

Who has guns?

By Mary Stevens
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Over one million people in the state of Florida have ownership of a gun. In order to have a gun, you must meet only a few conditions; be a Florida resident aged 18 or older, and not have been convicted of a felony.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is responsible for administering concealed weapon licenses. In the past year, 5,159 out of 5,328 concealed weapons license applications were accepted by the FDOA in Orange County alone, and 123,759 out of 128,398 applicants were granted a license to carry a concealed weapon in the state of Florida. 80,016 licenses were renewed.

The majority of gun owners are men, according to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Over 120,000 men between the ages of 21 and 35 own guns. In the same age group, only 28,000 women own guns. Women only account for 19 percent of the gun owners in Florida.

Commissioner Adam H. Putnam gives this advice on gun ownership:

“Applying for a license to carry a concealed weapon or firearm for self-defense is a right of law-abiding Floridians. However, you must remember that a license to carry a weapon or firearm concealed on your person does not authorize you to use that weapon. Use of a concealed weapon or firearm is regulated by other provisions of Florida law. It is my hope that you will exercise your lawful right to carry a concealed weapon or firearm responsibly, properly, and safely.”

Special Report: Guns

Case dismissed in West Campus gun incident

Freedom goes to young man fingered in fight

By Jeff Shedden
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Hudson Capi, the former Valencia College student accused of possessing a gun on Valencia property, got a break on Monday when the charges against him were dropped. Capi's trial was quickly dismissed by Judge Jenifer M. Davis.

Capi had entered a 'not guilty' plea, maintaining that his arrest was based around a case of mistaken identity, and that neither he nor any of the other occupants of the vehicle he was arrested in were anywhere near the scene of the fight. He claimed to have been picked up simply because

both he and the actual perpetrator shared a similar hairstyle.

Capi also claimed that the clothing he was wearing on the day of his arrest would be impossible to conceal or even carry a firearm in. He says he was wearing basketball shorts with no drawstring, and if he had tried to carry a gun in them, his pants would have fallen down.

Capi's cousin, Rony Boyer, was also arrested for possession of a firearm on school property, due to the AK-47 assault rifle located in the trunk of his car. Charges were dropped against Boyer, who was the legal owner of the weapon, which was properly secured in accordance to Florida state laws.

According to Danielle Tavernier, the public information officer for the state attorney's office, Capi's case was dismissed due to the lack of deposition from two key witnesses. An attempt was made to have the case continued to a later date, but Judge Davis denied this request.

Since the case did not result in an actual verdict, it is possible that the state may re-file the charges if they are able to collect witness depositions.

Following his arraignment, Capi said that this whole incident had been a source of major embarrassment for him and his family. With the dismissal of his case, his life may return to normal.



Bryan Levine / Valencia Voice
Hudson Capi at his pre trial in Orlando, Oct. 12

Alleged gun-toting student hopes to continue education

By Shay Castle
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Hudson Capi is unlike most young people his age; he is willing to fight to go to school.

The case was dismissed against Capi, who faced a third degree felony charge of possession of a weapon on school property stemming from an incident in which he allegedly dropped a handgun on the Valencia College West Campus during an altercation.

Capi was always confident that he would come out on top. "I know this thing is going to get cleared up," he said at his pre-trial hearing on Oct. 12. He said his biggest concern was being able to continue his education.

Capi was expelled from Valencia following a formal disciplinary hearing. He is banned from all campuses under a trespass order.

Valencia representatives would not comment on the possibility of re-admitting Capi.

Capi said that where he continued his education was not important, and hoped that the incident wouldn't "mess up" his chances at getting in another school if he cannot return to Valencia.

"I want to get the message out there that I want to go back to school," he said. "I don't care if it is at Valencia or not, I just want to go back."

<p>A fight breaks out in Building 3 at West Campus. Reports of a student with a gun are made.</p> <p>Hudson Capi and his cousin, Rony Boyer, are arrested for possession of a firearm on school property.</p> <p>Capi makes bond and is released from jail.</p>	<p>The possession charge against Rony Boyer is dropped.</p>	<p>Capi's arraignment is set for July 26.</p> <p>Capi pleads "not guilty."</p> <p>Capi's pre-trial is set for October 12, and his trial for October 17.</p> <p>Capi speaks to Valencia Voice so his side of the story can be heard.</p>	<p>Public defender Tiffany Henson re-affirms Capi's plea of 'not guilty' at a pre-trial hearing.</p> <p>The State Attorney's Office attempts to get witness depositions, but the two key witnesses do not appear.</p> <p>The charges are dropped against Capi and the case is dismissed by circuit Judge Jenifer M. Davis.</p>
May	June	July	Oct



Front cover photo by Christopher Correa / Valencia Voice

Valencia steps up security

Gun incident prompts changes

By Shay Castle
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Valencia has stepped up security following an incident during summer semester in which a gun was brought on West Campus.

“It took us back to review our response protocols,” said Tom Lopez, AVP of security, safety, and risk management for Valencia College. “We continue to revisit and reassess.”

Lopez, a former police chief, highlighted the biggest changes the school has made to ensure students’ safety remains a priority.

Greater police presence

In addition to the five or six Valencia security officers on campus during the day, there is, at minimum, one police officer on campus at all times during the week when classes are in session. It is this police presence that sets Valencia apart from other community colleges in terms of security, Lopez said.

“We are unique. My peers at other colleges don’t have contracted law enforcement,” he said. On campus officers carry Valencia radios, and typically respond within five minutes of the first call.

Valencia alert system

The security team has worked hard to create and maintain a system which notifies students, staff, and faculty via text

message, of emergency events on campus, which are now being integrated into social media and the college website.

“Right now it is an opt-in program,” said Lopez. Students can sign up through a link on their Atlas homepage. The system has seen a “nominal increase” in participation, but the numbers are still lower than Lopez would like. “I have made the recommendation to the college for the alert program to be an opt-out program, where students are signed up automatically and have to choose to opt out of it.”

Behavior assessment

“Valencia takes great pride in student success,” Lopez said. “The means to that is to know how to respond to situations involving disruptive students, so we can remove them from the environment and restore peace and order.”

A behavioral assessment team, including the dean of students and security officials, evaluates disruptive behaviors and decides the best course of discipline. The team is trained to get the best estimate of a person, to see if it is a continual problem or an isolated incident that is causing the behavior. With that process, students can get re-directed to the appropriate resources.

This process allows officials to distinguish between the student who continually conflicts with the values of Valencia College, and those who are reacting to stress.

“So many things can be affecting students; parents separating, health conditions, finances. It is good to re-direct those

students to the appropriate resources so they can be restored to model students.”

Safety procedures

The May gun incident was handled quickly and without injury, so most people on campus weren’t even aware that anything had happened. Few professors followed the protocol of ‘locking down’ their classrooms, but those that did were left to wait in the dark for an all clear that never came.

That feature has been added to official procedures, said Lopez. The CRT (Campus Response Team), is now charged with checking every building on campus to make sure people know it is safe. Evacuation procedures were also revisited following the water main break on West Campus that forced a campus closure and evacuation.

“Those incidents led us to be more critical of ourselves in terms of how we evacuate the campuses,” Lopez said. The school now has a plan for local law enforcement to direct traffic flow out of campus, and an alternate site was chosen for those students riding the Lynx bus and being picked up by parents or friends.

Room for improvement

Valencia does not have means of tracking the exact number of persons on campus as any given time. The SASS data warehouse keeps track of how many students should be on campus for different times of day and days of the week, depending on class enrollments, campus events, etc, but those are general guidelines, not an exact number.



Sebastian Arbelaez / Valencia Voice

Changes to security procedures after the gun incident are evident throughout Valencia’s campuses.

“It is next to impossible to know how many students are on campus at one time,” Lopez said. “An open campus presents a challenge.” An ‘open campus’ is one that invites the public on site without regulating parking. Anyone can come in on the buses or park their car and walk around the school. Events are open to the public, as are services such as the dental clinic.

Lopez remains optimistic about the safety of Valencia’s campuses, and his positive attitude is supported by a good history of low crime. In part, Lopez said, this is due to the constant presence of his security team.

“I’ll hear students say they see security guards just sitting around or driving the carts,” he said. “The point is; they are

there, they are visible.”

Events like the gun incident are rare, and usually a result of a dispute between students who know each other. Lopez points to this particular case to prove that student are safe from “random accosting,” something that has not been an issue for Valencia. He also reminded students that no one sustained injury, and the weapon was recovered by staff within seconds of being spotted.

“We’ll never know what was at the root of the problem,” Lopez said. “The goal of Valencia was to make sure the safety of the campus was reasonably assured, and we did that.”

The rest, he said, is up to law enforcement and the legal system.

Sharpshooters push for safety

Suggest stricter state standards

By Shay Castle
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For all the talk about colleges being bastions for liberal thought, it might surprise people to know that many Valencia students not only support gun rights, but take advantage of them. Many students actively employ their Second Amendment rights by owning weapons, and their knowledge, skill level, and respect for the potentially deadly instruments is impressive.

‘The laws aren’t too strict, but they need to make people take classes, they need to make them cheaper. I don’t know how you do that, but that’s what they should do.’

— Devon Smith

“I used to shoot competition .22 precision air rifle in NRA competitions,” said aerospace engineering major Devon Smith. Smith started out shooting for a project with his 4-H club when he was 10 years old, and was hooked. “It was our club project. The adults started their own shooting club, and I was like, ‘I like this,’” he said. “I

like that it is all discipline, not physical. It’s all concentration. You are shooting against yourself, not other people.”

Smith shot for six years in 4-H competitions, and one year with the NRA, aiming for a target no bigger than the tip of a pen from 20-40 meters away. Olympic shooters manage scores of 100 across the board, and Smith was shooting an average 92 kneeling 96-97 prone.

He no longer participates in competitive shooting. “Too expensive,” he said. But he still has his guns.

“I’m not going to get rid of them in case I ever need them again. You know, in case of a zombie apocalypse or nuclear fall out.”

Smith is in favor of the current gun laws, but thinks safety classes should be required for people to own a weapon.

“I would say that the majority of people probably don’t know what they are doing,” he said. “I think they should make everybody who owns a gun take a class, but it is so expensive it would be wrong to say, ‘You have to do that, but give us \$120.’”

Dave Thomas, a general studies major, knows how expensive classes can be.

Thomas, who hopes to go into criminal justice, has a concealed carry



Courtesy of Florida Security Training Academy

Student Dave Thomas (left) practices proper weapon handling during his safety training.

permit and class D and G licenses, which allows open carry for on duty police officers and security guards.

“All the classes I’ve taken, it’s pretty intense,” he said. Thomas spent 42 hours of class time for the D license and 32 hours for G license, including range time. That made the concealed carry class, at a mere four hours, seem inadequate by comparison.

“Classes should be longer, harder, and more informative on what some of the issues are versus how to stop it,” he said. “For the D and G classes, they teach you that 80 percent of shootings happen within 25 feet, 60 percent

within 10 feet, and it’s all over in 2 seconds. The average person doesn’t know statistics.”

Though Thomas thinks gun owners need to be better informed, he doesn’t want to change the laws.

“I think Florida is the best out of all the states for gun activists for people who enjoy their rights. It’s a good thing for responsible people.”

Smith agrees. “The laws aren’t too strict, but they need to make people take classes, they need to make them cheaper. I don’t know how you do that, but that’s what they should do.”

County waiting periods unaffected by new laws

By Mark Schlueb
Orlando Sentinel

If the Legislature’s aim in ordering the repeal of all local gun laws was to clear up confusion over a hodgepodge of rules, it didn’t work.

