

Forum

Handgun Reform protects rights of Children

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"Don't take away my guns," read the protester's sign on October 29th outside a handgun reform rally at Grimsley high school. As part of a group of people voicing their opposition to handgun reform outside "The Million Moms March of Greensboro" (a rally advocating safer gun laws), the protester was five years old.

"Boy, 8, playing with gun shoots brother, 7, in head," read headlines in Newark, New Jersey, November 10th, twelve days later. Seven-year-old Shakur Forte thus became the next child



victim of handguns.

Gun advocates say, in accordance with National Safety Council

statistics, that the number of fatal gun shootings involving children (ages 0-14) have decreased in recent decades, from 495 in 1975 to 250 in 1995.

Rally participants at "The Million Moms March of Greensboro" say "Not One More." It is their mantra.

The October 29th rally, a "Stand Against Violence: A Rally for Sensible Gun Laws and Safe Kids," brought a variety of supporters to local Grimsley high school. Both parents and children came, including a slate of noted speakers: N.C. State Senator Kay Hagen, various State Representatives, and several local religious leaders.

According to speakers and participants alike, it was not an anti-handgun rally; it was a rally for "sensible gun laws and safe kids." The rally advocated both background checks for handguns and mandatory gun locks that could prevent child tampering.

Many gun rights advocates

also came and protested outside the rally. They felt handgun reform, the purpose of the rally, placed their 2nd Amendment right (to bear arms) in jeopardy. Outside Grimsley high school, on the streets, men, women, and children held various signs, among them "Guns save Lives" and "Guns don't kill people, people kill people."

But what happens when children kill other children? When brothers shoot brothers?

In Newark, New Jersey, as two young boys were playing with a gun, seven year-old Shakur Forte was accidentally shot by his older brother. The gun belonged to the boys' legal guardian, Ian Forte, who was later charged with endangering the welfare of a child and possession of drugs. The bullet entered the back of Shakur's head and came out his mouth, but he survived and was taken to the hospital and listed in critical condition as of Thursday, November 9th.

Fortunately Shakur

Forte's name will not be added to the list of children killed this year in accidental shootings. Unfortunately, however, these statistics are the same ones that



Gun Rights Advocates will use to suggest that accidental gun shooting among children is decreasing. Does it take a death to emphasize the significance of this accident? Is it not enough that Shakur Forte almost lost his life to his brother?

Not for gun rights advocates apparently. Forte did not die. His story will mean nothing unless it is used to advocate, as was the agenda of the rally at Grimsley high school, gun laws that protect children's well-being, preserving their right to life as secured within the Declaration of Independence.

Winter Intramurals are here!

Smiles Smith and Erica Sammartino
STAFF WRITER AND GUEST WRITER

It's a story I can tell my grandkids. Our volleyball team was undefeated in the tournament—with a 0-0 record.

The tournament was cancelled because only a few people showed up. My soccer team was guaranteed to make the finals. However, there were only two teams in the league. And I don't know about you but I don't prefer playing two-on-two softball.

These have been some of my experiences with intramurals. To say the least, intramurals haven't been perfect at



Guilford. Attendance has been a problem.

Chris Oswald, class of '00, played flag football four years ago. Sometimes they had games and other times they didn't. "We sat around for half an hour and when we

were sure no one would show up we just left," said Oswald. "The games were on Sunday morning so most people had been up late the night before and were sleeping in."

I played intramural basketball for three years at Guilford. Luckily I've lived to tell the story. Big scary guys with short tempers dominated intramural basketball. It was bad, very bad. Sometimes fights broke out. Sportsmanship was missing. Student refs just let us play.

I distinctly remember one particular play. The play involved me, Smiles Smith, a freshman beanstalk, and a giant named, let's say Bill.

Bill played linebacker on the football team. Bill didn't like me very much. He would shove me around under the boards. Nevertheless, I guarded him as best I could.

Our team had just scored. I picked him up at about half-court. The look in his eye told me, I'm gonna smash you, as it usually did. Nothing was out

of the ordinary. This time, however, he really did smash me. He charged at me and leveled me with one swift motion. No foul was called.

Senior Tom Brewster recalls his experience. "I liked playing intramural basketball but I hated losing," said Brewster. "My team got spanked by 50 or 60 points each game. In a way I miss intramurals but I'm also glad to be gone."

We know where intramural sports have been; but what do students think about intramurals and what directions are they headed?

Intramural sports. Where are they at Guilford College? Where are they going? When I asked some students about

their feelings on intramurals, one of my first responses came from sophomore Claire Senseney. She asked, "Does anyone play intramurals?"

This seems to be a sentiment held by all Guilco students. When I asked another student, Michelle Fournier,

she said "Honestly, I don't know anything about them."

Intramurals are not supposed to be competitive. They were established so anyone can be active and have fun.

Leslie Mountcastle, the new director of student activities, wants the student body to know that she wants intramurals, "to be fun. You don't have to know how to play." Intramurals are supposed to be relaxing and could even help students reduce stress. But the only way this can happen is if there is more involvement.

Leslie is trying to raise student awareness about intramural sports. She is spreading word through R.A.'s, campus clubs, and the first-year center. Intramurals are always looking for suggestions for new games and sports to play. Look for spring inter-mural signups next semester. The only way to get an enjoyable experience out of intramurals is to begin playing.

