

# The Mining Journal

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## Guns On Campus

Downstate readers of the Detroit Free Press have a picture of the Northern Michigan University campus as a sort of frontier settlement bristling with firearms.

In a highly inaccurate report on the racial situation on the campus here, a Free Press reporter wrote: "It is common to see students and townspeople carrying rifles on campus." Elsewhere in the same article, he said "many of the school's black students began carrying guns to class and taking daily target practice because they say they fear for their lives . . . A reporter questioned six black students at random while walking on campus . . . Five of them were armed."

Anyone who has lived in Marquette or attended Northern Michigan University knows these statements are fabrications of the wildest magnitude. They would not even merit comment were it not for the immense damage they have done to the image of Marquette and the university.

It is true that a sizable number of students at the university own firearms. Most of these are students from communities in the Upper Peninsula, where hunting and fishing long have been among the most popular forms of recreation. They brought firearms to the campus in order to hunt on weekends — certainly not for self-protection or for violence, as the Free Press article implied.

When rifles or shotguns are carried across the campus, the owner almost certainly has these firearms cased in compliance with the law. Any students or townspeople "carrying rifles on campus" would be subject to arrest for violation of state statutes if the firearms were not encased or enclosed in the trunk of a car.

In response to a request by black students at Northern to remove all guns from the campus, Dr. John X. Jamrich, president of the university, ordered owners of all firearms who live on campus to turn them over to resident hall advisors, who turned them over to the campus security department for safe keeping until the end of the semester. (Dr. Jamrich did not "confiscate" the guns, as the Free Press reported.)

"Estimates of rifles and sidearms on campus range from 250 to 4,000," the Free Press reporter wrote, giving himself plenty of latitude. The deadline for turning guns in to the security department was last Sunday night. By that time, 95 firearms had been voluntarily turned in by people residing on campus.

The irony of all this is that Detroit readers of the Free Press now envisage Marquette as a community where nearly everyone — students and townspeople alike — stalk about the campus waiting for High Noon, whereas the fact is that there are far more firearms in Detroit itself than in all of the Upper Peninsula — and they are put to far worse use there than here.

We have no objections to being judged by outsiders, but their judgments at least should be anchored to reality.