

'Having police officers at Ohlone College unarmed is very disturbing'

EDITOR:

I would like to comment on the article in the Dec. 2, 2004 issue of the Ohlone College *Monitor* discussing whether or not Ohlone police officers should carry firearms. First off, as a student, let me say that having police officers at Ohlone College unarmed is very disturbing to me. Those entrusted with protecting me are denied the tools that allow them to perform that task completely. If our police are to be expected to serve and protect us without firearms, are we also to expect our professors to teach us without textbooks?

Anyone who believes that police can perform their duties to the best of their ability while unarmed obviously has no understanding of po-

lice work. What they also fail to understand is not only the nature of the world we live, but also the nature of some people whom we have no choice but to share it with.

The article mentions that the presence of firearms "do not make the atmosphere safer" and cites Japan's low crime rate as proof of this. That assertion could not be farther from the truth. In fact, Japan has suffered the highest increase in violent crime of any country in recent years. By 2000 Japan's murder rate had surpassed that of both England and Australia, both of which have also been experiencing increases in violent crime and have strict gun laws. Furthermore, the low homicide rate in Japan is similar to the low homicide rate of Japanese-Americans suggesting a cul-

tural connection.

While we are talking about other countries and the effect of firearms related to overall safety, let's not forget Switzerland. With a population of approximately six million, Switzerland requires all males between the ages of 21 and 32 to keep in their homes an M-57 Assault Rifle and 24 rounds of ammunition. Yet in 1997 their homicide rate was only 1.4 per 100,000. Non-resident foreigners commit almost half the crime Switzerland does have.

Fact of the matter is we live neither in Japan nor Switzerland. So let's talk about the presence of firearms in the United States. Many states now have "right to carry" laws for private citizens. On average states with right to

carry laws have a 19% lower homicide rate and a 39% lower robbery rate. In fact, the nine states with the lowest violent crime rates are "right to carry" states. So it would seem that the presence of firearms does in fact make the atmosphere safer in the U.S.

While California is not a "right to carry" state, here at Ohlone College we need at very least to equip of police with the tools necessary to fulfill their duties around the clock. Armed police would serve as a deterrent to isolated acts of violence and be able to limit the effect of a serious incident. While statistically the odds of a serious incident occurring at Ohlone College are very low, I for one would rather not take the chance than wait

until it is too late.

If Ohlone Police are to remain unarmed, and an incident in while armed officers could have saved a life or prevented injury occurs, I would hold the college responsible for tying the hands of our law enforcement professionals. The question for the administration should not be whether or not to arm our police, but rather which firearm should be issued and what additional training and qualifications are mandated.

Anyone who wishes to attend class in an atmosphere where armed police are not necessary to ensure the safety of all students can do so online.

RICHARD G. COMINOS, JR.
Ohlone student

Disappointing turnout for tsunami fundraiser

EDITOR:

I was very surprised to see such a low turnout for the tsunami fundraiser on Wednesday evening in the Jackson Theater.

I was there and I was enthused to see how many people volunteered their time and talent to come together for a worthwhile cause.

There could have been a lot more money collected for this

horrible disaster. I was also surprised to find out that there were no Fremont businesses that donated towards the prizes given away - as an extra attraction for the \$10 per person that everyone donated.

Local talent from Little Theater in the Fremont/Newark area performed as well as Jr. High School performers and former students who are on a quest for their own musical career, plus a

few of our own faculty and staff doing what they do, oh so well. A beautiful reading was done that brought everyone to tears and the reality of the disaster.

But nothing quite could match the impact that Mark Nelson made on the audience with his compelling slide presentation.

Mark was in Thailand during the tsunami and was able to show pictures before and after the devastation. The stunned silence

could not compare with Mark's choked up narration as he commented on those few days that he witnessed. He had to stop several times as he described his saving a man's life who was pinned under a car, or the mistaken identity of the "mannequins" he saw floating in the water. The fact that he was alive in Fremont, California, U.S.A., was obviously a blessing to Mark. The emotion that overtook Mark, overwhelmed the au-

dience.

If you didn't attend on Wednesday you missed a time in your life when you would have said, "Thank G-d I wasn't in Indonesia the day after Christmas, 2004, and thank G-d Mark is safe."

In the future, try and make these special events - it does a body good.

ELAINE NAGEL
Ohlone staff

Survey shows reactions to police with guns

By **FRANK ADDIEGO**
Staff writer

Recently at Ohlone, a controversy has been brewing over the issue of whether or not campus police officers should carry guns.

Right now, the issue is set to be discussed by the Board of Trustees next Wednesday. However some at Ohlone believe the issue should be put out to a direct vote by faculty and staff.

