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SAGA SNIPPETS

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Online Forum

Please take note that SAGA now has an online Forum.

To join please go to:

http://saga.org.za/smf_forum/index.php

Click on the Register button. This will take you to the registration agreement. You will then be taken to the registration page. Fill in your details.

You will then get two verification prompts. Once you are registered, you will receive an email that you need to use to activate your account. Thereafter you will be able to participate on the forum.

Gunsmith List

Some time ago, in response to a number of requests, a list of Gunsmiths was put up on our website. The idea was to provide gun owners with the details of accredited gunsmiths in each region.

Unfortunately, the list is now horribly out of date and we are in the process of checking/updating the information.

If you are an accredited gunsmith and your details are not on our site please send them to us. Or if your local gunsmith is not on the list, please urge him to get in touch with us.

The Gun Genie and its Bottle By Ivo Vegter

Every time there's an unfortunate incident involving guns, the clamour arises: Ban guns! Ban gun nuts! The problem is that there's very little logic in that argument. Whether you like guns or not, banning them would be both morally questionable and practically ineffective.

It is easy to be outraged about an armed gunman who opens fire on innocent victims. It would be unnatural not to be. But anger, fear and despair do not make for sound public policy.

The rhetoric after shooting incidents is crass, distasteful and ultimately misleading. There are accusations that those who support the right to carry guns are directly responsible for the deaths. This response was typified by a vile scene, in Bowling for Columbine, in which Michael Moore ambushed an elderly Charlton Heston, then president of America's National Rifle Association. When snubbed, Moore left a photograph of a young shooting victim, as if Heston himself had shot her.

In other cases, political partisans, most commonly from the anti-gun left which believes government goons should be the only people with the right use deadly force, try to pin shootings on their political opponents. Sometimes, attempts to smear political opponents stick, despite turning out to be untrue.

Partisan attacks that try to blame violent events on political opposition are routine, but they are cheap shots. They ignore the simple fact that any criminal will have political or religious views, and will probably be in part motivated by them. The actions of the criminal do not reflect on others who hold similar views, but do not consider those views a cause for murder. Guilt by association is a logical fallacy.

Violence occurs on both sides of the political spectrum. The Red Brigades, Action Directe, the Baader Meinhof Gang, various liberation and separatist organisations, Shining Path, FARC, the Weather Underground, the Black Panthers, were (or are) all aligned with left-wing politics. They've hijacked airliners, bombed restaurants and assassinated politicians. That does not make Michael Moore a terrorist.

The guy who tried to assassinate US congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in 2011 listed favourite books by authors including George Orwell, L Frank Baum, Aesop, Homer, Lewis Carroll, Ray Bradbury, JM Barrie, Harper Lee, Ayn Rand, Ken Kesey, Karl Marx, Hermann Hesse, Ernest Hemingway, Jonathan Swift, Adolf Hitler, and Plato. Which of these should we blame for his violence?

Popular riots often involve left-wing causes, such as the infamous Battle in Seattle in 1999, the deadly Genoa G8 protest in 2001, and the violent demonstrations in Ros-

… The Gun Genie and its Bottle Continued

tock, Germany, in 2007. There is even an emergent risk of violent attacks motivated by concern for the environment. Why lobbing Molotov cocktails in the streets is any more acceptable than a shooting spree is a mystery to me.

Accept that the world is filled with crazy, criminal, angry, rebellious or desperate people. People who share their particular beliefs are not fair game. As James Fallows once wrote on the cloudy logic of "political" shootings: "very often the 'politics' are obscure, personal, or reflecting mental disorders rather than 'normal' political disagreements."

It is trite to say that a weapon that isn't in the hands of a perpetrator cannot be used to commit violence. Of course it won't. If you ban swimming pools, you'd expect fewer deaths by drowning, too. Perhaps there would be fewer gun crimes in a nation with fewer guns. Conversely, perhaps there would be more knife crimes, and it would be facile to try to ban knives.

