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**March 19, 2024**  
**Vol. 14 • Issue 12**

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photo link: Mr 302 Bryan Shupe



**Pirates and Mead Arrive**



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# HEADLINES



photo link: Dupont Nature Center



## PIRATES AND MEAD ARRIVE THIS MONTH

BY TERRY ROGERS

A cozy pirate themed bar will feature originally crafted mead when What to Ferment Meadery opens in Milford on Saturday, March 23. Cannons jut out from under the bar, a large treasure map adorns one wall and one television will feature pirate-themed movies once the meadery officially opens.

“We just always wanted to run our own business,” David Wade said. “I’ve been brewing beer and different things at home for a long time and sharing it with friends and family. They kept saying, ‘You should sell this stuff; it is great,’ I always replied that doing that would take money.”

Then David received a notification from his employer, pharmaceutical giant Astra Zeneca, that allowed him to pursue his dream.

“Lo and behold, the company sent a letter telling me my pension plan that I entered into 10 years ago was fully funded and that I could do whatever I wanted with

it,” David said.

David and his wife, Jen, talked for a long time about whether to use the funds to open a business. They knew that if the business did not work out, they would have nothing to fall back on. Finally, the couple decided to look for a suitable location.

“We hooked up with a gentleman named Zach who showed us places around Camden,” David said. “They were all just not the right location or were too much money.”

Sara Bluhm, who was then working in economic development for the city of Milford, connected them to a contractor. “He showed us a site behind Big Lots that had not broken ground yet,” David said.

Then Bluhm mentioned she had family members in the mead business and that she had an idea what they needed for the business. Bluhm introduced them to Zack King who had purchased a building downtown he

was renovating for local businesses. King talked with the Wades about their needs and told them he may have a place for them, but it was small. They thought the same thing when they saw it, but it was also hard to visualize because it was simply an empty room.

“We started writing things down on paper and finally realized that this would work,” David said. “We didn’t need anything really big to start out. We negotiated the rent and paid Zack to help with renovations.”

King built the bar, put in new flooring and added a fireplace. “He even helped us with the tap system, the fermentation room and the windows,” David said.

With a pharmaceutical background, David understood the chemistry of brewing. Jen explained that he and her father, John, were really good at coming up with unique recipes. Interesting side note: When David first tried mead at a local meadery, he was not a fan.

“We went when they first opened and everything was rose petals and flowers,” David said. “I was mostly a beer drinker, only ever drinking wine on special occasions, so it wasn’t my thing.”

Jen convinced him to go back a year later and he found that they offered more options in mead, including one made with hot peppers. After that, David began experimenting with mead flavors, developing several of his own.

When What to Ferment Meadery — which they refer to as WTF — opens, it will offer four mead options. They will include a standard mead made with honey and water along with one named Six Cannons, made with dark cherry, watermelon and lime. There is a BBL Sour which is blueberry, banana and lemon, plus

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Secrets in the Sauce, made with beet, ginger, turmeric and lemon. Some of the recipes were created with John.

“We will soon offer one called Tropical Heat that is made with ghost pepper, pear and mango,” David said. “We hope to offer multiple flavors eventually, as we know not all types will appeal to everyone.”

Originally from Wilmington, the couple moved to Lewes for a while before selling their house and moving to Milford. They began brewing mead in small batches. David had always wanted to open a brewery and worked for Dogfish for about a year before returning to pharmaceuticals.

“The brewery market is so oversaturated here,” David said. “Jen inspired me to get into this because as a brewery you have to be really unique.”

When planning the meadery, David wanted a pirate theme because it would differentiate their business from others. When they decided on the Milford location at 27 S. Walnut Street, they were initially unaware that the mascot for the school district was a Buccaneer. Now that they know, they plan to name one of their meads after the mascot.

“I was literally online looking up whether pirates drank mead and found that they did,” David said. “The name of the company came to me in my sleep.”

Jen laughed, saying that she often uses the phrase that WTF stands for and, one night while he was sleeping, the name “What to Ferment” came to him. The next day, when he told her, she realized it was the perfect choice.

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“Because our place is so small, we will not be allowing anyone under 21 to come in,” David said. “We just don’t have room for children as they can’t sit at the bar. We also cannot have dogs. We will offer water, but we aren’t doing sodas or other types of beverages initially.”