Many of the police officers at other Bay Area community colleges carry firearms. Some don't. The crime statistics are on many of their websites.

The Contra Costa Community College website displays its recent crime rates, as does Diablo Valley College and Los Medanos College, among others.

Diablo Valley, whose campus police do carry guns, had the highest rates of rape, assault and theft during this period. In 2002, Diablo Valley College reported 113 counts of theft.

Contra Costa, whose campus police don't carry guns, had the highest rates of robbery, but came in second to Diablo Valley within the survey.

In all categories, Los Medanos, whose campus police do carry guns,

had the lowest rates in every category. The differences aren't striking in most cases, though.

The Peralta Community College District, which is under contract with the Alameda County Sheriff's department, reported generally lower crime rates, with the exception of Laney College's burglary rate.

Laney reported a total of 68 burglaries between 1998 and 2000, according to the Sheriff's Department website. Being part of the Sheriff's Department, the officers on campus do carry guns.

Chabot College does not have armed officers on campus. Com-

pared to the other colleges surveyed, much of the crime-especially assault-appears to be slightly lower, but not dramatically different. The exception is the theft rate.

In 2002, Chabot reported 62 counts of petty theft, six counts of grand theft and 26 counts of auto burglary.

While the variation in crime rates of campuses with armed officers verses those with unarmed officers aren't dramatic, the debate over Ohlone's campus security is.

Recently, Jon Degallier set up a discussion board on whether or not Ohlone's officers should be allowed

to carry guns.

One respondent on the board, Mike Triplett of the IS Department said, "I have 13 years of experience shooting on family-owned land and shooting ranges... over time, I have literally shot tens of thousands of rounds and I have never had any accidents."

Jackie Whitehouse, another respondent, said, "I think arming the officers leads us down a road we should not go. It tells our community that there is no peace but through force."

Faculty Senate President Barbara Tull said the faculty vote will take place next week.

Board to debate surplus property

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could be used for housing developments and either sold to developers at approximately \$1 million per acre, or more if leased.

The idea for developments on the acreage on the south side of the school is that they would become neighborhoods of high-priced homes, which would be sold to childless adults.

These active-adult homes would have an executive community between the ages of 40 and 50, and would not allow children.

Bidding for the property will come in time, as the school releases information to possible developers. The companies are supposed to return within a few months with their own ideas for the use of the surplus land.

After Ohlone receives these propositions, the Board of Trustees can then decide which companies will receive contracts for the land

development, and building will continue from there.

Meanwhile, Ohlone has hired a company to research the possible success of a grocery store on the surplus land with funds from the city of Fremont for the designation of development.

Thompsons, a company that specializes in grocery stores decided that with the income level of the area surrounding Ohlone, the location of other grocery stores in the area and traffic conditions determined with a research model that a grocery store on the surplus land would be successful and profitable.

Another research company focused on the possible success of housing developments on the surplus property and found that housing developments would also be profitable on the southern acreage.

According to the research done by Ohlone in cooperation with a

Los Angeles peer college and Stanford University, the residents of the active-adult homes would most likely move there to be associated with the college. Professors, researchers, volunteers and other professionals used to working with and around colleges might chose the location to be closer to campus.

Ohlone's facilities may be open to them, including access to the pool and recreational events such as concerts and theater events.

If the housing development is built, a new road would be made through the shopping area and run parallel to Mission. The road would divert traffic from Mission Boulevard and allow access to parking lots and the new residential neighborhoods.

The 34 acres could be bid on by private contractors to buy or lease. If the Board of Trustees decides to lease the property, it would be for 66 years.

Glass shatters, student cut

By **JAMES HENDRA**
Staff writer

On Tuesday, Alex Trung, certain that he was 10 minutes late to class, ran out of the cafeteria, placing his hand on the door, and pushed. He missed, hitting the fragile glass instead.

In a brilliant display of havoc and mayhem, the pane of glass shattered into several pieces, both large and small, leaving Trung with a cut hand and a small cut on the head.

The glass was 1/4-inch bronze plate glass, which will be replaced with 1/4-inch bronze tempered glass, which should be more shatter resistant, according to maintenance personnel.

About 30 people rushed to help Trung and a crowd gathered to see what had happened.

Director of Student Health Sally Bratton of the Health Center arrived to bandage Trung and prepare him for an ambulance, which arrived shortly afterwards.

Fifteen minutes after the glass broke, a team from Building Ten's Department of Buildings and Grounds, were already hard at work, cleaning up the mess.

While the maintenance men were doing their thing, the front area of the Cafeteria was closed off to traffic, to prevent more casualties. Less than 40 minutes after cleanup had started, the front entrance was reopened.