Sadly, there isn't much good data about gun ownership anywhere in the world. There are guesses, and surveys, and proxies derived from suicide numbers, but no matter where you go, even legal firearm ownership is often inadequately documented. Illegal firearm ownership is not well documented at all, for obvious reasons.

The best available evidence that where there are fewer guns, there are fewer crimes committed with guns, comes from a study published in the American Journal of Public Health. Because of inadequate direct data, it relied partly on suicide numbers as a proxy for gun ownership. This is the source of the click-bait chart that "proves there is something profoundly wrong with how the US handles guns".

As it turns out, despite extensive efforts, there is no research that shows gun control laws have any effect. In part this is due to a lack of adequate data, and in part because of inherent problems with data, such as self-selection bias. Whether or not someone acquires a gun is not a random decision, and may reflect a higher likelihood of criminal intent, suicidal intent, or victimisation by crime. Besides, criminals are unlikely to be entirely honest when government census takers turn up at the door.

But let us suppose that suicide rates are a valid proxy, and not just an indication that some states places are more depressing than others. Let's accept that the correlation between gun ownership numbers and gun homicides is valid. Does it prove anything? In particular, does it mean that murder rates (as opposed to shootings) are also higher where gun laws are more relaxed and gun ownership is higher?

As it turns out, it does not. A must-read study in the Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy concludes that murder rates are not correlated with gun ownership rates at all.

It documents a number of telling counter-examples that disprove the common theory that rates of gun ownership are linked to higher rates of violent crime. Most startling is the exceptionally high murder rate in Luxembourg, where guns are entirely banned and estimated gun ownership per capita is zero. No guns. Plenty murders. What gives?

The study goes even further. It establishes a negative correlation, both across countries, and within countries: where there are more guns, there is less violent crime.

Let's consider some of the other numbers that are routinely bandied about. You might hear, for example, that there are about 32,000 gun deaths per year in the United States. That's true, but that's no more than the number of annual road fatalities, and the US is a big country with a lot of people. Moreover, almost two thirds of gun deaths are suicides. Only 11,100 are homicides, most of which are gang-related. Is that a lot? It certainly is high, but it isn't enough to make it into the Centres for Disease Control's list of top fifteen causes of death. Is it getting any worse? This chart says otherwise.

Perhaps the most important philosophical argument in favour of the right to possess firearms is that the people ought not to be defenseless against their government. Figures as diverse as Hitler, Jefferson and Gandhi have recognised that conquest and tyranny require subjects to be disarmed. To quote Aristotle: "Both [oligarch and tyrant] mistrust the people, and therefore deprive them of their arms."

If you think we're beyond the point in history where people can be expected to overthrow a government that has lost the consent of the governed, then woe betide us. The people will get the government they deserve

But fair enough, modern governments do have nukes and navies. As George Orwell noted: "Rifles, muskets, long-bows and hand-grenades are inherently democratic weapons. A complex weapon makes the strong stronger, while a simple weapon – so long as there is no answer to it – gives claws to the weak."

You might concede that government is our master, and we by definition its servants, but would you also say that it is unjust to defend yourself, your family, and your property, against violent crime? And that if criminals are armed, this defence requires that the would-be victim be similarly armed?

I don't. And that holds especially for people living in vulnerable

… The Gun Genie and its Bottle Continued

areas, such as inner cities, remote farms, or poor townships.

Still want to argue that citizens should not be armed? If you employ armed security, you lose.

A common counter-argument is that armed victims are more likely to provoke violence, or fall victim to having their own weapons turned against them. And again, the academic literature begs to differ.

A University of Chicago Law School paper found that multiple-victim shootings almost always occur in areas where guns are prohibited, and that victims who are armed are less likely to be injured in violent crime than those who are not.