The meadery plans a ribbon cutting at 2 p.m. on Friday, March 22, with a grand opening Saturday from noon to 9 p.m. As of now, they plan to be open March 28 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., March 29 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. and March 30 from noon to 9 p.m.

What the Ferment will not offer is food, but guests are welcome to bring their own, the Wades said in a Facebook post.




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# CULTURE



photo link: [Second Street Players](#)

## BIT O'IRISH BRINGS CROWDS TO MILFORD

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford was teeming with people sporting their shamrocks and green garb for the Downtown Milford Inc. (DMI) Pub Crawl. Almost 1,000 people wandered around downtown, checking out bars, restaurants and even a few businesses offering tastings, drink and food specials along with music. Two buses transported revelers from the downtown area to Surf and Turf, Mispillion River Brewing and EasySpeak to extend the celebration.

“This was one of the best Pub Crawls we have had in years,” Sara LeBright, executive director of DMI, said. “People were dancing, laughing and simply enjoying each other’s company all over Milford.”

Bagpipers played at Milford Tavern to a packed house while bands played at other locations throughout Milford. Arena’s, Park Place, EasySpeak, Surf and Turf as well as Mispillion River Brewing and the tavern were

standing room only for the entire night.

“We cannot thank all the participants, sponsors and businesses enough,” Shelby DiCostanzo, president of DMI, said. “Our bus drivers were amazing and got our crawlers around town safely. We are already planning for next year and hope to make this event even bigger and better!”

The Irish celebrations continue next Sunday, March 24, with the Irish Music and Dance Concert at Milford Senior Center from 1 to 4 p.m. The event, a partnership between DMI and Irish Rose, will have Seven Rings Band, McAleer Paulson Irish Dancers, Blarney the Leprechaun and bagpipers. Irish scones, soda bread, jellies and more will be provided along with coffee, tea and a cash bar.

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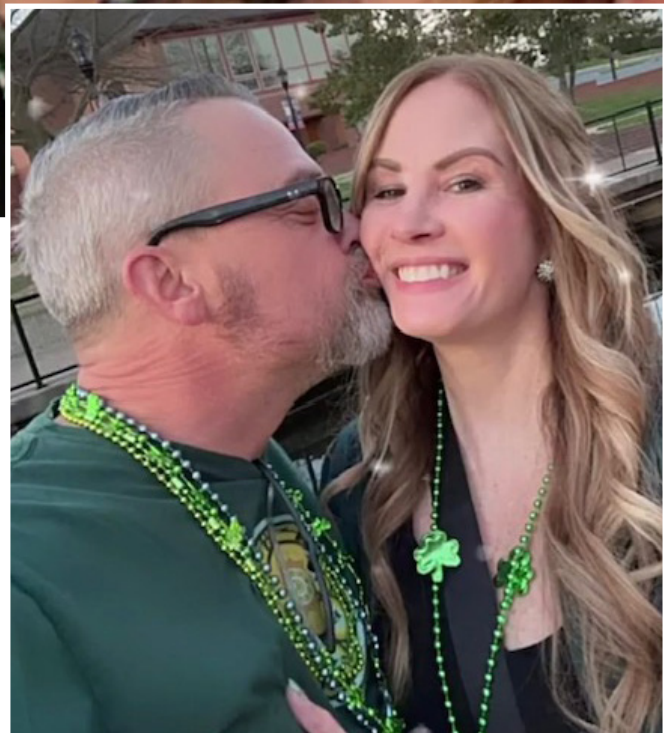
- SOUTHERN STATES

The advertisement features a background image of a red tractor in a field of green crops. The text is overlaid on a white and grey geometric shape in the bottom right corner.





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“Tickets are \$30 per person and may be purchased in person at Irish Rose or online,” LeBright said. “This is a fun event that will be sure to bring out the Irish in everyone.”

Purchase tickets [online](#) for the Irish Music and Dance Festival. Anyone who is interested in helping with the 2025 Pub Crawl or any other DMI event, email [Promotions@downtownmilford.org](mailto:Promotions@downtownmilford.org) or call 302-839-1180.



