

from our viewpoint...

Supreme Court says words are clear

Where do we go, now that the Supreme Court has decided the Second Amendment means exactly what it says?

Neither gun control advocates or advocates of gun rights are likely to climb down from the barricades, but their arguments are largely emotional

Let's start with the amendment itself:

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.

Simple enough. But much argument has been made about what it means. Until this year, the High Court has never really ruled on it.

In striking down a harsh gun-control law in the District of Columbia, the court apparently said it means people can keep guns in their home. That doesn't mean they can carry them around, and the District does not have a "concealed carry" law.

The law banned possession of anything but unloaded hunting arms, and the court said the Constitution calls for more than that. It said, if on a 5-4 vote, that people could keep handguns at home to defend themselves.

In a city as lawless and downright dangerous as parts of Washington, that will change a lot of people's thinking.

Gun advocates are celebrating, but the gun-control crowd is outraged. It will try to overcome the decision any way it can, even if that means waiting until a Democrat president appoints more liberal justices.

Is there any basis in fact for advocating gun control to reduce crime?

It doesn't seem to have worked in Washington, where the streets are hardly safe despite having had, until last month, one of the nation's strictest gun laws.

One problem with gun control is that it keeps guns away from law-abiding citizens — but not from criminals.

Citizens who fear arrest can't keep a gun at home. Many will break the law, but if they ever had to use their weapon, they'd face prosecution.

Criminals, what do they care?

Legal guns are seldom used to commit a crime. Criminals steal guns, import them illegally, get them any way they can. They commit crimes. One more doesn't make any difference to them.

It makes more sense to have stiff penalties for any crime committed with a gun. Leave people who want to defend their homes alone.

As the court said, that's what the Founding Fathers intended, and their advice is as sound today as it was 230 years ago.

The meaning of those few words the framers put down hasn't changed, and neither has the need, at least perceived by many, to defend one's home.

Those affected by crime and lawlessness should have their rights enforced, and the court has seen to that. For now, at least. — Steve Haynes



Liberty wins a big one

Liberals, who hate guns almost as much as they hate cars, got a well-deserved lesson in Second Amendment rights when the Supreme Court spit in their face by ruling the Constitution really does guarantee the right of Americans to own guns.

The ruling, which struck down the District of Columbia's laws almost totally restricting handgun ownership, affirmed the traditional view that the Second Amendment means exactly what it says when it guarantees "the right of the people to keep and bear arms."

The avid gun-grabbers have long insisted the accompanying clause, "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state" restricts the right to bear arms to members of said militia — a sophistry in view of the fact that at the time the amendment was adopted, the "militia" included all able-bodied adult white males.

As Thomas B. McAfee and Michael J. Quinlan, writing in the North Carolina Law Review, March 1997, Page 781, stated "... Madison did not invent the right to keep and bear arms when he drafted the Second Amendment — the right was pre-existing at both common law and in the early state constitutions."

Obviously, the Founders were not gun grabbers, as the gun-grabbing community would have us believe. Actually, unlike today's liberals, they had faith in their fellow citizens and in their ability to avail themselves of their rights



michael reagan

• making sense

in a safe and reasonable manner.

The District of Columbia law was based on the fallacious idea that by banning handgun ownership by citizens except under the most onerous conditions, criminals — a not unsizeable part of the district's population even with the exclusion of members of Congress as a criminal class — wouldn't be able to buy and own guns and thus continue their murderous ways.

C'mon now. Do they really believe criminals buy their guns in legitimate gun shops? Or do they understand their anti-handgun laws haven't made even the slightest dent to the city's incredible murder rate? Don't they realize their Draconian gun laws punish honest citizens unable to protect themselves and their homes, and not the thugs who are on a killing rampage on the streets of the nation's capital?

They share the fantasies of the nation's elitist gun-grabber fanatics who simply refuse to believe the majority of their fellow citizens are mature enough to be trusted to own handguns, or for that matter, to conduct their affairs with-

out Big Brother's guidance and control.

The liberals who want to ban gun ownership are the same liberals who'd like to drive family-sized automobiles off the nation's streets and highways, prohibit the use of fossil fuels because they allegedly harm the environment and contribute to non-existent global warming — a fantasy they are inflicting on the American people — and demonizing carbon dioxide, a natural gas without which life on earth cannot survive.

The Supreme Court ruling has been greeted by the American people as a welcome sign that many of their rights long threatened by out-of-control judges who make or misinterpret laws, rather than enforcing them, are now at last being safeguarded by the High Court.

That's a dangerous misconception. The new decision was a 5-4 ruling. That tiny majority, often reversed in other rulings that defy the meaning of the Constitution, will vanish if the liberals manage to elect Barack Obama and give his party sufficient control of Congress to guarantee that future Court vacancies will be filled with activist liberal justices who will turn the Constitution upside down.

We won a big one this time but the battle is far from won.

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We had one of those garden moments

You can divide the year not into months, but times of the garden plot.

Last week, we realized it was Time to Stake the Tomatoes.

That's a distinct celebration, as regular as harvest or the Fourth of July.

It comes on that day in late June when you realize if you don't stake the tomatoes and tie them up, they're going to be ground vines, and the zucchini and cucumbers already are mess enough to deal with.

So I spent a sweaty Wednesday morning driving eight-foot stakes in the garden. Cynthia tore an old sheet into strips — old T-shirts work almost as well, as long as their not red. Any color but red.

We tied foot-tall tomato plants to the stakes, one at a time, gently so as not to bruise any of the tiny fruit.

The next Wednesday, we tied them again, a foot taller. Now we are in the Season of Tying Tomatoes. It lasts four to six weeks, until whenever the tomato vines overtop their stakes. That'll be sooner this year than last, because the stakes are veterans. A lot of them are not quite eight feet anymore, nature, termites, the hammer all having taken their toll.

About that time will come the celebration of The First Tomato, followed closely by The Season of Picking Tomatoes. That runs from late July into October, whenever it freezes.

Somewhere along the line will come the Corn Harvest, which is short but sweet. Corn stalks come out as their ears are eaten, making more room for the squash vines underneath. That's one of the annual rituals.

Cynthia likes to get a lot of garden in a little space, so she plants squash — yellow, spaghetti and cucumber — under the corn and tomatoes. Sometimes this is so efficient you can pick cucumbers right out of the tomato vines. One year, she had huge spaghetti squash hanging from tomato plants and the dog-pen fence.

Running concurrently with all the tomato seasons is Daily Harvest, peas, beans, zucchini, whatever turns up. She takes care of that in the mornings.

It's like magic, almost, watching the garden morph from fresh-tilled soil to the Season of Salad — spinach, lettuce, green onions — to



steve haynes

• along the sappa

tomatoes and corn and green peppers, which dominate the summer skyline.

Then, one by one, the plants will disappear or die out. The spinach already has bolted and been pulled or eaten. The lettuce is nearly gone. The peas have bloomed their last, but the green beans just keep going.

There are little green tomatoes on all the plants and one big green pepper already. The asparagus has gone to seed, but it's made some great stir fry with the peas and beans.

