

High Court finally says 2nd Amendment is 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 every 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 make 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

Taylor to get fun, G'ma naps

A friend of ours has to watch his sugar intake, so I decided to make a batch of sugar-free jam.

Yes, I'm still making jam and jelly. This one had me worried, though.

After following the directions to a "T" and setting the jam to cool, I wasn't totally convinced it tasted OK. Jim gave it his seal of approval, though, so a pint jar of cherry jam is on its way to a new home with a "Merry Christmas" tag on it.

Writing today's column is turning out to be more of a challenge than usual. That first paragraph took about half an hour. And, honestly, I do think a little faster than that.

My keyboard is really messing up. Letters are not appearing when the keyboard is struck; numbers appear when I hit backspace command; and sometimes letters come out doubled.

The proofreader may have to work overtime on this one.

Here's what I mean. I will type this well-known phrase without correcting (or embellishing). "Thee quick brown f04x jjumped over the



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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fence."2

See what I mean? What a mess. This could take all day.

—ob—

Some of you may have heard I'm getting a head start on retirement. This will be my last week at my regular day job.

Oh, I plan to keep writing this column — as long as someone will read it, I'll write it — and I plan to do some feature stories, but I'm giving up the day-to-day.

My granddaughter Taylor is coming for a three-week stay and I want to enjoy her visit, not drag her to work or to a babysitter. I have lots of things planned:

1. We are going to learn how to make cheese together.

2. I'm going to teach her to sew (something simple).

3. We're going to do a lot of cooking.

4. We're going to have a slumber party and a wiener roast for her and the girlfriends she's made out here over the years.

5. We're going to go to the pool a lot.

6. We'll go to two county fairs.

7. Goto Mary's, my sister-in-law, and ride horses.

8. Water flowers and garden every day.

9. Make a scrapbook of her stay, and,

10. Take naps (me, not Taylor).

That's just for starters. I can hardly wait. Not just for Taylor, but the chance to stay home, too.

From the Bible

Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

Psalms 63:3-4

Bikers liked food, attention

To the Editor:

I was with the Bike Across Kansas ride when they rode through Oberlin last month.

The riders were impressed with the town, especially the museum.

Thank you for the food and for being there for us.

Letter to the Editor

Donna Fisher Reist
Olathe



Look, Ma, no warts. Really.

OK. OK. I admit it. I took it. That toad in your yard, it was me. I took it.

I've been toading my garden since early June, and I'm up to five now.

Steve and I go for a walk almost every evening, and when one of us spots a toad hopping his merry way down the street, across the grass or over a sidewalk, I toadnap it.

And, of course, Steve is an accessory to the crime. He helps me corral them.

Those little hoppers are hard to catch. They jump, change direction and make us look like fools running around in the dark on somebody's lawn trying to trap them without injury.

Once captured, they always seem kind of surprised that nothing is trying to take a bite out of them. They're said to be really bad tasting — I wouldn't know myself — but nothing seems to want to eat them. So, in frustration, I think, they sometimes pee on you.

This is why I try to keep my eyes on the trees and shrubs, rather than the sidewalks and lawns, for the first half of our walks. Who wants to spend most of an hour carrying a squirming, peeing toad? Not me. Not Steve, for sure.

When I arrive home, I put the toads in my garden. They don't stay there, but that's where I keep



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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"seeding" them.

So far, one has taken over the area by the garbage can, one is hopping around the auxiliary garden on the south side of the house, one is living in the sunflowers and Steve's native grass (weeds, if you ask me) beside the garage, one is in the iris bed and one is in an undisclosed location. In other words, I have no idea where it went.

Steve is really very indulgent about my love for creepy crawlies. He's lived through turtles, salamanders, garter snakes, lizards and toads besides the usual dogs, cats, rabbit and spiders. (What! You never kept spiders? What a strange family you had.)

I'm not sure where I got my proclivity for unusual pets, but I passed it on to my children. My son kept lizards when he was in high school and my youngest daughter had a pet spider. She once spent her lunch hour, while in graduate school, rescuing frogs from the college fountain. When the tadpoles

turned into frogs, it seems, they had no way to get out of the fountain and would drown without a little help from a friendly student.

Personally, I've been known to grab a garter snake while touring a high-end tourist resort's prospective golf course and carrying it around the rest of the day with the developer throwing me odd glances and my husband pretending it was the most normal thing in the world.

When we came to Kansas to look at the papers, I yelled for our hosts to stop the car then got out to rescue a box turtle, which was venturing into the path of an oncoming truck. Again my husband smiled and the newspaper owners, who had raised four kids, sold us the company.

But, I don't want to be greedy. You can have your toad back. All you have to do is check under the zucchini in the auxiliary garden on the south side of my house — oh and help yourself to some squash, too, please.

Bert Cool



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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cops and politicians, about reporters. Most of it, you couldn't print.

One of my predecessors, they said, had borrowed a young detective's gun one night, then popped a cap at the equestrian statue of Andy Jackson in front of the courthouse across the street. No way the kid could turn him in, not and face the chief.

Maybe it was even true; I never climbed up to see if Andy had any scars. But these guys knew things. One night, several of them called me aside to show me vice arrest records for one of my bosses, who had a habit of frequenting the men's room at Union Station. It didn't much change my opinion of him — he was a great mentor and teacher and a brilliant newsman — but after that, I stayed out of that men's room.

Times change. Bert retired from the police force. I moved to Colorado to buy a newspaper. Our paths didn't cross again until Cynthia and I bought *The Oberlin Herald* in 1993.

Bert had just retired again, as Decatur County undersheriff. He already had started back full time as head jailer and a dispatcher, and still did emergency management work for the county.

Often, we'd talk about those days in Kansas City. Bert complained

that all the old gang was gone, retired or deceased. The city took back the department, which had been under the governor's control since the corruption-ridden days of the 1930s, and uniforms changed.

Bert liked to talk about those guys in homicide — Gary McCready, always well dressed, and Gary Vanbuskirk, big and stern, and Sterling Ford, the half-blind old chief of detectives — but as the years passed, so did they.

Sometimes, I'd drop by the courthouse when he had the overnight shift on weekends. Though supposedly retired, he'd work 12 hours or more from Saturday to Sunday.

He came back to work after his heart attack and open-heart surgery. He came back after a couple of prisoners nearly beat him to death one night with a sock full of batteries.

It seemed he could survive anything, but of course, none of us gets out of this life alive. This spring, his infirmities forced him into the hospital. At last, he had to retire.

I was thinking I'd go see him once more, for old time's sake, but I was out of town the night he passed. I can still hear his voice, see the twinkle in his eye.

"Hey, kid," he'd say.

I don't think they make 'em like that anymore.

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