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<b>JUNE 17</b>	<b>MILFORD CENTRAL ACADEMY</b> 1021 N. Walnut St., Milford

# SEGREGATION IN MILFORD FOCUS OF DOCUMENTARY PREMIERE

BY KATIE MAZIMIR

It's been 70 years since the 1954 failed desegregation attempt at Milford High School. It would be eight years later, 1962, when desegregation efforts finally saw success.

On Saturday, April 6, a film about that endeavor, "In Due Course: Integrating Milford High School," will premiere at 1 p.m. at the Milford Public Library, hosted by the Milford Museum Series. A documentary from Delaware studio 302 Stories, "In Due Course" explores the underlying reasons that facilitated the major shift in community values.

"I explore topics in line with my personal values, and also share what I've learned with others in a platform that I believe is most effective," said Director Michael Oates said.

Through interviews, the movie sheds light on Milford's Black history relative to the 1954 Supreme Court's decision *Brown v. Board of Education*. Those interviewed for the film include Ed Kee, co-author of "The Milford Eleven;" Edna Turner Sharp, one of the 1954 Milford 11; Charles Hammond Jr., and Josephus Clark, two of the 1962 Milford 7; Edward Steiner and Dr. Karl Western, white Milford High School students in 1954; Dr. Reba Hollingsworth, a Milford native who became an educator; and Dr. Alvin Turner, Edna's younger brother. Oates will attend the screening and participate in a question-and-answer session after the viewing.



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"I have always been interested in telling stories and learning," he said. "My chosen career as a digital storyteller has allowed me to do both."

He opened 302 Stories, a film studio focused on education, the environment and community change, in 2000 after an Emmy nomination for "Dollars on the Beach," a self-funded broadcast documentary on the emerging Horseshoe Crab/Shorebird management controversy in Delaware Bay.

For more information, please contact the Museum at 302-424-1080, [tom@milforddemuseum.org](mailto:tom@milforddemuseum.org). This program is partially funded by Delaware Humanities and Berkana, Center for Media and Education Inc.

# BUSINESS



photo link: [Marcia Reed](#)



BY KATIE MAZIMIR

The Milford Chik-Fil-A got the OK this week to alter the drive-through customers use, which will result in a loss of seven parking spaces in the Milford Plaza shopping center. Those spaces would be eliminated on the southwest side of the property, Senior Design Engineer Justin Witters of Bowler Engineering said in this week’s Board of Adjustments meeting.

Right now, those seeking some of the fast food favorite’s offerings order from one of two lanes that merge into one before the drivers turn the corner to pay and get their food. “So they’re now going to keep those two lanes for the full drive through,” Witters said.

“So we can get our sandwich faster,” responded Board Chair Brendan Warfel.

In addition to serving as a bypass lane, Witters said the expansion would help reduce the stacking of vehicles into the rest of Chik-Fil-A’s property and out into the shopping center’s lanes, Witters said.

# COWS ECSTATIC: CHIK-FIL-A TO EXPAND ITS DRIVE THRU

The last time the number of parking spots was reduced was in 2016 when the board approved a reduction from 925 to 877 spaces. Pending approval from the property owner, the 870 spaces available for parking when Chik-Fil-A removes seven would be more than sufficient, Witters told the board. A 2023 traffic study of the Milford Plaza said the shopping center had enough spaces for the number of vehicles that use it.

“There’s no issue with parking, not running out of spaces there,” Witters said.

“It seems like a sensible thing to do. Not doing so I think would create a hardship both on the applicant and on all of us who wait for sandwiches,” said Vice Chair Nadia Zychal. “We’ve all seen the line.”

Other variances approved at the meeting include:

- Windward Grove Clubhouse for seven head-in parking spaces directly adjacent to Mason Way with a zero setback and 11 parallel parking spaces adjacent to the amenity parcel instead of the coded 16 off-street parking spaces.
- Hickman Overhead Door for the construction of an accessory building in the front yard.
- William Steele Welding & Fabrication for the existing 33,000-square-foot outdoor storage area to remain improved with stone rather than being paved.





