

PARENTS TALK BACK

Things we don't say about guns

Editor's note: This is the second in a two-part series about children and guns.

I joke about how grateful I'll be to hand the car keys to our children and relinquish my role as chauffeur.

But behind that false bravado lies an anxious fear so many parents feel when a child is finally old enough to drive. We are handing them the keys to a machine that could potentially be lethal. And having been teenagers once ourselves, we remember that dangerous sense of invincibility.

So, we make sure they learn the fundamentals of how to drive. They have to pass a written test, a road test and an eyesight exam. We never let them ride without seat belts. We talk to them about the dangers of drunken driving and texting while driving. We establish the rules.

This year, more Americans are likely to die of gunshot wounds than car accidents.

There were 33,804 motor vehicle deaths in 2013, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. There were 33,636 firearm deaths that year. Analysis by Bloomberg predicted that those numbers will soon flip, based on 10-year trends.

Similarly, a report last year by the Center for American Progress predicted gun deaths for teens and young adults are on track to surpass motor vehicle traffic deaths this year.

Gun violence disproportionately impacts teens and young adults. But lacking clear-cut conversations like those about car safety, how do parents begin to talk to teenagers and young adults about possible encounters with firearms? Which circumstances increase their risk of being victimized, and what can be done to lower those risks?

Despite news reports, our children are not very likely to encounter a shooter at a school, college, movie theater or shopping mall.

Rather, a confrontation with someone they know — a personal relationship, a former boyfriend or spouse, a family member, an acquaintance — is more likely to result in gun violence. And more than half of firearm-related fatalities are suicides.

Jeffrey Swanson, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University School of Medicine, is co-editor of a special issue on gun violence to be published next month in Behavioral Sciences and the Law. He is a co-author on a new research study that finds “a distressingly large number of seriously angry people with guns — often multiple guns — living in our communities.”

Their analysis of data from the National Comorbidity Survey looks at the responses when interview subjects were asked whether they had serious anger outbursts, such as losing their temper, smashing and breaking things, or getting in physical fights. Responses were combined with information from another section of the survey about possessing or carrying firearms.

“It comes to 10 percent of this (nationally representative) sample of adults who have impulsive, angry behavior and access to guns,” he said. They are mostly young to middle-aged men, Swanson said.

Teens and young adults should know this and understand the implications of that risk.

“The presence of a weapon dramatically increases the probability of a death, and guns are so much more efficient at killing people,” said Harold Pollack, professor of Social Service Administration and Public Health Sciences at the University of Chicago. “One of the most serious risks is of suicide of a family member because a firearm is available. It's a much more common problem than an intruder who seeks to kill you.”

He spoke more bluntly about the responsibility of parents in such cases: “If I had a teenage son who was depressed, that would weigh very highly in my personal calculation of whether I'd want to have a firearm in my home.”

If a child or adult is going through a rough patch, seek a safe place to store a firearm well outside his or her reach. In a few places, guns can be legally removed from those family members believed to be a risk to themselves or others. Pollack pointed out that some gun ranges have smart interventions to try to identify people at risk for suicide.

“These are done by people who are often very strong supporters of gun rights, but care a lot about the safety of people,” he said.

Accidental or unintentional gun deaths are not limited to young children.

While brandishing a weapon is illegal in all states, showing it in an intimidating or impressionable way can also be a crime. Take it seriously and report it to police.

Even in states in which it's legal to openly carry or concealed-carry a gun, a person entering your living space can be asked not to carry a weapon onto private property — or be asked to leave. If the person refuses, he or she can be arrested for trespassing.

Changes in public policy, attitudes and behaviors have been successful at lowering the rate of car fatalities for young people. Rather than becoming desensitized to this high level of gun violence, parents can use this heightened awareness to start a conversation. We need to be more proactive in talking to our children about a machine that may soon kill more of their peers than a car.



AISHA SULTAN
Parents talk back

Oldies but goodies

Joint birthday party for couple married 82 years

SPRING VALLEY, N.Y. (AP) — A husband and wife thought to be one of the oldest married couples in New York have celebrated their birthdays — and their combined ages will be 212.

