

Opinion

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The Battalion

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The Battalion Editorial Board

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Gun control

Should government ban more weapons?

PRO



BRIAN BONEY

It's time to crawl inside the heads of those who oppose gun control.

Let's see what makes them -- hereafter known as "pro-gunners" -- believe the best course for our violent society is to make sure weapons are made available as freely as possible.

Here inside their minds, as a cool breeze echoes lazily through the cavernous space, we can find several relics of pro-gunner philosophy.

Here in the middle of the floor lie three major tenets of the pro-gunner religion.

I suppose the most important reason is protection. They say the guns are needed to ward off intruders in their homes. It takes up the most space. Pro-gunners also want protection on the street.

But several studies have shown that a gun purchased for home defense is 10 times more likely to be turned on its owner or to be used in a crime. And if an attacker has a gun, and a pro-gunner has a gun, whoever attacks first will have the advantage, so the gun is useless.

Next to the protection artifact is a small sheet of paper with the Second Amendment printed on it. Of course, this amendment was written more than 200 years ago. I doubt the founding fathers could have conceived of assault weapons that fire 38 rounds in 10 seconds that can penetrate brick walls. Also, to follow the amendment by the letter, we would have to allow merchants to sell grenades, mortars and bazookas.

The remaining support for guns is for recreational use, such as hunting or target practice.

But hunting should use only the most basic, bolt-action rifles and pump-action shotguns. Target practice can be controlled by renting guns at selected shooting ranges, thereby keeping them out of circulation.

With the way the system works now, though, guns are heavily in circulation.

A call to a local gun store revealed the ease in which anyone can buy a gun. For \$364, I could buy a 9mm Ruger semi-automatic pistol with a 12-shot clip. Since I have a credit card, I could purchase it any day I want.

Government must outlaw the general sale of all weapons except the rifles and shotguns described earlier. All other weapons should be banned from use except for the police and military. Pistols are made to provide an easy-to-carry, easy-to-conceal weapon that's perfect for most crimes. Assault weapons are made to provide an extremely efficient method of killing large numbers of people en masse.

If they remain in circulation, they will continue to fall into the hands of thieves, drug dealers and other assorted crazies who have no qualms about turning their weapons on their fellow citizens.

Certainly, no one should be naive enough to think eliminating these weapons will make everyone love and cherish each other. People will continue to kill each other, probably until the end of time.

The solution to solving the problems of our violent society doesn't rest with the philosophy of making guns available almost on request.

Taking away the instruments of death from a violent society is the first step on the road to returning to humanity

CON



JON DESHAZO

We are often flooded with tearful testimony about the dangers of guns in the hands of idiots. But reason keeps being pushed aside by these dramatic tales that simply do not show up as often as gun control advocates would like. Quite simply, gun control will not solve the current problems in our society because it does not touch the real problem.

Guns are portrayed by movies as a source of power. Take action shows: everyone in the show is shooting at everyone else, the hero always manages to blow the bad guy into tiny pieces, and the crowd cheers. The power of a gun is reduced to a quick plot resolution.

As long as society tolerates, even worships, crime and extreme violence, it will get that crime and violence, whether guns are legal or not.

I am not summarily against gun control, and I know of few people who are. Most of us fear the level of gun control that will exist once the government discovers that a seven-day waiting period will not hamper crime enough to make our country a happy little utopia.

Control of guns through legitimate businesses simply will not stop the flow of guns into this country and into the hands of criminals. The black market will take over, as it already has in major cities. Criminals are not going to run into a gun shop and say, "Yes, I'd like that HK G70 with the muzzle velocity of 1300 ft/sec along with several boxes of shells because I am going to commit a crime with it."

Assault weapons are practically a moot point. Few of these weapons are obtained through legal channels. The arms industries of other countries will continue to sell high-tech weapons to anyone willing to pay the price.

