

If Amendment Revoked, What's Next?

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

To The Editors:

I submit the following opinions in response to a feature that advocated gun-control in the April 7, 1981 edition of the Herald. The opinions expressed are my own.

Sources of information: 1. **Holy Bible** - Kings James Version; 2. **Kings Mountain and Its Heroes**, by Lyman C. Draper; 3. **Kings Mountain**, by Hank Messick; 4. **1976 Gun Digest**, edited by John Amber; 5. **Gun Control: A Decision for Americans**, by Edard F. Dolan, Jr.

GUN CONTROL AND FREEDOM

On April 1, 1789, the first session of the 1st U.S. Congress convened. The first 10 amendments to the Constitution were ratified on December 15, 1791. These amendments became known as the Bill of Rights. The amendment we are most concerned with here is the 2nd or the "Right To Bear Arms Amendment." The 2nd Amendment reads:

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.

Today, this right is endangered. The anti-gun people point out that the word "militia" means the National Guard. To really understand this amendment you have to look at that word like the people of 200 years ago did.

The Founding Fathers defined the word in their debates. Militia meant "every citizen qualified to vote." It meant "the people," it did not mean any organized military organization, state or national, to be formed a century later.

The Founding Fathers did not want or trust a large standing army. They were afraid such an army could fall into the hands of a future despot and be

used against the people. Instead they wanted the country's main defense to be various state militias. These militias were to be made up of citizens who quickly became soldiers in time of danger. The amendment does not say that the militia members would be the only citizens to have guns.

Alexander Hamilton said in his papers that, actually, there were to be two militias. One was to be "organized" of citizen soldiers. The other was to be "unorganized" and made up of the rest of the population. He clearly indicates that the Second Amendment was to give all Americans the right to own a gun.

After the amendment was adopted, a proposal was made to add four new words. These words would have altered it to read "the right of the people to bear arms for the common defense shall not be infringed." The proposal was defeated. An American had the right to own a gun for any legitimate purpose.

One point should be remembered about defending yourself against a suppressive government. The National Guards are state armies but their commander-in-chief is the President. The President can "federalize" the Guards at any time. In the hands of the wrong President, they could be turned against the people they are supposed to protect.

As you know a revolutionary battle was fought at Kings Mountain. Did you realize that both sides were composed of citizen militia. The only soldier

that belonged to a regular army was Patrick Ferguson. If the Americans who fought and won at Kings Mountain had been denied guns because of a "Gun Law," we might well be subjects of the Queen today.

One of the groups that push for more gun control laws is the news media, both electronic and print. I wonder what the reaction would be if someone tried to restrict the rights guaranteed in the 1st Amendment, that is the one that guarantees freedom of the press and freedom of religion, among others.

The following comments were made by U.S. Rep. Steve Symms (R-Idaho) to the Subcommittee on Crime in part from an editorial that appeared in the **1976 Gun Digest**.

"Let me begin by assuring you that I am all in favor of keeping guns out of the hands of criminals, although I must confess that I am much more concerned about the commission of a crime than I am about the method or weapons employed. Nevertheless, disarming criminals of firearms is a worthy goal. Unfortunately, it is also completely unrealistic. Those who attempt to impose strict registration requirements or outright bans on firearms as ways of keeping them away from criminals are fighting a losing battle. Common sense tells us that the reason they are classified as criminals in the first place is because they are in the habit of breaking laws. There is no reason to assume that they will obey federal gun laws any more than the other laws they have broken.

"The question of federal gun registration goes even beyond this argument, however. As a result of the *Naynes* decision by the Supreme Court in 1968, criminals would not be legally obliged to register their guns - only honest citizens would. The Court ruled that since persons who possess firearms illegally would be incriminating themselves if they came forward and registered them, that they were in effect exempted from gun registration.

"The desire to ban firearms as a solution to crime is very analogous to the desire in the 1920's to ban liquor as a solution to intemperance. Gun prohibitionists and liquor prohibitionists both reach their conclusions by convoluted logic about human behavior. Their assumption is that human beings are victims - mere pawns of the inanimate objects around them. Remove the objects and all will be well. The Prohibition period should have taught us that this kind of reasoning is nonsense, that deviant behavior is primarily a function of human free will. And just as whiskey was readily available in the 1920's to whoever chose to break the law, so will firearms be easily obtainable through illegal channels by the crime community. The black market opportunities for organized crime would be staggering. Ultimately, any ban on firearms would have the effect of funneling huge amounts of money into the coffers of those who the law was originally intended to control."