The *Journal News* reports Duranord Veillard turned 108 on Saturday. His wife, Jeanne Veillard, won't turn 105 until May.

The couple celebrated Saturday at the Spring Valley home they share with their daughter.

Veillard is a native of Haiti who was a judge there.

He and his wife moved to the United States in 1968, raising five children while he worked as a hospital laboratory technician.

Though nearly blind and hard of hearing, Veillard still cracks jokes in Creole and does push-ups after getting up before dawn.

The Veillards have been married 82 years.



AP Photo/The Journal News, Tania Savayan
In this photo taken Feb. 26, Spring Valley resident Duranord Veillard and his wife Jeanne Veillard are photographed in Spring Valley, N.Y. Duranord Veillard celebrated his 108th birthday Feb. 28 and his wife, Jeanne will turn 105 in May. The Veillards have been married 82 years and are one of the oldest married couples in New York.

World's oldest person wonders about secret to longevity too



AP Photo/Kyodo News
Japan's Misao Okawa, 117, center, who is recognized as the world's oldest living person by Guinness World Records, poses with her relatives and Ward Mayor Takehiro Ogura, right, as she is celebrated at a nursing home in Osaka, western Japan Wednesday ahead of her birthday. Okawa turned 117 on Thursday.

TOKYO (AP) — The world's oldest person says 117 years doesn't seem like such a long time.

Misao Okawa, the daughter of a kimono maker, made the comment Wednesday, at a celebration a day before her 117th birthday. Appropriately, she was wearing a pink kimono decorated with cherry blossom prints.

Okawa, born in Osaka on March 5, 1898, was recognized as the world's oldest person by Guinness World Records in 2013.

“It seemed rather short,” she said after Osaka government official Takehiro Ogura, who brought her a big bouquet, asked how she felt about living for 117 years.

Okawa, her hair decorated with a pink daisy pin, looked up from her wheelchair and said she was “very happy” to be that age.

Asked for the secret of her longevity, she responded nonchalantly, “I wonder about that too.”

Japan has the most centenarians in the world, with more than 58,000, according to the government. About 87 percent of them are women.

Okawa has slowed in recent months and has trouble hearing but she eats well and is in good health, according to her Osaka nursing home, where Wednesday's televised celebration was held.

Okawa married her husband, Yukio, in 1919, and they had three children — two daughters and a son. She now has four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Her husband died in 1931.

OUT OF THE VAULT

Poker Jim gets outsharked in card game along Snake River

One of Eastern Oregon's most well-known Indian leaders, Poker Jim, died March 5, 1936, at his home on the Umatilla Indian Reservation after a cold turned into pneumonia. He was believed to be approximately 93 when he died. Long known as the chief of the Indian encampment at the Pendleton Round-Up from the very beginning, Poker Jim was a proponent of keeping his people's old ways and was well known for the Fourth of July celebrations on the reservation that featured horse racing, gambling and traditional tribal dances. He was not a tribal chief on the Umatilla reservation but was the father of one of the most famous, Clarence Burke, and a great spiritual leader of his people.

Sap-Ut-Ka-Low-Nee (“White Swan”) was born near Wallula and was affiliated with the Walla Walla tribe. He was old enough to remember the Whitman Massacre, and was part of a group that tried to join Chief Joseph during the Nez Perce war to retain the Wallowa



RENEE STRUTHERS
Out of the vault

when the inaugural Round-Up was planned in 1910, city leaders convinced Poker Jim to lead an Indian encampment as part of the festivities, an honor he retained for 25 years until his death.

Most who knew him agreed that before he lost his sight, Poker Jim could fleece just about anyone in a game of cards and it was said that was how he came to have his colorful moniker. One story of an attempted card-sharking appeared in the Sept. 22, 1916, *East Oregonian* Round-Up souvenir edition, as purportedly told by Colonel John Sims to Col. William Parker.

country in the late 1870s. He also served as a scout under Captain Collier during the Bannock Indian War in 1878. He was well known among the settlers in Pendleton and,

Col. Sims, no mean card player himself, happened to run into Poker Jim riding along the Snake River between Walla Walla and Asotin, Wash., sometime during the 1870s and was convinced to sit down for a game. Knowing Poker Jim's reputation as a card player, Col. Sims went into the game vowing to bet carefully, lest he lose more than he could afford.