Gun-rights advocates applauded new penalties that went into effect this month for city and county politicians who pass or enforce local gun laws. The rush to kill firearm ordinances meant gun owners wouldn’t have to worry about inadvertently violating the law by visiting a city with different rules.

But it turns out, one of the most widely applied rules, waiting periods that vary by county, is unaffected. Today, Orange County is expected to repeal several local firearms regulations, including a three-day waiting period for handgun purchases. But other counties have no plans to repeal their waiting periods, which often exceed state law.

It’s creating confusion for gun buyers and sellers who expected the Legislature’s action to erase all local firearm rules.

“I’m sure there are a lot of mom-and-pop stores that assume those local waiting periods are gone,” said Charles O’Meara of Shoot Straight Inc., which owns six gun stores around the state, including Apopka and Casselberry.

The state already imposes a three-day waiting period for the purchase of handguns. But Florida voters amended the state constitution in 1998 to give counties the authority to enact their own waiting periods. These county waiting periods can be as long as five business days and can apply not just to handguns but to shotguns and rifles, too.

The result can be puzzling for consumers. Someone who buys a shotgun in Hillsborough County must wait three days to take delivery, but could leave the store with his new shotgun the same day in neighboring Polk County. The same buyer has to wait five days in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

— MCT Campus

Rollins robbery suspects still at large

By Fred Lambert
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Valencia is not the only Central Florida campus dealing with gun crimes.

A pair of Rollins College students were robbed at gunpoint on Sept. 25 near Rollins' Holt Hall dorm area at the bright and sunny hour of 2:30 p.m.

The students were in a parked car before being approached by a Red Chevy Tahoe or GMC Yukon. An armed gunman emerged from the vehicle and accosted the two students, relieving them of their wallets. Another suspect was driving the SUV; both were described in a Timely Notification Bulletin from Rollins' website as African-American males between 20 and 30 years of age.

The gun wielding suspect was said to have shoulder-length dreadlocks, baggy clothes and darker skin than the driver, who was noted to be of "lighter complexion."

One of the students was pistol-whipped in the mouth before the two thieves sped off, according to a press release from the Winter Park Police Department. The identities of the students are not being released.

This incident came just days after

another crime found its way onto Rollins' campus in the early morning of Sept. 19.

Seminole County sheriffs chased down three suspects fleeing in a vehicle that was believed to be stolen.

The pursuit ended and the suspects were immediately apprehended after abandoning their vehicle and attempting escape by way of the campus soccer field.

Winter Park police and the Seminole sheriffs coordinated, sweeping the area and recovering two firearms. A third was discovered in nearby bushes the next day, according to a Rollins Timely Notification Bulletin. Winter Park police described the two incidents as having no connection, and the high-speed pursuit ending on Rollins' campus as pure coincidence.

Valencia's Tom Lopez, assistant vice president of security, safety and risk management said that he was in email correspondence with Rollins security, and they had made arrangements to keep an eye out for the suspects from the Sept. 25 incident.

If incidents like this occur on Valencia campuses, the typical procedure is to send out a bulletin similar to the Timely Notifications that Rollins issues, keeping students



Courtesy of the Winter Park Police Department
Police sketch of the Rollins robber, described as an African-American male between 20-30 years old.

informed and on the lookout. The investigation of the Sept. 25 mugging is ongoing, and the Winter Park police have declined to comment on further details of the case.

Any information about this crime or the suspects involved can be reported to CrimeLine at 407-423-TIPS, or detective Phil Owen of the Winter Park Police Department at 407-644-3316.



Guns on Campus

Recent incidents at Florida colleges

Christopher Correa / Valencia Voice

By Mary Stevens
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Sept. 25 — Armed robbers accosted two Rollins College students near the dorms at two in the afternoon, pistol-whipping one across the face.

May 26 — A gun was dropped, and quickly recovered, during an argument on Valencia's West Campus.

May 7 — Officer Randy Davidson was forced to retire after he used a stun gun on a student at Rollins College.

Jan. 9 — FSU student Ashley Cowie, 21, was shot and killed after a gun was accidentally fired at an off-campus fraternity house.

May 5, 2010 — The University of Miami was put under lock down after a man was seen walking around with a gun. Officials arrested the suspect and identified the weapon as a toy gun.

Nov. 20, 2009 — The University of Miami was put on lock down when four suspects fired a BB gun. A student was injured when a BB gun pellet hit her arm. No other injuries were reported.

Oct. 6, 2009 — The University of South Florida was frozen for over three hours after three reports of gunmen with a bomb and a knife were made. Vincent Thomas Perry McCoy, 23, was arrested for the false reports, the result of a practical joke.

July 24, 2009 — Students at University of South Florida in Tampa were forced into lock down mode for over an hour after a man called the crisis line saying he had a gun he intended to use. No shots were fired, and the man, whose identity was not released, was subdued.

1999	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
13	7	5	32	5	13	8	6
Columbine (Col.) High School	Brookfield, Wis.	Nickel Mines, Pa.	Virginia Tech University	N. Illinois University	Binghamton, N.Y.	Appomattox, Va.	Tucson, Ariz.
9	9	People killed in mass shootings since 1999			5	9	
Atlanta	Red Lake, Minn.			Pearcy, Ark.	10	Hartford, Conn.	
				Samson, Ala.		5	Bellville, Texas

Gun battle cracking to life in congress

Working to make laws same in all states

By Fred Lambert
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Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-FL) introduced H.R. 822, otherwise known as the National Right-To-Carry Reciprocity Act of 2011, in February. This legislation would enable relatively legal ease for owners of concealed carry permits traveling state boundaries, making the licenses for carrying stashed handguns valid across states where they are already awarded to local residents.

“Just as driving licenses are valid in other states,” Rep. Stearns said, “this would make it the same for carry permits.”

The plan has drawn fire from others in Congress, namely Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), a member of the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security. Scott contends that the bill will interfere with a state’s right to be selective in who they issue a permit to.

“Setting aside for a moment the issue of whether it’s a good idea to allow or encourage the carrying of concealed firearms,” Scott said in a subcommittee hearing on Sept. 13, “it would certainly be unwise and improper for us to discard the ability of states to protect the safety of their own citizens.”

This controversy trails back to the US Constitution. H.R. 822 cites the reassertion of the Second Amendment, and of the

Fourteenth Amendment (which says that no state may create laws that “abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States.”) The NRTCRA goes on to claim other justifications, including that 48 states issue concealed carry permits; most people who exercise the right to carry concealed handguns are law abiding and “provide crime prevention or crime resistance benefits” and that prevention of legally carrying concealed firearms outside a person’s home state “interferes with the constitutional right of interstate travel, and interstate commerce.”

‘If you’re going to have a concealed weapons permit and you have to leave the state, you should be able to have that with you without being prosecuted.’

— Matthew Anderson,
Computer Information Technology

Scott finds his reasoning with law enforcement in places like Virginia. Citing a letter from the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police at the subcommittee hearing on Sept. 13, he read, “H.R. 822 would severely undermine state concealed carry licensing systems by allowing out of state

visitors to carry concealed firearms even if those visitors have not met the standards for carrying a concealed weapon in the state they are visiting.”

This all comes less than a year after the Orlando Weekly reported the gun-slaying of a Philadelphia resident named Irving Santana by Marquis Hill, in an article titled “Shoot First, Ask Questions Later.” Hill had been stripped of his Pennsylvania concealed carry permit after assaulting a police officer in court, but easily obtained another in Florida, whose laws provide that out-of-state citizens may apply for a permit due to the high frequency of non-resident visitors, or tourists.

Florida’s standards for receiving a permit are much more lax than many states, and don’t provide for police discretion in the issuing process as states like Pennsylvania do, according to the Weekly. If an applicant meets the basic standards, they are given the permit.

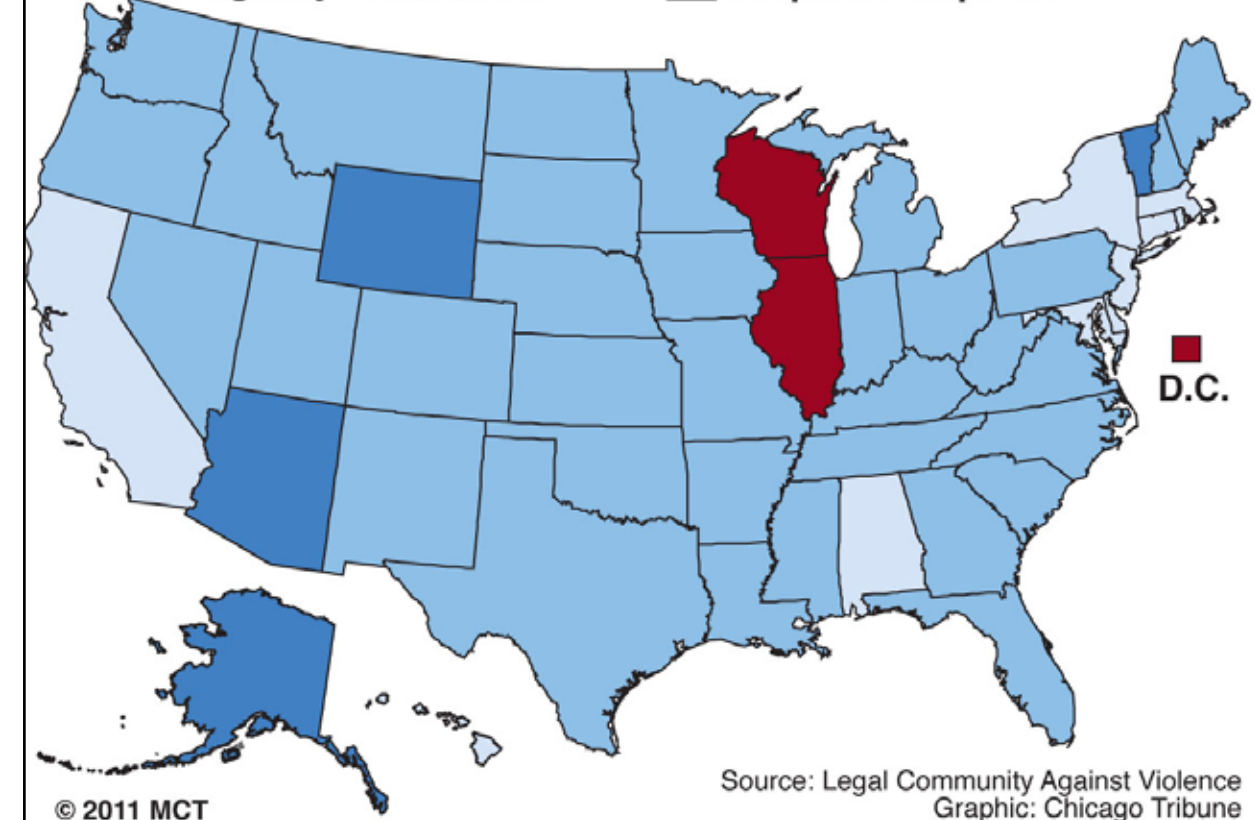
Since Hill’s offense was only marked as disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor, he made the cut. The truth is that Florida is in reciprocity agreements with many states already (34, according to Handgunlaw.us), and one is Pennsylvania. H.R. 822 would merely extend this to a national level.

The Santana slaying is just one example of how differing state gun laws could complicate the matter of the NRTCRA, a feeling

2011 concealed carry laws by state

The governor of Wisconsin is expected to sign into law a bill making it legal in that state to carry a concealed weapon with a permit if a person meets minimum requirements. This will leave Illinois as the only state where it is illegal to carry a concealed weapon.

