

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

From the Desk of:



Sheriff Clinton of Towns County

best way for government to facilitate that is to take away a citizen's God-given right to personal protection.

I am reminded of a case prosecuted by one of my good friends. In this case the assailant of a little girl finished his crime by murdering the child with a rock. No one has ever asked me how I felt about the assailant's use of a rock as a murder weapon. The answer for me is the same. Whether a firearm, knife, ball bat, flame thrower, or rock, it is horrific that there are people who would harm others, particularly our children.

Unfortunately, there are those who would cause us and our children harm. Is our answer to blame firearms? To me that is a deflection of the real problem that there are those who would commit these heinous crimes. I have rarely seen a violent offender commit an offense unarmed, though often the weapon was not a firearm. I don't believe the answer is to disarm law abiding citizens. To me that just makes the law abiding citizens easier prey for those who would commit these crimes.

The fact is there are very real dangers in this world. Among these dangers is the existence of those who would cause us and our children harm. The man that committed the recent attack in a Colorado theater cared very little for the law. One can only wonder how that situation might have been different if it were easier, and more socially acceptable, for those law abiding citizens to carry a firearm for their own defense. It is the duty of government to protect citizens. We do not, in my opinion, accomplish this best by taking away their ability to defend themselves.

The Middle Path

by Don Perry

On the first Monday morning after the killing in Aurora, Colorado, every information network is beginning each broadcast with the face of an accused killer. The maniacal visage leers out from almost every news source available on the Internet as hordes of cameras and microphones scramble to do what they do best, keeping us spellbound in morbid fascination, fulfilling our unspoken need to see the blood stains and the bullet holes, over and over again at the top of each hour. The newsreader personalities are serving up the excruciating details of tragedy in the same well-modulated tones of matter-of-factness, pausing at the same places for emphasis, raising and lowering tones and eyebrows on the same syllables, over and over again. There it is again, the face of the grinning madman, the apartment window, the president's speech, and the faces of the victims "Continuing coverage," the caption flashes. "New details" to feed our appetite for sensation. Over the next few days the tragedy will be digested in the talk show circuits. Armchair activists will post their sentence of condolence on Facebook for their friends to "like." Eventually life will return to normal, with the nightly shooting report on the local news to keep us satisfied until the next horror appears.

Ninety-three people were killed in Iraq over the same weekend as the Aurora shootings. Three car loads of gunmen opened fire on an Iraqi army base. Bombs exploded in a residential area and a suicide bomber blew himself up in a crowd of police. This story and so many other tragic occurrences can be sifted from even a cursory glance at the news wires, although they are well down the page from the story currently occupying the national consciousness. If you watch television news; if you read headlines on the Internet and if you believe that what the media presents is a representative sample of reality, then you may well ask, "Is civilization falling apart?"

No. It is not; at least it isn't if you are using violence as a guide. The numbers are clear on this matter. We are less likely to die from violence today than in any other time in human history. Harvard neuroscientist Steven Pinker has written a fascinating study of the issue in his book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*. In it, he compares the violence of today to a past of slavery, widespread domestic abuse, witch burnings, pogroms and constant warfare. In Europe,

GUEST COLUMNS

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write. Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE EMAILED OR MAILED TO:

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for example, homicide rates have dropped from 30 to 100 per 100,000 per year down to the current average of between one and two per 100,000.

Why, then, do so many of us believe that the world is becoming more violent? Look no further than your television remote for an answer to that question. Communication today is instantaneous. Corporate media competing for the attention of our advertising dollars can pull from sources around the world to feed our penchant for the morbid and the sensational. If there are not enough shootings in Atlanta to lead off the nightly news, Channel 2 can quickly and easily access the news wires for a tragedy from a neighboring state.

Headlines will continue to be sensational to grab our attention, and thus our wallets. If we do not look beyond the headlines; if we do not read more than the first few lines of the lead stories selected for us, then we run the risk of feeding a national gestalt that is based on inaccurate or incomplete information. Headlines feed fear and anxiety. Just look at the reaction of the markets to sensational stories. We want to make decisions based on the best information available. Violence is certainly a fact of life, but it is not the only fact, nor the most important one.

When the sad images of this past weekend eventually begin to fade or to be replaced by breaking news of the next sensation, it is not the face of an insane killer that I will choose to remember, no matter how many times it is flashed before me. I will choose instead to remember three young men: Jon Blunk, Matt McQuinn and Alex Teves. These three heroes died shielding their girlfriends. All three took a bullet to protect the ones they loved. I will choose to remember a 13 year old girl who refused to flee the theater so that she could give CPR to a dying 6 year old. Monsters have always lived among us and will continue to do so, but they are but a small part of our world, no matter how the headlines attempt to magnify them. We are safer now than we were 200 years ago. There is more good in the world than evil. These facts do not sell soap, but they are the truth.



