

Letter to the Editor,
DON'T MESS WITH OUR SECOND AMENDMENT

Quite a few writers have commented recently about pending gun control proposals. The arguments for gun control always appeal to the reader's compassion and cite the incidents where schools have been attacked by a crazy individual or students that have been bullied by others and sought revenge. Those opposed to gun control appeal on the basis that the control of firearms would accomplish nothing except to remove guns from the individual's defense of self, family, and home.

Recently, columnist Diana West asked the question, "Why does Obama need 1.6 billion bullets?" She pointed out that this is enough to fight an Iraq-type war for 27 years. Also, since many of the rounds being bought are not of the type to fight a war nor for target practice, one has to wonder what the administration intends to use them for. Millions of the rounds are hollow point which are not used in combat against enemy troops.

Our Founding Fathers included the Second Amendment because it knew that a government can become tyrannical such as the British government had become. The possession of equal firearms by large numbers of citizens has long been the only sure way to keep a government in check since a population that is riled up against the government can prevent the authority of the governing class from eliminating the rights of the people. That is actually what happened in our Revolution when our ancestors fought the British Army.

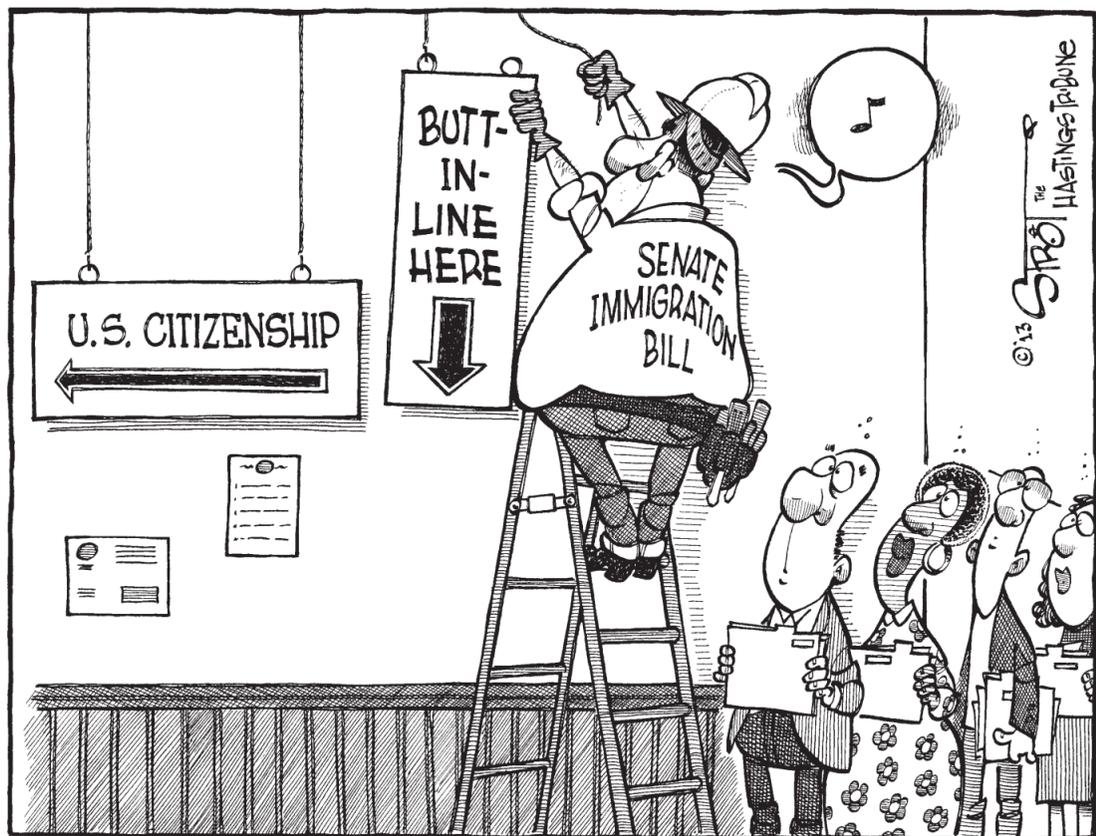
We have seen a dramatic erosion of the rights of the people over the course of our history with particular note over the past 12 years since 9/11. Benjamin Franklin said: "They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety." Should we be concerned? Some think so. The concern is what does the government intend to do. The movie star Clint Eastwood stated that "A pen in the hand of this President is far more dangerous than a gun in the hands of 200 million law-abiding citizens."