- Prohibited
- Allowed with a permit at issuing agency’s discretion
- Allowed with a permit to anyone who meets minimum qualifications
- No permit required



displayed by Bobby Scott, who referred to state’s rights at the Sept. 13 subcommittee hearing. “If a state decides to enter into a reciprocity agreement with another state, as many states do, that is their right and they continue to exercise independent judgment

about how best to protect their citizens.” Scott said. “However, we in Congress must not strip them of the power to decide and to protect the safety of their citizens.”

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As the bullets zip through the House, it almost seems like a partisan battle with familiar tones to it – Republicans vouching for gun owners and Democrats fighting for gun control – but the bill is in fact co-sponsored by North Carolina Democrat Heath Shuler, along with 244 other representatives from both sides of the aisle. This debate seems to transcend party lines, at least for now, and should provide an interesting display of side-taking once a vote comes around.

Where does the rest of America stand on this fractious issue? Valencia students weighed in, and many sounded off in support of Stearn's plan.

"I do think that having concealed handgun licenses will help crime rate go down," said Stefan Castro, senator of government affairs in Valencia's SGA.

"It makes sense, for what they're going for," said Matthew Anderson, a computer information technology major. "If you're going to have a concealed weapons permit and you have to leave the state, you should be able to have that with you without being prosecuted."

Economics major Micheal Sloan, who sat next to Anderson chatting between classes, chimed in. "I think it falls in line with other acts and public records that states are obliged to recognize, such as criminal records and marriages," he said.

Others weren't completely on-board with the NRTCRA, like Maria Siciliano. "I don't think they should be carried around really, because when people have it they're going to use it. It's not always good people that get the license," she said "But I do like going to the shooting range a lot."



Christopher Correa / Valencia Voice

With every state making their own gun laws, congress is now being pushed for standard regulations.

Bill Symolon, professor of US Government and International Politics at Valencia's Winter Park Campus, referenced the Full Faith and Credit Clause of the Constitution when asked about his stance on H.R. 822. "I like the idea of Federalism, where states control what happens within their own limits," he said. "In the same token, the Constitution already requires states to honor the laws of other states."

Symolon, a former Marine officer and Vietnam-veteran, scoffed at Rep. Scott's arguments against the bill. "I hesitate to agree with any law or regulation that's trying to prevent all bad things from happening. You can't prevent them from happening. Bad things are going to happen," he said. "The best you can hope for is

reasonable accommodations, and I think the states should have enough respect for each other to realize that no state is going to willingly and knowingly give a permit to someone who is mentally unbalanced and shouldn't have a gun."

Washington should remain a contested skirmish zone as the National Right-To-Carry Reciprocity Act of 2011 gains momentum in the coming months and President Obama tries passing his jobs bill. The House Judiciary Committee is marking up H.R.822, or considering amendments to it, during mid-October. Amid this, Americans should squint through the smoke to gain a clear perspective of where their cross-state gun rights are headed over the next year.

Safe storage of firearms required

Section 790.174, Florida Statutes

1. A person who stores or leaves, on a premise under his or her control, a loaded firearm, as defined in s. 790.001, and who knows or reasonably should know that a minor is likely to gain access to the firearm without the lawful permission of the minor's parent or the person having charge of the minor, or without the supervision required by law, shall keep the firearm in a securely locked box or container or in a location which a reasonable person would believe to be secure or shall secure it with a trigger lock, except when the person is carrying the firearm on his or her body or within such close proximity thereto that he or she can retrieve and use it as easily and quickly as if he or she carried it on his or her body.

2. It is a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083, if a person violates subsection (1) by failing to store or leave a firearm in the required manner and as a result thereof a minor gains access to the firearm, without the lawful permission of the minor's parent or the person having charge of the minor, and possesses or exhibits it, without the supervision required by law:

In a public place; or

In a rude, careless, angry, or threatening manner in violation of s. 790.10.

This subsection does not apply if the minor obtains the firearm as a result of an unlawful entry by any person.

3 As used in this act, the term "minor" means any person under the age of 16.

— Courtesy of 'The State Senate,'
2011 Florida Statutes - 790.174

You cannot own a gun in Florida if:

You have renounced US citizenship

You are a fugitive from justice

You are currently under arrest or charged with any felony

You are currently under arrest or charged with any crime of violence (including domestic violence)

You are currently under arrest or charged with a crime relating to controlled substances

You have been convicted of using a firearm while under the influence of alcoholic beverages, chemical substances, or controlled substances in the past three years

You have been charged with public intoxication, disorderly intoxication, or driving under the influence in the past three years

You are an unlawful user of a controlled substance

You have been involuntarily committed to a mental institution

You are a Veteran of the Armed Forces were you discharged under dishonorable conditions

You suffer from a physical infirmity that prevents the safe handling of a weapon or firearm

Guns ranges review safety procedures

After rise in range related suicides

By Jennifer DiDomenico
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The suicide rate in the United States is extremely high. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), over 36,000 Americans die by suicide every year- 57% of those with a gun.

A woman sued Walmart in 2004 for selling her daughter, a young, diagnosed manic-depressant schizophrenic, a shot gun, which she used to commit suicide.

According to CBS News' resources, the company did perform a background check. However, the woman's name did not show up in the database.

Former Valencia student Kat Norcross was able to relate to this issue. She knew a young man who took his own life in the same manner.

"It wasn't his dad's gun or anything. It was a gun that he bought somewhere. He was seventeen," said Norcross. "Guns are a sort of snowball-effect weapon."

Statistics show a high rate of suicides in shooting ranges. Shooting ranges are areas designed for the practice of firearm use to gain various skills. Several ranges can be found throughout the state of Florida, along with nearly every state in the United States. The only requirement to rent and shoot a gun in a semi-private booth, in Florida, is a Florida identification card for someone over the age of 18.

Between April and July of 2009, three suicides occurred at different central Florida gun ranges. The most notorious of these involved a mother, Marie Moore, 44, who took her son Mitchell, 20, out for a regular afternoon activity at the Shoot Straight range in Casselberry, Florida.

Before she took her own life, she used the rented gun to shoot her son in the back of the head as he aimed at the target. The murder suicide was captured on security cameras at the gun range.

The woman wasn't diagnosed medically with a mental disorder, but a suicide note to her boyfriend revealed that she had been hearing voices and having delusions, believing her son to be the Anti-Christ.

"I had to send my son to heaven and myself to Hell," Moore wrote in the letter.

Moore had also been thrown out of a gun range for suicidal talk once before, as reported by the Orlando Sentinel. Since background checks are not required to rent a gun at a shooting range, these issues were unknown to Shoot Straight employees.

Another suicide later the same month at the Casselberry location prompted the chain to alter its policies regarding rentals. Jason McCarthy, a 26 year-old from Winter Springs took his own life three weeks after the Moore murder-suicide. Shoot Straight suspended the rental of guns for one year after the incidents, but began the practice again to be competitive with other ranges,



Hilda M. Perez, Orlando Sentinel, MCT Campus

Rhonda Kirkland, Sarah Price and Adrian Dozier practice shooting at 'Shoot Straight Gun' range in Fla.

according to a statement by Shoot Straight attorney Joerg Jaeger reported in the Orlando Sentinel.

Tommy McWilliams, 27, sent a suicide note to his mother on her cell phone just moments before taking his own life at the Casselberry location in June of this year. Another man attempted to kill himself at the Apopka Shoot Straight in August, but failed to mortally wound himself. The man's name had not been released at press time.

The gun range chain faced a wrongful death suit for the Moore murder-suicide from Mitchell Moore's father, Marvin. The suit was dismissed with prejudice in Janu-

ary of 2010, and cannot be refilled.

The gun ranges still rent guns without a background check, which is required to purchase a gun. Representatives from several central Florida ranges declined to comment.

During a survey this week, Valencia students were asked their opinion on gun control and who they believe should be able to have a gun in possession. Though many students believe guns are okay for safety purposes, student Annie Curtis does not.

"Guns are not a tool of safety," she said. "They give people the authority and ability to hurt others."

Shay Castle also contributed to this story.

Accused Seal Beach shooter faces charges, victims families

By Mona Shadia

Huntington Beach Independent, Calif.

The Huntington Beach man accused in the worst shooting rampage in Orange County appeared in court Friday, where he faced eight counts of first-degree murder, one count of attempted murder and the pained remarks of the victims' grieving family members.

The charges in Orange County Superior Court include special circumstances that could result in the death penalty, which Orange County District Attorney

Tony Rackauckas is seeking.

The arraignment for Scott Evans Dekraai, 41, at the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana was postponed to Nov. 29. His defense attorney requested more time to prepare for the case and assemble a team.

Dekraai showed no signs of guilt or remorse. He gave one-word answers and stated his full name loudly and with clarity. Family members and friends appeared distraught, holding back and wiping tears.

"Coward!" one shouted.

"Scumbag!" said another.

One man held two photos of a family

member he lost.

A woman shouted, "I hate you! I hate you!" repeatedly at Dekraai, just as Judge Erick L. Larsh dismissed court for the day.

Attorney Robert Curtis of Jarvis & Krieger appeared on Dekraai's behalf. The Long Beach-based family law firm represented Dekraai during his child custody battle with his ex-wife.

Jarvis & Krieger plans to assemble a defense team of attorneys from outside the firm, Curtis said. Dekraai chose not to use the aid of a public defender.

Davis asked Larsh to allow Dekraai to take his anti-psychotic medication and use a spinal cord stimulator that he has been using since his 2007 boating accident.

Larsh said he would have a team of doctors review Dekraai's condition and determine his needs.

Prosecutors expect an insanity defense.

Curtis said after court that he may file a change-of-venue motion to relocate Dekraai's case because he believes it could be hard for Dekraai to get a fair trial in Orange County.

Earlier in the day, in an emotional press conference, Rackauckas appeared shaken by the details and held back tears as he spoke.

"There are some crimes that are so depraved, so callous, so malignant, that there is only one punishment that will fit the crime," he said. "When a person, in a case such as this, goes on a rampage and kills innocent people in an indiscriminate, bloody massacre, I will, of course, seek the death penalty."

Prepared to commit murder, Dekraai walked into the Salon Meritage at 1:20 p.m.

Wednesday with a bulletproof vest and three guns, Rackauckas said. He allegedly stopped to reload his gun amid the rampage.

"For almost two minutes, Dekraai shot victim after victim, executing eight people by shooting them in the head and chest," Rackauckas said. "He was not done. He

'When a person, in a case such as this, goes on a rampage and kills innocent people in an indiscriminate, bloody massacre, I will, of course, seek the death penalty.'

— Orange District Attorney,
Tony Rackauckas

then walked out of the salon and shot a ninth victim, a male, who was sitting nearby in a parked Range Rover."

Dekraai's ex-wife, Michelle Fournier, whom he was reportedly targeting following their bitter custody battle over their 8-year-old son, was among the first two killed.

Dekraai is known to have had a contact with Fournier the day of the shooting, although it was unclear who initiated the contact or if it was by phone.

Dekraai and Fournier had a custody hearing in court Tuesday, the day before the shooting, that did not go Dekraai's way, Rackauckas said.

Several months ago, Fournier called the Seal Beach Police Department to report a dispute about Dekraai picking their son up from school before the court had granted him permission, said acting Seal

Beach Police Chief Tim Olson.

The case was forwarded to a family law court, Olson said.

All of the victims who died were shot multiple times in the head and chest. Some survived by hiding or playing dead.

About 20 people were in the salon when the attack began, Rackauckas said.

The motive of the rampage, Rackauckas said, was revenge.

Dekraai was not satisfied with killing only his ex-wife; instead, he went about killing others because he believed they were "enablers" and supporters of Fournier, the district attorney said.

