

MIDTOWN NEWS

— BRANDYWINE —

VOL. 3 NO. 1
AUGUST 2023



In the summertime, when Midtown gets so hot, spoon Italian Ice, it's sure to hit the spot,
In the summertime, you've got patios and porches you can find...



WELCOME TO THE AUGUST 2023 EDITION OF *MIDTOWN BRANDYWINE NEWS!*

As you may have already noticed, we've doubled the size of this issue of *Midtown Brandywine News*. We hope that you enjoy the expanded format and we can't wait to bring you double the news and views from Delaware's Loveliest Neighborhood, Midtown Brandywine.

Also starting with this edition, we intend to double our publishing frequency, with a new edition arriving in your mail slot and email box (for subscribers) in the first week of every month.

Please take note that due to the space limitations of the printed edition, we're only able to include the full-length stories on our website, midtownbrandywine.org. We are publishing abridged versions of stories in the printed edition and encourage readers to visit the neighborhood's official website to read so much more news and views from Delaware's Loveliest Neighborhood!

Many thanks to our neighbor **Natasha Poppe** for her superb design and layout work for the issue you're currently reading, and to our immediate past editor **Lauren Musumeci**, upon whose shoulders the current volunteer team stands.

Simon Cousins, Editor, Midtown Brandywine News

PEREGRINE FALCON FLEDGLING 'SOLO' TAKES HER FIRST FLIGHT

The *Midtown Brandywine News* recently had the pleasure of speaking with **Michael Moore**, President of the Delaware Ornithological Society, **Scott T. Northey**, the Vice President, and **Kim Steininger**, who has been overseeing the "Fledge Watch" for Midtown Brandywine's Peregrine falcons since 2002. For the benefit of those who may be only partially

familiar with the conservation project, we started by asking where the Peregrine Falcons' home is, and where the Fledge Watch takes place.

Kim Steininger: The falcons' nest is situated on the northern edge of the roof of the Brandywine Building, the brown high-rise on the corner of 11th St and West St. As for the Fledge Watch, it occurs on the top level of the parking garage on the corner of 12th St and Tatnall St, and via our four live webcams. Both buildings are visible from most of Midtown Brandywine, and if you were at the Courtyard Marriott hotel, you'd be kitty-corner from both locations.

MBN: Can you share with us the history behind the falcon program in our neighborhood?

Michael Moore: Peregrine falcons were severely affected by the pesticide DDT in the 1960s and were nearly driven to extinction. I recall seeing my

-Continued pg 2



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Falcons, continued

first falcon in the late '60s, which was a thrilling experience since they had become so rare. Due to their dire situation, they were placed on the endangered species list, necessitating a recovery program. These falcons typically nested on cliffs and inaccessible areas to protect themselves from predators. However, it was noticed that they began breeding on buildings in urban areas that could approximate cliffs and provided an ample food supply of pigeons and other prey. Yet, some nesting sites were not appropriate, resulting in nest failures from storms and other issues. To address this, artificial nest boxes were installed throughout the east coast, including bridges.

This initiative has been incredibly successful, leading to the hatching of many falcons. In 1992, a nest box was installed on Wilmington's Brandywine Building, thanks to Craig Koppie of USFWS, who observed recent falcon activities in downtown Wilmington. In 2010, a webcam was added inside the box, allowing thousands of viewers to glimpse into the world of the Wilmington Peregrine Falcons. The current resident falcons for 2023 are a new pair named Whitman (the male) and Bridget (the female), who replaced Trinity and Red Girl, who nested on the building for over a decade.

Kim Steininger: Whitman hatched on the Walt Whitman bridge on the New Jersey side. He's a Jersey boy!



Read the rest of this story at <https://midtownbrandywine.org/falcon-solo-first-flight> or scan this QR code with your smartphone camera.

MIDTOWN BRANDYWINE NEIGHBORS' ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS 2023-2024

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CONTACT: midtownbrandywine@gmail.com



IN MEMORY OF LEONARD J. YOUNG, JR.

With heavy hearts, the Midtown Brandywine community mourns the passing of our dear neighbor, Leonard J. Young, Jr. Leonard was a cherished member of our neighborhood, known for his warm smile, kind heart, and active involvement in making our community a better place.

His life will be celebrated with a Mass of Christian Burial at **Saint Joseph Church, 1012 N. French St., Wilmington, 19801, on Saturday, August 5, 2023.** The Viewing will take place at 9:00 am, followed by the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Omega Services at 10:00 am and the Funeral Mass at 10:30 am.

For those unable to attend in person, the Mass will be live-streamed at <https://www.youtube.com/@StJosephsDowntownWilmington>.

In memory of Leonard, the family kindly asks for donations to be made to the GTL Education Foundation, re: Leonard J. Young, Jr. Scholarship, PO Box 25209, Wilmington, DE 19899, or to the St. Joseph Church Building Fund, 1012 N. French Street, Wilmington, DE 19801.

Notes accompanying the donations should read "Leonard J Young, Jr Scholarship" and "In memory of Leonard J Young, Jr," respectively.

Leonard leaves behind a legacy of kindness, community spirit, and dedication. His warm presence will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him. The family appreciates your prayers and expressions of love and support during this difficult time. Cards and other tokens of remembrance can be sent to Loretta Young at 302 W. 14th Street, Wilmington, DE 19801.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.



BUGS

Midtown Brandywine News caught up on our local Greenscape Committee's work in our neighborhood. We spoke with Jessica Reed, long-term neighbor and chair of the committee.