In conclusion, Rep. Symms says, "My final objection to federal firearms control rests on moral and philosophical grounds. Gunowners, hunters, sportsmen, collectors and shooters are, as a group, probably the most law-abiding people in the entire United States. They are not potential killers and menaces to their communities as the anti-firearms campaign portrays them ... To penalize these people who use firearms for lawful purposes because of the criminality of a minute number is not in conscience with the fundamental American principle of justice and fairness. Nor does it set well with our heritage and history as a free people."

After reading Rep. Symms remarks about that ruling by the Supreme Court does anyone still think that a registration program at any level of government would stop criminals from getting a gun?

Laws that define the act of murder and dictate penalties for an act of murder have been on the books for as long as history has been recorded. In the Bible we are told that the first murderer was Cain. No one knows how long ago that happened but the murder recorded in the Book of Genesis predated the invention of firearms by thousands if not millions of years. Ever since that time, even with laws that prescribed death as punishment, murder has been one of the leading crimes. Did laws that condemn murder stop Lee Harvey Oswald from killing John Kennedy or James Earl Ray from

killing Martin Luther King? Did the laws of civilization stop Adolf Hitler and his henchmen from murdering 6,000,000 plus human beings during World War II? How about the untold millions that have died at other men's hands since time began? If laws worked would there even be a crime rate to report? Would there be a need to have prisons to separate law-breakers from society? If laws worked wouldn't we have Heaven on Earth? The whole idea is not to break laws.

Some people are going to break any gun law that is in effect now or any law that might be enacted in the future.

Why has something that was looked upon with pride in this country 30 years ago become a thing to hide in the 1980's? The thing I refer to is gun ownership and believing in the right of a free and proud people to own firearms.

Americans are guaranteed a lot of basic rights by the Constitution. We are the only people in the world today that have these rights and freedoms. The right to bear arms is just one of them. Our country was founded on a dream of freedom. The United States of America in 1981 is the end result of 200 years of that dream evolving into what we are today. Our country is not perfect by any means but even with all its problems I would not want to live anywhere else or under any other form of government. Would you?

I will fight for my rights. All of them, not just the right to bear arms. If we as a nation surrender any of our constitutional rights, I believe there would begin a domino reaction that would result in the loss of every right and freedom we now enjoy. Think long and hard, if the 2nd Amendment is revoked, which amendment and what freedom would be next on the list?

Alan L. Jones
304 Fulton St., Kings Mountain

He's For Gun Control

Dear Editors,

Our President lies wounded, felled by a bullet fired from a "Saturday Night Special." This favorite weapon of the assassin was easily obtained at a Dallas pawnshop.

In all but one of the eleven assassinations and attempted assassinations of Presidents or Presidential candidates, the assassin used a handgun. Presidents Lincoln, Garfield, and McKinley were slain. Candidate Robert Kennedy was killed. Governor George Wallace is crippled. In September 1975 alone, President Ford's life was threatened twice by assassins wielding handguns. Now President Reagan has been shot.

Must we bury another President before the Congress acts to pass an effective national handgun control law? Together we can make the Congress act now to control handguns. Join with us today.

N.T. "Pete" Shields
Chairman, Handgun Control, Inc.
810 18th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Thanks To City

An Open Letter To City of Kings Mountain:

I appreciate the lovely flowers you planted around the Depot, first the lovely camellias, then the pretty white cherry trees. Now, the white dogwood and pink double cherry trees.

I enjoy the delicious meals provided by the Kings Mountain Aging Program, the nice programs and the friends there.

Thank you for all of us who participate in the activities of the Kings Mountain Aging Program at the Depot.

ELIZABETH RHEA
West Mountain St.

Roads In Bad Shape

To the citizens of Kings Mountain:

Our once fine town is getting very slack. It's our job to shape it up to what it once was. Take for instance the public roads. Nobody likes driving on bumpy, tore-up roads, but in Kings Mountain, that's all there hardly is.

About the only road that is even decent enough to drive on is the one in front of the new, expensive city hall or otherwise known as the Governmental Facilities Building. You know? The building that was built off those government loans, that your children and their children will still be paying for if they live here when they are grown up.

Speaking of our town's children. The imagination park has really come along for the little kids, but what about us teenagers. Some of us like to play putt-putt, but we don't have a course. Oh yes, we do

but is so full of weeds and is always closed I forgot about it. The swimming pool was once a pretty fun place to be but it gets too overcrowded and is pretty bad out of shape. Nobody wants to go swimming with rocks and bottles.

We could go on talking about the bad things that's become of this town, but we don't have enough paper. One last thing before we close. If this big KM town would spend as much time and money restoring this town as much as they do tearing it up, we would have a much nicer town.

