

# the daily collegian opinions

editorial opinion

## Fear kills

Violence could end if people discard their shells

With rocks tied to sticks or with nuclear bombs, people have been killing each other since there were people to kill.

A week ago, someone shot President Reagan. The president's brother, Neil, said the incident came as no big surprise to him. We live in a violent society, he said, and should come to expect such horrors.

Yes, more and more, Americans seem to expect violence as part of everyday life.

Handgun sales continue to boom, and people are signing up for training in marksmanship, martial arts and personal defense.

Turtle-like, people are responding to the fear of violence by pulling shells around themselves and hiding their eyes.

But where does this leave Mr. Reagan, Mr. Brady, Mr. McCarthy and Mr. DeLahanty? On the sidewalk, bleeding into the gutter, with

ing in pain like the thousands of others who die of gunshot and knife wounds each year while the rest of us prance away in terror.

Everyone is to blame for violence, not just owners of guns and knives, not just killers. Everyone is responsible. And the whole country must respond together rather than withdrawing into each individual shell.

The gun control issue must be decided. If banning handguns would save lives, perhaps banning handguns is one answer. If banning violence on television would save lives, maybe that's an answer. Other solutions must be explored.

But to continue to accept violence as a natural part of our society is to condone the assassination of presidents, the killing of next-door neighbors, and nuclear holocaust.

The Daily Collegian's editorial opinion is determined by its Board of Opinion, with the editor-in-chief holding final responsibility.



## Handgun control: PRO..... and CON.....

Somebody has to write this column. Somebody has to take the usual flack from National Rifle Association members. Somebody once again has to be accused of starting the United States down the road to communism. Somebody has to suffer the inevitable chastisement for suggesting that the Bill of Rights be violated.

I guess that somebody might as well be me this time.

But I'm not a dedicated humanitarian, a communist or a martyr. I'm just scared.

Monday was the second time in my 21 years that I heard someone say, "The president's been shot." I was just 4 years old the first time, not old enough to really understand what had just happened. This time I understood. This time I was appalled.

John F. Kennedy is dead. Martin Lu-

ther King is dead. John Lennon is dead. A neighbor of mine, struck by a stray gunshot in a bar room brawl three years ago, is dead. So are countless others who are victims of gunshot wounds every year.

And the blood is on our hands.

It's time to stop the killing. Don't tell me that the U.S. Constitution protects the right of citizens to keep and bear arms. Don't tell me that gun control is the first step to communism. And don't tell me that "guns don't kill people, people do."

Because guns do kill people. And the Constitution, if you take the time to read it, only protects our right to a well-regulated militia—not the right of crazy people to carry guns. Alexander Haig should be the exception, not the rule.

Having freedom is not very useful when you can't walk down a public street without fearing for your life. And the two rights that our Constitution certainly does guarantee are life and liberty.

But I don't really believe Congress or anyone else will establish gun control in

simply a man who allegedly walked into a pawn shop, bought a gun and shot the President of the United States.

In the home of the brave, survival of the fittest rules—in the street as well as the political arena.

I know the inevitable flow of anti-gun control letters will follow this column in just a few days. They'll say I'm un-American, a communist, a bleeding-heart. Some of them may even say I'm crazy.

But let's hope they're wrong. Because there's nothing to stop me from walking into a pawn shop and buying a gun.

And God knows there are enough crazy people walking around with guns—crazy enough to kill, but not too crazy for our society to give them a way to kill, quickly and effectively.

Doug Bell is a 12th-term journalism major and contributing editor for The Daily Collegian.

Why me?

After visiting John Lennon's home only weeks after his slaying, then only two weeks later, hearing that my uncle, a New York City police officer, was killed with an illegal handgun, and finally, last week, anxiously waiting for the dreaded news that thankfully never came about President Reagan, why am I still against gun control?

On this block, there is a restaurant. Among all this violence, the restaurant had never been touched; not even the sportsman lawfully used to hunt with being banned?

