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...YOU HAVE A



Story and Photo by Serena Wood

Upon telling someone I'm into guns, I've observed varied reactions. Most of the time this revelation has been met with something positive, such as a story about the other person's own shooting experience, a suggestion of where to shoot, or simply a grin and, "Cool, a chick who's into guns!" However, as the rest of you have surely noticed, not all people enjoy the idea of being around a gun nut. I've encountered a few who seemed downright horrified that a "nice girl" like myself would want to own a gun. Some of these people have been of the belief that a woman should let her husband or the police protect her, but the majority were totally against guns and believed they only served to create crime and violence.

Interestingly enough, I typically notice a different reaction when I tell someone I carry than when I simply tell someone I *have* guns and enjoy target shooting. The former seems to evoke an image of a potentially violent individual with an itchy trigger finger, while the latter must somehow sound like a more "safe" person who is less willing to kill someone. I have no idea why one is "worse" than the other in these peoples' minds, but apparently it makes a difference to them. (I'd like to point out that I do not go around telling random people that I *carry* a gun; these conversations typically occur between myself and friends or family members. My love of shooting and desire to be armed are hardly

secrets, but I don't see a reason to broadcast them to the general public.)

"Why do you think you need a gun?"

"This is a safe town, nothing ever happens here."

"I've never been attacked, what makes you think something would happen to you?"

These are just a few of the things I've heard, and although I generally try to avoid debates with people who so easily dismiss my choice to defend myself, I still hope that some of them will keep an open mind and can attempt to understand my point of view. Even among these people, there are some who can understand keeping a gun at home just in case someone breaks in, but most of them don't understand why I would actually carry one, and think I must be paranoid for doing so.

Reactions like this are frustrating to those of us who see things from such a remarkably different point of view, but again, I try to use these opportunities to explain my way of thinking. My favorite way to do this involves cars (shocking, right?) and seems to do the trick. I ask if the person carries a spare tire in their car. Typically they respond affirmatively. I then ask if they only put the tire in their car when they think they may encounter a road hazard that could damage a tire. Confused, they typically explain that they never take the spare tire out; it's always there in case they need it, because they never know when a tire will go flat. Bingo! You wouldn't carry a spare tire only when you thought you might need one; if you could predict