official honorary membership,” Stratton said.

Throughout the day there were readings of a ladybug book by a local author, presentations by Sussex Conservation District regarding the need to protect trees, bugs and plants as well as music provided by Fine Day Radio and Rooster from Chicken Country radio. Although the Walnut Street bridge was not open to vehicle traffic, it was open to pedestrians, allowing visitors to take selfies of themselves standing with their feet in both Kent and Sussex County.

“We had so much fun at the Bug and Bud Festival,” Maddy Mackey Umana said. “So many vendors and so many people came even though it was a little chilly. So glad we had the opportunity to go.”

Others were excited to get out and enjoy the first kick-off for spring.

“What a great festival,” Shelly King said. “We had so much fun and I cannot tell you how grateful I am that everything in the kid’s area was free. With four kids, most festivals are so expensive we have to avoid the children’s area, but this was such a great thing to do, make all the things kids want to do free. Please keep this up in the future!”

The Bug and Bud Festival is organized by Downtown Milford, Inc. (DMI). Since DMI is almost completely volunteer, operated with just one full-time staff person,

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the festival is managed by volunteers. DMI is always looking for new volunteers to help with their events. Anyone who is interested can contact the office at 302-839-1180 or email promotions@downtownmilford.org.

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PARSON THORNE MANSION UNDERGOING RENOVATIONS

BY TERRY ROGERS

Thanks to recent grants as well as funding from the state of Delaware, Parson Thorne Mansion, also known as Silver Hill, is undergoing significant renovations. The mansion, which was believed to be constructed in the early 1700s, is one of the oldest structures in Milford. In 1961, James Richard Draper gifted the home to the Milford Historical Society.

“We have been working on the mansion for years and did extensive work in the early 2000s,” Ralph Prettyman, president of the Milford Historical Society, said. “As time went on, less funding opportunities were available, but at least we kind of had things stabilized, so to speak. And then as we get into, like, 2019 or 2020, we found that our roofs here in the front, both the left wing

and the right, were severely deteriorating. Holes were developing on the right wing and squirrels were getting inside. We then began an intense effort to get the funding to at least get the front roof repaired and so we got a Preservation Delaware Grant to do that.”

As with many old buildings, however, the society soon learned that not all structural problems were visible. In 2021, an interior ceiling collapsed in the rear wing. Inspection found that moisture had seeped into the rear wing roof and pooled in the ceiling, causing it to collapse. Another Preservation Delaware Grant allowed them to make these important repairs. In 2023, the historical society received \$75,000 from the Community Reinvestment Fund through the state of Delaware.

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“That really helped us to be able to kickstart deferred work. So the first thing, we knew that we were going to have to replace the rear part of the wing roofs. So that funding allowed us to replace the rear roof for the east and west wings. We also knew that on our shed, the roof was failing, so we replaced that as well. Now we knew that the roofs with damage were in good shape,” Prettyman said. “So at least now, the main thing when preserving a building is you got to keep moisture out. So, we knew that was priority. Our second priority, we knew back in the early 2000s. for whatever reason, when the new HVAC system was put in, for whatever reason, they didn’t put it in the West Wing or the East Wing. So, we can’t really use those rooms for display purposes.”

The plantation office was used by Gov. William Burton when he served as the governor of Delaware from 1858 to 1861. Gov. Burton was a tenant in the building which was owned by Henry Fiddeman. In addition to Gov. Burton, John M. Clayton, who served as U.S. Secretary of State under President Zachary Taylor, also lived in the home in the early 1800s.

“That is why we feel it is important to get it back to its former glory,” Prettyman said. “This was the office of a Delaware governor, and we feel it should represent that era of history.” A room next to the office is currently used for storage, but it appears to have been a room used for another purpose as it has chair rails and trim. Prettyman speculated it may have been the office of an assistant to the governor or Clayton.

Prettyman explained that artifacts cannot be stored in areas with extreme temperature fluctuation which

meant to create what was originally the plantation office in the mansion or to use the kitchen and other rooms, HVAC had to be installed in those rooms. The funding from the state allowed them to install stand-alone units in each room. It also allowed them to upgrade the electric service which will allow them to add electric to a sharecropper’s cottage on the grounds as well as a potential visitor’s center.

“The visitor’s center would be a barn-like structure with a small lean-to on one side, very similar to what would have stood here many years ago,” Prettyman said. “Inside, we would have a large exhibit space that could also be used for events, handicap accessible bathrooms, a conference room an office and storage for artifacts. We are currently trying to raise the funds for this center which will cost between \$180,000 and \$300,000.”

