

NORTHERN WOODS AND WATERS

Campus Ban On Firearms Will Hamper Autumn Sports

By Butch Sapp

News Outdoor Writer

By now, any hunter living in the dorms should have his firearms off-campus or locked up with the security office. If you don't, you are facing suspension from the university.

Fortunately, except for an occasional crow, fox or coyote hunter and an occasional tin-can plinker, the season for firearms is over. The full impact of the recent removal order will not be felt until next fall.

One of the most heard complaints made by students attending this university is that there is a lack of off-campus activities. With the convenience of a sporting weapon now severely limited, the one major fall sport for students here has been crippled. How many football games would be played on lawns here next fall if all personal footballs had to be registered and kept in the HPER building?

No one can deny that violence on this campus could conceivably be sparked by the callous use of a sporting arm. Removing this possibility, however, is a process of treating symptoms, not causes. Returning this university to order will require more than eliminating problems as they have been expressed at this point. Just as the removal of guns from campus has created another problem, affecting even more students than the first, so apparent solutions to other problems may catalyze more.

In my own opinion, not that of the university and not that of this newspaper, recent events at Northern Michigan University have not been caused by national events nor by racial prejudice here. This school, unlike many other campuses, is involved in a power struggle. The issues being expressed are not necessarily the belief of the few, very few, persons who demand their correction, but are being used

as tests of the authority of the administration. A person does not have to believe in a cause to fight for it; witness the number of dissenters, not unlike myself, who volunteer for duty in Vietnam.

The question, then, is not that conditions here are academically or socially bad and that divergent views are being expressed to correct them. The question is: "Who, exactly, is running this school, a baffled administration or a cohesive clique of individuals attempting to find out how far they can go for their own personal gain."

Certainly, some followers involved in the power struggle are sincere in their claims. I feel, however, that they are shortsighted in their actions, for if they were not, they would lead instead of follow. This short-sightedness has led to an adverse effect on more students here than all the dialogue of the past weeks has aided.

This myopia may be applied not only to the followers but also to those who hope to obtain personal goals, the administration, the faculty, the mass of students and even the press. Inflammatory statements such as those made in the *Detroit Free Press* Thursday, May 14, contending that up to 4,000 NMU students carry guns to class regularly are not just untrue, they are ludicrous.

I understand explanations that inner-city residents regard firearms as objects of violence. For 14 years, I lived in inner-city Flint yet I learned to use weapons as sporting tools. I offer to teach, if not proficiency, at least appreciation of outdoor activities to any person, black, white, yellow or red, who has been deprived of this opportunity.

I am not bitter. I am not accusing. I am looking for something constructive to accomplish. I feel there are too many persons on this campus afraid of each other. My concern borders on fear because I've seen situations like the one we have here bloom into trouble.

I live off-campus so I can keep and care for my weapons as a craftsman should care for his tools. I approach shooting sports in this way, as a craftsman, not as a killer. But I feel sorry for those who have not had the opportunity to view sporting arms in this way. And I feel sorry for persons who have had to relinquish their expensive and cherished equipment to persons they neither know nor trust.

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