Poker Jim took a blanket from under the skirts of his saddle and laid it on the ground. When Sims offered his personal deck of cards for the game the Indian insisted on using his own pack that he produced from under the blanket, and to humor him Sims went along. When he looked over the pack, Sims noticed all four aces were in the deck and wondered what Poker Jim could possibly be holding back, since Sims figured there was a secret hand somewhere that would be produced in time for the big reveal. Sims managed to secure all four aces during the early betting stages and as the game wore on the betting went higher, until

finally both men had wagered everything in their pockets, and their horses and tack to boot.

When time came for the draw, Sims instead turned over his hand, showing the four aces. Poker Jim glared at the cards, then gathered both hands up with the discard pile, shoved them under the blanket and, with a grunt, started back up the road to Asotin.

“I do not know to this day what the hand was he was prepared to spring on me,” Col. Sims related, “but have always thought it must have been another four aces.” Poker Jim, knowing he was caught if he revealed his hand, had simply acknowledged his loss with the best grace possible. The two never met again, but Sims never failed to chuckle at later stories of men who, thinking they could take advantage of him, were taken themselves by Poker Jim.

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ODDS & ENDS

Blind dog rescued after lost for 2 weeks in the cold

FAIRBANKS, Alaska (AP) — A blind dog who wandered away from her Ester, Alaska, home during a cold snap has been reunited with her owner.

The 11-year-old Labrador retriever named Madera ventured away from home on Feb. 6, when the temperature dipped to 40 degrees below zero.

Her owner, Ed Davis, said he didn't expect to find her alive. “My best hope was to walk those trails and look for a track that might be hers,” he said. “My best hope was to find a frozen dog.”

A man riding a bike accompanied by a bell-wearing dog located Madera in the woods last week, about a half-mile from the Davis' home, *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* reported. Madera let out a whine when she heard the dog's bell.

Davis said his dog lost 14 pounds but was, overall, healthy.

The man who rescued her, Constantine Khrulev, asked for the \$100 reward money to go to the Fairbanks Animal Shelter Fund. Davis was so impressed by the gesture that he increased the donation to \$250.

Madera is completely blind because of an autoimmune disease.

This isn't the only tale of a lost, blind dog to end happily in Fairbanks in recent years: A blind 8-year-old dog named Abby walked more than 10 miles in 2012 from her home in the Two River area before she was rescued.



AP Photo/The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, Eric Engman
Ed Davis poses with his dog Madera at his home Feb. 26 in Ester, Alaska. Madera, who is 11-years old and blind, survived two weeks in sub-zero temperatures after wandering away from home earlier this month.

Man burned by fajitas while praying can't sue eatery

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — A New Jersey appellate court says a man cannot seek damages for burns he suffered while

bowing his head in prayer over a sizzling steak fajita skillet at a restaurant.

The ruling made public Wednesday upheld a lower court ruling that dismissed his lawsuit. The man claimed a waitress didn't warn him the dish was hot, but the lower court found the food posed an “open and obvious” danger.

It happened in 2010 at an Applebee's in Burlington County.

The man said he bowed his head, then heard a loud sizzle followed by a grease pop. He then felt a burning sensation in his left eye and on his face.

The man said he panicked and knocked the food on his lap, causing more burns. The burns didn't cause scarring.

Police find pot inside container labeled ‘Not Weed’

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A man in Lincoln, Nebraska, has been cited for possessing pot inside a container that had been slapped with a label reading: “Not Weed.”

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports that Lancaster County deputies stopped the man's vehicle around 9 p.m. Saturday. Officers found the plastic sour cream container during a search of his car, and the driver acknowledged that the pot belonged to him.

He was arrested on suspicion of drunken driving and cited for having less than an ounce of marijuana.

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