MBN: Firstly, Jes, congratulations on your recent appointment as our new Vice President of the Midtown Brandywine Neighbors Association! And thank you for stepping up again as chair of the neighborhood's Greenscape Committee. Can you share how long you've been actively involved with the Association?

Jessica Reed: Thank you, Simon. I believe I joined the association around 2001 or 2002, so I've been involved for nearly two decades now. My participation has varied over the years. Like many neighbors, I find myself immersing in a project for a while, maybe for five years or so, and then feeling the need to step back. It's been a cycle of engagement and respite for me.

MBN: While I'd love to dive into your past projects and the history of your involvement in the neighborhood, today I'd like to focus on the initiative you're currently spearheading with the Greenscape Committee. This is the initiative I've heard you refer to as "Bugs, Birds, and Branches". Could you tell us more about this?

Jessica Reed: Yes, of course. The "Bugs, Birds and Branches" initiative, in a way, encapsulates two major aspects we're focusing on. The Greenscape Committee, which I've been a part of since the early 2000s, has often been involved in large, capital-intensive projects such as the brick sidewalks and major tree planting. With a million dollars now committed to these tasks, these projects are moving forward, somewhat out of our



BIRDS



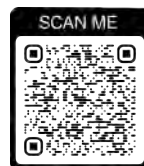
BRANCHES

hands as they enter their next stages.

However, we've often been asked by our neighbors about other areas of concern, primarily related to the local flora. We've often had to explain that while we care deeply about the local vegetation, our primary focus had been on projects like the sidewalks. My husband and I have a personal interest in native plants, being members of Mount Cuba and having converted our own garden to native species.

When I met **Jason Hoover** and learned of his eagerness to engage in community work, I found we had a shared interest in building a program around this idea. Jason brought a lot of innovative ideas, including the Monarch Butterfly project. I was more focused on the plants, but Jason's suggestion of highlighting the Monarchs was genius - we could draw attention to our native plants by showcasing this emblematic species, just as the Polar Bear represents all endangered animals.

The truth is, each native plant supports a multitude of native insects and birds, creating a complex, interdependent ecosystem. But understanding this intricate web can be overwhelming. Jason's approach simplifies this concept - helping people see that the plants we cultivate impact our local environment. The Monarch butterfly and the Milkweed - which serves as the sole food source for the Monarch larvae - exemplify this relationship. I've also been involved in birding, having participated in the Peregrine Falcon Project.



Read the rest of this story at <https://midtownbrandywine.org/bugs-birds-and-branches> or scan this QR code with your smartphone camera.

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

The summer heat is upon us and Midtown Brandywine's new Board of Directors is cooking up many new things around the neighborhood. We started at our annual meeting in June, six people stepped up to join the board for 2 year positions. In July, we elected our officers and filled most of our committee leadership positions but there are still plenty of ways to participate. **There are 2 board vacancies** and lots of opportunities to join one or more of our committees. For this year we are already expanding our communications with the Newsletter and Website through the public relations committee and our Greenscape committee is taking flight with butterflies and bird projects. There will be some new events coming soon so please take advantage of all that is going on -- **and consider offering a porch pop-up ! An Italian Ice party, anyone?** Below is a list of some of our committees. Reach out to me if you have any questions or want to join us. (Public Relations, Greenscape, Events, Public Safety and Parking, Properties and Governance)
Thank you!

Joel Stango
President 302-438-9834



PHONE NUMBERS

Police Non-Emergency 302-654-5151

Report a concern 311
about roads, lights, request a service, etc

Michelle Harlee 302-576-2140
City Councilwoman

Stephanie Bolden 302-744-4351
State Representative

Sarah McBride 302-744-4147
State Senator

NOTE: Monday Sept 4 is Labor Day, Trash collection on Tuesday

MBN: Maddie, as the new school year approaches, could you please provide us with a rundown of some key dates and events that families and students should be aware of at Freire Charter School Wilmington?

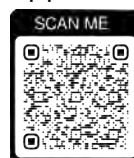
Maddie Weckel: Certainly! **Firstly, I want to emphasize that we are still actively enrolling and eager to welcome new families.** To facilitate this, we have arranged various opportunities for interested families to engage with our admissions team. We are hosting virtual open houses during Monday lunch hours leading up to the start of the school year. Additionally, we have scheduled "instant decision dinners" on Thursday evenings on August 3rd, 10th, and 17th, and open houses on Saturday, August 5th, and August 19th; these events are in-person, at the school. Interested families can visit our website to sign up for any of these open house opportunities. Everyone is welcome to join us and learn more about Freire and the educational opportunities we offer to students.

A NEW YEAR FOR STUDENTS AT FREIRE CHARTER SCHOOL

On July 26th, we sat down with **Madeline "Maddie" Weckel**, Co-Head of School, Academics, at the Freire Charter School Wilmington. As the new school year approaches, we wanted to learn more about developments at the school and how they intersect with life in Midtown Brandywine. Maddie shares key dates for the upcoming academic year, discusses traffic and parking around the school, updates us on the progress of the gymnasium construction project, and reveals opportunities for collaboration between the neighborhood and the students of Freire.

To ensure a smooth start to the school year, we have planned a materials pick-up afternoon on Thursday, August 24th. This allows families to visit the school and collect their technology, materials, and schedules.

For 8th and 9th graders, the first day of school will be Monday, August 28th. Then, on Tuesday, August 29th, all students, including upperclassmen, will begin their academic year. We appreciate any support in spreading the word about the opportunities we offer to students at Freire.



Read the rest of this story at <https://midtownbrandywine.org/new-year-at-freire-charter-school> or scan this QR code with your smartphone camera.