

opinion

Handgun law sets course for future

A suburb of Chicago has found a way to unravel the complicated matter of handgun control. The village of Morton Grove, Illinois, passed an ordinance banning the sale and possession of handguns. That ordinance passed in June 1981 and just recently was ruled constitutional by a U.S. District Court. Morton Grove has set a precedent for communities all over the country that are concerned with the proliferation of handguns and handgun related crimes in their communities.

There is no reason the City Council of Eugene cannot follow the example of Morton Grove and adopt a similar handgun ordinance.

Before Morton Grove's ordinance the problem of handgun control was left to the federal government. Legislation by the federal government has been effectively squelched by rifle associations. It is not unfair to say the federal government may never legislate handgun control nationally without a base of community-support in the form of handgun ordinances.

The Morton Grove Village Board of Trustees voted last June to ban the sale and possession of handguns. Under the ordinance, owners of handguns were allowed 90 days to get rid of their guns or make make provisions for them, such as storage at gun clubs. For a first offense, violaters would only be warned. A second offense would cost the violator a \$500 fine and six-months in jail.

The Morton Grove ordinance was instigated after a request was made to open a gun store in a shopping center in the residential section of the village. The sponsor of the ordinance, Neil Cashman, said the owner assured the village he would only sell to policemen. Cashman doubted the business was really only for policemen, as Morton Grove has a police force of only 50 people.

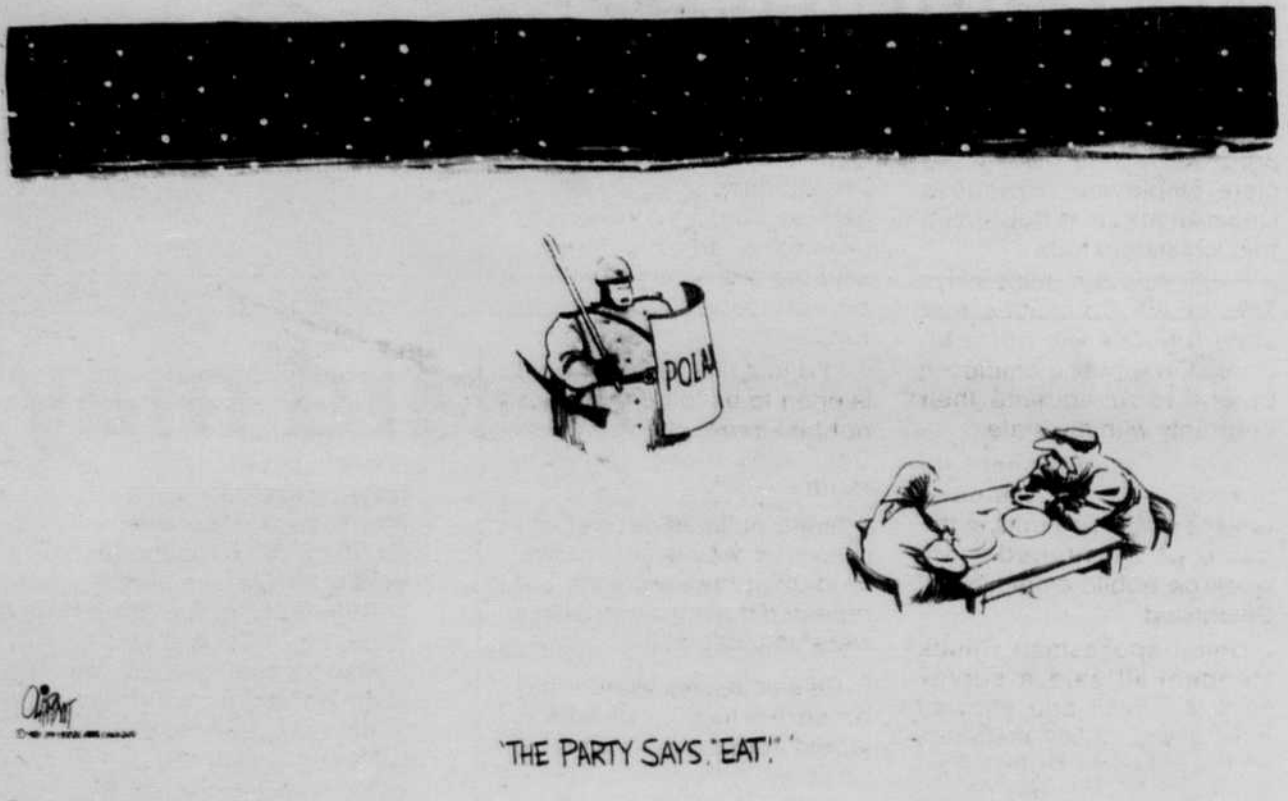
Morton Grove's impetus for enacting the handgun ordinance is certainly singular, but not uncommon from situations in other towns across the country. The criteria for establishing an ordinance banning the sale and possession of handguns can be individually defined for each community.