Is it even possible to remove guns from society? In South Africa, weapons flooded into the country during the decline and fall of the Apartheid state. Automatic assault rifles have always been illegal, yet AK-47s were everywhere. Have they vanished? Of course not. After the transition to democracy, amnesties and reward programmes yielded relatively low numbers of firearms, and arguably only from law-abiding citizens or the very poor. And some of them ended up right back in criminal hands anyway.

And the notion that police ought to be entrusted with firearms while the rest of us ought not to have them, is contradicted by two points. Criminals don't care what the law says, and police aren't exactly the most responsible with firearms either.

It's easy to get emotional at horrifying scenes of shootings. They're like aircraft accidents: rare, but traumatic.

Fear and despair in the face of violence leads to demands that someone does something. The appearance of "doing something" is politically more valuable than actual results. Even just expressing outrage is entirely sufficient. Whether or not you could get a law passed, and if so, whether you could get it implemented, and if so, whether it would achieve its intended outcome, are not politically relevant questions. They don't fall well on outraged ears.

But in the absence of evidence that gun control even works, how can one justify the sacrifice of liberty, both temporary and permanent, that it would imply?

Encouraging firearms training and responsible use is sensible, as is disqualifying people on grounds of serious criminal or psychiatric history. But the idea that stricter gun controls will somehow establish a peaceful, unarmed society is a pipe dream. The notion that guns are the problem whenever a violent crime occurs is a distracting falsehood.

There is no way we'll get even a fraction of the existing guns off the street. Even if it were effective to bury gun owners in red tape and institute draconian search-and-seizure measures, they would disarm mostly law-abiding citizens. Gun controls only empowers criminals, and makes the police the metaphorical fox guarding the hen house.

Gun laws motivated by outrage and fear won't work. It would be better to do nothing. If we're serious about reduce violent crime, we need measures that address the causes of crime, not the means by which they are committed.

The gun genie isn't going back in the bottle. Violent crime is an entirely different matter. DM

Published in Daily Maverick at:

http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2014-06-12-the-gun-genie-and-its-bottle/#comment-1431715146

Copied here with permission from Ivo Vegter.

Ivo Vegter is an independent columnist writing in Daily Maverick. For the sake of clarity, please be aware that he is not a gun owner.

Advertising Standards Authority Follow Up

Having notified members in the first SAGA Snippets that the GFSA advert had been withdrawn, we received numerous complaints of it being screened on television.

It appears that our complaint was considered to be print media specific so we have now lodged a further complaint to cover television media as well. As soon as we have feedback, we will let you know.

If any member should see or hear the advert please take note of the media, date and time and send us the information as soon as possible to assist with the complaint.

Thank you.

Firearm Licence Audit Proposal

On Tuesday 1 July 2014, GFSA called on the Police Minister to stop the issuing of any new firearm licences and to conduct a forensic audit of all licences issued since 2010.

This call is as a result of officers based at the CFR who have been accused of fraud and appeared in court. Should an audit be ordered more than 4 million licences would have to be reviewed.

SAGA media spokesman John Welch comments:

SAGA is strongly opposed to the suspension of current licensing applications or procedures pending any forensic audit. Obviously all reasonable steps ought to be taken to prevent and curb fraud and corruption but, ordinary law abiding citizens who are presumed to be innocent, should not be punished by having their applications suspended indefinitely.

If the police are corrupt then the National Commissioner should resign since she is unable to effectively manage SAPS. The citizens should not be punished because she does not do her job by allowing incompetent, inefficiently trained or untrained officers who have not been vetted to do the job. If SAPS do not ensure in-house compliance and anti-corruption strategies, the public should not suffer the consequences.

Compare firearm licenses with drivers licenses – would anyone agree to the suspension of all drivers licenses issuing programmes because there are allegations of corruption against one municipality?

While SAGA agrees with an independent audit, there is no reason why this could not happen while the licensing process continues. This will allow the auditors to also do spot checks on currently submitted applications.

In addition the suspension of licensing would have hugely adverse effect on gun dealers who would be hit very hard in these times of financial hardship/ recession.

