

Reason takes flight over gun regulation

When you mention the tragedies of Columbine, Aurora, Tucson or Newtown, people agree those were terrible events, but say anything about finding a reasonable way to reduce gun violence and a portion of the population will rail at you for taking their guns away.

It always sounds as if the gun lobby, and some gun owners, have indoctrinated the public that any attempt to limit types of guns, accessories or background checks is the beginning of an effort to disarm all Americans.

The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is the broad mantle being used by the gun lobby to insist no changes need to be made – except to arm all the schools and teachers.

When the Bill of Rights was proposed by James Madison it was because none of the individual freedoms had been spelled out in the main Constitution, and he insisted the 10 amendments be added to ensure the states would ratify the main document. It worked back more than 230 years ago, and we have watched the list of amendments expand to a total of 27 today. There is even an amendment (18th on prohibition) that was later repealed (21st) because people changed their minds.

The First Amendment is the one with the five main freedoms: religion, speech, press, assembly and petition for grievances.

The Second Amendment is “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.”

Those broad, sweeping phrases have stood the test of time. Many of the men who wrote the original documents establishing The United States of America did not always agree on what each phrase meant. There was agreement the nation needed a federal system to manage the affairs of the country that grew from the original 13 colonies to the present 50 states.

Madison argued the nation needed a standing army and navy, but Thomas Jefferson disagreed saying he felt in times of peace the country did not need a standing army or even ships for a navy. Jefferson always felt there would be time in face of a war to train and equip an army and build ships for a navy, but as President he found that to be a bit impractical.

Today as we consider the reactions to the gun violence in our country, the two sides appear to lack reasonable positions. The gun rights people are convinced this is an attempt to disarm all Americans, and they insist the guns are not at fault. They claim it is all the violent electronic games, violent movies and television shows plus the inability to control those who are mentally ill.

As a country we don't directly blame cars, but we do insist the car manufacturers work to improve their vehicles to protect lives and reduce injury caused in such accidents. We have many regulations on the car companies – insisted on by insurance companies – to test the vehicles for crash safety. We have developed special attachments to make it harder for a drunk person to start the car.

When was the last time we asked the gun manufacturer to improve safety. It is time to ask them to step up and be part of a solution to the violence associated with their products.

This is certainly not a whole solution, but maybe we can get some realism in the discussion. Remember the Second Amendment is for “a well regulated militia.”

– Tom Betz



Sometimes skills trump degrees

Jack's pursuit of a Ph.D. in physics began in the 1960s. His love of physics, a desire to work in the space industry, or perhaps the dream career of a university position propelled him to graduate school. Then the unthinkable happened. The bottom dropped out and suddenly physicists became a dime a dozen. With this as a background, I was troubled by a current unemployment category labeled, “College graduates unable to find employment in their field of study.”

While Jack was pursuing his doctorate, he was offered a job at the U.S. Bureau of Mines. He accepted the position and working full time and attending school full time completed his Ph.D. It was a far cry from his dream career as a college professor, but it was a job. Many, if not most Ph.D. science graduates, at that time, were nowhere near “employment in their field of study.”

Except for one of Jack's fellow

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



a large investment. Few had college loans, because it was possible to work and make enough to pay tuition and support our somewhat Spartan lifestyle. Perhaps our greatest strength was a belief in our ability, not just to achieve, but to adapt.

Jordan Weissmann, an associate editor of The Atlantic, said, “When there were fewer graduates, a generic college degree used to be a valuable credential. Now that the market is flooded, diplomas count less, and specific skills count more...It's one more sign that, for people seeking to fix America's employment picture, “college for all” is the wrong mantra. We need to be talking about “skills for all” instead.”

Jack was hired by the Bureau of Mines, not because he had a Master's Degree, but rather because of skills obtained in his high school shop class. Sometimes skills trump degrees. Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

grad students, none of us received government assistance. We all worked doing what we could to make ends meet. We never believed a college education came with a guarantee.

I will grant you, living on minimum wage was easier then. Finding affordable housing in a decent area was doable. Most of us lived in one bedroom apartments or in our case, a 10 x 50 foot trailer. None of us drove late model cars and most had hand me down furniture, and everything else for that matter. Name brands were yours and mine, not Nordstrom's or J.Crew. College was not, by comparison, such

A computer analysis of the Facebook user

Facebook has a link to Zeebly. It reviews your posts and analyzes them, an interesting exercise.

Zeebly says I talk most about sports, crafts and interior design. A house remodel this past year accounts for the craft and interior design fixation.

I am compassionate and ambitious. The opposite of ambitious was “content”. Is content code for “lazy”? I personally do not think I'm particularly ambitious. Perhaps I often post about things I've accomplished causing Zeebly to think I really work hard (which would be wrong). I'm contented and a little lazy.

The average person on Facebook tends to be extroverted and traditional. I am somewhat extroverted, but slightly the opposite of traditional; which to Zeebly is “artsy!”

I am cautious, organized, non-spiritual ?, and optimistic.

Under the heading of interesting facts Zeebly claims I'm more spatial than 93 percent of people. Spatial is defined as taking up time and space. This seems vaguely insulting. If I take up a lot of time it must mean I'm long winded. Take up a lot of space? Let's not even go there!

My posts are way below average in “teaching”. So although I'm longwinded what I'm saying is not very instructional.

I ask very few questions. It's not that I think I know everything. Or maybe it is, but it is not arrogance. It's the same reason I don't spend time “teaching”. I assume we all know certain things.

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



I don't need to explain everything. That's probably giving a lot of people too much credit! But not my Facebook friends or readers---they are smart!

I also do not ask questions because I figure if others want me to know something they will tell me. I'm compassionate, remember? Part of compassion is respect for privacy, right?

My posts are above average in cultural, loving, excited, and humorous. I'm relieved they got my attempts at humor. More than anything my posts were nearly 100 percent happy!

That last little thing made me even happier.

It is proven (at least by Zeebly) that I'm interested in sports. We went to the Fiesta Bowl. If you paid attention you know who we were cheering for. I have been rather amazed at the comments from people since our return. “Oh, it's too bad you lost.” “I'm sorry!” etc.

Gee, we had a fabulous time once we got out of Kansas and the New Year's Eve blizzard! (And a ditch near Logan but that's a story for another time.) Phoenix is beautiful. The people are wonderful. It is not at all like it is portrayed on reality TV: never saw a

single drive by or drug deal. My team is 11-2 for the year. I'll take it, thank you very much!

Then there are the Duck fans, so condescending. “Yeah, you have a lot better fan support than we do but we're mad because we should have been in the National Championship Game.”

No matter what Zeebly says about spatiality, I'm nearly speechless. You do not show up to support your team (who will never be together again) because of a perceived slight by the BCS?

It all comes back to being happy. What does it say about people who base their happiness on the outcome of a football game?

The Declaration of Independence says we have the right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

Rather than pursue happiness far too many of us are “content” to sit in a stadium hoping it will be delivered to us. Think we are entitled to it because we purchased a ticket!

John Lennon said, “When I went to school they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down ‘happy.’ They told me I didn't understand the assignment and I told them they didn't understand life.”

Zeebly is right: I am a happy person. And it is wrong: I do question. Perhaps not on Facebook but there are six questions in this article!

As to “teaching” if I ever teach anyone anything I would hope it is: Think!

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