David Green
801 Henry Street

John Etters
804 Henry Street

Support Emergency Services

Dear Editor,

One of our much needed and desired public services is in serious jeopardy. The Kings Mountain Emergency Rescue Services, Inc. formed in 1977 and beginning with a deficit of approximately \$19,000 is in dire need of citizen funds and support to liquidate a pressing balance of approximately \$3,600 on equipment plus funds for continued operation. We've done well thus far on the debt but with a little extra effort on our part along with the community's faithful support we can eradicate the balance due and gain funds for supplies, equipment, etc.

The Services is dedicated and owned by the citizens of the Greater Kings Mountain area, funds to provide this outstanding service to us are obtained by 100% donations and no charge to those served! Additional revenue is gained by various sales; bake, hot dog, rummage and door to door solicitation by volunteers (usually the crewmen).

The Technicians and crewmen who give so unselfishly of their time to obtain required training and "Duty-Hours" receive no compensation other than the satisfaction of having served their fellow citizens in time of crisis when the need is most assuring. They spend many long, hard hours of training to help save lives and certainly give much of themselves in the process. Can we not now give something in return for this devotion? Kings Mountain is a progressive area, let's not regress by losing such a much needed service. We are only helping ourselves by providing what these outstanding Volunteers need to continue their generous mission. Being handicapped and having had to use the service several times naturally I'm especially respectful for the care and professional concern they provide and the long hours they endure in training, duty and away from home.

Presently commanding the squad is Capt. Edward Collins and contributions will be picked up Friday thru Sun., April 17-19 until 6 p.m. or may be mailed to Kings Mountain Emergency Rescue Services, P.O. Box 189, City, 28086. Call 739-8088 for donation pick up. All donations are needed, appreciated and tax deductible.

Please citizens lets give to our own so that they may continue to give us a service much needed and desired! Business firms support is highly desired.

This letter is not meant in any manner by myself or content to reflect any dissatisfaction for the highly competent, professional and very important services provided to us by the Cleveland County Emergency Med. Service which is staffed by E.M.T. of the highest caliber and an important credit to our community. They too are ours!

C. Ross Baumgardner
Waco Road, Kings Mountain

All In Good Time

I don't know about you other folks out there, but I have no desire whatsoever to live to be 100 years old. Every now and then I read an article about how the scientists will unlock a mystery in the near future that will make time stand still and we will become ageless.

I don't care what they do, I believe we will feel tired and worn out and more than ready to call it quits. If you've lived a fairly good life, worked hard, and done at least a part of what was expected of you when it's time to go, I'll be ready. How about you?

What really scares me is this "lingering on" business. I think everything possible should be done to keep a person in good health and spirits for as long as possible. When the time comes it seems cruel to me to drag out a terminal illness.

Many diseases that once killed so many people of all ages have come under control. Real miracles have come about.

Now the scientists are beginning to work on our genes. Here they are hopeful of great discoveries. Maybe these should be left alone.

Most experts agree that what we eat and drink and do make up our body health. One of the most important things is a positive outlook on life. I think I have that. I'm happy most of the time and positive I don't want to live to be 100 - not even 99.

A friend of mine jokingly (maybe not) suggested once some time ago that we go "off" and have our faces lifted and a few other things. I said "What's the use, the outside might be spruced up, but the inside would be the same old worn out me."

I love cartoons - some are really good. One fellow said to the other "Why don't you get up and go to work?" He answered, "I'm too tired." "You're not either, you're just lazy." Well, I love this - "Lazy people can get tired too." Amen to that.

Americans have gone hog wild over exercises - all kinds of weird doings besides the regular games. It's supposed to be good for you. I guess it is. I wouldn't know. Just doing what I have to, to keep me and my household together takes all the strength I've got and more.

When I think of doing all these chores over and over, on and on, it just seems quitting time won't be so bad.

Johnny Carson had a woman on his show the other night that said she was 96 years old. I declare she didn't look a day over 75 at the most! She talked bright and cheerful and said she'd just recently started making commercials. Imagine that. She said she'd been married 62 years and had been smart. She'd married a man 7 years younger than she was and he'd helped her a lot - good planning.

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Anyway she's one in a million. I'll stick to my hopes of not making it to 100 - for better or worse.

We come into this world just as we are without any choice as to who we will be. Seems only fair we should have a say so as to our departure, if we have a chance. It should be quiet, easy, and over when it's time.

I couldn't help but laugh at the story I read recently about a woman 106 years old. She said that she would probably have been dead 60 years ago if she'd ever gotten married! Be that as it may most of us are willing to take a chance or two. Besides you know the old saying "There's no fool like an old fool." I may make it in spite of myself if I keep on giving up bad habits. Folks, I'm not on my fifth day of abstaining from my consumption of jelly beans. It's not easy!