Few Republicans and fewer still Democrats have been willing to take a stand against the liberals' demand for reducing the Second Amendment. One Republican, Senator Tom Coburn, has requested clarification of the massive ammunition buy. The answer from DHS admitted that the Department of Homeland Security, the single largest customer in this bullet buy, only used 103 million rounds in 2012 though they are buying 1.6 BILLION rounds in a one-year contract.

The Bonafide Needs Rule which government procurement employees operate under, limits actual purchases to what can be reasonably required for the current or following one-year period. Another concerned Republican, Senator Jim Inhofe has submitted legislation to limit government civilian agencies (not the military) purchases of ammunition to the amount of supplies required before Obama became President. These Republicans appear to be unique since others in their party are ready to compromise on the Second Amendment.

This is a slippery slope – if some limitation of the Second Amendment occurs now, it will make things easier for the governing class to further limit gun ownership in the future if not outright eliminate it, armed with the names of all gun owners. Even in Kansas, the recently passed Second Amendment Protection Act which supposedly reinforces the Second Amendment is a dangerous thing since it opens the door to reinterpretation. This law exempts all guns that are made in Kansas and have not left the state, from federal gun control. How will that be reinterpreted in the future? No law is needed and further laws serve only to limit the right under the guise of support. The Conservative Party of the USA (no, not the Republican Party) is standing firm on this issue and accepts NO limitation or erosion of the Second Amendment. Please contact your legislators and the White House and demand that they also stand equally firm. We don't know what our officials intend. Yet, we do wonder, why does Obama need 1.6 billion bullets?

Dr. Glen Welch
Leavenworth, KS



The hazards of raising chickens

It wasn't a hard decision to make. No straws to draw. No votes to take. No arguments to be heard. I knew, immediately, which one of the three roosters had to go.

I was gathering eggs one morning when I was attacked, from behind, by a flurry of wings and clawed feet. One of the roosters had tried to flog (for lack of a better word) me. Perhaps one of the hens sitting in the nesting box had clucked the message, "Help! Help! She's trying to take my eggs." I don't understand the subtleties of "chicken lingo."

All I know is he not only came at me once; he came at me three times. He wasn't the least bit intimidated by my flailing arms and loud voice commanding him to, "Stop that!" He wasn't deterred, even when I tried to kick him in mid-air.

Maybe I couldn't scare him, but I knew someone who could. I stormed out of the chicken house, yelling, "Jim! Ji-i-m! Ji-i-i-i-i-m!"

When I found Jim I said, "He's got to go! That rooster tried to kill me."

Not sounding too sympathetic, Jim said, "Which one? Not the one with the long tail feather I hope?"

"Yes," I said. "The one with the long tail feather. He's the one. And he's got to go. If you don't wring his neck, I will."

Since Jim knows I have never wrung

Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



a chicken's neck in my life, I think he decided he better do it, just to spare the poor bird any undue suffering.

So now we're down to two roosters. A side benefit is that it's a lot quieter at our place. It seems the feathered attacker was also the one who loved to crow, loudly, at 4 a.m. every day. The remaining two roosters seem quite subdued. They do keep a wary eye on Jim, however. It's as if they know that if HE comes to get one of them, it's a one way trip. You leave, but you never come back.