Another room inside the mansion that is unique is a small room located in the East Wing. It was separated into two bathrooms at one time, but the fixtures and plumbing broke, leading the historical society to remove the plumbing fixtures and turn the room into a small exhibit space. On one wall, the brick exterior of the mansion is visible as well as plaster work that was used to create the room which Prettyman believes was used for storage.

“When we got in here, we found there was a lot more wrong than we anticipated. Three of the five floor joists had to be repaired or replaced,” Prettyman said. “We did that, and we left the wall exposed as a teaching tool.

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The graphic features the Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware logo at the top, which consists of a stylized blue and white icon of two hands shaking. Below the logo, the text "BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF DELAWARE" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The main title "GREAT SUMMERS START HERE" is prominently displayed in large, bubbly, blue and green letters. Below the title, there are three lines of text in orange and blue: "Field Trips | SWIM4LIFE", "Weekly Themes | Caring Mentors", and "POC Accepted | Financial Assistance Available". At the bottom of the graphic is a large orange button with the text "Learn More" in white. The graphic is framed by a thin orange border. At the bottom of the graphic, there are two photographs: one of a young girl with dark hair smiling and another of a young boy with blonde hair holding a small dog.

Other walls and spaces will allow us to hang or display artifacts.”

All the colors inside the mansion are “first colors.” The historical society had paint chips tested to determine what colors were used during the early days of the mansion. What was discovered was that the original paint were shades of brown and blue with some green. Outside the mansion, there is a small cottage that the historical society hopes to convert to a servant’s quarters.

“The whole idea is for museum interpretation. There were slave houses on the property and there were tenant houses. We want to represent this as the servant quarters,” Prettyman said. “We hope to put some primitive furniture in here to make it look like it would have back then.”

The cottage has some original paneling and Prettyman, along with his brother-in-law, salvaged wood from the Sudler House when it was torn down. Prettyman’s brother-in-law, a woodworker, was able to refinish the boards to use as paneling. Vapor barrier will be installed under the cottage as well as HVAC. A fireplace will be created, and a cabinet built in one corner as it would have looked in the late 1700 to early 1800s. Inside the mansion, other rooms will need additional restoration.

“This was the kitchen,” Prettyman said, after opening the door to a room with a giant fireplace. “We want to interpret this as a kitchen, but it needs a lot of work. We have some flooring work we need to do and some plaster work. This will be the last room that we work on as far as refurbishing.”

Upstairs, one of the bedrooms will also be refurbished once the historical society has storage space for some of

their collections. Another is already refurbished in the Victorian time period through a \$10,000 grant the historical society received. The room fits the era of the mansion when the gables and a porch, which has since been removed, were added.

Donations are accepted for all projects at the Parson Thorne Mansion. On Saturday, May 4, the Milford Historical Society will hold its bi-annual Antique’s Show from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and there will be tours of the mansion provided. Admission is only \$1 with proceeds going toward the preservation of the mansion. Volunteers are also needed to help with preservation, including helping with events, fundraising, grant writing and more. For more information, contact parsonthorne@gmail.com.



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MILFORD LIBRARY PLANS HORSESHOE CRAB PRESENTATION

BY TERRY ROGERS

In partnership with the American Littoral Society, Milford Public Library will hold a Horseshoe Crab Field Presentation on Tuesday, May 14, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at the Slaughter Beach Pavilion. The program is made possible with funding from the Robert F. Schumann Foundation.

“This program will provide detailed information on the importance of the horseshoe crab to our area,” Carolyn Tabor, program director for the library said. “We are thrilled to have the American Littoral Society provide details on these interesting creatures.”

The American Littoral Society was founded by Dr. Lional A. Walford of the Sandy Hook Marine Lab as a bridge between science and the public. In the 1960s, the society divers gathered data on fish and invertebrates and defended a valuable diving spot off of Fire Island (NY).

Today, they focus on education, conservation, advocacy, fish tagging and presentations on the environment.

“During the months of May through August, horseshoe crabs return to Slaughter Beach, with the best times to see them from late May to late June,” Tabor said. “They come onto the beach to spawn and sometimes the waves will flip them upside down. Since they sometimes have difficulty themselves over, some die in the hot sun.”

According to experts, if you see a horseshoe crab lying on its back, gently turn it over by its shell. Never pick the crab up by its tail and if you come across one that is tagged, do not remove the tag as it is being tracked by scientists. Instead, take the information from the tag and report it following the directions.

