

Trains

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not blocked by the train take advantage of that,” St. John said.

While Davis agrees that some may take advantage of the opportunity, he feels that the root of the problem lies with the trains themselves.

“My personal opinion with trains is that, of course kids are going to abuse them if there is a train because it is right there in front of

them. So, it is an opportunity there for the taking, but I do not think that is the main purpose of the [students’ untimeliness due to trains]. I think it is more of an irritation than trying to beat a system out,” Davis said.

MHS Principal Michele Sinclair also attributes some of this untimeliness to the train schedule.

“We’re at the mercy of Canadian National Railway. ... They are not very sympathetic to our situation,” Sinclair said.

She does, however, realize that those who work the railways are trying to do their jobs.

“I do understand that if they are not stopped here, they are stopped in somebody else’s town. It has got to stop somewhere to load and unload, and I get that,” Sinclair said.

With the students rendered powerless by the train schedule, Hamilton suggests a solution to the problem.

“Maybe they should have just thought about not building the school on this side of the tracks,” Hamilton said.

Davis also proposed an answer to end the daily obstructions from the trains.

“Move ‘em out. Do things by flight,” Davis said.



PHOTO BY CHRISTIN WATKINS

MHS Blood Drive

When: Friday, Feb. 27, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: Mattoon High School North Gym

Sign-up for an appointment with your government, economics or English teacher. Bring a photo ID when you give.

Who: 16-year-olds (with parent permission), 17-year-olds and 18-year-olds

Why: The community blood services is the blood bank the blood from the blood drive will go to. The Community Blood Services provides for Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospital, St. Anthony in Mattoon and Carle in Champaign.

What to know: Make sure to drink extra water and eat foods with iron the day before. Eat breakfast the day of the blood drive.

Last year, MHS donated 90-100 pints of blood. Each person that donates could save up to three lives.



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The MHS Mirror

is produced by the students enrolled
in the Journalism II and I courses at Mattoon High School.

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We, the staff of the MHS Mirror, strive to be a public forum that evokes individual high-level thinking and sparks conversation in a way that defines high school journalism, while maintaining a high ethical journalistic standard.

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Police

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“We have a spectrum that’s called the ‘use of force’ that officers are trained to somewhat use. Like if a defendant’s at this level, then you need to elevate the use of force to just above them to gain control of that suspect. It probably needs to be looked at harder by departments, and make sure that we’re doing training the correct way, so we are responding and reacting to things the way we’ve been trained,” Alexander said.

There is also talk of new equipment.

“There are two things that I hear local police talking about. One is officers wearing bullet-proof vests. A lot of police departments will issue every officer a vest, but they leave it up to the officer whether or not to wear it. A lot of police departments are considering making that mandatory now with some of the ambushes of police officers in increased violence,” Ervin said.

Body cameras may be in the future as well.

“I know that some of the bigger departments have already went to the personal cameras where these officers have a camera mounted on the front of their uniform. I believe they activate it whenever they’re having personal contact with a person, whether it’s just a traffic stop, if it’s just a theft call, a domestic, or whatever it is,” Alexander said.

Ervin concurs with Alexander’s statement and has further insight on the purpose of the body cameras.

“If you have an incident like what happened in Ferguson, then the entire incident will be recorded and hopefully then there would be no dispute as to what really happened. But really, locally, neither one of those things [has] been implemented. It’s just something people have been talking about,” Ervin said.

Although these are not being implemented locally yet, they have the right idea, according to local law enforcement.

“I do think [the body camera is] a good idea. That way no false accusations are made, and the police officer can’t make up a story about what actually happened. So it protects the public and the police,” Alexander said.

There have been changes made within the last few years to the equipment police officers carry.

“Since I’ve started here, we’ve added raffles to the cars for situations, and that was kind of a terrorism grant. Some nonlethal tactics would be like the taser, there are the bean bag guns, and pepper spray. A lot of that stuff is going to change and become more readily available,” Saunders said.

With new equipment and more training locally, Ervin feels the of-

ficers are prepared.

“I think the police officers in Central Illinois are very well-trained. I think they’re very professional. They have up-to-date equipment. Officers are being trained in the types of problems that are confronting society today, things like an active shooter,” Ervin said.

When difficult situations do occur, certain members are trained for those unique jobs.

“We have a CRT, a critical re-

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Kasey Alexander
Mattoon police officer

sponse team, that’s made up of different members of different departments. They train on a monthly basis on how to respond, whether it be a hostage situation or a subject that’s barricaded themselves in a house. We train in case stuff was to happen in schools. We do that on a yearly basis, so I think we’re prepared. Are we prepared for everything? Probably not, but we do a lot of training. As far as law enforcement in this area, I think we’re prepared for most things,” Alexander said.

Officers put a lot of time into training with the hope they will be ready.

“The department has sent most of the guys to certain trainings. They constantly take us out of service and put us through trainings. A lot of the trainings have gone more to even terrorism. We attend classes for that and I’d say as long as we keep training, keep our head on our shoulders, and are aware of our surroundings we’ll be alright,” Saunders said.

However, training can only prepare only so many for possible situations.

“Unfortunately, some lives are taken unjustifiably, and it causes tension between people all over where there’s race or whatever it is that causes tension. Not everybody’s going to agree with the use of force that officers use all the time. Training can always be better,” Alexander said.

Though every situation can’t be predicted, there is confidence in local police.

“They’re giving officers the equipment they would need to handle that if it happened. They’re making sure their officers are receiving the proper training, so I’m very confident that if there were a major incident that would occur in our community that the local police would be well equipped to handle that,” Ervin said.

Officers are also aware that they need to be more sensitive to the public.

“I do think that one of the things people are maybe a little more mindful of these days is how you interact with citizens. Whether it’s when you’re taking a report or whether you’re issuing a traffic ticket. Whatever your it is, you’re trying to make sure that you’re professional and that you treat people with respect, so that you don’t have complaints. You’re trying to portray a positive and professional image of the police when you interact with the public,” Ervin said.

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