During the incident, Dekraai's son was reportedly at his school principal's office waiting to be picked up. "That little boy is also a victim," Rackauckas said. "He is now left to mourn the murder of his mother, and grow up with the knowledge that his father committed a mass murder."

— MCT Campus



Allen J. Schaben, Los Angeles Times / MCT

Two women place flowers at the memorial for the eight victims of the Oct. 12 mass shooting.



Mark Boster, Los Angeles Times / MCT

Shooting suspect Scott Dekraai, 41, faces eight felony counts of first degree murder.

YOUR VOICE

No real safety on campus with guns

By Gary Stein
Sun Sentinel

Ah, college. A place of higher learning. A place to broaden your horizons and improve your spiritual being. A place to socialize with many types of people. A place to have a beer or two.

And hey, a great place to carry your weapon in case you have to blow somebody away, right?

That's the way the world is going, folks.

There are presently about a dozen states con-

sidering campus-carry laws, with Texas expected to enact one this year. Yep, Texas thinks it's great to have students and professors armed to the teeth with concealed weapons. Things could get very dic-y in Psych 101, if you get my drift.

Florida is hardly innocent here. SB234 would delete the current prohibition against carrying a weapon on the property of colleges, universities, and certain other schools.

Kind of makes you feel warm and fuzzy all over, doesn't it? We have guns all over the place -- in na-

tional parks, in Starbucks you name it -- and now the GLA (Gun Lovers Lobby) wants to make sure you have your God-given right to carry your Glock onto campus.

Why? The GLA doesn't need a reason why. They just say why not? And gun-loving (and GLA-fear-ing) legislators go along with it.

Crazy? Sure.

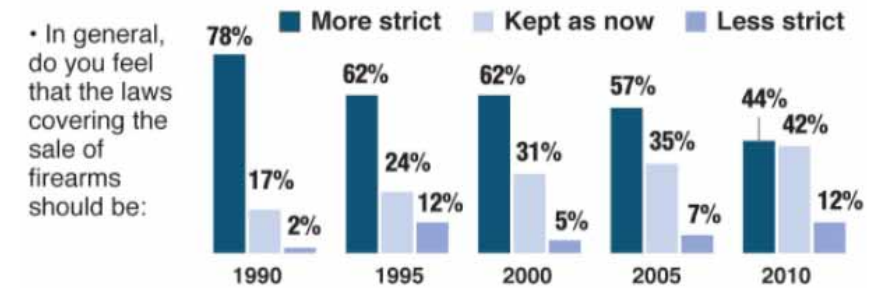
Just make sure when you send your kid a care package to school, you include ammo along with cookies and cereal.



Ted Richardson, Raleigh News & Observer / MCT Campus
A small group of Virginia Tech faculty and students gather to honor the anniversary of the shootings and to protest gun proliferation.

U.S. guns: Opinion and laws

How public opinion on stricter gun laws has dropped over the past 20 years and how gun laws vary by state:



Melina Yingling, Judy Treible / MCT

Students have right to self-defense

By Rofkens Petit-Homme
Special to Valencia Voice

Guns. Pun aside, it's a loaded word. Place the term with anything related to any physical education environment, and the conversation becomes even more tense.

The State of Florida Statue 790.115 says, "Possessing or discharging weapons or firearms at a school-sponsored event or on school property prohibited." Anyone caught with any type of weapon on campus can and will be arrested. But what about self defense?

Multiple instances have occurred on collegiate campuses, where a shooter has gone on a rampage, killing anyone with in sight of the barrel of their boom stick. In the Virginia Tech scenario it ended in a murder-suicide. Other shootings have ended

with law enforcement taking the final shot.

As of right now only one state allows concealed weapons on a post-secondary educational campus; Utah. Legislation was passed last February by State Senator Greg Evers to allow citizens to carry concealed weapons, effectively lifting the ban in place on colleges and universities in the state.

One of the reasons people attend and commit to post-secondary education is to be informed and taught aspects of survival and independence. Why then can we not talk seriously about allowing students to carry concealed weapons on campus?

Why can't responsible student citizens bring their own weapons on campus?

Why not develop a top notch system to monitor weapon holders? (That should have tons of companies foaming at the mouth to develop.)

What will be the consequences of allowing weapons on campus?

One of the biggest debates in every state legislative building is about gun-safety. Why shouldn't public and private educational institutions be on top of this inevitable skyscraper?

If a political extremist, or suicidal gun-person happen to infiltrate campus walls, emergency law enforcement will probably be to late to avoid any casualties. If there is a plan to take down the perpetrator already developed, the emotional bearings of contacting loved ones of the afflicted can be diminished significantly.

The thought of someone taking another person's life for no apparent reason is a daunting one. Although if there is a slight chance to save dozens, with the help of a fellow Second Amendment supporters, it shall pass.



Oliver Douliery, Abaca Press, MCT Campus
Demostrators carried their weapons openly at rally in Arlington, Virginia, citing Second Amendment issues as their cause for protest.

MY VOICE

Do guns keep America safe?

By Shay Castle
scastle@valenciavoices.com

Gun rights are a hot topic in which most people take a passionate stance on one side of the issue or the other. That arena of discussion is not a place you'd find many people who are wishy-washy on the Second Amendment.

I thought I had my mind made up. You have every right to own a weapon, but your right ends at the expense of my safety. The proliferation of guns in this country means too many deadly weapons end up in the wrong hands. Therefore, less guns equals more safety.

But then I met Warren Lewis, an NRA recruiter and gun store owner. He went with the old standby to try to convince me: If you were in a restaurant and a gunman came in, wouldn't you want a concealed carry person there to save you?

I hate these types of arguments. Every gun rights supporter invokes fear-based scenarios.

They don't work, because I'm not afraid of situations that, statistically, are unlikely.

Which is why I was surprised when his next theory made me pause.

"Why do you think this country has never been invaded?" he asked. "It is because too many of us have guns. A military takeover would never be successful."

"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."

— Second Amendment, U.S. Constitution

Could that be true? Are the nation's 52 million gun owners the key to our relative domestic tranquility? Is this why no foreign troops have set foot on mainland U.S. since

the War of 1812?

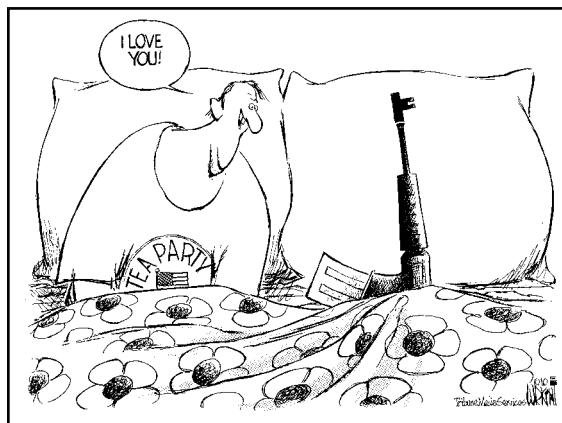
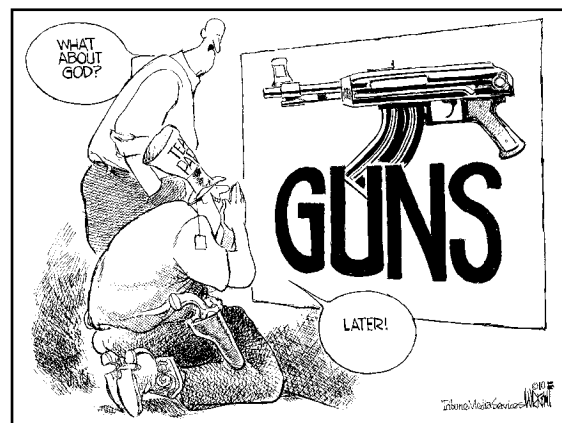
It definitely hasn't hurt our chances. An unarmed population is certainly easier to subdue.

Second Amendment supporters point to their guns as the primary reason our own government has not established tyrannical rule, but in today's tumultuous global environment, the fear of invasion is far more real to me.

Lewis didn't totally convert me. His lack of concern for gun registration and proper safety training, which are two measures that would go a long way in stemming a wide range of issues, was troubling.

He opened my mind a little more, essential for a healthy debate that will hopefully lead to smarter solutions. We can only honor the spirit of the Second Amendment when people are protected from enemies, foreign and domestic, and their fellow citizens.

"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."



Tweet of the Week

"Eliminating open carry for guns in Calif. just means the gangs will wear baggier pants."
— @hale_razor

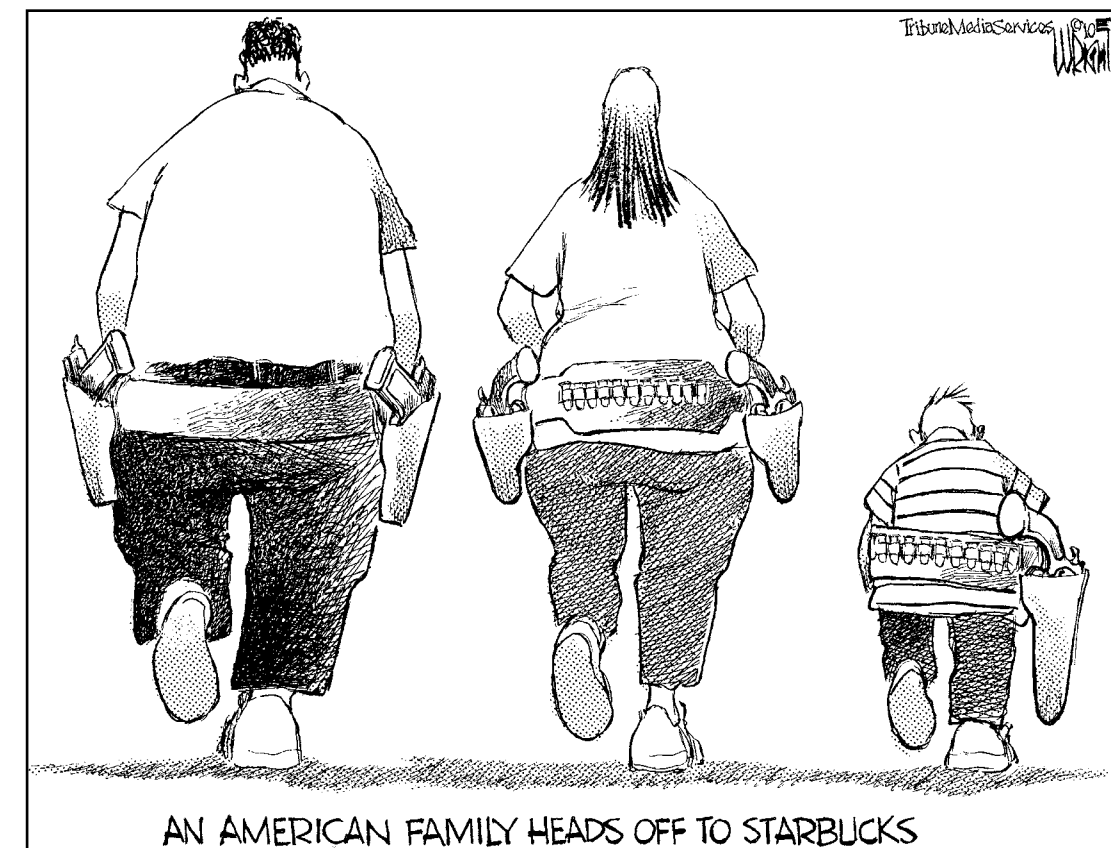
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Pinko hippie liberal gun nut

Luger loving lefty proves that guns aren't just for conservatives

By Jeff Shedden
jshedden@valenciavoices.com

I'm about as liberal as a person can get. I'm rather anti-corporate, pro-tolerance, equal-rights and all the other squishy stuff. It often comes to people's surprise when they find out that I'm completely against gun control.