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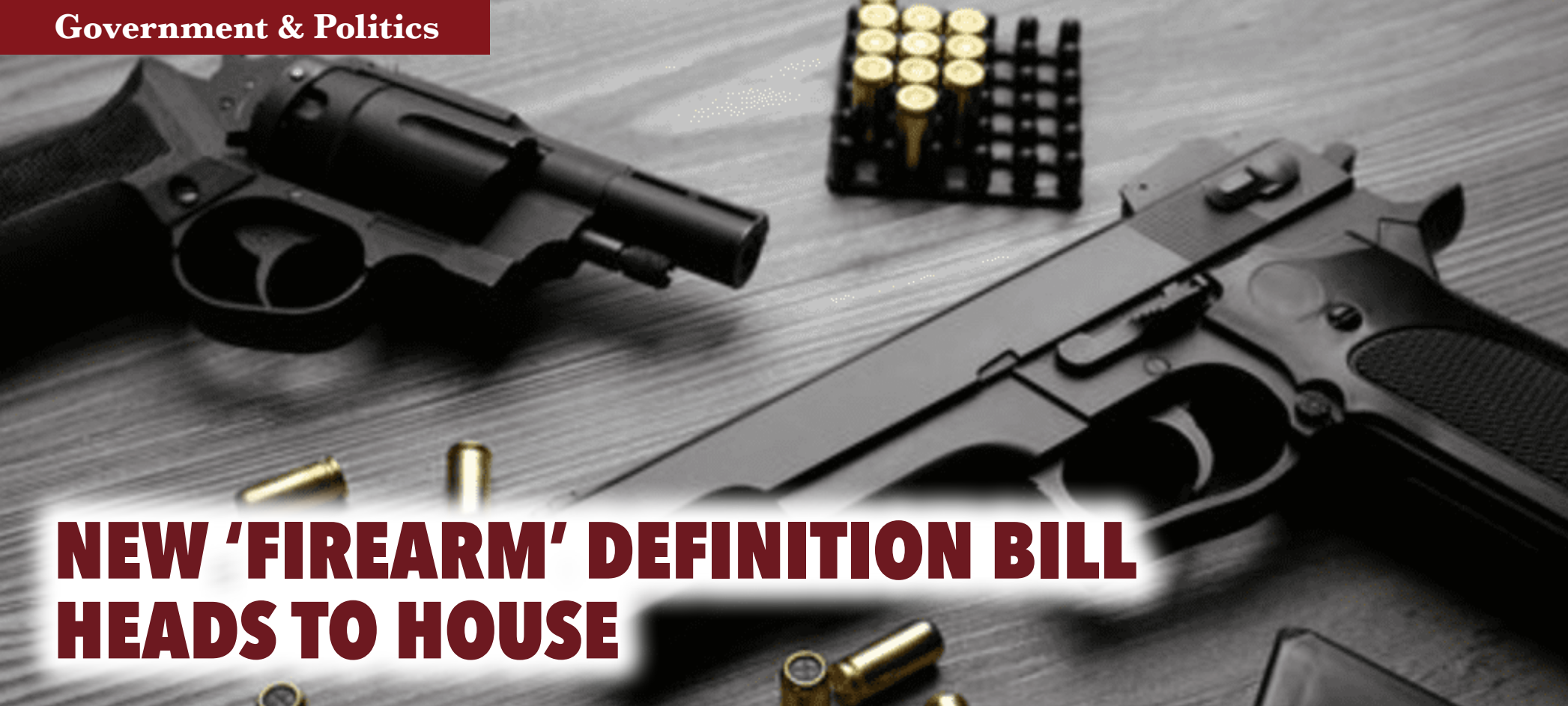
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# GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



photo link: Marcia Reed



## NEW 'FIREARM' DEFINITION BILL HEADS TO HOUSE

BY JAREK RUTZ

The Delaware House of Representatives will be the first to take a look at a new bill that will redefine Delaware's legal description of a firearm.

The Firearm Definition Task Force, responsible for evaluating the state definition and its ramifications in lawmaking and criminal code, had a quick, 10-minute meeting March 12 to take one last look at their work. The focus was on confirming additions suggested at a meeting two weeks ago.

