

# THE BLUE BANNER

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF SARAH SHADBURNE

SSHADBUR@UNCA.EDU

NEWS EDITOR MAGGIE HADDOCK

MHADDOCK@UNCA.EDU

ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR LAURA BROWNE

LBROWNE@UNCA.EDU

ARTS & FEATURES EDITOR TAYLOR SEXTON

TSEXTON@UNCA.EDU

ASSISTANT A&F EDITOR MADDY SHERER

MSHERER1@UNCA.EDU

ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR PEYTON RODGERS

PRODGERS@UNCA.EDU

ADVERTISING MANAGER VIRGINIA TAYLOR

VTAYLOR@UNCA.EDU

ASST. ADVERTISING MANAGER LONDON NEWTON

LNEWTON2@UNCA.EDU

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR EMMA JORDAN

EJORDAN@UNCA.EDU

COPY DESK CHIEF BRAILEY SHERIDAN

BSHERIDA@UNCA.EDU

MULTIMEDIA EDITOR LAWSON RUDISILL

LRUDISIL@UNCA.EDU

FACULTY ADVISER MICHAEL GOUGE

MGOUGE@UNCA.EDU

*The Blue Banner* is UNC Asheville's student newspaper. We publish each Tuesday except during summer sessions, finals week and holiday breaks. Our office is in Karpen 019.

*The Blue Banner* is a designated forum for free speech and welcomes letters to the editor, considering them on the basis of interest, space and timeliness. Letters and articles should be emailed to the editor-in-chief or to the appropriate section editor. Letters should include the writer's name, year in school and major, or other relationship to UNCA. Include a phone number to aid in verification. All articles are subject to editing.

# EDITORIAL

## THE ROOT OF GUN VIOLENCE IN THE US CONTINUES TO GO OVERLOOKED

MAGGIE HADDOCK

News Editor

mhaddock@unca.edu

The Tree of Life shooting in Pittsburgh on Oct. 27 and the Thousand Oaks shooting last Wednesday left 24 dead in total. Three weeks apart, these two incidents were not anomalous. They were just two of the 308 mass shootings this year, separated by 11 mass shootings in between them, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

Some, like Roger Gilmore in this week's Letter to the Editor, propose the presence of at least one armed guard at every place civilians gather — places of worship, nightclubs and so on — will turn these otherwise soft targets into fully equipped, safe places.

In shootings like the one at the Tree of Life synagogue, alleged shooter Robert Bowers used an AR-15 as one of his weapons. Seemingly, a handgun carried by a single armed security guard could not deliver the necessary impact to stop a mass killer with an assault rifle. Even in the case of the Thousand Oaks nightclub, the probability of one guard defending a full club before the shooter attacked seems improbable.

Now in particular, we ask: Could gun reform fix the problem? Gun reform proposed as a full ban of this weaponry would not remedy the issue, as banning any accessible thing only makes room to defy its absence.

The Second Amendment includes the right to bear arms, but these rights are not hindered unjustly by the proper precautions. Stricter background checks and investigating previous violent or suspicious activity could decrease the number of gun crimes each year. But as Gilmore

poses, criminals will always find a way to access guns, regardless of bans.

This is true, but acts of senseless violence by mass shooters quickly find space to be demonized as the likely demographic of suspects — criminals who have illegally obtained weapons. The Violence Policy Center has identified 32 concealed handgun permit owners responsible for mass shootings since 2007.

In the case of the Thousand Oaks shooting, alleged shooter Ian David Long was cited with having post-traumatic stress disorder. The Sidran Institute estimates that 20 percent of adults who have experienced significant trauma suffer from PTSD, and not all of those diagnosed commit acts of violence. Assuming every mass shooter suffers from mental illness only further isolates the already stigmatized population of those struggling with mental health, those who never commit acts of murder in their lifetime.

Until we address the bigotry behind massacres like the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting, or other acts of violence such as the 12,588 that have been killed in 2018 by some form of gun use, according to the Gun Violence Archive, we do not make the arguments for more effective gun reform. Instead, we wander aimlessly and argue nothing can be done as school children, those who worship and those who socialize fall victim to the crimes by white American men who legally obtain weapons not with the intention to defend, but with the intention to kill.

ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON GUN VIOLENCE PAGE 15