Horseshoe crabs predate dinosaurs as the oldest



known version of the species is nearly 450 million years old. There are four species known today, but the ones that appear on Slaughter Beach are the Atlantic horseshoe crab. They are not actually crabs, but are more closely related to spiders, with legs near their mouth help them consume worms, mollusks and crustaceans. Horseshoe crabs are not dangerous and their tails are used to help them steer as well as flip over if they get stuck on their backs.

“We are excited for people to learn more about these fascinating creatures,” Tabor said. “The program is free but does require registration.”

To register for the Horseshoe Crab Field Presentation, call Trever Metz at the American Littoral Society at 302-245-5064. You can also register by visiting the Milford Public Library [website](#).

MILFORD
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photo link: [Marcia Reed](#)



PERMANENT MAKE-UP STUDIO MOVES

BY TERRY ROGERS

In 2022, Ericka Passwaters opened a permanent make-up studio in The Loft, a group of studios located above Mispillion Art League. After becoming certified in 3D areola reconstruction, she realized the Loft studios did not offer the privacy her clients needed.

“I lived in one of Dan Bond’s apartments and I knew that he had other properties he was refurbishing as well. He mentioned to me he was going to have suites in this building, so I went and looked at them and it was perfect,” Passwaters said. “It kept getting pushed back, I think it was more than a year, so I had to keep pushing my clients back, but it ended up working perfectly. If it had been done when it was supposed to be done, I would have been on maternity leave and all I could think was ‘how am I going to do this with a newborn.’”

The need for privacy stemmed from Passwater’s certification that allows her to create areolas and nipples for someone who has undergone mastectomy or augmentation. In some cases, those women lose those parts of their breasts, and the 3D reconstruction allows them to feel their breasts are more “normal.”

“I also offer scar camouflage,” Passwaters said. “If a client has scar tissue, which is common after mastectomy, if the scar is raised, red or discolored, I can basically blend in the scar with their skin tone making it less noticeable.”

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Passwaters spent 11 years in the retail side of the beauty business. A graduate of Milford High School, Passwaters became certified in permanent makeup while working full time with Bare Minerals at Alta. She planned to open her own studio, but then got a big promotion at work, so she put her plans on hold. When Alta closed their doors permanently during COVID, Passwaters decided it was time to take the leap.

“I was scared to branch out on my own and start a whole new business, but it was either that or look for another full-time job that could ultimately close again, so I went ahead and took the leap,” Passwaters said. “In addition to 3D areola reconstruction and scar camouflage, I also offer permanent brows, permanent liner and permanent lips. The eyeliner is technically called lash enhancement and the lips are called lip blushing.”

Passwaters explained that there are many options available for brows, including microblading, microshading, ombre powder and combinations. She feels that the best part of her business is giving women confidence, seeing them smile and feel better about themselves.

“For some, it may seem to just be an eyebrow,” she said. “But for others that brow may be life changing.”

Permanent Makeup by Ericka Passwaters is open Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. by appointment only. She is open occasionally on Saturday from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. and is willing to schedule later appointments if a client cannot get in before 4. The studio is located at 10 Northwest Front Street in Milford. Appointments can be made by visiting her [website](#) and clicking on the Book Now or Contact buttons.



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GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



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CITY APPOINTS AUDITING FIRM, GETS UPDATE ON AUDIT

BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent meeting, Milford City Council agreed to a Request for Proposal from Zelenkofske Axelrod (ZA) accounting services. This is the firm that has been providing audits to the city for the past year. City Finance Director, Lou Vitola, explained to council that remaining with the same audit company would help streamline the process in the future.

“The primary reasons were that we’re going to be in a new system for fiscal year 24. And by then ZA will have been through their first three of the city’s audits and probably be in the best position to meet the city’s needs and our goals. Price is an important consideration but it’s not the number one consideration,” Vitola said.

In previous meetings, Vitola has expressed that when a new auditor is brought in, the city must spend time explaining their processes, accounts and other details which can lead to delay. Because ZA was a new auditor,

the need for these explanations was partially the reason for a delay in completing the 2022 audit. However, Vitola stated that it appeared that audit was nearing completion.

“We’re at a point where the auditors are in possession of the financial statements and all the files, footnotes, management discussion and analysis and they are reviewing the final adjustments that we made in response to the latest volley from them to us,” Vitola said. “At the last Council meeting, I reported this caused a delay. They had more questions. So, we responded to those questions. We didn’t just respond with some answers. We had to respond with some proposed adjusting entries and had some explanations of certain transactions.”

Vitola continued that the questions were for information only.