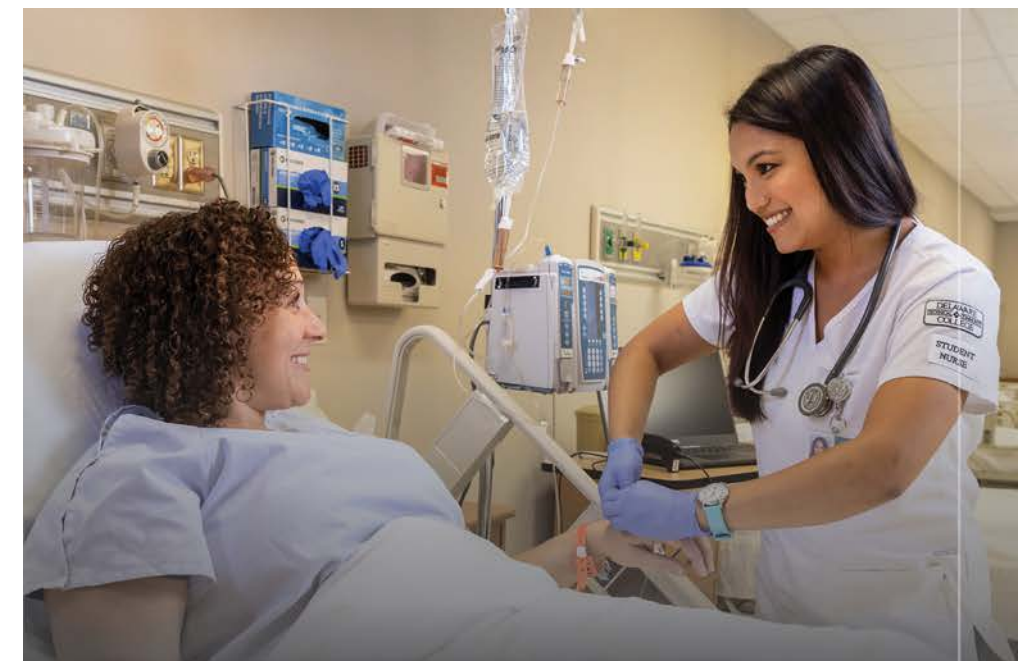
"We have a final draft legislation of redefining firearm in Delaware Code, adding this new definition of projectile weapon," said task force chair Rep. Jeffrey Spiegelman, R-Clayton.

He thanked the Department of Justice, who worked with the task force to create an appropriate definition.

Part of the issue with the current definition is it created challenges for lawmakers, especially with the influx of bills relating to guns and weapons. Spiegelman has said it can create unintended consequences.

For example, the existing definition includes nail-guns, so technically someone with a former felony conviction would be breaking laws if they used one on a construction job. That's not the goal of some of the gun laws passed.

The task force has also added equipment like bow and arrows and spear guns, which have become more popular items of choice for hunting and fishing. "Projectile weapon" has been added to the definition. The bill, redefines "firearm" as any weapon from which a shot, projectile or other object may be, is designed, or may



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readily be converted to be discharged by force of combustion, explosive, gas and/or mechanical means, an explosive, whether operable or inoperable, loaded or unloaded. It says that a “deadly weapon” includes a firearm, bomb, knife of any sort, a switchblade knife, a billy, a blackjack, a bludgeon, metal knuckles, a slingshot, a razor, a bicycle chain or an ice pick.

“Covert firearm” means any firearm that is constructed in a shape or configuration such that it does not resemble a firearm. Here’s the **draft bill**. It is unclear when it will be introduced to the House because first it will be circulated for sponsors.



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# EDUCATION



photo link: [Milford School District](#)

# HOUSE COMMITTEE REJECTS BILL TO CREATE STUDENT FELONY ASSAULT

BY JAREK RUTZ

Two weeks after the Milford School District was placed on lockdown and subsequently closed to ensure student safety, a new bill was introduced to the General Assembly to punish those who commit assault in schools.

**House Bill 22**, sponsored by Rep. Lyndon Yearick, R-Camden, makes intentionally or recklessly causing physical injury to an employee, contractor or subcontractor of a public or private elementary or secondary school an assault in the second degree, which is considered a felony. This Act is known as “The School Personnel Protection Act” and was brought upon the House Education Committee March 13.

One thing was for sure: both sides of the aisle agreed that school safety — both for students and staff — as well as discipline for poor behavior, is an issue that needs to be addressed. But many Democrats argued that Yearick’s bill is not the answer.

