

Police chief requires citizens take gun class

United Press International
CHELMSFORD, Mass. — It may not be legal, but Police Chief Raymond McKeon insists that if you want to buy a gun you've got to prove first that you can handle it.

When Priscilla Hadley received a handgun for Christmas, she wondered if she'd ever muster the courage to fire it.

"I'm not interested in blowing anyone away," she said, "but women shouldn't be crippled with fear at the prospect of using a gun."

Her apprehensions were dispelled by Chief McKeon's attempts to protect his community from needless deaths.

In a comprehensive home firearm program, he has made it tough to obtain licenses and is educating owners about their responsibilities as owners of a lethal weapon.

Massachusetts requires guns to be licensed (with a mandatory

one-year jail term for violation) but requires no practical knowledge and experience with handguns as a prerequisite for obtaining a license.

McKeon found that intolerable.

"My God, a driver's license isn't issued without a suitability test," he said, "while a license for a gun doesn't stipulate that the potential owner know anything about using one."

In Chelmsford, no one obtains a firearms license without passing an intensive written exam and demonstrating the safe use of guns at the police range.

McKeon said the tests could be challenged in court, but insisted, "those are my minimum standards of suitability, and I stand by them." But he's worried about those who obtained licenses before his restrictions were implemented more than a year ago in his comfortable town of 32,000.

The only solution, he said, was to offer free, day-long courses for those already owning or considering purchase of a gun.

Alarmed by National Safety Council statistics which showed 1,900 accidental firearms deaths nationwide in 1982, McKeon said his goal was to turn the community "into one of the safest in the country" through a program other police departments can emulate.

"We're not trying to discourage people from purchasing guns," McKeon said. "What we want to do is prevent unnecessary tragedies from happening."

The Home Firearms Responsibility course, run by three officers and a civilian expert on guns, focuses on ammunition, identifying and operating firearms and the responsibilities of an owner.

Then it's out to the range for practical experience.

Japan trails U.S. output

United Press International
NEW YORK — Americans harbor many illusions about Japanese industry and the productivity of its workers, say two university professors of Japanese extraction.

Contrary to current popular belief, U.S. workers actually are 30 percent more productive than Japanese workers except in those industries that manufacture largely for export and have turned heavily to robotics, says Prof. Koji Taira of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.

Taira adds that, while Japan's economic growth has been gaining on that of the United States by 10 percent a decade, the Japanese hope of reaching full economic parity with the U.S. in per capita Gross National Product probably will not be reached. The newest estimates of some Japanese economists, he said, put Japan's potential growth

now at a rate no greater than America's.

"If that's right," Taira said, "the U.S. will remain a comfortable 30 percent ahead of Japan."

Taira told United Press International Japan's automobile industry is peaking and cannot continue to expand. He also said Japan's light industries, apparel and other consumer goods, are finding it ever harder to compete with Taiwan and other Asian countries.

Prof. William Ouchi, who teaches management at UCLA's Graduate School, said in an interview in the Manhattan Report on Economic Policy that naive Americans believe the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry "knows all, sees all and tells everybody what to do" in business. The truth is just the opposite, Ouchi said.

"The Japanese government intervenes far less directly in economic policy than the U.S. government does; things go by voluntary consensus in Japan, not by government intervention."

Ouchi attributed much of the current Japanese success in competition with the U.S. to structural failures in the American system. For example, he said, American law puts too many restrictions and obstacles in the way of inter-company joint research and development projects.

Japanese law and custom favor such projects.

Another big failing in the United States, Ouchi said, is that "in a society that cherishes private property rights, we have, paradoxically, favored a system in which nobody really owns our big corporations, therefore you have companies drifting or running amok."

Big Japanese companies are tightly owned by big banks and so top management is constantly monitored. Ouchi blamed the Glass-Steagall Act of 1933, which forbids bank ownership and control of non-banking businesses for much of the current failure of U.S. industry. He said the United States is the only industrial democracy in the world that has such a law.

Ouchi is most widely known as the author of "Theory Z: How American Business Can Meet the Japanese Challenge." In this book, he deals at some length with the Japanese practice of lifetime employment, which he terms a critical factor. His Company Z seeks to make American employment conditions just as attractive or more attractive in different ways.

Rescuers want cautious hikers

United Press International
CONCORD, N.H. — If you go mountain climbing, be a Boy Scout and be prepared — for anything. And if you're going off the beaten track, make sure someone knows your plans.

The people who rescue lost climbers in New Hampshire's rugged White Mountains don't mind performing good deeds in 80 mph winds and bone-chilling cold in a real emergency.

But sometimes an inexperienced and thoughtless hiker is unprepared or changes his course without telling anyone. When volunteer rescuers have to risk their lives to bail this kind of climber out of trouble — which could have been avoided — they get understandably angry.

Rick Wilcox, coordinator of the small Mountain Rescue Service of North Conway, puts it this way: "We'll help anyone. But we're not kamikaze about it. The hikers have a responsibility to take care of themselves."

Probably the most controversial rescue ever made in New Hampshire's mountains involved two Pennsylvania ice climbers who were saved last winter after surviving several days in wind chill factors of at least 100 degrees below zero on 6,288-foot Mount Washington, the tallest mountain in the Northeast.

Albert Dow, a rescue worker, was killed in an avalanche while looking for the two young men

— the first rescuer in the area to die in the line of duty.

Hugh Herr, 17, and Jeffrey Batzer, 20, suffered severe frostbite that cost them parts of their extremities. Herr's legs were amputated six inches below the knee while Batzer, 20, lost parts of his fingers.

Rescue workers still debate whether the climbers were negligent.


"They made two different decisions that spelled disaster," said David Warren of the Appalachian Mountain Club. "They changed their route without telling anyone, and they left some heavy equipment behind — leaving them unprepared for a night on the mountain."

"It's a bittersweet experience. Two people managed to stay alive and one person is killed," Warren said.


Fish and Game Capt. Henry Mock said the most blatant example he remembers of a hiking mistake involved a young couple who went winter climbing without leaving a note — one of the worst errors a climber can make, he said.

Wilcox's 25 Mountain Rescue Service volunteers mostly work in shops and tourist-related businesses in the mountains. Like volunteer firefighters, when the call goes out for their services, they drop their work, gather their own equipment and often lose a day's pay at their regular jobs.

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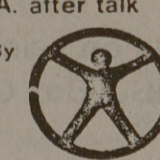
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