

Columnist weighs the pros and cons of cops packing heat

J. Guthrie Mann
Capital Times Columnist

So I was sitting at work, waiting for the last few ticks of the clock to release me from the daily grind, when a PSH Police officer walked into the center to warn of the first "accosting" incident (excuse me but isn't accosting what happens when the Har'e Krishna's bother you at the airport?), when I noticed she wasn't carrying a side arm. What the heck is this about???

A young female employee expressed some concern for her own safety, and the officer suggested that she invest some money in one of those pepper mace things, and pointed to the one she carried on patrol. Again the question: What the heck is this about??

As it turns out, PSH Police do not

carry guns because past students felt the presence of a weapon was too threatening and pushed for police not to

LITTLE MANN ON CAMPUS

carry anymore. It is threatening, isn't it? And it's meant to be that way too.

My reaction is not in light of recent events, but a reaction in general to an officer of the law not carrying a sidearm. Saying police should carry now because of the rape and attempted rape would be considered alarmist and derisive, to say the very least. Up to this point I had yet to see a PSH police officer up close.

I am not a member of the N.R.A., nor am I a huge proponent of gun control. I do, however, believe that a

police officer without some form of sidearm is more of a security guard than a cop, who is supposed to protect and serve.

The PSH police are in fact certified police officers and hold their Title 120 (that's certified cop training from the state of PA). They are here for our protection, and it fails me as to how they can do this in their castrated state.

Suppose the PSH police are faced with a life threatening situation. Suppose that it's you, up on top of the Olmsted building, completely freaked out after final exams, naked, with a sniper rifle, gunning for anyone carrying a brief case and wearing cloths from 1978 (hey, stranger things have happened). What can our protectors do if the very worst came to worse.

"Listen, I got some Cayenne pepper

under pressure her, don't make me use it!"

Your eyes will sting and you'll be saying "GaaaronEtee" for a month. Hello?! Reality check....

Police should be prepared for even the most unlikely of instances; even nudists with hunting rifles; even if the cops are campus police. It only makes sense.

Please don't affiliate my views with those of the N.R.A., who, by the way, will be sending every female student at PSH a letter about how much safer the world would be if everyone got to carry a .357 Magnum to school. I'm not kidding (I just wish they'd stop sending me those stupid "surveys" that beg for money at the end).

Up until last year, I took a pretty dim view of campus policing agencies, picturing all of them like "Barney

Fifes" with Penn State logos on their sleeves. I even went so far as to verbally chastise the Chief of Police at PSU - Altoona, for not having anything better to do than to hand out tickets as if they were flyers to a new pizzeria at the mall.

Shortly after chewing this guy out, I found out that he was a well-decorated, highly regarded, retired, municipal police officer, with more time as a cop than I had in life (talk about whipping it out and stepping all over it).

Let's cut these people some slack. They are trained law enforcement professionals, here to keep us safe from the dangers of the real world, and sometimes, from ourselves. Give them their guns back and trust them to be the police officers our tuitions pay them to be.

The crime behind the crime: blaming the victim

Paula D. Eiland
Capital Times Staff

Just the other day while going to class I overheard one fellow student tell another of the campus assault that occurred on Oct. 23, "What was she doing out at 3 o'clock in the morning anyway?" Straight way the very quintessence of this argument confirmed my deepest view of society's perpetuation of the "old boy" mentality of sexual deviate behavior toward women - sure, take the easy way out - just blame the victim for exercising her rights in a free and democratic society.

The very irony of this argument is that both of the students conversing were women. Had they fallen victims by becoming brainwashed into thinking they were the cause of provoking such physically compulsive behavior by their male counterparts? Something has gone terribly wrong in a society that fosters this kind of mentality. In fact, many people that I discussed both the rape and the assault with felt the same way.

How disgusting that such thinking could be exhibited in the very minds of the victims who were denied equal

access under the law by their white male counterparts just short of a century ago. Yet some molested minds have chosen

PAULA'S ISLAND

to side with the very ideology that has plagued this country's history for ages past. Something has gone terribly wrong in our society.

Reflecting back, this mentality dates back as far as the Civil War. One good example of such idiosyncratic behavior tolerated by the dominant culture in society as well as the highest institution of authority, the government, can be found in society's and the government's consenting ill treatment of African American women in the slave era.

For centuries African American women were unconsentingly, visited by their white masters in their slave quarters and sometimes brutally beaten. Often they were physically violated against their will. During this era sexually deviant behavior toward African American slave women was not viewed as rape, but rather a display of

the demeaning hierarchy of roles and power between masters and slaves. For instance, the role of the master was to purchase African American slaves, treat them as "his" own personal property, in addition to using them as vehicles by which to vent his anger and frustrations by asserting his masculinity through physical abuse and the sexual gratification of his deepest fantasies.

The role of the innocent, defenseless and politically powerless African American slave woman was simple...to be the work horse of her master's land...physically laboring to keep harmony in "Masser's" home. Hence, she was the object of his eye providing repulsive sexual pleasure in exchange for her life.

The example presented above illustrates one instance of how the "old boy" ruthless behavior was encouraged among other white male masters or counterparts during this era. Another disturbing factor that contributes to the manifestation of society's view of victim versus victimizer is that the government, one of the highest institutions of law and order, played a vital role in perpetuating

the sales of African American women as objects of physical gratification.