I also do not support the NRA, but that's mostly because I don't support any corporatist lobbying group, and the NRA heavily politicizes the issue. But the issue is simple in that the Constitution says we get to have guns, and therefore we can have guns.

We can get down to semantics in determining what constitutes a gun- for example, is a flame thrower a gun? If it's not, then it can be restricted, and if it is, then it's flambé time!

I agree that guns have a huge presence in violent crime, and most murders are committed by firearms. But people perfected the art of hurting and killing each other years ago.

So why is a pinko like me not trying to keep these mean, evil guns out of the hands of gun-toting Neanderthals? For starters, my opinion is that we need to stop babysitting our adult population and saying what we can or can't have. The other

reason is that I've actually fired a gun.

Firearms have actually been a major part of my life since I was about 10 years old. I joined the rifle team when I was at military school and did fairly well with .22 rifles that we were issued. Rifle teams use Daisy air rifles now, for some wimpy reason I'm sure. There was just something about the loud crack, the whiff of gunpowder, and the hole that appeared in the faraway target.

We need to stop babysitting our population and saying what we can or can't have.

I recently got the chance to do trap shooting with my brother for the very first time. My brother is somewhat of a redneck and really enjoys making things blow up real good.

He also forgets that while I'm more of a city boy, I've always been pretty good with a boomstick.

While we are both accustomed to using guns, neither of us had shot clay pigeons

in the dead of Winter with 20 gauge shotguns. While my brother was at one station spewing forth yee-haws and dadgums and dang-olds, I was holding my own at the other. At the end, our scores were very close, but from his expression, I may as well have raised the Titanic.

There is something definitely masculine about the power and the noise erupting from your hands, but it's in no way limited to those of us who are more testosterone-laden. I have to lay much of the blame for my acceptance of guns on my own sainted mother.

My mother worked in the medical field for many years, and then one day just up and decided that firearms were more fun than phlebotomy, and joined the police academy. She just recently retired from the Sheriff's Department where she was consistently tops in marksmanship. I can say with great pride that my mom can circumcise a housefly with a shotgun.

When you visit some people's mother's houses, you can open up drawers and find knick-knacks, or knitting needles. At my mom's house, you find guns. She has big guns, little guns, guns for killing snakes, guns for turning intruders' pants yellow, and even guns for picking off foreign despots.

The combination of guns and her profession instilled a little bit of paranoia

in her from time to time, though. I'll never forget the time I was sitting up, late at night, playing videogames when my mom bursts in. She had heard a noise outside and I was still awake. "I need you to cover me," she said.

To most people this would sound exciting, or even a little scary, right? I'm sure it would have been a tense moment, were I not covering my mother who was bedecked in a pink, fuzzy robe, bunny slippers, a headfull of curlers and carrying the biggest hand cannon imaginable. It was like Dirty Harry meets Mama's Family.

Luckily there was nothing actually happening outside. I don't know how much help I would have been since I was devoting all of my energy into not screaming in hysterical laughter. Actually, now that I think about it, anybody sneaking around the back yard would be having similar problems, so my mom was safe either way.

My experience with guns has allowed me to de-politicize the entire issue, and I can understand that they're only as dangerous as the person in control of them. But I also have a little secret.

The only gun I currently own is a Nerf Maverick, and am not likely to own a real firearm any time soon. Why? As fun as they are, I don't actually think I need one.



Courtesy of Susan Seay

Jeff's mother, Susan Seay, at her Alabama home exercising her Constitutional rights.

Personal freedom above all, gun dealer says

By Shay Castle
scastle@valenciavoices.com

Warren Lewis, owner of Ballistic Gun & Pawn in Ocoee talks about all things guns, from responsible ownership, safety, laws, and what needs to be changed, and what will always stay the same.

I'm a first time customer. I've never owned a gun before, and I walk into your store to buy one. What's the process?

Fill out a 4473. Everybody fills one of these out. This is to make sure you are able to legally own and possess a firearm. This takes about five minutes. If you do not have a Florida concealed weapons license, you have to wait three days on the purchase of a handgun. It's called a cooling off period, in case you want to go do somebody harm.

What if this comes through and a red flag come up?

Then you don't get the gun

How often does that happen?

Very rarely. Most of the time people that are convicted felons know they can't come in here and get a gun. They get it off the street.

What about the gun show loophole?

There is no gun show loophole. That's a crock. Everyone who is a federally licensed firearms dealer makes buyers fill out one of these (4473 forms.) The only thing that is maybe considered a loophole is private sellers, but private sales between you and I is nobody's business.

What does it take to be a licensed dealer?



Christopher Correa / Valencia Voice

Warren Lewis, owner of Ballistic Gun and Pawn in Ocoee, says law abiding citizens shouldn't lose their rights because of criminals who steal guns.

Money and time. Six months \$1,000.

Do you recommend safety classes to first time buyers?

No, there is nothing required that you have to have a safety class. Do I recommend them? Sometimes. A lot of times people come in here, you can tell by the way they hold a gun and I give them pointers. I try to help them out that way.

What type of gun would you recommend for first time buyers?

A revolver. It's real simple; you just load the bullets, pull the trigger, and it goes bang. If it doesn't go bang, pull the trigger again.

What is the typical cost for a first time buyer?

With a gun and some ammunition, maybe \$300 to \$400.

What about the cost for registering a gun?

There is no registration in the State of Florida. Period. Everybody thinks when you fill out one of these, you are registering the gun. This goes through FDLE. The only record of you owning and possessing that firearm stays with me in the shop. We keep all of these because the ATF says we have to. They can trace it back by the serial num-

ber and tell you where it came from, but the further down the line it goes, the chances of tracing it are slim to none.

Are you opposed to registering guns?

Yes. Why does anybody need to know how many guns I have and where I have them. Why should I register my gun? Why should you register your car?

What guns do you have in your personal collection?

A little bit of everything. Some hunting rifles, an AR-17, a few handguns, and an AK.

What do you recommend in terms of storing your guns in the house?

It all depends on what you're going to use your gun for. Guns are like tools, it depends on what the job is. If you have one in the house for home protection, you don't want it in the safe, disassembled, bullets over there. That's not going to do you any good.

You are an NRA recruiter. Do you recommend being in the NRA to gun owners?

I do. Anybody that is concerned about the second amendment, whether they own a gun or not, needs to be an NRA member.

What are some of the benefits?

There is a long list of benefits. The number one reason is that the NRA is the most powerful lobbyist organization fighting for your Second Amendment right. Thanks to them, the FDLE has 24 hours to destroy all the information I have given them so that they can't compile a list of gun owners.

— Continued on next page

— Continued from Page X

You only have to fire a weapon one time to qualify for your concealed carry license. Is that enough?

The law says the instructor has to see you safely discharge a firearm. Everybody does their classes a little different. It is not a gun safety class. The concealed carry class is to teach you the law as to where you can and cannot carry them.

Like on government property and college campuses?

They should be able to carry on campus. It would stop a lot of the things that people are thinking about. It doesn't make any sense not to carry one. If the bad guys are going to come in with guns, wouldn't you like to have one?

You have to take a safety course do get your license to drive, but not for guns. Would you change that?

I think it's fine like it is. It's not that hard. Always treat your gun like it's loaded, never point it at anything until you're ready to shoot, keep your finger off the trigger. It's pretty simple.

Anything you would change about gun laws?

I think you should be able to carry wherever you want to carry. I do like the fact that you have to have a license to carry, but you should be able to carry

Are concealed carry laws more strict than ownership?

Same things apply to carry as it is to own and possess. The only people that can open carry in state of Florida is on duty police officers and security officers.

What do you see for America if there were no guns?

It would be total chaos. Look at the crime rates in countries have banned guns;



Christopher Correa / Valencia Voice

Lewis recommends revolvers for first-time shooters. 'You pull the trigger, and it goes bang. Simple.'

it doesn't work.

If the citizens don't have any guns, then the government can do anything they want to do. Can they come through your town with an army tank? They can't do that, because there are too many people with guns out there.

Think about why nobody has ever invaded us on our home turf. It is because too many citizens have guns. It would be impossible to take us over.

Do you think we are headed the way of no guns?

I think they will always try to take our guns, I don't think they'll ever be successful because there are too many of us. Like Charlton Heston said, 'From my cold, dead hands.'

What would you say to people who are undecided about where they stand on gun issues?

If you were in a restaurant, a bad guy come in and starts shooting everybody up, wouldn't you rather have somebody there beside you that is a concealed carry person, whether you want to or not? Don't you think it's their right to do that? It's my choice, not yours, and don't tell me what I can and can't do.

What would you say to me if I was completely against guns?

I would say that you're an idiot.

Where do you think people get illegal guns?

They steal them. They don't come in here and buy them because 99 percent of them can't pass the background check.

How do you think we can stop guns from getting into the wrong hands?

When they get caught they should go to jail. They need to enforce the laws we have.

Go and look at how many crimes were committed by someone who legally owned and possessed a gun. That's not the problem.

The criminals are going to find a way to do what they do, and if you pass more laws, the only people you are hurting are law abiding citizens. The people who are going into Circle K and sticking them up; do you think they care how many laws you pass? They don't.

What is the biggest issue facing gun owners today?

One of the big things today is they are finding it hard to take your guns. They are focusing on different avenues, like if you don't have any ammunition, your gun is pretty useless.

For me, it's all about freedom. Leave me alone. As long as I'm not bothering anybody else with what I do, why should anyone come along and tell me what to do?

Christopher Correa contributed to this story.

Common weapon & firearm definitions

Concealed firearm: Any firearm which is carried on or about a person in such a manner as to conceal the firearm from the ordinary sight of another person.

Concealed weapon: Any dirk, metallic knuckles, slungshot, billie, tear gas gun, chemical weapon or device, or other deadly weapon carried on or about a person in such a manner as to conceal the weapon from the ordinary sight of another person.

Firearm: Any weapon which will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; any destructive device; or any machine gun.

Slingshot: A small mass of metal, stone, sand, or similar material fixed on a flexible handle, strap, or the like, used as a weapon.

Weapon: Any dirk, knife, metallic knuckles, slungshot, billie, tear gas gun, chemical weapon or device, or other deadly weapon except a firearm or a common pocketknife, plastic knife, or blunt-bladed table knife.

Electric weapon or device: Any device which, through the application or use of electrical current, is designed, redesigned, used, or intended to be used for offensive or defensive purposes, the destruction of life, or the infliction of injury.

Dart-firing stun gun: Any device having one or more darts that are capable of delivering an electrical current.

Securely encased: In a glove compartment, whether or not locked; snapped in a holster; in a gun case, whether or not locked; in a zippered gun case; or in a closed box or container which requires a lid or cover to be opened for access.

Florida statute 790.001

Gun Safety: Interview with Paul E. Rowe

Criminal Justice Institute coordinator for Valencia talks trigger discipline



By Marianella Zapata Noriega
mzapatanoriega@valenciavoices.com

With gun related accidents happening every day around the country, I sat down with Valencia Criminal Justice Institute's corrections coordinator Paul E. Rowe to talk about gun safety.

What are some of the institute's basic rules on safety while doing the firearms portion of the training?

The essential part of firearm training is safety, not how to shoot a weapon; it is how to handle a weapon safely. The owner of the weapon must know how the weapon functions, how to store it in a safe condition that follows Florida state statutes.

One of the biggest things is realizing firearms that don't kill; people kill. A firearm is an extension of the individual who has it in their possession. Now depending on what that individual wants to do, depends whether or not that weapon is going to be used in commission of a felony, which might be killing someone.