Hoping that new controls on guns will stop mass killing is naive. The controls will only stop a potential assailant from getting an assault rifle legally. Anyone crazy enough to kill a dozen people should have no trouble breaking the law to get a gun.

Assault rifles and similar armor are not required to kill a whole lot of people. Look up "homemade bombs" in the library and mix a few household chemicals, and plastique and dynamite derivatives are ready to blow up a house. I know of a few good mixtures personally, but I'm not going to use that knowledge to kill anyone.

Say we eliminate pistols (and manage to get my two away from me). We have not eliminated violent crime and the mentality that goes along with it.

I cannot find the logic in pretending to eliminate all those guns that manage to kill people. To hope that taking guns off the shelves of a department store will deter further crime is wishful thinking. I also find curious the notion that civil liberties unions can claim rights of criminals all over the place, but guns in the hands of the populace is somehow evil and is destroying our society.

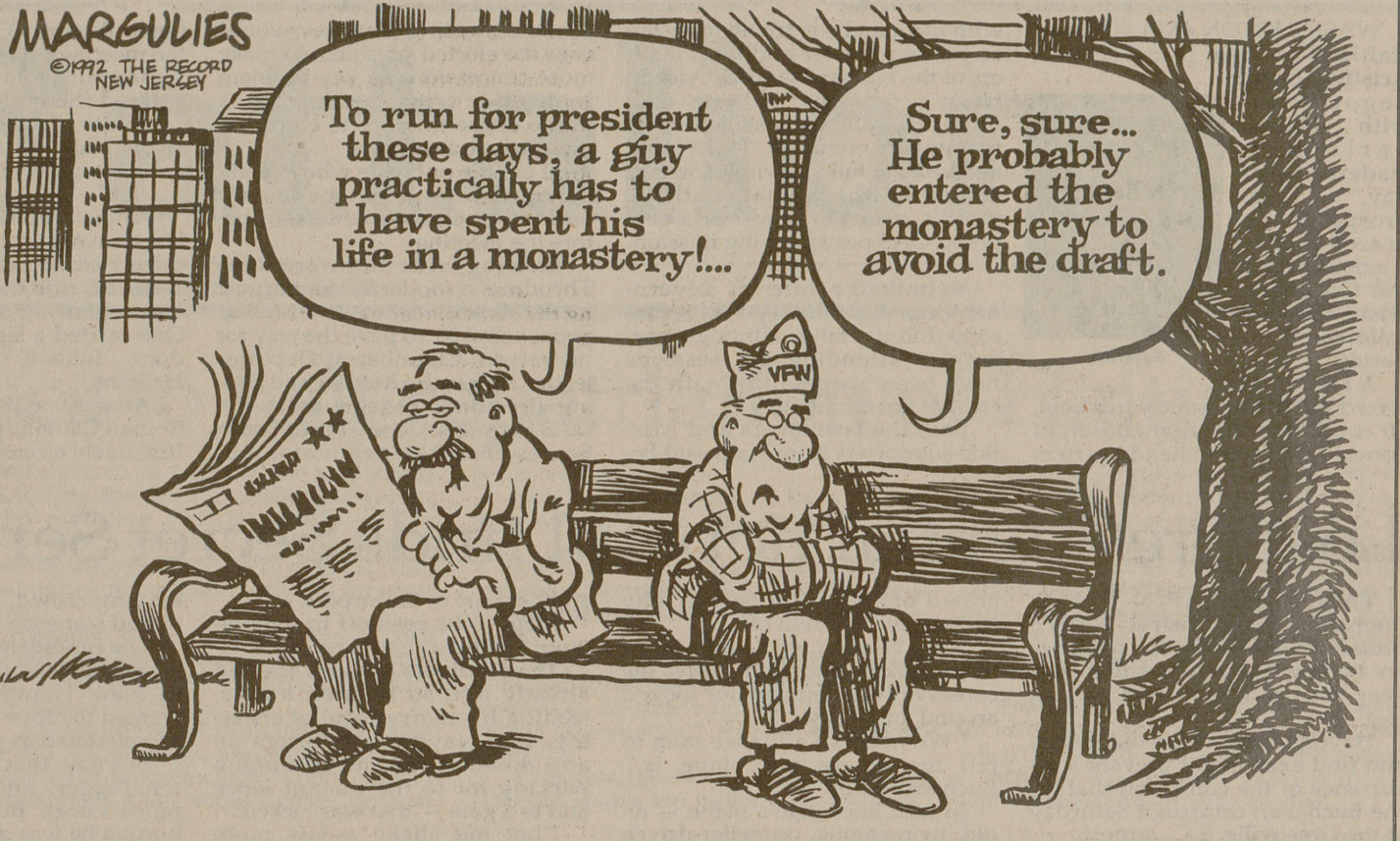
I would love to see every gun taken from every criminal in the country. I would also love to see pigs fly unassisted.