"IT'S ON MY MIND.."
Danny H. Parris

A society without conscience

Did you ever hear the story about Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson going on a camping trip? As I heard it, it goes something like this: As they lay down for the night, Sherlock said to Watson, "look up into the sky and tell me what you see." Watson looked up and said, "I see millions and millions of stars." Sherlock said, "And what does that tell you?" Waxing eloquent, Watson began, "astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Theologically, it tells me that God is great and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, it tells me that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. What does it tell you, Sherlock?" Sherlock Holmes logically said, "Someone has stolen our tent." When you look at our world, the leaders of America, and the confused, conglomerated state of affairs of our nation, what on heaven's earth do you see? Let me wax eloquent for a moment. Logically, what I see is a whole passel of elected leaders that do not have the faintest idea of the suffering, misery, worry and deprivation of millions of Americans that need jobs and finances to take care of their families, schools, churches and organizations that are teetering on the brink of disaster. Frankly, and morally, what I see is a nation that has let a bunch of nitwits from Hollywood celebrities, overpaid athletes, media mongers, aspiring authors of untruthful books and power-hungry, prideful-domineering, so-called theologians steal from this nation its sacred social conscience. Do you realize we have become a SINLESS nation? You will have better

success trying to slip daylight past a rooster than you will getting anyone to say, "I have sinned." All I ever hear is "I am innocent!" I am sick and tired of adulterous preachers, politicians, painters, plumbers, whatever saying, "I used poor judgment," "I was caught in a weak moment." I am tired of judges, athletes, etc. who are caught driving drunk or abusing children saying, "I was depressed," "I grew up in a dysfunctional family," or "I wasn't thinking clearly." For God's sake won't someone just honestly say, "I committed a terrible sin?" Astronomically, our present situation tells me that if we don't stop listening to loony star-gazers and start listening to the ONE who created the stars, the sky is going to fall. Theologically, our situation tells me if America doesn't quit looking for sedatives from star-gazers and soothsayers and begin seriously seeking solutions from the bright and Morning Star, America's flickering light could be extinguished by the ONE who holds the seven stars in His right hand (Revelation 2:1). Meteorologically, it tells me that America has gotten off course by listening to these wandering stars (Book of Jude v. 13). Furthermore, if there is going to be many more beautiful tomorrows, we must begin at my house, your house, the school house, the court house and up to the White House seeking wisdom from the real Star that the wise men sought in Jerusalem. May the Day Star, who is Christ the Lord, arise in our hearts. I know some of you will say, "Preacher Danny has grown old and has become pessimistic, paranoid and senile." Well, you would be right about old, (above 70) but I may see with a sharper conscience (to know with) than ever. The prophet Amos was asked by Jehovah God, "Amos, what do you see?" What he saw was not a beautiful tomorrow, but judgment at the door. Mr. & Mrs. Reader, What do you see?



RARE KIDS; WELL DONE

By Don Jacobsen

My wife and I were catching a bite of lunch in a Food Court recently. You know, one of those assembly line cafeterias in the mall between Penney's and The Shoe Barn. We picked up our food and sat down near a family already eating - a dad, mom, and three beautiful little girls.

We watched these five folks obviously enjoying each other and I couldn't help but speak to the dad. I wanted him to know how blessed he was to have four beautiful girls (counting his wife). He wanted me to know he agreed, and that actually they had two more daughters, teenagers, one at home and the other away at college.

He explained that it wasn't altogether something they had planned. The older daughter was his by a previous marriage, the other teen was his wife's by a previous marriage. The three younger ones were the result of this marriage. I told him what I do - work with families - and that what we call, "his, hers, and ours," isn't that uncommon these days.

He wanted me to know he realized this kind of arrangement can be a bit tricky. Then he made an interesting observation: "We've really worked at it so they don't think

that way," he said. "Sometimes it seems like they forget who is whose. We're just all the same family. They're all mine and they're all hers."

You don't have to read very far into some of the "parenting experts," today before you discover that even "experts" don't always get this right. Many contend that mom is responsible for the children she brings to the marriage and dad (if he has any) is responsible for his. That is a flawed recipe; let me detail at least one of the reasons.

The family is a training ground for life. One of the urgent issues a child should learn by observation is how a dad functions and what a mom's role is. How confusing is it if mom treats some of the kids one way and the rest of the kids another way. What's the lesson if dad is central in the life of "his" kids but is sidelined when it comes to the others. Remember the recipe that says something like, "Start with two cups of water and blend in one cup of flour..." When something is well blended you can't tell the parts from the whole. That's why the term, "Blended family" is such a powerful description.

Send your parenting questions to: DrDon@RareKids.net.



"It may not be an Olympic sport, but those guys take the gold medal in mudslinging."

Towns County Herald

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