What are some of the things people should know before picking up a gun?

You should never pick one up until the individual who has the gun explains how to pick it up, how to hold it, and what the function of the gun is.



Marianella Zapata Noriega / Valencia Voice
Students at Valencia College's Criminal Justice Institute in one of their many in-class lectures.

For someone that wants to learn how to use a gun, what are the steps that they should take?

One of the first things that they should do is think about their reason for getting a gun. Most people will say protection. The question then is do you want it for self-protection or home protection.

The second thing is to ask yourself what kind of gun you want. There are two; revolver and semi-automatic. Those are the two types of handguns that you would

look for, when you get to rifles and shotguns that is a whole different type. For protection most people get a handgun.

The next thing you have to decide when you go to a gun store is what type of gun do I want. If you make your mind up for a revolver, then what name brand do you want. Most people will look at the aesthetics of the gun itself, does it look pretty?

Think about what type of gun you want size wise, large or compact.

For the safety and so forward you need

specific instructions by a certified firearms instructor. Normally it is going to be NRA (National Rifle Association) instruction, or you can benefit from a certified firearm instructor from the law enforcement department to come and give you a course or a class on firearm safety.

Where do the students here do their firearms training?

We do the training at the Sheriff's office shooting range.

There have been a lot of incidents in shooting ranges. Any thoughts?

At Shoot Straight in Casselberry they've had three incidents. One was a mother who killed her son. As he was in the process of using a weapon, she walks behind him and shots him then turns the gun on herself. There have been another two incidents in the same location where individuals have gone in and committed suicide.

Now how do you tell whether and individual is suicidal or not? You don't. By the same token how do you look at a person and tell whether they are a burglar or not? You don't know.

There is no specific way of questioning an individual when they come into a gun range and knowing that one this individual is going to commit suicide or to commit murder and then commit suicide.

Is there any training that people can get when they go to a gun range?

A lot of times the range will ask if you need help with the weapon. If you are renting a weapon, all they will show you is the particulars of how to open the slide, the cylinder, how to load the weapon, and some principles on how to fire the weapon.

As far as safety training goes, there is very little training for an individual going into a gun range.

When they rent the lanes to people that bring guns of their own, they assume (and that gets a lot of people in trouble) that they know how to handle the weapon safely and that they have been trained on the weapon. A lot of times they haven't.



Marianella Zapata Noriega / Valencia Voice
Students get back after finishing firearm training.

Have video games become too violent?

Graphic realism worries some, pleases others

By Manuel Marquez
mmarquez@valenciavoice.com

Violence Sells. But have video games become more violent in order to sell more?

In the early years of gaming, violence was less graphic, even cartoonish. In games such as Super Mario and Space Invaders when you kill the enemy, they disappear in a cloud of smoke or a small explosion. When the hero dies, they simply fall off the screen or disappear like their enemies.

At the time and with the current technology, these games were considered violent. Now with the improvements in technology, people don't simply disappear in a cloud of smoke.

Today when the enemies die, they bleed, they explode in chunks of meat, and a grotesque image of a corpse remains with the gunshot or cut wound left behind.

Just because the level of realism has changed does not mean that the games have become more violent, the goal is still the

game: shoot and kill everything in your path. The difference lies in the amount of realism that is acceptable to the viewing audience.

As the level of realism and gore has increased with the technology of video games, some people have become more desensitized to violence.

This past weekend I attended a Major League Gaming circuit where gamers were shooting, stabbing, punching, and exploding each other to win money. They were congratulated for their victories and all of their simulated kills. The crowd would stand and jeer, stop and shout whenever a player killed another player.

While there I spoke to one of the cheering fans, Giovany Rodriguez.

"I do think that video games have become more violent, but does it make a person violent?" he asked. "I don't think so. A stable person would know the difference between fiction and reality."

Does simulated violence make kids more violent? According to federal crime statistics, the rate of juvenile violent crime in the United States is at a 30-year low. Researchers discover that people serving time for violent crimes typically consume less media before committing their crimes than the average person in the general population.

It is true that young offenders who have committed school shootings in America have been video game players. But young



Courtesy of Electronic Arts.

Bulletstorm encourages gamers to 'kill with skill,' rewarding players for uniquely killing enemies.

people in general are more likely to be gamers — 90 percent of boys and 40 percent of girls play. The overwhelming majority of kids who play do not commit antisocial acts.

The strongest risk factors for school shootings centered on mental stability and the quality of home life, not media exposure, according to a 2001 U.S. Surgeon General's report.

There are two sides to every tale. Video game companies, and those who represent them such as the Entertainment Software Association, want you to believe

that there are no lasting effects from video games, while other researchers and politicians like Indiana University School of Medicine and Kansas State University want you to believe that video games do "increase emotional arousal."

There have been numerous studies that support both sides of the argument. The only thing that can be said for sure, in a business where consumers spend \$25.1 billion on video games, hardware and accessories, the effects of violent play are still clouded in mystery.



Satah J. Glover, Philadelphia Inquirer / MCT

The Bonners pictured at their home in Haddon Township, Pennsylvania, playing 'Halo 2' on XBOX 360.

Effects of media violence on the impressionable

Young have the desire to bring what they see to life

By Brittany Rose
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When you see a child playing “cops and robbers” or with light sabers, your first thought won’t likely be that movies and television have made kids believe that guns are cool or that violence is acceptable. A child playing games like that is socially acceptable and isn’t something that sets off alarms in the minds of most people.

Several parenting books and sources argue the point from both sides. Some say that playing war-type or fighting games

modeled after shows or films that they watch on television, such as Star Wars, can teach a child to love and to crave violence, while others believe that it teaches them assertiveness and impulse control.

It can help to teach them limits as long as a parent is around to remind them that hurting people is wrong, so this is only for pretend.

“Many kids who start off using guns do so because they think it’s cool and they don’t understand the consequences behind the weapon because they are too immature to know that,” said Danny Banks, Chief of Investigations for FDLE, Orlando region.

“If they haven’t been talked by an adult about gun safety, then they’re not going to understand the bad things that can happen when they use them.”

Is a child that grows up watching television shows with guns and violence more likely to commit a violent crime with a gun than one who is shielded from those types of programs?

When a child brings a gun to school and uses it, the first thing that the families and the victims begin doing is wondering why the child turned out that way and what could have been done to prevent it.

“I think that it’s a matter of, will you let the media affect you like that,” said Josue Simplicio, a Valencia College student. “A kid doesn’t have to see guns portrayed in the media and then automatically choose to use them.”

“It’s about not letting the media control you, and talking to your parents about your thoughts on it.”

Many people seem to agree on the fact that children who are able to communicate and have open-ended conversations with their parents or adults are the ones less likely to pick up a gun and use it or show it off without regard for the safety issues surrounding them.

“If you’re a parent, parent your kids,” said Steven Glass, a Valencia College student. “It’s about the parents making an effort to influ-



Mona Reeder, Dallas Morning News

Fatih Uyan, 10, holds a toy gun to the head of Ugur Kan, 9, as they play in the street in Istanbul, Turkey.



Tod Roberson, Dallas Morning News

James Richards, right, plays guns with his brother, Peter, outside their trailer home in Wyre Piddle, UK.

ence their kids properly rather than letting the television influence them instead.”

So what happens to the children who don’t have adults with good advice, but only the media to go by?

“The media tends to glorify guns and to make kids want to possess them, and show them to their friends,” said Banks. “Unfortunately too many kids grab guns and use guns because they think that it’s socially acceptable.”

Schools are taking special care to teach kids about the special safety that they should take in their lives when it comes to violence as well – with programs like SAVE, a nationwide club that stands for “Students Against Violence Everywhere.”

Programs like this are being used to spread awareness not only from adults to students, but from students to other students as well with national awareness days and meetings about violence.

Nearly every school in the U.S. has some kind of SAVE program, and through it, many kids are being taught not only about keeping themselves safe but they’re also being taught to make adults aware of situations before they are able to get out of control.

Teaching children about the fact that violence in the media is not a cool thing to actually imitate as well as taking programs such as SAVE can really begin to fix the problems with violence in schools as long as the children are open to these things.

Boutiques to bullets; my first time busting a cap

By Brittany Gil
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I get bi-weekly manicures, shopping is my favorite sport, and I “EEEEK” at the sight of mud. Shooting a gun was the last

thing I thought I was going to do.

My views on guns have always leaned more toward the anti-gun side. I never understood the actual reasoning behind owning a gun if you weren't law enforcement, but this week my views on guns have

changed completely.

Walking into the Oak Ridge Gun Range, I was intimidated, nervous, and very unsure of what to expect. Jeff Shedden, also a writer for the Valencia Voice, was my accompaniment for my gun range experience.

It took a total of about ten minutes for us to rent out a SIG 9 mm and 50 bullets. After soaking up some pointers on how to hold and prevent recoil from the gun, it was time to lock and load.

As I patiently watched Jeff load and set the gun up, I couldn't help to look around and check out the two other pairs of shooters aiming and shooting at the targets. The pairs also took part in small side conversations about aiming techniques and impact of the gun recoil.

It hit me then that this was more than a sport; it was a bonding experience.

Jeff signaled to me that the gun was all set up and ready. I couldn't help but nervously wobble my way to the station.

I prepared myself for a intense first shot, still unsure, and still extremely nervous. As I slowly pulled on the trigger I thought to myself, 'Don't lose control of your arm, stay still, and don't close your eyes. As much as you want to, DON'T DO IT!'

I shot my first bullet. Unsure of where it could have landed, I was surprised and felt as if this heavy load on my shoulders had been lifted off of me by gun loving angels.

Once I started I couldn't stop. The first bullet went straight through the chest of the target, and the five to six bullets after went everywhere but. I even managed to shoot off the string that moved the target back and forth.

I soon became very comfortable with the gun. I managed to hit the target in the



Jeff Shedden / Valencia Voice

Target after first round at Oak Ridge range.

chest, brains, and pelvic area. After about 25 tries, I was done, but had found a new understanding to owning a gun as well the use of guns as a sport.

My experience at the gun range was eye opening. I can understand why people take a joy out of owning a gun and using it as a sport. It's stress relieving, exhilarating, and addictive. (Not to mention that all the different types of guns and history that guns have is very interesting.)

Who would have thought that going to a shooting range can bring people together, as well as great memories?



Jeff Shedden / Valencia Voice

Brittany Gil learns to shoot a gun for the first time at Oak Ridge gun range in Orlando. "I was intimidated, nervous, and unsure of what to expect." Gil said.

All graphics provided by manufacturers
Remington 870



Gun collecting for beginners

By Jeff Shedden
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Americans embrace firearms like no other culture. For those looking to start a gun collection, it can be a daunting task.

The key is to start with a solid collection of practical arms, avoiding the silly toys that might be seen in the movies. Don't be fooled into starting with something ridiculous like an Uzi or a TEC-9 because of some guy waving one in a music video.

A great place to begin is with the "Judge" 4510 by Taurus. It is a five chambered revolver, designed to hold .410 bore shotgun shells. It got its nickname when Taurus discovered that it was being carried by Miami judges in high-crime areas, and they mar-

ket it as protection from carjackers.

The Judge has a rifled barrel, which qualifies it as a pistol, and not a short-barreled shotgun. The rifling keeps the shot pattern tight and gives it good stopping power at short distances. The Judge will also fit a .45 colt slug, but what's the fun in that?

A better place for that .45 bullet is in the SIG-Sauer P220 semi-automatic. The P220 is a lightweight, easily concealable pistol that is favored by police and civilian owners alike. It's durable and expertly crafted, and with good maintenance, it will last for years.

