

Siuslaw News
 P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

VIEW FROM UPRIVER



Un-control

WESLEY VOTH
 Guest Viewpoint

criticizing the president on his visit to our state. I heard more voices in outrage over his efforts to change the “gun business-as-usual” than to share his grief at the growing mass of victims of such weapons, and these recent ones so close to our home. So who is it that is using

this incident for political gain? This defense of the mass private stockpiling and escalation of citizens arms, and their constitutional rights to do so, than even in calling time out on the weapons sales that have profited just who, exactly?

It has been hard for me as a mail carrier the past six years or so to deliver the kind of mean-spirited, blatantly anti-Obama, and fear mongering mailings that go to members of the NRA. While not privy to the inner contents of these, I cannot help but notice what is written all over the outside. Yet I never see any of it marked refused, or fewer local households receiving it. How safe am I supposed to feel ringing the doorbells of these households to conduct postal business, walking past the declarations that I am now in someone’s gunsights? It is hard for me to be friendly with people who are this armed, this afraid, this melded to their right to be dangerous.

I wound up in possession of the shotgun I have at my house because its owner did not trust himself to have it at hand. He was going through a difficult period, and now years have gone by. I have had times in my

life when I was a danger to myself and others. Or when safeguards became inadequate between dangerous things in my possession and the children it was my responsibility to protect. Probably most people fall short in this regard at one time or another. Be it substances, hardship, accident or just life, more weapons mean more chances for something to go wrong.

Simple math. And not just a few more weapons. If you want to view some simple math, look at the website of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Under “Resources” can be found the 2015 Annual Statistical Update of Firearms Commerce in the United States. The numbers are staggering. One little gem: last year we imported about 2 million handguns from the countries we were at war with in 1945.

If you add together guns manufactured in the United States and those we import, you can see that when Obama was re-elected and the NRA rhetoric really spiked, 2013 saw an unprecedented 16.4 million new guns in this country, almost triple the average during the Bush post-9/11 years.

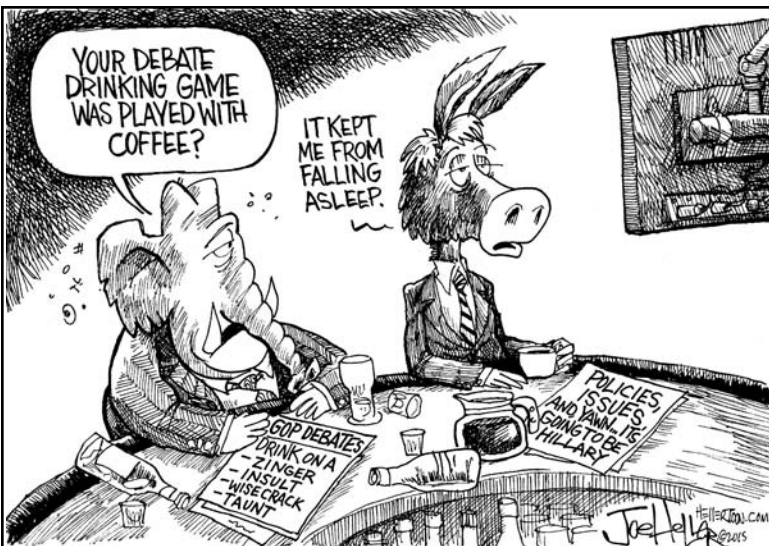
The year 2014 was undoubtedly higher still, but the Bureau cannot legally report these figures until after Dec. 31 to protect manufacturer’s proprietary secrets under the Trade Secrets Act. We have passed the 100 million mark this century, 60 percent of those since Obama became president. Depraved. Inhuman.

The opinion expressed above is solely that of the contributor and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Siuslaw News.

I’ll begin with my disclosures: Me and guns/gun culture: I was raised to be a hunter. I have owned several shotguns and a rifle over the course of my life-time, destroyed by me when I was done with hunting. I am currently in possession of a gun that is not mine. I was a member of the NRA because of a hunter safety program briefly prior to turning 18 in 1970 — after that I wasn’t interested in what they were about.

Me and religion: I was raised in the Christian religion, in the denomination called the Society of Friends, aka Quakers, Christians who take Jesus’ words to mean what they say: we are to love our enemies, to turn the other cheek, to do good to those who spitefully use us. I was taught to understand the creation narrative of Genesis and the Ten Commandments to mean that anything designed for or used as a weapon against another person is a misuse of the creation and therefore evil, that to put trust in weapons is idolatry.