How frenetic that many people in society of this era stood idly by and paid homage to the crucial acts by silently consenting or openly acknowledging the ludicrous behavior between one human being toward another. How disgusting that society passively permitted these men to continue their behavior, glorifying their actions in the process, meanwhile assigning blame to the victim as if she solicited or deserved such hideous actions by her white male counterparts.

These fragile human beings, African American women, suffered generations of torture, humiliation, abuse, sexual deviation and alienation from a supposedly "free" and democratic society. She set the stage for generations to come by enduring the pain of what American society would later term as "rape."

Decades later, rape continues to flourish as one of the leading crimes in our society. No longer does rape just affect African American women, but it has become multi-ethnic in stature affecting all classifications of race and

genders. However, little has changed in the eyes and attitudes of many people in society; the instance of the two students conversing about the campus assault is example enough. Instead of this student questioning the motives and actions of the attacker, straightway she went on to inquire about the actions of the victim-- as if it were her fault! How long will the "old boy" attitude continue to plague American society?

I once read that the history of a country reflects the healthy or healthless state of that society. Is our American judicial system in a healthy state when the American government continues to deprive victims of rape justice under the law by dismissing (in most cases) the very occurrence of rape? How long will society continue to blame the victim rather than the victimizer for his compulsive sexual actions? How long will women of sexual assault have to suffer the gruesome physical and emotional torture that their sisters of slavery had to go through? Perhaps the answers to some of these questions posed can be found in the attitudes of the next generation of society.

Take a trip to the natural state of diversity

Michael Starkey
Capital Times Columnist

So there you sit, glued to the tube like so much inanimate protoplasm.

The screen flickers as a tale of great conquest unfolds. Alexander the Great is making his tour of the known world and he's making offers that few refuse. The telephone rings and the hospital calls to say your dad is in need of a heart operation. You glance at the digital clock on the VCR and it peers back through 8:00 eyes. Wrapping a cotton shirt about you, you head for the kitchen and slather a slice or two of bread with some PB&J.

Just another normal type of scene right? Correct-a-mundo oh faithful reader. But let us dig a little below the surface. Let us view the world from slightly different angles and perhaps surprise ourselves.

STARKEY'S SANCTUARY

Secure in the White bread world of TV, June and "Mr. Cleaver" or Ozzie and Harriet, Father Knows Best, those kooky Bradys, and the whole kit and kaboodle just saccharines you near death. All those perfect white faces in perfect white places leaving all those indelible white traces.

But no person acknowledges the little white lies, the multicolored ties, the hidden cries of the unspoken "others." You know, the different skin tones, accents and attitudes. The "odd ducks," the "different" ones, those who "are not OUR kind," the ones we never saw in our town.

We live in a fantastic time where miraculous things happen in the course of our daily lives. Indeed, visitors from the past would view us as "gods." Consider the flickering images on the TV, the disembodied voice on the phone, the fabric of the sofa, the colorful interplay of the plaid in the shirt, the magical glowing time device, the cold box from whence came sustenance.

These are all end results of the human mind at work. Notice there was no specification of gender, race, nationality, religious affiliation, or sexual preference. We take the life we have very much for granted as if to say "Yes, I deserve these things, they are rightfully mine due to my place in the great scheme of things."

So what's the big deal?

Head south to the land of my grandmother and immerse yourself in Cajun life near the Mississippi delta. Or sneak over to grab some Tex/Mex gusto. Drive through the arid land of the Navajo and listen to the spirit wind as it sings the song of life into your heart. Take the bus down to Chinatown and see eight centuries of continuous cultural history dance and swirl before your very eyes. Visit a neighborhood church were gospel is the message as well as the medium. Walk through a veterans cemetery and read all the names on the headstones, and remember all those great American names like Slavinski,

MacGregor, Ito or Bergenstein. Go to south Chicago and watch transplanted Delta bluesmen wail their tales just across the street from a kielbasa factory which is next door to St. Mary and Margaret's church.

Pickin' up any clues yet? Catch my drift? See what I mean?

We stand together, for surely if we choose to stand alone we must fall. WE is the important concept here gang, 'cause this country is defiantly about a collective United States.

All of the folks who helped make this place what it is today deserve our respect and careful consideration. Those folks who had the guts to try to carve out

a life of freedom from fear and want came to this place to make a stab at changing the world. At the same time, don't forget folks who professed belief in freedom--like Locke who still felt it was okay to own human chattel--were sometimes slaves to their traditions and made errors in their lives.

So maybe it comes to this: look for the differences in each other and celebrate them, learn from the mistakes of the past and don't repeat them, take each day and

person as they come, savor them and live with them to the fullest extent of your ability, allow room for each thing to expand to the fullness of its own self.

Open your eyes, open your minds, open your hearts and be free.

So here is the closer. The first graph is loaded with different strokes from different folks...George Washington Carver is a give a way--you know the guy who did wonders with peanuts? But did you guess the inventor of the cotton gin was a woman? That the telephone was a discovery on the way to a hoped for cure for the handicap of deafness? The concept of zero came from the Arab

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STAIRWAY TO HELL

by Trev Stair