All forms of corruption must be rooted out in all sectors of government and society and we, as responsible firearm owners, support all such reasonable and lawful means and initiatives. Ongoing compliance checks/processes/ procedures ought to be in place in every government department, as part of applying and enforcing corporate governance.

For more details please follow the links below:

http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2014/07/02/fake-licences-to-kill

and

http://groundup.org.za/article/cops-...seriously_1953

Fifth Biennial Meeting of States on Illicit Trade in Small Arms

States Recommit to Stemming Illicit Flow of Small Arms by Tackling New tracing Challenges, as Biennial Meeting Adjourns

Concluding its week-long session today, the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States on small arms and light weapons adopted by consensus an outcome document that highlighted the international community's renewed commitment to preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade.

The text, adopted as orally revised, covered several main areas, including implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action and international tracing instrument; global cooperation and assistance; and follow-up to the Second Review Conference in 2012, recommending steps for the way forward.

To further implementation of the Action Programme, States were encouraged to continue strengthening stockpile management, including physical security measures, particularly in conflict and post-conflict situations, to prevent the diversion to the illicit trade, illegal armed groups, terrorists, and other unauthorized recipients.

On tracing, States noted with concern in the text that recent developments in manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons, including those presented in the Secretary-General's report (A/CONF.192/ BMS/2014/1), posed new challenges for effective marking, record-keeping and tracing. ...

This full document appears at:

www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2014/dc3509.doc.htm

United Nations

page nine by Alan Korwin, the uninvited ombudsman

Here follows extracts from an open letter written by Alan Korwin to the Governors of the fifty States of the Union, June 27, 2014

Dear Governor,

Like you, I'm mortified by the psychotic atrocities being committed in one state after another. And like President Obama recently said, "Legislation is not going to pass without more grassroots-level support."

But too many of you keep seeking small or large gun bans -- and run into brick-walled opposition from the grassroots gun-owner community. Then you appear surprised, or dismayed.

You don't seem to realize, every time you create some new type of "no-guns-at-the-lunch-counter" rule, you don't create the safe gun-free zones you think you do, and we out here know it, so of course we resist you.

You're creating reckless "make-believe gun-free zones," where anyone with a gun can simply walk in. These pretend gun-free zones are exactly where the psychos go.

That's not only dangerous, it's as crazy as the psychopaths who use these places for their evil deeds. Tens of millions of honest people obey your rules, like lambs to a slaughter, and the slaughterers merely walk in, every time……

Every time you sign a bill to ban guns from some location, without putting up the money for expensive physical barriers like at an airport, that's practically negligent, since everyone can see (thanks to the media) how dangerous these make-believe gun-free zones are……

The idea that only some people are allowed at the lunch counter must be abolished, and society will benefit. The innocent will benefit and the criminals will be disadvantaged. And:

You will have the robust and unbridled support of the firearms community and get somewhere, instead of being stopped cold. Wouldn't that be nice for a change? You want to do something? Do that.

We faced the fear -- some say paranoia -- that carry permits first spawned, when they began sweeping the nation decades ago. But we soon learned that armed citizens don't shoot slow waiters, or each other at stop signs. Responsible gun owners are, well, responsible.

It's the criminals we have to watch out for, and since we know our laws don't disarm them, of course you'll meet fierce resistance when you work to disarm the rest of us. So stop banging your head against the wall and work with us. We're your constituency too. Do something already.

Please don't fall for this dangerous, reckless and negligent logic:

IN THIS BUILDING YOU ARE PROTECTED BY THIS SIGN

www.pagenine.org

Snippets Update

Items that feature in SAGA Snippets appear in the language that they are released in.

On an administrative level SAGA makes every effort to offer bilingual communication to members but with Snippets this is not always going to be possible.

Thank you to all those members who gave such favourable feedback on the first issue of SAGA Snippets. We will do our best to continue keeping you updated on firearms matters on a global scale.

Watch this space …for more interesting firearm snippets