The main concern was that it isn’t right or effective to put children, many who might have cognitive disabilities, and all whose brains aren’t fully developed, into

the criminal system. Rep. Eric Morrison, D-Newark, said the bill would contribute to the school to prison pipeline.

“One thing that you’ve said twice now that’s really shocked me is that in terms of the bill, it doesn’t matter whether the actions are intentional or unintentional. And that’s very disturbing to me, because intentions definitely do matter.”

Yearick noted that this year alone, there have been more than 50 charges for assault. He also admitted he has no evidence that this would prevent issues in schools, but said he wanted to offer some solution.

Several legislators and members of the public gave personal anecdotes of when they were in school and someone misbehaved, or if their child had an incident in school in the past — they wouldn’t want it resulting in felony charges.

Rep. Sherae’a Moore, D-Middletown, who was against the bill, said she appreciates Yearick’s sentiment with



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see page 20

having teachers and students' safety at the forefront of discussion. The committee also acknowledged that the General Assembly recently established a school climate task force, and several said they wanted to wait until that committee got to work before voting on a bill like Yearick's.

The bill was ultimately not released by the committee.

A bill that was released was **House Bill 312**, sponsored by Rep. Kim Williams, D-Marshallton and committee chair, which requires school board members to undergo training in financial responsibility. The school board president would be tasked with informing each new member of the board of the training obligation.

A school board president must also send a letter by Jan. 15 of every year to any school board member who has not fulfilled the training obligation by Jan. 1 following that member's election or appointment.

Several current board members across Delaware, notably Don Patton in Christina School District, have said that training for new board members is critical to be effective.

HB 312 heads to the House floor for discussion.




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# SPORTS



photo by: Aleksander Saks / Unsplash



BY JAREK RUTZ

A new sporting event could be adopted into track and field competitions across the state. **Senate Bill 211**, sponsored by Sen. Darius Brown, D-Wilmington, makes the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association adopt javelin as an approved event for all DIAA-sponsored track and field competitions.

In presenting the bill to the Senate Education Committee Wednesday, Brown pointed out that javelin has historical roots in the Olympic Games of Ancient Greece and is a recognized event within the rules and regulations found within the National Federations of State

## SAFETY CONCERNS SURROUND BILL MAKING JAVELIN AS DIAA SPORT

High School Associations. According to the Wall Street Journal in July 2022, Brown said, at least 22 states within the country have adopted the javelin as a throwing event within their high school track and field programs. The NCAA also has sponsored a javelin event since 1921 for men and 1982 for women.

Sen. Laura Sturgeon, D-Hockessin, and chair of the Senate Education Committee, asked Brown about the safety of the sport.

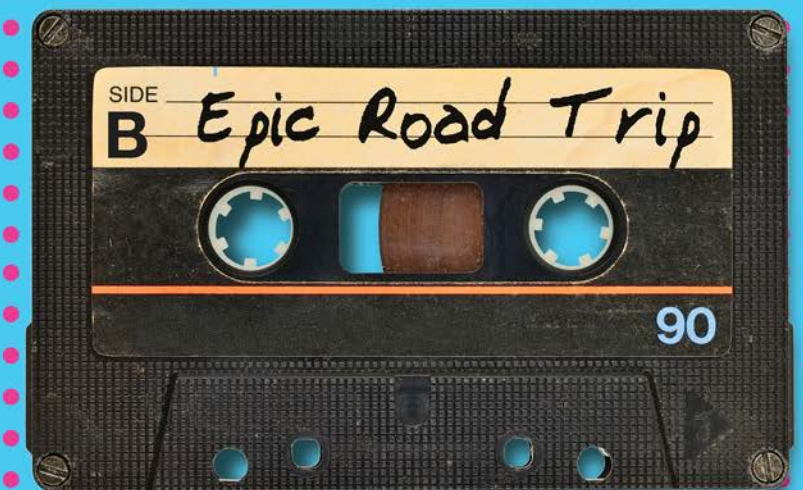
“The javelin throw can be practiced safely with appropriate safety precautions and rules, such as the use of a rubber-tipped javelin,” Brown said.

