Opinion

Column/Jack Link

Look before crossing

After being inundated by propaganda from living groups and deluged with information from the Freshman Handbook, you're probably sick of advice. But if you have a few minutes before the freshman picnic, this column could save your life.

"How?" you ask. By repeating a warning your parents started drilling into you since you were old enough to cross the street: look both ways before crossing— you guessed it—the aforementioned street. Particularly if that street happens to be Massachusetts Avenue.

Please don't feel I'm insulting your intelligence. No, the true danger is that you will overestimate the intelligence of the average Boston driver. You might naïvely expect him to stop at a red light. I know I did three years ago as I lugged my bags across the street. Fortunately, I jumped back in the nick of time.

Outraged, I looked around for a handy .45 to take out my assailant. I waited for the patrol car to roar off in hot pursuit of the lawbreaker, confident that justice would soon be served and the safety of pedestrians preserved. Imagine my amazement as the maniac sped out of sight, ignored by the officers in the patrol car.

Little did I know that the 'police car' was only a Campus Police (CP) car. Years later, during an interview with our valiant Commander-in-Chief, I asked how he could permit such outrages to zoom through our quiet campus on their way to Harvard. The Chief replied that enforcing traffic laws was too much of a bother for his limited force. His men were needed to deal with more pressing matters. He then explained his plans to impose a fifty dollar fine upon any student caught upon the Great Dome, the Little Dome, or any other dome you can think of.

"But Chief, why do you want to keep students off the roofs?" I asked. "The tradition goes back fifty years!" The Chief replied that roof climbing is dangerous, and that the CPs felt it is their duty to protect students from themselves. I muttered that hacking was not nearly so risky as crossing Massachusetts Avenue.

Besides, the Chief added, some students commit acts of vandalism up on the roofs. Asked to give examples, the Chief cited the annual cost incurred when damaged roof access locks were replaced. I asked the Chief why the locks were used anyway. You can probably guess the answer: to keep students off the roofs, of course!

Remember this advice when you venture across the streets of Cambridge, and watch out for the CP's on roof and tunnel tours.