Want to stop some crime? Set harsh (and I mean HARSH) sentences against those who use guns in a crime. Incarcerate kids who carry guns into schools. Stop convicted felons from getting guns. When crime again ceases to pay, gun-related violence will go down along with rape and other violent crimes.

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MARGULIES
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NEW JERSEY



Mail Call

Keep Mariners in Seattle

This is in response to Chris Whitley's article on the Seattle Mariners. Chris, watch your mouth. I care about the Seattle Mariners. I know a hell of a lot of people who care about the Seattle Mariners.

I can tell you, from the outside, it looks like a good idea to sell the Mariners to Yamauchi. But the Mariners are very much a part of Seattle. Many people fear if the Mariners were sold, they would be moved. Promises can be broken easily.

The spirit Washingtonians have for the Mariners can be likened to the spirit Aggies have for their baseball team. Even though the Mariners rarely break the .500 mark, Mariners fans have a huge amount of spirit. And when the Mariners are winning, the fans have as much spirit as Dallas Cowboy fans. Basically, the Seattle fans don't want the Mariners being moved. Jeff Smulyan is afraid of the Mariners being moved, just like every other Washingtonian. There has been pressure on both Boeing Co. and Washington billionaire Bill Gates to buy the Mariners. The hope is to keep the Mariners in Seattle.

Finally, how many "big-name free agents" come to the Houston Astros expecting "Bobby Bonilla-size" contracts? The Mariners don't get too many, either.

Jason Russell Clark
Class of '95

Racial slurs degrade Aggies

I recently attended the Texas A & M-Southwest Texas State baseball game. I had never attended an Aggie baseball game before, and I thought it would be fun to experience. I had heard that the Aggie fans really involved themselves in the games through their constant yelling and taunting. As I watched the first inning, I quickly discovered that what I had been told was true, and to be quite honest, I found it rather exciting. As each player from the opposing team approached the plate, he was showered with taunts and sarcasms from the student body. I see nothing wrong with this. This is a ritual quite consistent with A & M's traditions and baseball in general.

However, as the game progressed, my enthusiasm and excitement quickly turned to disappointment and anger. I do not feel that racial slurs and taunts should be part of Aggie traditions or the game of baseball itself. I am sure that Jesse Acheon, a Hispanic baseball player for Southwest Texas State, was offended and disgusted by the reception he received from our "great" student body. As he approached the plate, one of our beloved students greeted him by shouting out, "La Migra," referring to the immigration authorities. Another of our "bright" students felt compelled to shout, "Hey Jesse, teach us how to speak Spanish," and still

another student added, "How do you say strikeout in Spanish." If this were not enough, as Jesse warmed up at the plate, the majority of the fans in the second deck above the visitor's dugout decided all at once to practice their Spanish-speaking skills by shouting out, "uno, dos, tres..."

Aggie fans, if you have not noticed, there is a Hispanic on the Texas A & M baseball team. Not only is Eric Gonzalez a member of the team, but he is also a starter at left field and bats in the No. 1 slot. Imagine the impression his parents would get of A & M if they were to attend a game and witness such an incident.

