

Concealed carry instructors: Interest up

By Howard McEwen • Enquirer contributor • August 1, 2010

Kentucky has given license to carry concealed weapons since 1996, but interest in becoming licensed has increased lately, according to some concealed carry weapon instructors.

"I teach one 22-person course per month and always fill them, always have, but there's more interest since the last national election," said Joe Kalil Owner, Defensive Handgun Training LLC in Florence.

Debbie Martin of Morningview, another instructor and former law enforcement officer, said demand for her class has also increased.

"What I am seeing is an increase in is the number of victims in class," Martin said. "I get approval from those students in advance and during class I will ask them to share their experience. It can be pretty heart-wrenching sometimes."

Martin said people who are "afraid" of weapons are pushing themselves to take her classes "because, I think, of the economy and the desperation people might go through to provide for their families."

Kalil said he believes the increased interest is for self protection but politics is driving it also.

"The White House and Congress and have a record of being anti-gun," he said. "This administration has voiced its support of a UN treaty regarding small arms around the globe and many proposals for such a treaty could erode our right to keep and bear arms in this country."

To obtain a license to carry a concealed deadly

weapon in Kentucky, one must be a resident of the state, at least 21 years old and complete a training course. Further requirements can be found at www.kentuckystatepolice.org/conceal.htm.

Kalil started teaching the courses to support citizens' Second Amendment rights but also because he enjoys teaching.

"It is satisfying to see them enjoy the material, want to learn and to see how they improve their skills. Regardless of race, sex, being a blue- or white-collar worker, they are all good people and all are welcome."

Martin said she's also seen an increase in single women taking the course.

"I started teaching these classes in hopes to bring more women in. Sometimes men instructors can be a little intimidating," she said.

Despite offering the classes to thousands of people, neither instructor knows of any instance that one of their former students has had to fire their weapon.

"Thank God none of them had to discharge their firearm," said Kalil. "In a couple cases, the permit holder had to draw their firearm which

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deterred the aggressor from continuing their attack. They acted responsible and no criminal or civil charges were filed against them. That is very satisfying."

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