Training on the P220 is a must, since the pull is a little different than many novice shooters might be used to. The P220 also requires a more safety-conscious owner, as chambering a round also cocks



SIG 9mm

the hammer, requiring a manual release if not firing.

While the P220 is okay for defense and target shooting, there's a certain satisfaction of firing a more powerful weapon.

For this, you'll want to make sure your collection has a Smith & Wesson Model 686, a long-barreled, six-round, .357 revolver. This is a very familiar firearm, and carries a lot of recognition and security with it.

The Model 686 also requires some training, since it has a fierce kick, and many a novice has dropped the pistol from the recoil, or worse, gotten hit in the face from the kickback. Once you're comfortable handling it, you'll discover the satisfaction of not just putting a hole in a target, but nearly obliterating it.

The final must-have weapon in any new gun collection is probably the simplest of them all: the Remington Model 870 12 gauge shotgun. This is the most popular shotgun in the world, at over 10 million units sold. It's lightweight, with a fairly short barrel and the capacity to hold eight rounds.

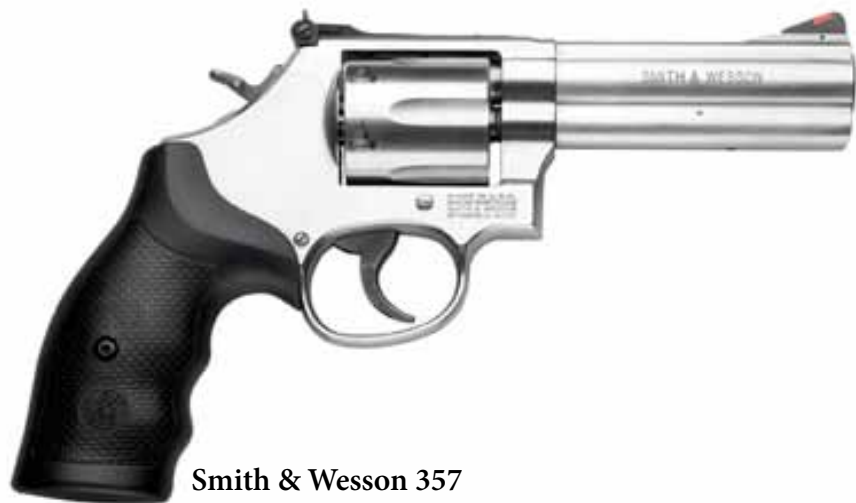
Any shotgun is a useful tool for sport, hunting or personal defense, but Remington is the best. A burglar will respond to the visceral sound of a shotgun cocking a lot faster than the vague threat of a pistol. If the worst happens, a shotgun doesn't require the precise aim that a pistol does and is more likely to hit in the dark.

Again, training is necessary because the kick is hard, and aiming a shotgun is not the same as a rifle. Shotguns fire pellets in a

spray, so you aim with the barrel, not with sights or scope.

One thing to understand about gun ownership is that ammunition can be expensive. Because of this, many gun owners will keep a simple 9mm pistol or .22 revolver just for "play" shooting. SIG makes great 9mm pistols, and Smith & Wesson make grand .22 revolvers. The ammunition for these is fairly cheap, so you won't break the bank spending the afternoon at the shooting range.

Before you begin collecting these weapons, absolutely make sure you take a gun safety course first. Your local police department will provide you with all of the information you will need. Gun ownership can be satisfying and rewarding as long as you are safe and responsible.



Smith & Wesson 357



Taurus Judge

Dark side of 'Pumped Up Kicks'

Mellow sound of summer hit song disguises disturbing message

By Steve Johnson
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — It was when my wife shoved the music player back across the table that I realized I needed to think harder about the tune I was playing for her.

"Pumped Up Kicks" has been hailed as the song, or at least a song, of the summer, although it first hit the charts in spring and is peaking now, in fall.

It is a perky pop ditty with just enough low-fi murkiness to make it hip. And its bright carousel of a chorus gets in your head and spins merrily around.

"Pumped Up Kicks" is also a song about a kid preparing to shoot his classmates at school.

"All the other kids with the pumped up kicks," says the chorus, "you'd better run, better run, outrun my gun ... You'd better run, better run, faster than my bullet."

Maybe we're desensitized by the almost absurdly violent first-person-shooter video games so many kids spend their afternoons playing. Maybe naming the song after fancy sneakers instead of the weaponry creates enough emotional distance.

Or maybe we figure, as I initially did, that it's just pop music, and its ear-candy qualities trump whatever the point of view might be.

But after looking closely at the song's lyrics and listening to it many extra times, I have come to agree that this song is more deserving of a push away than the warm embrace it has mostly received.

I don't for a moment fear that my kids or yours are one ill-considered pop song away from going bad, but I'd just rather not have their environment include a school shooting treated with all the gravity of bubble-gum pop, with whistling!

"Pumped Up Kicks" has been very, very good to Foster the People, the L.A.-based trio who released it as their first single. From nowhere, they've gone to playing Lollapalooza this summer. They're on a mostly sold-out tour right now.

And the tune has been top 10 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart since Aug. 27, No. 3 for the last five weeks. It's a nice story, almost.

Mark Foster, the group's Cleveland-bred frontman, did not respond to an e-mail request to address some of the questions raised by the song.

But in interviews, when the song's dark subject matter has been an issue, he's seemed able to satisfy questioners by referencing Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood."

He has said that he wrote the song because he's been troubled by school shootings, telling, for instance, NPR Music's "World Cafe" that he wondered "what would it be like to be inside of a kid's head that's a teenager and is basically losing his mind."

Yet, when that interview went up on the NPR website, the introductory text reduced the song to "a breezy summer jam with a subtly sinister edge."

I'm not sure what's subtle about "outrun my gun" or the verse in which the protagonist appears to shoot his dad.

But acknowledging that the song is dark is about as far as most critics who have reviewed "Torches," Foster the People's debut album, have come to engaging with "Pumped Up Kicks."

I'll go further and say that while I will certainly stand up for Foster's right to try such a thing, and while I don't doubt his sincerity, his reach simply exceeds his grasp.

You might argue that the tune's cheeriness is a symbol of just how far off the deep end this kid has gone. That would be a more reasonable interpretation, though, if Foster were



Christine Marie Saraceno / Valencia Voice

Mike Foster, lead singer of Foster the People, performing 'Pumped up Kicks' at the House of Blues in Orlando Oct. 20.

more in control of his lyrics: if he were not, for instance, switching from third to first person in the few lines he's written or offering as the only possible bits of explanation for the shootings sneaker envy and the tidbit that "Daddy works a long day."

Popular music, to be sure, is full of murder songs, many of them classics: Johnny Cash "shot a man in Reno just to watch him die." Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" opens with a son confessing murder.

"Pumped Up Kicks," by contrast, introduces its star as "a cowboy kid" with "a rolled cigarette hanging out (of) his mouth."

We don't know why he's planning to do what he does, only that the songs temporary narrator sees him as sort of glamorous. And, if we bother to think beyond the song's 4 minutes and 16 seconds, we know that he will bring a lifetime of agony to people who have done nothing to deserve it. That just doesn't feel very pop.

— MCT Campus

History of violence

By Jeremy Williams
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2000s

Eminem is no stranger to controversy; in 2000 he released the video to "Stan," a song that puts a disturbed fan in the spotlight as he abuses his pregnant girlfriend. More recently, 2010's "Love the Way You Lie," with Rihanna, was attacked for glorifying domestic violence.

1990s

After the Columbine shooting in 1999, Marilyn Manson's music and lifestyle was blamed for causing the assailants to open fire in the school, killing 12 students and 1 teacher. A firestorm debate began, not only over gun control and school violence, but also on Manson's messages in his songs.

1980s

N.W.A. came under fire in 1989 with the release of "Straight Outta Compton" whose lyrics glorified drug use, degraded women, and encouraged violence towards the police.

Oldies

Even our parents were not free from controversy when it came to violence in music. In 1955, Johnny Cash released "Folsom Prison Blues" where he so proudly exclaims, "...I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die..."

Sports stars pack heat

Athletes feel need to self-protect with guns

By David Barron
Houston Chronicle

From a distance, be it one created by geography, lifestyle, fame or finances, it's easy to consider the plight of Plaxico Burress, the wideout who couldn't shoot straight, and pass it off as slapstick.

In fact, one observer quickly compared Burress, the Jets' wide receiver who accidentally shot himself in the leg with a handgun at a New York nightclub and now faces weapons charges, to the ultimate goof with a gun.

"Plaxico Burress," said Adam Scheffer of NFL Network, "has become the Barney Fife of hip-hop." And such is the enduring nature of Don Knotts' character from The Andy Griffith Show that even players of Burress' generation understand (and occasionally snicker) at the comparison.

Slapstick, however, obscures the very real dangers that can confront young, successful, wealthy athletes, and it's a facile means of addressing lifestyle choices that can result in unfortunate decisions and grim consequences.

On the same weekend that Burress accidentally shot himself, for example, the Washington Redskins honored Sean Taylor, the defensive back who died in November 2007, a day after he was shot by intruders at his home in Miami.

Former Jaguars lineman Richard Collier was shot 14 times. His left leg was amputated, and he is paralyzed below the waist. Police believe the gunman was retaliating against Collier for a nightclub altercation.

Arizona Falcon's defensive back, Dunta Robinson, gave ESPN magazine this description of the robbers who held him at gunpoint at his Houston-area home last year. "One of the guys was like, 'You're a good player, so I'm not going to kill you,'" Robinson said.

Each of the three situations, in addition to the Burress case, differs in the degree to which the player put himself in harm's way or was victimized by someone attracted to his celebrity. But each is a scenario considered daily by thoughtful men who see themselves as potential targets.

"Some people don't place any value on human life, and they see us as an opportunity," said former Texans defensive lineman Anthony Weaver. "I know billionaires don't walk around with weapons, but you don't see billionaires on TV every day, either. You wouldn't know Warren Buffett if he walked past you on the street."

And so Weaver, who says he and his wife are licensed to carry concealed weapons in Texas and 26 other states, says he has his gun with him 99 percent of the time when he isn't at work. He estimates that a dozen or more of his teammates own guns as well.

"I don't drive around in a flashy car, but I see how people look at me. I see how they look at Mario (Williams)," Weaver said. "If you've got a license and if you know what you're doing, it's something you're entitled to have with you to protect yourself. I think it's worth it."

Weaver said he was one of at least 20 Texans who received instruction in gun laws and gun safety as part of a seminar sponsored by the team. He said he received his license to carry a concealed weapon through the Department of Public Safety but does not know how many teammates have similar licenses in Texas or other states.

The Texas Legislature last year exempted concealed handgun permits from disclosure under the Texas Open Records Act, so it is not possible to determine how many members of the Texans or of Houston's other pro teams have permits.

Texans owner Bob McNair said the team discourages players from carrying guns but provides instruction should they choose to do so.

"Our official position is that we would rather they not have a handgun on their person," McNair said. "If they want to have one at home, fine, but to be carrying one, we would rather they not do that."

"They need to be schooled, and they need to be properly licensed so they know



Craig Ruttle, Newsday / MCT

Former Giants' WR Plaxico Burress was charged with two counts of felony weapon counts after he shot himself in the leg in a New York nightclub in 2008. The gun in question was not registered.

how to handle it and know what to do and what not to do. You're better off not having one. That's the bottom line on your person. If they need guns, they're going to places they shouldn't be."

Ryan Reichert, the Texans' director of security, said the team has arranged seminars for players with Houston Police Department officers to address gun safety but agreed with McNair's description of the team's weapons policy.