I am sure that Eric does not appreciate the racial slurs and taunts directed at opposing Hispanic players and neither do other Hispanic students on this campus. If you want to know how to say "strikeout" in Spanish, take a Spanish course. Not only will you find out that Spanish is one of the most beautiful of the languages, but you will also learn that the Hispanic culture is one that is very diverse and something that is held sacred by many of us. In the future, please think before you say or shout something that others may find offensive, because although "the pen is mightier than the sword," someone else may think otherwise.

Tony Gonzalez
Class of '92

Basketball needs support

I would like to let out a great big whoop for head coach Tony Barone and the A&M Basketball team! They have worked hard and done a tremendous job fighting the incredible adversities of this season. Unfortunately, I cannot equally praise the majority of my brothers and sisters who also call themselves Aggies. Where is the spirit and support that use to be so famous at this university. Everyone loves a winner. Aggies are no different. The difference is that at this university, being an Aggie means that you are a winner no matter what the totals add up to in the win/loss column. Where is the fan support that our other teams have always enjoyed? This is the spirit of Aggieland, and from that burning spirit is ignited a bonfire of energy that our teams have always benefited from.

What about the record, you say? Paul "Bear" Bryant lost every single conference game his first year at A&M, winning only one game of ten that year. How do we judge him? The Jackie Sherrill era, too, saw dismal years before the glory of Dallas. It took three years just for Sherrill to have a mediocre 6-5 winning season. It also required a season in which four of his six wins came against teams like UTEP, Iowa State, Arkansas State, and Rice. Some Ags will remember that Sherrill's first win as an Aggie came only after UTEP missed an easy field goal in the closing seconds of the game. Others can recall the struggle against lowly Arkansas State where we barely won, 22-21. Even so, Aggies proudly put bumper-stickers on their cars exclaiming "I believe in Jackie!" The fans still crowded Kyle Field's gates, and we, continued our legacy of

fan support. Where is that support for Coach Barone and the fightin' Texas Aggie basketball team?

Neither Coach Barone nor anyone associate with A&M's current basketball program was involved in any NCAA infractions, yet they ironically are the ones who must pay the price. Carbon-Monoxide poison further disrupted the efforts of our team. Assistant coach Mitch Buonaguro barely escaped death that day. The experience was a nightmare to the players, coaches, and all their families. Shamefully, the Battalion responded to these families' grief and pain by running cartoons that treated the deadly poison as though it were laughing gas. Injuries have further plagued a team that has seen much more than its share of trials and tribulations.

Sadly, G. Rollie White has gone from the holler house to the haunted house. Only the ghosts of past student bodies can fill empty seats. They cheer, but their voices are silent. We are 40,000 strong here at A&M. If every one of you reading this went to only 1 of every 4 home games this year, G. Rollie White would rock with energy and Aggie wins. It would also boost the confidence this young team needs to overcome the tremendous odds of NCAA violations, injuries, the traumatic carbon monoxide experience, and our toughest basketball schedule in decades. Campus organizations can go to games together as a group social event. The corps alone could fill up half the coliseum. These Aggies may not have outscored a lot of opponents, but when you go to see them, you will see an exciting style of play that hints at the success to come in the near future. With all the adversity they have endured, they play with their hearts out and give their all. That has always been the Aggie spirit, and in keeping with that honorable tradition, they deserve our support. I hope to see you in the stands. Gig'em!

Andrew J. Nelson
Class of '92

Have an opinion? Express it!

The Battalion is interested in hearing from its readers. All letters to the editor are welcome.

Letters must be signed and must include classification, address and a daytime phone number for verification purposes. Anonymous letters will not be published.

The Battalion reserves the right to edit all letters for length, style and accuracy. There is no guarantee that letters will appear.

Letters may be brought to 013 Reed McDonald, sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111 or can be faxed to 845-5408.