The single public commenter, Robert Overmiller said this was concerning. He pointed out that historically there have been deaths of young people goofing around and playing catch with the javelin. Overmiller said boys will be boys, and said even with the rubber tips, if young athletes are playing around, the objects are still dangerous and could cause serious harm.

Sen. Eric Buckson, R-Dover, who’s been involved in athletics for decades as his time as an educator, said he was concerned that schools not offering javelin will be at a disadvantage at interscholastic competitions.

see page 23

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Brown clarified that just because the bill would require the DIAA to approve the javelin as an event, not every school has to offer it.

“These are the same challenges most high schools have in our state with most of the field athletic options within track and field,” he said, “from high jump, to pole vault and everything else.”

Having points docked in competitions for not having athletes to field certain events is something schools have been dealing with forever, and while it is true that schools not offering javelin might miss out on a higher score, this isn’t a new concept, Brown pointed out.

Buckson suggested that many schools don’t even have the facilities in place to practice javelin.

Senate committees do not take a public vote. Rather, the senators sign the back of the bill with their vote, and the outcome is posted on the bill tracker, typically within an hour or two.

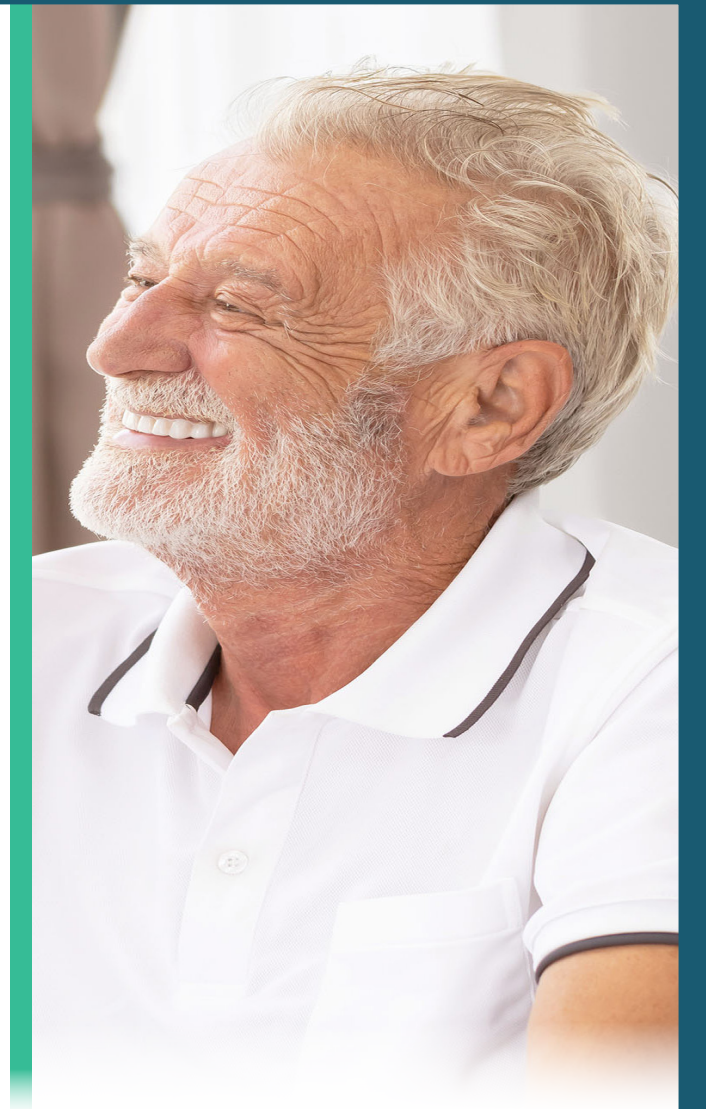
If released by the education committee, SB 211 will go to the Senate floor for a vote.



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From large corporations like Christiana Care, Delaware Tech Community College, and Delaware Department of Health to small shops like Fur Baby Pet Resort, Dolce Coffee Shop, and Benvenuto Tuscan Restaurant, we customize each plan to optimize the needs of each of our marketing partners.

I would love the opportunity to meet with you for 10-15 minutes to see how we can help. You can click the link to set up a meeting with me in our virtual office: <https://meetings.hubspot.com/shupe1>

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