"We discourage guys from having guns," he said. "Most of the time, having a gun escalates the situation where not having a gun might not lead to a drastic outcome."

Policy aside, gun ownership and use is a significant hobby for some players. Williams told the New York Times last year

he owns 10 guns, including a .50-caliber Browning machine gun rifle, a Desert Eagle pistol, and AR-10 and AR-15 rifles. His mother, Mary, who told the newspaper she owns five handguns, said she taught Mario to shoot when he was 8 years old.

Offensive lineman Eric Winston, noting recent speculation that at least 50 percent of NFL players own guns or rifles, said he has no reason to disagree with that estimate.

"I don't know about personal licenses (for concealed weapons), but I would say (gun ownership) would be at least 50 percent," he said. "You go one to one here, I guarantee you there are 25 guys in this locker room who have guns."

Continued on next page

Continued from page X

Another Texans player who has acknowledged owning a firearm is Robinson, who in September 2007 was bound and held at gunpoint by robbers at his suburban home. Robinson told ESPN The Magazine that he never thought he needed a gun until the incident.

“I’ve heard the league say you don’t need a gun,” he told the magazine. “But if you haven’t been in my situation, you really can’t answer that question. I would never use a weapon in the wrong way or look for trouble.

But I’ll tell you this: I will protect my house. My gun definitely makes me feel a little safer.”

Robinson would not address his situation last week but said he understands why athletes would feel more comfortable with a weapon. He noted that one of Burress’ Giants teammates, Steve Smith, was robbed at gunpoint outside his house in New Jersey.

“I don’t know about carrying a gun into a nightclub,” Robinson said. “But I understand how you would feel that way because of things going on with players in this league. You just want to be safe.”

Gun safety is an issue for every pro league. The NBA and Major League Baseball, along with each league’s players union, sponsor annual seminars on security issues, and each league monitors cases involving weapons, as does the NFL.

The NBA, for example, suspended Minnesota Timberwolves point guard Sebastian Telfair without pay for three games this season after Telfair pleaded guilty to criminal possession of a weapon. The violation

occurred in 2007, when Telfair was with the Boston Celtics. He was sentenced to three months’ probation.

The team education sessions touch on specific points of Texas law. For example, as of September 2007, a person who can legally possess a firearm can carry a handgun in a motor vehicle and can carry it to and from his vehicle without a license.

It is a criminal offense, meanwhile, to carry a handgun while intoxicated. Texas law also prohibits handguns from a business where alcohol is sold if more than half of the business’ revenue is from the sale of alcohol for on-premises consumption. It also is illegal to carry a gun at locations where high school, college or pro sports events take place.

“I guarantee you there are 25 guys in this locker room who have guns.”

**—Eric Winston,
Houston Texans**

Given those restrictions, anyone who emulated Burress by carrying a gun into a nightclub in Texas would be subject to prosecution. Such restrictions indicate the degree to which players, like the general public, should rely on common sense in dealing with security issues.

Former Rockets star Charles Barkley said in a radio interview that Burress was “idiotic” for carrying a gun into a night-

club and was the “luckiest man in the world” that he was not more seriously injured and that a bystander was not injured when the gun discharged.

Barkley said he owns a handgun but does not carry it on his person and instead relies on security guards when he is in a public setting.

Former Rockets guard Rafer Alston said he understands the mindset.

“When you go out, you need some sort of security, but I don’t think the security is the gun,” Alston said. “You need to let a security guard do what he does. If there’s a situation, he’s trained to defuse it.”

Texans wide receiver Andre Johnson, who played with Sean Taylor at the University of Miami, is equally aware of the need for players to be vigilant regarding security issues. However, he questions the benefit of carrying a concealed weapon in that effort.

“If you have a gun, you need to keep it locked away. I don’t think it’s something you should be walking around with,” Johnson said. “You do have to be aware of your surroundings and be aware of the people who are around you. It’s something I think about. You never really know who is out to get you.”

Weaver sympathizes with Burress but doesn’t defend Burress’ lack of judgment.

“I feel for him. It’s an unfortunate situation, having it loaded and losing control of the gun,” Weaver said. “I worry about Plax, and I hope everything is fine with him.

“But you’ve gotta be smart. You know what they say. Guns don’t kill people. Stupid people with guns kill people.”

Chronicle staff writers John McClain and Megan Manfull contributed to this report.

— MCT Campus



Mike Haskey, Columbus Ledger-Enquirer / MCT
Pat Tillman, the former Arizona Cardinals safety, who was killed by friendly fire while serving in Afghanistan. He was 28.



Harry Walker / MCT

A Redskins fan mourns the death of defensive back Sean Taylor, who was shot and killed by an armed intruder in his Miami home during a robbery in 2007.

Right: Thirteen-year NFL veteran Steve McNair was found dead in his condo with multiple gunshot wounds. His mistress, Sahel Kazemi, 20, was convicted in what police ruled as a murder-suicide.

R.I.P.

NFL victims of gun violence



Kenneth K. Lam, Baltimore Sun / MCT

Life after football

Former NFL vet trades game for guns

By Jim Baumbach
Newsday

After 10 years of chasing quarterbacks as a defensive end with the Dolphins, Rams and Panthers, Jay Williams retired in 2004 and immediately sent a

mass mailing to anyone he could think of in the NFL.

Want to buy a gun? Call me.

"I believe in my right to bear arms," he said, and he won't ever apologize for that.

That's because selling guns is now his way of life. Four years ago, Williams

opened Jay's Tactical Gear and Accessories, a licensed gun shop that he operates out of his home south of Charlotte, N.C.

Although the majority of his sales are from online auctions or gun shows in North Carolina, he estimated that he has sold guns to 10 NFL players.

He refused to identify those players, and indicated most of his transactions involve handguns. They need guns for their own protection, he said, because professional athletes are constantly at risk.

"Criminals are jealous," Williams, 37, said in a phone interview. "They're jealous of your stature. They're jealous that you're making it playing ball. And it's a notch on their belt to take you down a couple of levels."

"That's why they follow someone like Steve Smith home. And you know what? After they robbed him, I bet they were talking it up to each other when they went back to wherever they came from. How he was scared, and how he ain't all that big now."

"Because, basically, criminals are cowards."

But it's one thing to be a coward and another thing to be a dangerous coward. And that's the threat that criminals with guns pose to professional athletes, Williams said.

You never know what they might do. You never know when they might attack.



Christopher A. Record; Charlotte Observer / MCT

Williams, 96, with the Carolina Panthers, tries to tackle Saints' running back Ricky Williams.

It's up to the athletes to be prepared, Williams said.

"When they have a gun, for a criminal, that represents power," he said. "You may do everything they ask of you, but it's that power they feel they have over you at that time. To them, they're thinking, 'It's up to me whether you live or die.'"

The son of a former Washington, D.C. police officer, Williams has spent his whole life around guns. He said he knew when he made it to the NFL in 1994 that he needed a gun of his own for protection.

Williams said he's never been in the position where he used his gun, or even felt close to using it. But he's glad he has one on him all the time, even nowadays,

because you just never know.

"Whenever I got to a new team, the first people I got with were the security guys, especially the security supervisor," he said. "I would ask, 'What are the gun laws for this state?' And they would give me a printout and I had that information right there."

That's exactly what Williams does with his clients. He said he gives them all the information they need, from state-to-state laws to advice on when it's permissible to use a firearm (a life-threatening situation.)

"The guys I have sold guns to that play in the league," he said, "you've never heard any stories about them."

— MCT Campus



Al Diaz, Miami Herald / MCT

Williams, 91, on the Dolphins, attempts to sack quarterback Anthony Wright of the Ravens.

Trifecta for tragedy: Young, black, armed

By Leonard Pitts Jr.
Miami Herald

The last time most of us heard the name Javaris Crittenton, it was as the other guy in a news story starring Gilbert Arenas.

The story grew from a December 2009 incident in the locker room of the NBA's Washington Wizards in which a supposed "joke" between the two escalated until they produced guns from their lockers. Arenas got most of the attention, and blame, which is fitting. He was the team's star, considered one of the better players in the game. Crittenton, by contrast, was a journeyman who had bounced from team to team.

After the incident, he was bounced out of the NBA proper, ending up in its Development League. Still, he might have made it back to the big time, might have played overseas, might have wound up coaching at some level.

But if Atlanta police are correct, all those might have just went away. Crittenton, 23, was arrested at John Wayne International Airport in Orange County, Calif., on Monday. He is suspected of killing Julian Jones, a mother of four, who was shot to death in a drive-by earlier this month as she stood outside her home with two other people. Authorities say she was not the intended target and that Crittenton was after someone he believed had stolen jewelry from him. His fall offers a tragic coda to the events of 20 months ago. Tragic, but not surprising.

The FBI reports that 9,775 arrests were made in 2009 for murder and non-negligent homicide.

There is a reason people under 30, like Crittenton, accounted for about two-thirds of them: Young people tend to have poor impulse control. There is a reason males, like Crittenton, accounted for about 90 percent of them; males tend to be more aggressive.

And there are multiple reasons young black men, like Crittenton, account for about half the arrests: one being that black men tend to be more hyper-vigilant about, and to guard more jealously against, perceived threats to their manhood.

You'd think having a chance at some sort of future would insulate you from those forces. You'd be mistaken. Crittenton, young, male and black, struck a dangerous trifecta.

His lawyers, by the way, say that when he was arrested, their client had checked in for an Atlanta-bound flight, intending to turn himself in. They say he is innocent and looks forward to clearing his name at trial.

If he does, great. If he does not, we will henceforth regard with new eyes that locker room stand-off a couple years ago. We already know it suggests immaturity, already know it suggests knuckleheadedness. But it also suggests something we see all too often in violence-scarred urban hellscape: young black men trying to validate their manhood on the cheap, trying to find it in the barrel of a gun.

A man or boy has a psychological, perhaps even biologic need to prove his capability, durability, fearlessness, toughness. Recognizing this, it would be a worthwhile mission for families, schools, worship houses and other community institutions working

MY VOICE



Harry E. Walker / MCT

Crittenton got fined by the NBA for bringing guns into the Wizards locker room in 2009. Now he is a murder suspect.

toward violence reduction to formulate means that allow boys to fulfill that imperative constructively.

At the very least, teach them that a gun is not a penis. It's a tragedy that Crittenton didn't know that.

It's a bigger tragedy that he's not the only one.

— MCT Campus

Penalty for gun too harsh?

By Dan Le Batard
McClatchy News Services

I have a "What's the big deal?" attitude about most of the outrage surrounding our games.

Let's start with Gilbert Arenas, by me apologizing for what might sound too much like an apology for Arenas when all I'm really doing is wishing Arenas worked in an environment that didn't force insincere apologies from people who clearly aren't apologetic.

Arenas was wrong, period. You can't defend the dumb and dangerous. Bringing guns into any workplace, never mind an emotional one, is certainly that. I can tell you that good guy Greg Anthony admitted to The New York Times in 2003 that he used to bring a pistol into the Knicks' locker room. I can tell you that since the in-home muggings of Antoine Walker and Eddy Curry, basketball players are more armed and alarmed than ever -- so scared that Antawn Jamison usually circles his neighborhood two or three times when returning from anywhere just to make sure no one is following him.

I'm more interested in how this mess has gotten Arenas a stiffer penalty and more backlash than former New York Jet Damien Robinson received a few days after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, when he drove to the stadium with a semiautomatic weapon and 200 rounds of ammo in his trunk.

Arenas was suspended for being funny.

Real guns at work? Those didn't get him punished. Making imaginary guns with his fingers at work? That will go down as one of the most expensive jokes in sports history.

— MCT Campus