“There was no reason for the questions other than

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wanting to understand more about the nature of the transactions that happened because they were between certain funding groups within the city. Things like interfund loan activity related to property. So, we cleared that up for them. We gave them some entries and now it's in their hands," Vitola said. "They had one volley back to us earlier in the month and we responded to that. And the latest question from them came to me today and I look forward to responding to that no later than tomorrow morning. I told them I think we're getting close to the point that they will actually commit to a date that that final draft will be available for review and approval. But so far, that March 7 version that that was communicated earlier, is the prevailing version and there are a handful of adjusting entries to that version that you'll see shortly."

Councilman Jason James stated that he spoke to the lead auditor as well and confirmed what Vitola said. He found that the auditors found nothing in the way of fraud and that the delays were mainly questions regarding bookkeeping procedures.

"Part of doing the work as the auditor is fraud inquiry. I did speak to the lead auditor and speaking to the lead auditor we did discuss some of the processes and delays in the audit," Councilman James said. "I just want to say information that the director did provide and that is the same independent response I got from the lead auditor also."



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KEY PROPERTIES DELAYS REQUEST ON ROUTE 1 LAND

to the site.”

In 2022, Milford City Council denied the request with a vote of seven to one, with Councilman Todd Culotta casting the only vote to approve the request. Recently, Councilman Culotta explained that his vote to approve the plan was to give Milford more control over what happened to the parcels. He believes that if the county approves the change, Milford will then be required to follow suit. Based on social media comments, those who live in the Milford area are adamantly opposed to the change. Stanley Sharp commented that developers won't be happy until it is a “strip mall all the way from Dover to the beaches.”

“I absolutely agree 100%,” W.F. Christy commented on Sharp's post. “They have done the same thing along Rt. 1 from the C&D Canal down to Dover. The developer making the proposal still hasn't finished the development on the west side of Route 1 known as Hearthstone Manor. According to homeowners, there, the development is fraught with problems with roads and construction issues. That development was begun 20+ years ago.”

The proposal was withdrawn to address issues raised by DelDOT regarding access to the site and is tentatively scheduled to return to the Sussex County Planning agenda in August.



BY TERRY ROGERS

Sussex County Planning and Zoning was supposed to hear a request from Key Properties to change land east of Route 1, across from Bayhealth Sussex Campus, from residential to commercial. A few days before the hearing, Key Properties pulled the request. This request had come before the Sussex County board previously and been approved, only to be denied by Sussex County Council. Similar requests have been made to Milford City Council and denied twice.

“The subject parcel was considered for commercial land use during the initial phase of the master plan, but commercial was not ultimately recommended due to difficulty in gaining road access to the property and the proximity to low density residential land uses,” a letter sent from Milford City Council to Sussex County read. “Council denied Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use map for the subject parcel in 2016 and again in 2022. The request was denied due to the proximity for low-density residential land uses in the area, availability of other commercial land for development within the city and the difficulty in providing commercial road access




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UPDATED STATE LANDLORD/TENANT GUIDE COULD BECOME LAW

BY JAREK RUTZ

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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EDUCATION



photo link: [Milford School District](#)

MILFORD SENIORS RECOGNIZED AS SECRETARY OF EDUCATION SCHOLARS

BY JAREK RUTZ

Two Milford High School students were recognized by Secretary of Education Mark Holodick as 2024 Secretary of Education Scholars. Carley Mackert and Jorja Willey both received the recognition at a dinner in Dover where 91 other students were also recognized from schools around the state.

“This represents one of the highest academic achievements a student can earn in a Delaware public school,” Secretary Holodick said at the dinner. “Every scholar here has achieved incredible success in and out of the classroom—ranging from extraordinary accomplishments on school athletic teams to community service and school leadership positions. These students balance all of these demands of their time and still are able to study and excel academically.”

Mackert is the daughter of Melody and Greg Mackert.

She has excelled both academically and athletically during her time at Milford High School. Her cumulative 4.77 grade point average currently places her first in her class. Mackert has been a three-sport varsity athlete since 8th grade and serves as captain for the Milford High School field hockey and swim teams. While not in the classroom or athletic arena, Mackert also participates in Student Government, is an active member of the National Honor Society, and is currently completing an internship as part of the work-based learning program in the area of occupational health. She plans to attend Alvernia College (PA), where she will play field hockey and major in occupational health.

“I am fortunate to have many wonderful people in my life who motivate me to do my best, but my sister is the

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key to my success,” Mackert said. “Her influence has encouraged me to strive to reach my full potential. Her success has inspired me to follow in her footsteps.”