President Reagan himself is against handgun control, and I'll just bet that it still is his position.

Finally, I would like to point out that the right

to keep and bear arms has been a cherished freedom for many years, very dear to a large number of people throughout the United States.

So all you people who think that this incident could have been avoided through some type of gun control, think over what I have said and use a little common sense when making your cockamamie claims that gun control is the answer to our spiraling crime rate.

Mike Heary, 10th-administration of justice March 30

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## Deprived

The term "gun control" is a misnomer. Since they are inanimate objects, without wills or the ability to act on their own, there is obviously no need to control guns. "Gun control" is in actuality "people control." It consists of depriving people, to one degree or another, of the most effective means of self-defense: firearms.

You can't depend on the police to protect you from violent crime. Police apprehend criminals after the crime is done, very rarely do they stumble into it. Their limited resources make it impossible for them to be there when needed.

If you want protection you will have to provide it yourself. Handguns are just right. They can be employed by one single, weak, innocent against a group of strong evil attackers. They are equalizers and, by definition, evil groups attack good individuals, not the other way around.

Statistically, in 1966, 87 percent of all gun crimes in New York City were committed by unregistered weapons. In Detroit in 1971, the figure was 75 percent. Real criminals won't register their guns.

In 1970, states with strict gun control had a murder

rate of 4.1 per 100,000 people. In the same year, states with more libertarian laws regarding guns had 3.9 deaths from handguns per 100,000 people.

Philadelphia, in 1968, enacted more restrictive gun ownership. During the next two years, it experienced a 17 percent increase in murders (increasing to 37 percent in the next year and a half). During the same period, Pittsburgh, with a relatively libertarian gun law, had a 1 percent decline in homicides. Criminals tend to kill the unarmed, not the armed.

Finally, if one likes political reasons one should remember that on the day Nazi Germany swallowed the main part of Czechoslovakia, the arms registration lists were seized and the people disarmed. The same thing happened in Hungary in 1948 when it went Communist.

I have never fired a gun in my life but I sleep better knowing there are 90 million private guns in America.

When only police have guns, the police state is just around the corner.

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## The American way

By ALLEN R. MARSHALL  
graduate-geography  
March 30, 1981

Once again the violent dimension of American life has gripped us with a fear we have come to know all too well over the recent years. The act of terror perpetrated this afternoon against our president and others is not an isolated incident, but rather an example of the way we have chosen to vent our frustrations and disappointments. The assailant was not alone in committing a crime of rage today. Every one of us that sat in front of the TV and wished for Hinkley's death or harm as punishment committed a crime of rage as well. Are we any better than him, even if we do not actually pull the trigger?

The American way of life has come to be synonymous with a fascination for violence and hate. Violent sports, shoot-em-up entertainment, cruelty to wives and children, threats of war and armed intervention to promote political stability exemplified by U.S. policy towards El Salvador— all these are symptomatic of this fascination. We as a society and a nation have cultivated a response to frustration which is fundamentally violent. If we choose to condemn the

assailant's actions, I think it is essential that we examine the tenor of American life and how it affects our judgment of the situation.

Violence, justified in the name of President Reagan and the others experienced today and the unbridled violence of American life generally will never abate.

The society condemning today's act of terror is also a society which finds its heroes in warriors with smoking guns. Until this moral contradiction is resolved, we will never be a nation at peace, and acts of cruelty and hatred will continue to haunt us.

Dean Longo is a sixth-term aerospace engineering major and a staff writer for The Daily Collegian.

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## Think

With the clamor and emotionalism brought on by the recent assassination attempt on President Reagan, I feel that students should use their heads when deciding on the issue of gun control. The incident has brought on the wrath of gun control advocates and their reactionary counterparts. The solution to the handgun problem ranges from the views of gun control advocates who feel the abolition of private gun ownership or strict control is the answer, to the views of pro-gun advocates who feel that strict mandatory sentences are the answer. In talking with many students, I find that the majority of opinions do not lie around the mean of these solutions, but at the extremes.