The controversy over handgun control can be paralleled with obscenity and pornography if one sees the village applying a concensus of public opinion and enacting a standard for their community. If the ordinance, which is being appealed, reaches the U.S. Supreme Court, the proponents may be successful if they argue for community standards. Community standards, in obscenity and pornography, and possibly in handgun control, are feasible avenues to address the handgun problem. Eventually, a national handgun law will have to be enacted. The Morton Grove ordinance is a solid start.

Morton Grove, Illinois is a community not unlike Eugene in design and outlook. It is an upper-middle-class suburb in the rolling hills northwest of Chicago. The area is primarily residential, with little heavy industry. The population is well educated and concerned with total environment of their community as this handgun ordinance illustrates. The difference between Morton Grove and Eugene is that that community took a courageous step to eliminate a national problem from their village.

Handgun related crimes are, and have been, on the increase during the past decades. Something has to be done to control the sale and possession of such lethal devices as the Saturday night special.

Eugene and other communities concerned with the proliferation of handguns and the plague of handgun related crimes should consider following Morton Grove's lead and adopt handgun ordinances. It is a viable alternative to waiting for the federal government to respond to the people's will and enact a law that is sorely needed.



letters

Incompetence

Last Memorial Day weekend my 10-speed bicycle was stolen from in front of the Hawthorne dormitory. I reported the bike, to campus security, as stolen. The next day I was called back by the campus security office and told that they could not find my registration card. I insisted that I had registered my bike, and had a green sticker (number 6639) on the frame. They insisted there was no record, so I gave up.

Early in December, I saw what looked like my old bicycle (I had since bought a new one); it was parked outside Carson Hall. I promptly called Campus Security, and they in turn notified the Eugene Police department. The bicycle was identified as mine in a very interesting way. The campus officer radioed back to the office and compared the number on the green sticker (still on the bicycle) to the registration number on my registration form (the one they couldn't find last year).

The Eugene police officer investigated the theft and found some interesting evidence. Last year the bike was found by a resident of the Hamilton complex in some bushes near his dorm. He brought the bike to his RA, who notified the campus Security office. A short time later, the same caller notified campus security, again, of the found bicycle. At the end of the year, having had no one from campus security come to pick up the bike, one of the residents kept it. His sister was using it on

campus this year, until I found it. Why wasn't my registration card found the first time, when I needed it the most? Why wasn't the bike picked up from the Hamilton RA? How grossly inefficient is our security office? My last question is, how often does this needless form of incompetence go on?

Dave Lund
Sophomore, Computer Science

'Taps' inane

It is remarkable that anyone should find something good to say about the film "Taps," and I am particularly disappointed that the Emerald's film reviewer, Matt Meyer, has so courageously committed this sin against literacy. "Taps," a cinematic monument to everything inane, is about an army of military academy students who are such intellectual zeros that they will risk their lives shooting it out to save their alma mater from condo conversion. That isn't a plot, it's a preposterous excuse for a shoot-out. Comparing "Taps" to "Lord of the Flies" is (excuse my eloquence) disgusting; these aren't "children acting in an adult world," these are grown students acting like psychopaths — they deserve to be shot.

Liking "Taps" is tantamount to moral complacency. "Taps" insults the intelligence of its audience like no other film before it, we are not yet a nation so bereft of values that we will shoot each other over our alma maters. Don't see "Taps," go to "Reds" instead.

Bruce Robinson
Senior, political science

Mainstream

"Think like we do or else!" is implied by (1) University professor Carl Hosticka, Lane County Democratic Campaign Chairman and (2) Oregon's news reporters.

Hosticka intends to label "mainstream" democratic candidates by issuing pre-primary endorsements and political reporters will cover only 'ser-

ious' candidates. The U.S. Constitution's First Amendment goal of freedom of speech is to achieve "the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources." 436 US 775.

Jefferson said "Truth is great and will prevail if left to herself; that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate: errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them."

Call it what you will, fascism or communism, every totalitarian movement has controlling political party and public thought as its hallmark. It has meant the establishment of government by decree, by bureaucratic planning, by concentrated and irresponsible power.

Indeed, who has the right to say what a party stands for until a candidate's issues are accepted or rejected by an informed public's primary vote? And what news reporter has the right to judge one candidate's issues "serious" and another's not?

John M. Reed
B Street
Springfield

Pornography

John Gibbons' letter on pornography is either a very clumsy satire or a chickenshit approval. I can't quite tell which. To me pornography is nothing less than a sickening form of violence against women, children — and men. And more and more pornography is taking a violent turn into bondage, pain and even death. There is nothing rebellious of tradition in pornography. There is quite a difference between the backward stupidity of pornography and the beautiful possibilities of erotica. And John, maybe you should help your son become a person instead of another pathetic "macho man" getting off on stag films.

Suzy Downs
Eugene

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