



'Things Fall Apart'

Nigerian native Ike Nwosu discusses life in his home country

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Krepel Feature

Learn more about MHS Spanish teacher Randy Krepel

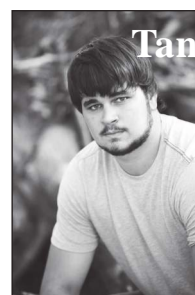
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A-Craze

Editorial: Too many MHS teens strive for good grades to the point of exhaustion

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Find out about Scott's injury and his road to recovery

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MHS Mirror

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"Striving to reflect the MHS community"

Local police respond to violence

By Mary ZuHone
Reporter

The recent increase of violence in the nation and particularly the discussions on police tactics, and crime against police, has affected the local Mattoon Police Department.

The Department said it adapts to these current issues in order to make the citizens feel more protected. One way they do this is to review, revise, and add more training. In the future, local residents might see added equipment as an effect of these occurrences, but even now, local policemen have confidence that Mattoon is prepared for any violent events.

"We never want to be complacent as officers. And when stuff happens like police shootings, and then you have the individual who took the life of the two police officers in New York, it heightens our awareness of surroundings and the people we're dealing with," Mattoon High School Officer Kasey Alexander said.

Police officers' heightened awareness often leads to added training.

"The police academies in Illinois are currently 12 weeks long, and the state is looking into increasing it to 16 weeks. If that happens, the majority of the additional four weeks is more to include classes on, basically, diversity. Dealing with people that might come from a different background than you, race relations, and those kind of things," Randy Ervin, Lake Land College chief of police said.

More training will reaffirm the

idea that officers must always be on the alert due to these violent occurrences.

"It'll definitely change the training. You have to be vigilant the way it is, but now, your head's going to constantly be on a

swivel. When someone's not happy with you or don't like you, you're always under the chance of being attacked," Mattoon police officer Brandon Saunders said.

The training center for officers is local based.

"There is a law enforcement training center located in Mattoon. It serves all of Central Illinois, and every police department and sheriff's department in Central Illi-

nois is a member of that training center. They have training literally every week on a wide variety of topics," Ervin said.

Officers are trained to gauge the level of danger each suspect poses to himself.

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PHOTO BY MARY ZUHONE
A police car is parked outside the Mattoon Police Department. Local law enforcement is taking more precautions because of recent violence around the country.

Trains: Nuisance or excuse? *Students, faculty discuss train tardies*

By Christin Watkins
Advertising Manager

The trains that cut Mattoon in half are nothing new, but their daily presence is seen as a continual hindrance to many Mattoon High School students, parents, administrators, and now a state legislator.

While some are not impacted personally, MHS Attendance Secretary Amy St. John said she thinks trains do negatively impact students.

"I get here at 7 [a.m.], so usually I can beat the train, but it definitely affects the students," St. John said.

This problem with train tardiness is more than just occasional.

"Usually, at least once or twice a week, we have kids that are late due to the train," St. John said.

One student who has experienced this issue first-hand is se-

nior Rendie Hamilton.

"The mornings are a really big issue because I live on the other side of [the tracks], and where I live, there's three or four ways

around, but I still get caught by them," Hamilton said.

Hamilton is not the only student driver that must tolerate these

morning trains.

These daily hold-ups are "just a big hazardous mess. Not to mention, [they are] tedious and just a huge annoyance," Gunner Davis, senior, said.

State Sen. Dale Righter (R-Mattoon) recently addressed this issue in a press release on Feb. 6.

"[Over] the years, as rail traffic has increased, delays caused by longer and more frequent trains have become intolerable and a potential threat to public safety. Working with Mattoon city officials, I hope to engage both Canadian National and the Illinois Department of Transportation to provide some relief for the citizens of Mattoon," the

statement said.

While those discussions progress, MHS students like sophomore Nick Helms understand the difficulty of getting around these trains. Helms said he feels there are some, however, who exploit trains in the morning.

"I feel like I understand that some kids you know really are getting in late, but it is kind of ridiculous to the extent that it is 30 or 40 minutes into the class and people are still being excused," Helms said.

St. John said she also recognizes that students may misuse these excused tardies.

"Sometimes I do think they [take advantage of morning trains]. They either take their time getting to class, or some who really are

TRAINS / 2



PHOTO BY CHRISTIN WATKINS

A train is stopped on the tracks in Mattoon. State Sen. Dale Righter (R-Mattoon) is trying to work with Canadian National Railway and the Illinois Department of Transportation in order to alleviate the inconvenience.