

Deadly weapons fail as inalienable rights

Few hobbyists find pleasure in collecting the instruments of death. But National Rifle Association members do, and they stand behind the Constitution for protection: that tired defense, stretched to absurdity, of the right to bear arms.

Bullheadedness on the issue of gun control suggests a paranoia that the collector actually someday will need an automatic weapon and a stockpile of armor-piercing ammunition.

Desire to collect a dangerous weapon currently stands as the only qualification for a ticket to the U.S. psychopathic militia. If the rational public decides to divorce itself from common sense and suddenly subscribes to the philosophy of the National Rifle Association — that guns don't kill, people do — then logically, merchants could sell automatic weapons, home napalm kits, even nuclear warheads, over the counter of every corner Mom and Pop gun shop.

What rational person could defend ownership of a weapon capable of spitting 600 rounds per minute into a schoolyard? A weapon is a servant of death, and an AK-47 serves no other purpose than the wanton taking of life.

Make no mistake. In the hands of law enforcement agents, in the hands of the military, in the hands of our children, automatic weapons and handguns are designed for killing human beings. The AK-47 was not designed for looks, to enhance someone's wall like a prize fish. Nor was it designed for hunting or target shooting. It was designed to make a living person a dead person, plain and simple.

Of course, the AK-47 readily available over the counter is the semi-automatic, not the automatic version. Some gun-collectors will claim that they use semi-automatic weapons for hunting, and that automatic-weapons purchasers must undergo an extensive background check.

But background checks do not work.

Why not? Gun collectors often claim that if guns are outlawed, only outlaws would have guns. And where do outlaws get the guns? Well, if no background check is forthcoming, then they buy them over the counter. Fair enough. But even if background checks are enforced, the criminals simply steal the automatic weapons from the law-abiding gun collectors. Gun collectors, not peace-loving liberals, make guns available for the criminally insane.

Good sense dictates making ownership of lethal instruments difficult. We can't prevent a maniac from owning a hatchet, because perfectly sound reasons for owning one come to mind. But an Uzi, an AK-47? Why not send nuclear weapons to Ghadafi?

Merchants generally assume that someone who purchases a particular item, particularly an item that costs upwards of \$300, intends to use it.

Patrick Edward Purdy used the AK-47 he purchased over the counter in Sandy, Ore. He used it in Stockton, Calif. to kill five school children and wound 29 others. Purdy was a gun collector, too. He loved guns. He was even described by a neighbor as seeming "like a normal young man." Heard that before?

But again, we are reminded of NRA efforts in the past, especially arguments in favor of teflon-coated bullets with the power to plow through bulletproof vests worn by police officers. Why would anyone want to own such ammunition? The answer seems obvious: to kill police officers.

The NRA's justification for demanding their "constitutional rights" in such obvious wrongheaded arguments? If it's out there, they want to be able to own it. They claim that efforts to curtail automatic weapons will lead to purchasing difficulties with semi-automatic weapons, then with handguns, then with hunting rifles, then with Daisy air-pump b.b. guns.

Further, background checks, no matter how extensive, provide little if any corroboration of the future mental stability of the weapon's owner. Many more guns are involved annually in the shooting of family members in the heat of an argument than in the defending of one's home from an interloper. We submit that a paranoid person who keeps a dangerous weapon beneath the bed stands a much better chance of killing a child making his or her way to the bathroom as of shooting a burglar. Not to mention the accessibility of the weapon in the collector's home to any passerby who decides to take advantage of the collector's carelessness. Or the fact that mail-order conversion kits exist for making semi-automatic weapons into automatic weapons.

Undoubtedly, gun collectors will continue to scramble for the most deadly weapons on the market. As long as they do, the American black-market arsenal will grow, fed by innocent and short-sighted intentions, and people with an exaggerated interpretation of the definition of "arms."

How long will the silent have to pay through violent death because of the strong lobbying powers of determined and well-financed hobbyists?

SWELLY



Letters

No heaven

In response to Scott Shoup's question (ODE, Jan. 20) concerning an individual's entrance into heaven... Jesus Christ said that a man (or woman) must be "born of water (signifying repentance) and the Holy Spirit, or he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Each individual must die spiritually to him/herself, and receive life in Christ in order to inherit eternal life in heaven. It is doubtful that anyone living a life that perverts, or is contrary to God's holy plan is either 1) born of the Spirit, or 2) living life in the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Thus, to answer Scott's original question: No, Scott, it would seem that you're not headed for heaven.

David Pierpoint
Student

So confused

Ever since someone criticized fraternities because two people on the steps of a fraternity house made racist remarks, letters about stereotyping and over-generalizing have been appearing. But I'm getting more and more confused.

No one objects to labeling all business majors as ultra-conservatives without a thought in their heads that doesn't relate to money.

The ODE's policy on "lonely hearts" ads says one can't specify national origin. But it's okay to ask for someone tall. So it's okay to generalize and discriminate on height, but not on national origin. By the way, can I ask for an Oregonian and write, "Californians need not respond"?

What about age? Is it really true that older people are wiser than young ones? I'll bet that consensus is yes. But isn't that a gross generalization? Don't many people manipulate their life experiences to confirm their perceptions about life? Do these people grow wise with age, or just arrogant? What about those young people who are "wise for their years"? Who determines the amount of wisdom one obtains per year?

What about looks? Employers and the ODE personal ads have the same policy here — discrimination is acceptable. If you have too many zits, you're out. After all, you probably don't wash. Besides, business and personal lives can't be burdened with getting to know someone.

Statistics do provide some generalizations. So is stereotyping okay? What percentage of a group must possess a certain trait before we can generalize? I'm so confused.

Alice Berry
Eugene

God's words

It is not my intention to judge anyone, for I believe that judgment is something that is reserved for God and God alone. I would like to provide an answer to the question posed by Scott Shoup (ODE, Jan. 20) where he asked: "My husband is a man and I am my husband's husband. Does this mean we can still get into heaven or not?"

I found the answer to be in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. In the New American Standard edition it says: "Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (by perversion), nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

Let me reiterate that these are not my words, but God's. I hope that they are as clear to you as they were to me.

Joe Worley
School of Music

Mad with truth

Amidst a gorilla and Uncle Sam, with the banging of pots

and pans, I don't blame the Emerald for misquoting me in an article on the Wake Up America counter-inaugural parade. My actual statement was, "They might say we're crazy, but we're mad with the truth." Thanks for covering the quote, because it raises intriguing questions.

Were we the "loony left," as one critic claimed? We kept our spirits up, and melded more than a dozen crucial issues, including two national protests that day: Stop the U.S. war in El Salvador! Stop nuclear weapons testing!

Was the man dressed in an all-styrofoam suit "crazy"? His sign read: "George, I'm an environmentalist, too, like James Watt, Donald Hodel, Anne Burford" His costume woke us up to reality. Locally, for instance, "Environmentalist" Bush isn't eagerly planning to save Oregon's unprotected Ancient Forests from clear-cutting.

Was our noisiness "insane"? Today, we face cruel homelessness, racist attacks, repression of women and catastrophic ecological assaults to our planet and bodies. The false logic of silent obedience is true insanity.

Society's elite — out of short-term self-interest — distorts rationality, linear thinking, and objectivity in order to distance, divide and control people and even our earth. Let's combine true rationality with what is mistakenly labeled "crazy": mutually supportive emotions, spirituality, creativity, celebration, humor, etc.

An excellent book on this is Theodore Roszak's "The making of a counter culture: Reflections on the technocratic society and its youthful opposition" (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969).

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Letters Policy

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