If a student stops and puts either one of these solutions into the real world, he or she will realize neither one is the answer. Students at the University can easily observe that the government is not very efficient in limiting the supply of controlled substances to the public. The mass quantities of marijuana, speed and other such controlled substances available on this campus should be proof enough of that. In effect, then, the argument of pro-gun enthusiasts is correct in that the government would only be disarming the law-abiding citizen. On the other hand, steep case loads and overcrowding in American prisons do not make the solution of pro-gun advocates very feasible either.

I feel that the problem we currently face goes far deeper than violence caused by handguns. Many freedoms and privileges are abused by Americans every day. It is the cost of living in a free society. Personally, I strongly oppose gun control even though I feel the solution offered by

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## Shuddering

As I sit listening to the reports concerning the shooting of President Reagan, I shudder at the thought of opening the paper tomorrow and looking at the headlines which claim that handguns should be banned.

I would be the first one to admit that what transpired was shameful and very regrettable. However, the fact remains that banning handguns to stop the crime of murder is like banning butane lighters to stop the act of smoking; banning water pipes to stop people from smoking marijuana; banning the automobile in order to stop people from getting maimed or killed; or banning alcohol hoping people will not drink alcoholic beverages.

The fact is that people will always have access to guns when they wish to obtain them. Furthermore, banning handguns penalizes the law-abiding citizen who wishes to engage in sport shooting or hunting.

Taken one step further, if handguns indeed were ever banned, what is to stop the rifle that the sportsman lawfully uses to hunt with being banned?

President Reagan himself is against handgun control, and I'll just bet that it still is his position.

Finally, I would like to point out that the right

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## Not well

This here American hasn't been doing well lately. I mean sex, violence, drugs, scandal, swindle and stealing are increasingly mortal hazards.

However, recently it seems this country has acquired a taste for blood. It's like a Dracula syndrome: the Kennedys, Malcolm X, George Wallace, Martin Luther King, John Lennon, Vernon Jordan, Ronald Reagan and company, Atlanta, Dade County, legal prisoner executions.

We couldn't even salvage another Japan, Korea, or Taiwan out of Vietnam despite the vain bloodletting from both friends and enemies.

So what's to be expected? After all, the 1948 to 1960 war babies, intentionally, circumstantially or ignorantly are living up to our names.

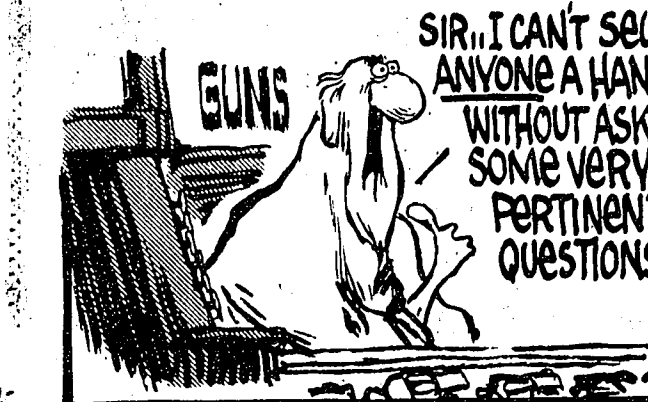
Something tells me that "the system" has some very major flaws at home, and tightening the social screws will only increase the pressure in the melting pot. How can this country even attempt to police and incorporate the whole world when clearly frustration and gross socioeconomic inequality pervades here, especially in

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## Response

I congratulate you for publishing Wendy Miller's review of the Whetstone Run/Bufalo Chip-kickers concert in the HUB on March 22. The review has stirred much discussion and controversy. Considering I have an interest—both personal and professional—in bluegrass, I must respond.

I quarrel with Miller's definition of bluegrass, and I question her interpretation of the perfor-



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