

## Public Safety officers discourage guns on campus

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Staff Writer

Mention guns on campus and someone will shockingly ask, "Are there guns on campus?" Since most people feel uncomfortable around guns, is it a problem here?

According to Chief of Public Safety Jim Wiseman, it is an occasional problem that happens here every couple of weeks. "It's an ongoing problem that hasn't gotten to the point where it is serious yet."

Wiseman mentioned seven guns and five knives were taken from people last year. The guns taken were either revolvers or smaller concealable pistols. The count doesn't include 12 to 15 rifles or shotguns students bring on campus that are hanging in rifle racks in pickup cabs.

Even though there are signs at both entrances to the campus strictly prohibiting firearms of any kind on campus, including bb. or pellet guns, some students are either ignoring the signs or don't see them.

People's attitudes toward guns have changed over the last several years.

"It's our society and culture and where we are now—an explosion of young people into handguns. We have more guns loose with criminals than before," says Wiseman. He feels that it isn't just a problem in colleges and high schools, but is creeping into junior highs as well.

"One of the great strengths in this country is this is a free and open society, which can also sometimes be a weakness," Wiseman added.

So why would anyone bring a firearm on campus? There are several reasons. One is convenience. "When we find people

with rifles and shotguns in rifle racks in vehicles, it's usually someone going hunting after class," Wiseman pointed out.

Once Public Safety becomes aware of it, they deal with it right away. A Public Safety officer checks to make sure first of all, it isn't loaded, and if it's a rifle, that the action is left open. The officer then requests that as a courtesy to other students who may feel uneasy about it, that the weapon be left at home and not returned to campus.

Even though all Public Safety officers are commissioned as

**"They forget it only takes a second to smash a window and take it [the gun]. Plus, any stolen weapon stands a good chance of ending up in the hands of criminals."**

**-Tom Steigleder, Public Safety Officer**

Deputy Sheriffs and have the power and authority to make an arrest, most students, once confronted, cooperate.

"Our main purpose is to gain voluntary compliance to any problem that could be a challenge to public peace and harmony," commented Wiseman.

"I have yet to find anyone who won't cooperate with us," said Public Safety Officer Tom Steigleder.

"They forget it only takes a second to smash a window and take it," said Wiseman. Plus, any stolen weapon stands a good chance of ending up in the hands of criminals.

Another reason someone may want to carry a firearm is they feel a need to be protected. Steigleder, who has been with Public Safety for two and a half years, tells how he stopped a male walker on the campus foot paths around 9 a.m. on a weekend.

The walker apparently was a gun broker and had a license to carry a concealed weapon. He not only had one concealed pistol but three: a .38, a 9mm and a .45 automatic.

He said he didn't feel comfortable without them. Officer Steigleder told him he didn't feel comfortable having him armed and on campus, then asked him to leave and not bring the weapons back.

Even though signs at both entrances to the college say no skate boarding, drugs, alcohol or firearms, Steigleder feels "no firearms" should be at the top of the sign and in larger letters.

Even students may feel a need to be protected from other students whom they fear, and might carry a small concealable pistol. Some automatic pistols are small enough to conceal in a bookbag or stuffed into a waistband with a sweater or coat pulled over it.

Or it could be carried in a fanny pack with a specially-designed holster in it. "These (fanny packs) are mainly designed for law enforcement, but are also for general sale," Wiseman said. Women can conceal them in their purse if they feel vulnerable with the increase in crime. Instructors could possibly carry one because of fear of rowdy students.

"They can whip it open (the fanny pack) having a dispute with someone to scare them cause they are bigger than you are. So you crack off a round and hit someone who is just standing around," said Wiseman.

It may be brought to the attention of Public Safety as another student or staff member may see it (the pistol) as their coat or sweater rises up, exposing it, or the bulge may be obvious. One

student may brag about it to another student or someone may see it in a locker room as the student changes clothes. Once Public Safety is made aware of the concealed weapon, it is immediately confiscated.

Wiseman also pointed out that the confiscated weapon may have been used in a crime. In this case, the person is arrested and the weapon turned over to Multnomah County Sheriffs' Office as evidence.

A third reason is age. It's not just young people who decide to carry them.

"(We have) had people in their 50's and 60's with it [a gun] in their possession. Older people can be afraid of younger people and the way they dress, their culture and the way they talk. When you don't understand something, you're afraid of it," mentioned Wiseman.

A fourth reason is that someone may have committed a crime in the area, and could possibly be hiding in the woods on campus.

Steigleder tells how a reserve deputy from the Oregon City Police Department had his home broken into and his uniform, deputy belt and a .357 stolen. Later, the Oregon City Police ran into the robbers at the Berryhill Shopping Center, but let them go before they knew they had been involved in the burglary.

Public Safety then got a tip the robbers may have been living in the woods on campus. Steigleder and Bob Black searched ELC and found a door to the Art Center open. They searched the building room-by-room and the surrounding area.

"That's one spooky place to be at night, in the garden area...it took about two hours. Bad thing was they could see you before you saw them," said Steigleder. No one was found.

## CLUB CALENDAR

**Help Everyone's Environment Live (HEEL)**, the new environmental club, now meets every Weds., from 11 to 11:50 a.m., in P124. For more information, call ext. 2247. *This week only:* HEEL members meet in P102.

**Chrysalis** Come CELEBRATE women writing! Join other women writers every Wednesday at 12 p.m. in B114. No matter how you write, you are ready to read. ?'s, call Kate Gray at ext. 2371.

**CCC Environmental Committee** meetings are every Weds., from 11 to 11:30 a.m., in P102. Everyone is invited to participate in focus groups: Helping the ELC, Bottle Bill Expansion, Recycling on Campus, AmeriCorp Projects and Environmental Week. For more information, call Ken Eshelman at ext. 2245.

**The FCA Retreat is coming!** The retreat will include softball, tennis and a barbecue. Cost is \$5. The retreat will be April 27th, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more info, call Kathy Woods ext.2418.

**Phi Theta Kappa exec meetings** 12 noon, M204, Tuesdays, 4/16, 4/23?, 4/30, 5/7, 5/14, 5/21, 5/28. ?'s, call Kate Gray ext. 2371 or Rosemary at 257-7765. All PTK members welcome.

**GALAB:** Treat yourself to a support group for Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals. Meetings are Thursdays at 4 p.m. at Starbuck's in the Oregon City Fred Meyer's; and Fridays, 12 p.m. in P104. ?'s call ext 2371.

**All interested writers, poets, playwrights, readers** Come to B113, each Tue. from 12:30 - 1:30. We will also have off-campus meetings from 5:15 to 7 p.m. each Fri in the old Oregon City library between 6th and 7th St. in Oregon City. We go to readings, plays & literary events in Portland. Bring your work or yourself and join us in a supportive relaxed environment. Allen Widerburg, ext. 2359.

**Friends of Trees** is having their last planting of the year and they need you to help! The planting is from Sunday, Apr. 21, from 12 to 4 p.m. To sign up, please contact Brinda Fearn, Student Activities office (CC140), or call ext. 2247 by Friday, 4/19.

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