

Forum

Does right to protect yourself extend to classroom?

■ CALLEY LATHROP

Staff Reporter

A teacher in Medford, Ore., wants to carry a concealed weapon to her high school classroom to protect herself from a violent ex-husband. The weapon? A semi-automatic pistol.

The 44-year-old high school teacher does have a license to carry a concealed weapon, and the law guarantees her the right to carry it in public buildings. The law, however, does not specify whether the school district can keep her from storing it in the classroom. The thought of a teacher fearing for her safety while in a high school classroom seems a little absurd, even when school shootings headline newspapers all the time. Yes, a person has the right to protect herself, but does she have the right to bring a deadly weapon somewhere that is supposedly safe already?

There are many factors that come into play here. In the end, the law is really all that matters, but in this case, the law is foggy. Yes, she has the right to carry a concealed weapon in a public building, and yes, a high school is technically a public building. The question is whether or not the school district can prohibit it, and whether its policy supersedes state law.

A school is supposed to be a safe haven for students as well as staff. School safety is becoming a more prevalent issue due to the fact that school shootings have become annual occurrences. Virginia Tech, Henry Foss High (Wash.) and Weston High (Wis.) are some of the more recent shootings, all occurring

in the last year. Maybe if there had been a teacher with a gun inside, lives would have been spared. This issue could impact all high schools, because if one teacher carries a gun, why shouldn't they all? Do we really want our teachers carrying guns on the off chance someone will snap? Or, in this case, that an estranged ex might enter the school for the sole purpose of assaulting his former wife?

Schools need to be diligent in how they handle safety. Every year, WLHS administrators and staff go over the new safety procedure for that year. There are always people patrolling the halls, like Officer Allister Bunch or Brian Bailey, dean of students. Teachers are asked to keep a sharp eye during breaks and prep periods, but awareness can't protect us from everything.

"We may not like it, but a dangerous situation could take place. We do the best we can, but you can never have one-hundred percent security," Kim Noah, principal, said.

Another issue with an armed teacher is how the parents of the students would feel. I know I would be uncomfortable knowing my teacher carries a loaded gun, and that a violent man could attack at any time. What if a shoot-out did take place and students were caught in the crossfire?

There are two sides to this story, and both have very legitimate arguments. The teacher's ex-husband does have a history of violence, has threatened to kill her, she has the right to protect herself, and maybe a gun is

the only way. The possible issues that would come with carrying a gun vastly outweigh the benefit. We live in a society where a gun gives the holder security, power and often pride. This teacher may be fighting for more than the right for protection, she has become a crusader for support of the Second Amendment: the right to bear arms. Do we need more guns? People kill people, but often times a bullet deals the

deadly blow.

"I believe arming society to the teeth will just result in more violence overall," Matt Kellogg, history teacher, said. If a teacher feels that threatened, maybe she should take a leave of absence, especially when doing so endangers students and faculty.

"This issue goes beyond her safety, it's about a community that could be affected. We are a family

at school, and if a teachers presence put others in danger, we would try and create a plan that would keep everyone safe. That might include the teacher not being at school for a period of time. We care about everyone's safety," Noah said.

To the anonymous teacher from Medford, leave your gun at home. Violence has no place at school, and we all need to work to keep it that way.

Field trips provide fresh experiences

■ MARY WOOD

Staff Reporter

During the last school year, I didn't go on any field trips. The only thing that came close was a short trip to Camassia or wilderness spots in the area during biology. In my English class, we were almost fortunate enough to go see a play, but sadly, the trip didn't happen. The lack of field trips made it quite a disappointing and boring year.

Field trips are important opportunities for students to see things in a different way than they normally would while inside the classroom. They provide a fresh environment with many new opportunities for learning class material in a way that is likely to be remembered.

Even the small trips to the woods in my biology class made a big difference.

I was allowed the privilege of hands-on learning for a variety of topics, making the information I learned stick with me for a longer time than anything I learned while sitting in class.

Bigger field trips make an even more notable experience. I'll never forget an eighth

trips so beneficial: originality.

If not just for the purposes of learning, field trips are great for a student's mood and state of mind. School can get extremely boring, and field trips add variety and fun to a normally mundane place. A fun trip could even introduce students to a new hobby,

making it worthwhile not only in class, but in their everyday lives.

The school needs to find a way to mix things up if they want students to enjoy going to class, and field trips are a great way to do that. Whether it's going into the woods

for a science class, seeing a play for English or drama, or going to a museum for art, things need to happen. To make school truly educational, students need to experience their subjects beyond the classroom.



Ethan Connolly, McKenna Miller, Laura Huck, seniors, and Geoff Bingham, science teacher, measure the stream flow at the salmon hatchery on Eagle Creek during an AP Environmental Science field trip. The students participated in orange races, measuring the speed of the oranges to help visualize stream flow.

Photo by Malia Chong

grade field trip to the beach that taught me many things for science class that year. It was different and exciting, which left a long lasting impression. Unconventional methods of learning can also be the most practical. That's the key factor that makes field

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Link Crew directed toward wrong crowd

■ SARAH CHICOINE

co-Editor-in-Chief

With the new school year commencing, the Class of 2011 is roaming the halls, or perhaps what can be better explained as crowding the middle of the halls. Freshman year, in general, can adequately be described in one word: awkward. The transition from middle to high school can be daunting, and it's almost essential to have some aid. Thus, Link Crew was created. Link Crew is supposed to give the new freshman at least one upperclass buddy

that they can come to for assistance, but let's get serious, how often does that happen?

The idea of Link Crew is great and the people who administrate it are some of the nicest in the school. However, the activities seemed to be aimed at a completely different audience. These kids are coming into high school, not elementary. The activities seem to insult their intelligence rather than boost their confidence. The orientation day is uncomfortable in

the first place, and making the freshman play hand games only adds to this awkwardness. I have talked to numerous freshmen who feel patronized by the activities that were proposed.

However, the day of orientation is really important; I think it could be better focused on educating the freshmen about the high school's facilities. Personally, I am a senior, and still don't know how to look for a library book, much less actually check one out.

Link Crew

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