-ob-

We love tomatoes. Jim especially loves them. He eats them for breakfast. He eats them for snacks. He eats BLTs. He eats the sandwich without the "B" and the "L". He eats them with salt and pepper or plain. He eats them any way he can.

So growing our own tomatoes has become a slight obsession. He has amended the soil. He's tilled and re-tilled. This summer, he built the Taj

Mahal of tomato shelters.

Our tomatoes have been hailed out too many times. Oh, we've laid hail screen over the tomato cages to protect the crop, but that only made picking the tomatoes that much harder. That's why, this year, we'll never have to face that problem again.

I watched from the kitchen window as Jim drove posts into the ground at all four corners of the tomato patch. I watched as he hauled lumber, ladder and tools to the work site. Soon, a structure began to take shape and I could visualize what he was doing.

The four corner posts hold up the double-sloped roof line with rafters every 36 inches. Stretched, from side to side, wrapped over the edge and stapled down is heavy-duty hail screen. It's a thing of beauty. My first thought was to put twinkle lights on it for an evening attraction. My second thought was, "If it had clear plastic wrapped around it, we would have a green house." Later, I learned that Jim had planned ahead. That was his idea in the first place and come next spring, we can start some seeds early.

So even though we'll probably never begin to justify the expense of labor and materials, we'll have the satisfaction of never losing another tomato crop. And as Jim said, "Come hail or high water, we'll be ready."

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Long hours, a flurry of activity, less-than-ideal weather conditions and work involving large machinery combine to make wheat harvest a potentially dangerous period.

To say farmers are busy during this time would be an understatement. Try to call one after 7 a.m. or before 10 p.m. and you'll be wasting your time – they're not home. They're in the field or shop preparing for harvest.

Wheat harvest marks the pinnacle of nearly a year's effort to produce this crop. During harvest, farmers and custom cutters work long, hard hours. Fifteen-minute meal breaks are about the only real time off in days that often stretch 14 hours. If weather conditions cooperate, cutting usually begins about 9 a.m. and continues until midnight, or when the grain becomes too moist or too tough to cut. People and machines are pushed to their limits.

While every machine – combine, truck, grain cart, tractor or auger – provides its own unique hazards, operator stress or error account for the majority of harvest accidents. Years of safety features built into these machines are useless without operator safety. Exceed human limitations and accidents are bound to follow.
Operator knowledge and attitude

Let's make it a safe harvest this year

Insight

John Schlageck



remain the key to a smooth, well-oiled wheat harvest. A safe operator knows his skills, limitations and condition, both physical and emotional.

The safety-conscious operator knows his equipment, its condition, capacities, limitations, hazards and safety equipment. Such an operator is constantly monitoring field and weather conditions.

In Kansas, thousands of acres of wheat add to the pressure of slicing through those acres before hail or windstorm destroys the bountiful crop. With this added pressure comes the desire to take chances, short cuts and extend working hours. Such behavior only adds to fatigue and high levels of stress and tension.

Remember, harvest will take its toll if you don't take breaks. Eating balanced meals, even if you only take 15 minutes is important.

Stop the machine. Crawl off and relax a few minutes while you're eating.

Drink plenty of water, tea or other cold liquids during the hot, dry days of wheat harvest. Jump out of your machine for such breaks at least every hour.

Walk around the machine to limber up. This will also allow you to check for possible trouble spots on your combine.

Before harvest ever begins, check your equipment and perform the proper maintenance. Consult your operator's manual or dealer if you have any questions. Well-maintained machinery reduces the chance for breakdowns and related aggravation in the wheat field.

Delays due to breakdown only force harvest crews to work longer and harder to catch up. Such delays also increase the chance of accidents during this catch-up period.

As is sometimes the case with some farmers, they may have kept some combines longer than they should have. Treat these "old-timers" with care. They'll need additional preventative and routine maintenance.

Pulling pre-harvest maintenance is easier and less frustrating than fixing such problems in the heat, dirt and sweat of the harvest field. Reduce your chances of aggravation now – it will be worth it.