So it has been hard for me to listen to people, who most vocally identify themselves as Christian, locally this last week



LETTERS

Time to take action

Eugene’s foxy-biased TV and radio stations pulled off the ultimate embarrassment to this state by exploiting their right-leaning philosophies on the air during the Umpqua Community College tragedy.

They gave excess and unnecessary visual time to the gun huggers and Roseburg tea-party-types, making sure the “don’t tread on me” flag was displayed during all advertising and news programs, plus showing their eight to 10 demonstrators. All this after the sheriff and city officials respectfully asked for no political-type action when the President announced he was coming to Roseburg.

Because of this tragedy, gun huggers like Trump and Carson

suggested we hand out guns to 5 million teachers and 45 million students in our high schools and colleges.

Does the gun hugger community really believe that adding 50 million guns to primarily stressed out, emotional teens will lower the amount of shootings or safeguard our classrooms? In Oregon alone that could possibly mean 605,545 more guns in our schools. It has been proven that the opposite would be true.

I suggest the politicians that run our cities, counties and states get together and figure out what might really help and start taking some actions together that would be beneficial. Taking gun sales out of our grocery stores would be a good starting point.

Gene Olson
 Florence

Supreme Court

Amid all the controversy surrounding the recent Supreme Court decision on gay marriage (Obergefell et al. v. Hodges, Director, Ohio Department of Health, et al.) and the resulting expressions of outrage — activist judges writing law, etc. — I thought it might be a good idea to actually read the entire decision.

Because of my now 18-year marital association with a very good lawyer, I’ve learned there is almost always a lot more value in the reality than in the commentary.

It is an extensive read, running to about 100 pages, some 36,000 words, but I think a worthwhile effort. I read it not to find support for my personal

bias but to try and assess the depth of the legal issues involved and the sincerity of the opinions.

What I came away with, regardless of my agreement with one side or the other, is the absolute sense that this is the only way serious decisions can be made in a free society. Someone has to do it!

We empower nine honorable people of exceptional capacity to examine an issue from every reasonable angle and come to a decision adopted by a majority vote.

Without bias? Of course not. There is no such thing as a human being without bias.

But still, in a free society, how better could it be done?

Jimmie Zinn
 Florence

YESTERDAY’S NEWS

MOMENTS IN TIME

The History Channel

- On Oct. 25, 1853, Paiute Indians attack U.S. Army Capt. John W. Gunnison and his party of 37 soldiers and railroad surveyors in Utah. Gunnison and seven other men were killed, but the survey party continued its work to find a route for a proposed transcontinental railroad.

- On Oct. 24, 1901, seeking fame, 63-year-old schoolteacher Annie Edson Taylor becomes the first person to plunge over Niagara Falls in a barrel. After a brief flurry of photo-ops and speaking engagements, Taylor’s fame cooled, and she was unable to make the fortune she had sought.

- On Oct. 23, 1921, in France, an American officer selects the casket of an unidentified soldier to be honored among the 77,000 U.S. servicemen killed in World War I. The “Unknown Soldier” was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

- On Oct. 22, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signs the Highway Beautification Act, which attempts to limit billboards and other forms of outdoor advertising along America’s interstates.

- On Oct. 20, 1973, Solicitor General Robert Bork dismisses Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox, whose investigation of the Watergate break-in revealed that the burglary was one of many possible abuses of power by the Nixon White House. Two days later, the House Judiciary Committee began to consider the possible impeachment of President Richard Nixon.

- On Oct. 21, 1988, “Mystic Pizza,” a romantic comedy starring unknown actress Julia Roberts, opens in theaters. Roberts would skyrocket to international fame when she appeared in the 1990 blockbuster “Pretty Woman.”

- On Oct. 19, 1991, a fire starts in the hills of Oakland, California, and within an hour, 800 buildings are ablaze. The firestorm would kill 25 people and destroy thousands of homes. Even though fires had ravaged the same area in 1970 and 1980, people continued to build homes there.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor concerning issues affecting the Florence area and Lane County.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters should be limited to about 300 words and must include the writer’s full name, address and phone number for verification.

Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Libelous and anonymous letters as well as poetry will not be published.

All submissions become the property of Siuslaw News and will not be returned.

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