

editorial opinion

Owning up to responsibility

The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

The two bank robbers who shot and killed two FBI agents and wounded several others in Miami last week exercised that right.

In 1983 alone, 9,014 Americans were murdered with handguns, 1,100 others were killed accidentally and 12,000 used handguns to take their own lives.

In 1968, the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy prompted the U.S. Congress to adopt the 1968 Gun Control Act to regulate — not prohibit — the use of guns.

But the Gun Control Act ain't what it used to be — not after what the House of Representatives and the National Rifle Association did to it last week.

The House passed a bill that would mandate minimum sentences for using a gun in a violent crime and allow the interstate sale of rifles and shotguns.

What the House did not allow — heading back to the House — was the bill that would face some of the lunatics who exercise their

Second Amendment right — is the interstate sale of handguns. This move was considered a major political defeat to the NRA.

Most politicians dream of such major political "defeats." The NRA's powerful Washington lobby of three million people, its \$1.4 million in campaign contributions to 1984 elections and its advertising campaign claiming certain legislators want to take away people's guns have borne fruit.

Several lawmakers have admitted that the House is intimidated by the NRA; it has made gun control an issue that could win or lose an election.

"It's a classic example of the power of big money and a well-orchestrated campaign by a narrow interest," said U.S. Rep. Robert G. Torricelli, D-N.J. "It's an example of the Congress at its worst."

Further, it appears that the same bill will also pass in the Senate, which passed a similar measure last summer. Let's face it, the NRA has become the advocate of gun dealers, not gun owners, and has wrenched the nation's lawmakers into conforming with its ever-narrowing interests.

With all rights guaranteed under the Constitution come responsibility. The First Amendment guarantees newspapers their right to print. But newspapers also have a responsibility not to recklessly libel an individual or invade a citizen's privacy.

It is time for Congress to put aside its political considerations long enough to stand up to the NRA and make sure that with the right to sell and own firearms comes accountability under the law.

reader opinion

Injustice

A 75 percent discount in college tuition — unheard of in the Amazon. No folks it's Penn State! By now are you baffled? The other day in class I was moaning because summer semester tuition bills are coming out soon.

Someone sitting next to me in class stated that children and spouses of Penn State faculty and staff attend the University with a 75 percent discount in tuition cost per semester.

Penn State's administration is complaining because the University did not get enough funds from the state, so tuition is expected to increase.

At one time, the reason for this huge tuition discount was true but wages and benefits at the University are now comparable to most businesses, and the benefits are above average.

Some people may say discounted tuition is just a fringe benefit of the system, but I strongly disagree! This is a public university offering a superior level of higher education, so why should some of us be charged more than others for our education?

My suggestion is to make everyone's tuition the same (provided they are Pennsylvania residents). This increase in funds won't solve the University's budget problems, but it sure seems like the right way to handle this injustice.

Along with using the stock to direct these companies, how about the upcoming congressional elections? If everyone who is against apartheid registers to vote and would write a letter to his congressman, we would force the issue to become an important question in Congress.

During the past year we have been reminded of the struggle that is taking place in South Africa.

Injustice

I believe we should give a round of applause to the Black Student Coalition Against Racism and the Undergraduate Student Government and others who have helped to bring to the plight of the South African Blacks to our attention.

Their sincere efforts to educate us of the evils of apartheid is in keeping with the traditions of university. However, the ending of apartheid by divestment brings some doubts to mind.

I am against apartheid and racism. I support efforts to stop such practices. Divestment from companies that are in South Africa may be a good idea, but only in the short term.

Let me ask this: suppose the University does divest, then what? Will the protests cease? Will the voice for justice in South Africa become silent on campus?

I certainly hope not, but I believe that is what will happen. By divesting, we are going to be satisfied and say, "Well, we did our part?" Or will the call to divest become a slap in our faces?

Women have their problems. One such problem is traditional job stereotyping which involves low pay and low prestige.