Daughter of Holly and Richard Willey of Milford, Willey is a dedicated student and exceptional athlete. She is ranked second in her class with a cumulative 4.77 grade point average and has completed the Allied Health Pathway while attending MHS. She is currently excelling in our work-based learning program interning as a physical therapist technician in Premier Physical Therapy while also balancing three varsity sports including cross country, as well as indoor and outdoor track. Willey demonstrates her dedication to her school and community through participation in Student Government and is a member of the MHS National Honor Society. Willey will be attending Delaware State University next year to major in aviation with plans of becoming a commercial airline pilot.

“Throughout high school, one of my key influences has been my dad,” Willey said. “From a young age, he had it seared into my brain that hard work was the only way you’d get anywhere in life, inside and outside of school.

Profiles of the other 91 students honored by the Secretary of Education can be found by clicking [HERE](#).



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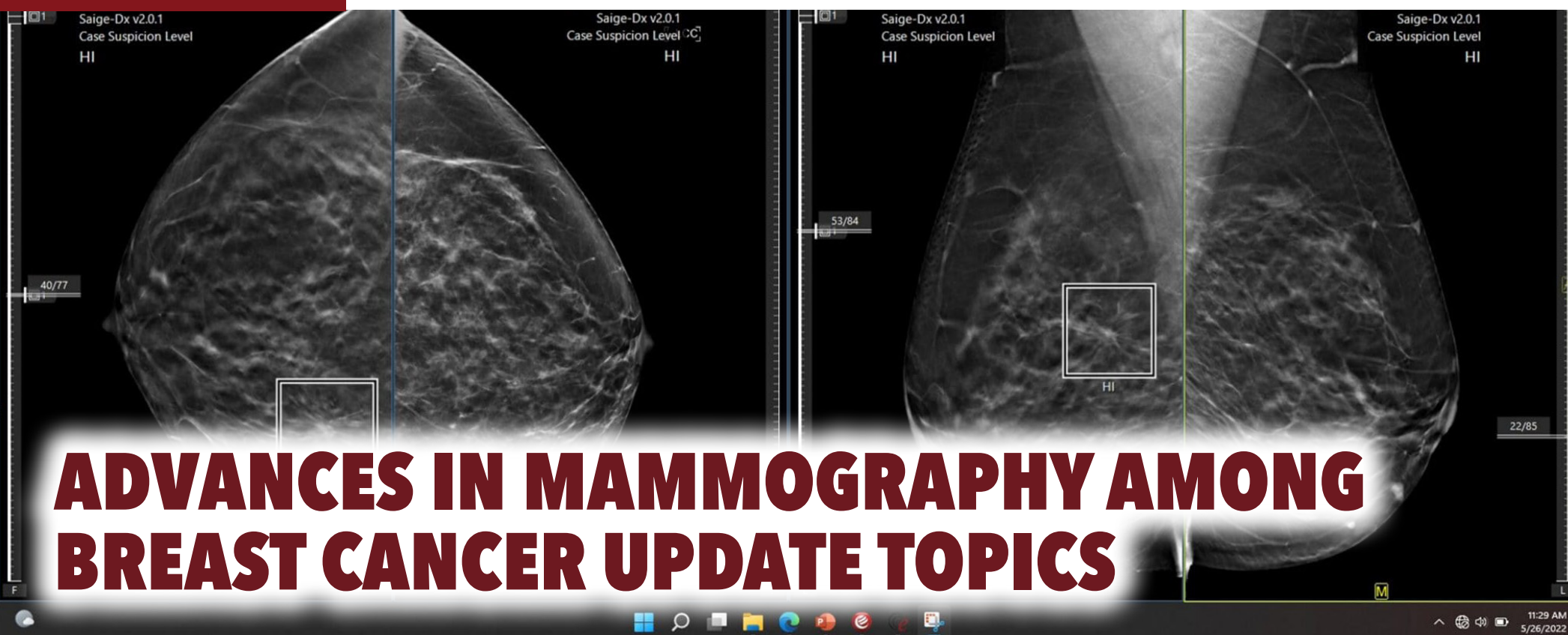
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HEALTH



photo link: Bayhealth



ADVANCES IN MAMMOGRAPHY AMONG BREAST CANCER UPDATE TOPICS

BY BETSY PRICE

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

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

Dr. Diana Dickson-Witmer, a breast surgical oncologist with Beebe Healthcare, plans to continue spreading the word at the update about a screening technique

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

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

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

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

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

AI and mammograms

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

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

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

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