However, the greatest problem that women deal with is that our society (both male and female) perpetuate traditional male/female roles. Little girls are taught that their success in life depends upon acceptance by someone else, usually a male. Little boys are taught to achieve.

Why are girls taught to be passive and submissive and little boys taught to be assertive and independent? Just because this society has always been a white, male world doesn't mean there is no hope.

There are opportunities for all of us to change the existing sex role stereotyping. Children should be raised with an idea of a healthy individual's characteristics (not male, not female, but an integrated approach).

Uniqueness can exist when we stop the stereotyping that sets us all apart. This will break the narrow thinking of the white male society and create a more integrated society.

Renee Lehman junior-high education

The desire to turn life into an irreverent joke with a razor punchline

So much more attractive inside a moral cloak — from "Moral Kiosk" by R.E.M. I wish my roommate would get her head out of the clouds and back in the gutter where it belongs.



Emil Shay

Lately chaos has been an elemental theme in my life. It makes my mind licky. "Oh, Jesus," I say when I open the newspaper and eventually turn to the letters to the editor.

I think about it sometimes though. I think about the world — where it's going, where I'm going, who the hell the world thinks it is — and I feel chaotic and want to strike out. I want to spray-paint graffiti on it.

My thoughts turn, again, to things mind-fused under "Other Universal Ironies and Vast Ponderments."

I wonder where that river of life-consciousness is taking me and what does the

scheme of things matter when the universe is speeding inexorably toward entropy anyway?

It's funny to think that in what, another few billion years, all the stars will have burned out if the universe hasn't first collapsed back into a monoblob.

Speaking of Washington, I want to shake the hand of Ronald Reagan with a joy buzzer concealed in my palm. I want to take a marker and black out the front teeth of Mary Lou Retton in every damn battery commercial and cereal box she ever appeared on. I want to defile that smile.

With blatant disregard for social norms, I want to urinate on public walls. I want to sit in the middle of a busy street and read Webster's New Riverside University Dictionary aloud to passing motorists.

I want to climb trees and buildings like a monkey and throw paper airplanes to people below. I want to go on national TV and give the world the finger.

Hey! I get down on my knees and praise God every night. Hey! I click my heels and sing "Happy Days Are Here Again!" whenever the phone bill comes in the mail.

I don't want to hurt anyone; I just want them to know I think they're stupid. Hopefully, in the most offensive way possible. I want to do cynical instead of be cynical. I want to be anti-everything.

But here I am going to college so I can get a nice job like every other good little mother's son. Here I am studying hard so I can get a high grade point average like every other college kid wanting to get ahead in the world.

I don't like being a part of society. You can call me nutty. But I don't mind being a part of humanity. I like life. I like myself. I like most people, although I do not like what some of them think, do, say or stand for — or the type of music they listen to.

Still, I like to think of myself as otherwise. Still, I want to paint Pattee Library purple with red and green polka dots and alternating slashes of diagonal black and blue lines.

And still I think 80 percent of the population would probably flunk a test on originality and most, if asked, would give the wrong answer to the question "Why do I wear sunglasses when it's not sunny?"

I look at the world and I sometimes get a bad taste in my mouth. I gargle with cynicism.

Emil Thass is a senior majoring in English and a columnist for The Daily Collegian. His columns appear every other Tuesday.

We're not the N.R.A. We just happened to be living our lives in peace when we were shot by nuts and criminals who were able to easily buy guns. That's all we wanted to say.

The Daily Collegian Tuesday, April 15, 1986. Editor: Mark Ashenfelter; Assistant Sports Editors: Chris Raymond, Carl D. Rath, Doug Frank; Arts Editor: Pat Grandjean; Assistant Arts Editor: Victoria Jaffe; Science Editor: Nan Crystal Arens; Graphics Editor: Tony Ciccarelli; Photo Editor: Gregg Zelink; Assistant Photo Editor: Cristy Rickard.

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