

forum

Gun control: is it time for new laws?

Yes -- loopholes in law make access too easy

Why would someone want to own a handgun? To kill a rabbit? No. To kill a deer? No. To kill another human being? Maybe.

Every 50 minutes an American is killed by a handgun. Twenty-nine Americans alive today, maybe even you, will be shot dead tomorrow.

In the closets, nightstands and dresser drawers of Americans, there are an estimated 55 million handguns and by the year 2000 there will be 100 million handguns in the United States.



By Maureen Keenan
Staff Writer

In New York alone, authorities estimate there are two million illegal handguns. The federal agency in charge of reducing this arsenal in New York is the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF).

Each year the BATF acquires nearly 2,000 handguns through confiscations or purchases by undercover agents.

If they continue at this rate with the flow of illegal weapons into New York ending, which is unlikely, authorities figure it would take the BATF a millennium to disarm the city.

But we can never totally disarm a city, or a country. What we can do is strictly enforce the current law while also making changes in the law.

The 1968 Federal Gun Control Act prohibits the sale of weapons through the mail and bans the importation of the so-called Saturday Night Special.

This law also makes it a felony for anyone other than a federally licensed dealer to purchase guns in one state for sale in another.

Gun dealers are also required to keep a record of gun sales and must refuse to sell a gun to anyone who is under 21, a convicted felon, mental defective, a fugitive, a drug addict, an alcoholic or a resident of another state.

But since no prior check is required, there is no way for a dealer to know if a potential customer is some psychopathic killer.

As the law stands today, John Hinckley Jr. could go to the nearest gun dealer and purchase a gun.

What this current law also doesn't do is forbid the importation of foreign made parts that make up those guns.

Due to a loophole in the law, the lethal parts to these handguns are imported from abroad, assembled and sold in the United States.

Anti-gun forces, like Handgun Control Inc. support a measure sponsored by Senator Edward Kennedy, D-Massachusetts and Representative Peter Rodino, D-New Jersey, that bans the sale, manufacturing and assembling of Saturday Night Specials; requires 21-day waiting period either to purchase a gun or to get a purchase permit; prohibits pawnshops from selling handguns and mandates a prison sentence for anyone using a gun in the commission of a felony.

With the past year showing a 13 percent increase in violent crime, the greatest increase in a decade, you would think there would be more support.

Polls reveal that two out of three people favor gun control, yet there are still those gun enthusiasts who think guns are an American tradition.

One such person, William Ruger, founder, chairman and chief executive of Sturm, Ruger and Company, Inc., one of the top 12 firearm manufacturers in the United States, said, "Guns are a great and brilliant example of the individuality of our citizens, just like owning an automobile."

It's this type of mentality that stops the law from being revised. Next time there's greed.

Last year's gun dealers sold more than six million weapons, with gun dealers using much of this money to have laws passed in favor of free disposition of guns.

The National Rifle Association spent \$1.5 million on anti-gun control candidates from their \$46.7 million in assets.

Pro-gun advocates also feel every law-abiding citizen has a constitutional right to have a gun during lawless times.

But the first civil liberty of all citizens is "freedom from fear of violent and sudden death."

The question isn't whether to disarm honest citizens but whether we should make it harder for those breaking the laws to arm themselves.

Are we going to sit idly by adding to the list of George Moscone, Robert Kennedy, John Lennon and thousands of anonymous individuals killed by firearms?

Robert Kennedy once said, "The victims of violence are black and white, rich and poor, young and old, famous and unknown...most important of all, human beings whom other human beings loved and needed."

Shawn Eisor was one of those people.

While doctors were fighting to save Ronald Reagan's life, hundreds of miles away, Shawn was with his best friend watching TV. Before them was the slow motion drama of the assassination attempt on Reagan.

According to police, Shawn told his friend, "I know where there's a gun in the basement."

The two boys did find the gun and started playing with it. Shawn left the room briefly and when he returned his friend warned jokingly "If you come in, I'll shoot."

The pistol was cocked, a shot was fired.

Police found Shawn lying on his back with a hole in his upper chest.

Before this incident, the handgun had never been fired.

Yet after this scenario you still hear someone like Harry Mehr, a gun dealer, make an inane comment like, "Gas goes in cars, right? Cars kill people, right? But gas stations still sell it."

So I wonder, why do people buy handguns.

Sure, I could use a handgun for protection. Maybe I could put it in my nightstand just in case an intruder enters.

I just hope my roommate doesn't walk in.



No -- laws can't stop stupidity or carelessness

Only two forms of gun control are being discussed: registration and a severe restriction on who would be allowed to own a handgun at all.

Registration, as it is currently being implemented by the U.S. government and some states, involves, to a slight degree, restrictions on the right to own handguns.

Fully automatic weapons, for example, cannot be owned by anyone. Felons and people with a history of mental illness are not allowed to own any type of firearm.

Outside of this, there are very few restrictions on someone's ability to



By Tom Quinlan
Staff Writer

purchase and own a handgun.

Unfortunately the most tragic deaths involving handguns or weapons of any type cannot be even slightly controlled or reduced by registration of the weapon.

Registration cannot cure stupidity or carelessness, and every heart-rendering story, detailing the death of a young child accidentally killed while playing with a firearm, is attributable to those two causes.

Registration isn't powerful enough to cause a normally reasonable and law-abiding citizen to put down the gun he grabbed in a moment of anger, and stop him from killing someone in a moment of rage. To add to the tragedy of events the victim of this crime of passion is usually a friend or relative.

Recognizing that registration alone cannot prevent these senseless killings and that it has virtually no impact on criminal activity, some people advocate a restrictive policy on handguns that would stringently limit their availability.

Operating on the premise that government should be a security blanket and post-natal womb, they want a guarantee from the government that their lives shall be trouble and pain free.

They seem to believe that security watched over and promised by the government is infinitely preferable to the right to make their own decisions.

This is what the gun control debate boils down to:

What degree of security is worth the surrendering of a few basic rights?

The second amendment reads "A well regulated militia, being essential to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

The founding fathers labored under the delusions that their descendants would be reasonable and mature people.

Congratulated by legal scholars for their flexible laws that were adaptable to changing conditions, they must have known that this right would be abused.

And the right has been abused. Even felons, who are nominally denied

access to any firearms are able to pick up a handgun.

But the first 10 amendments, commonly referred to as the "Bill of Rights," were not written as rights that we could enjoy as long as we behave ourselves.

They were written as a partial listing of the common rights of all men that governments had most often pre-empted and then routinely abused.

It was their belief that rights are going to be abused and that it was better if they were abused by people instead of governments.

The fact that a right has been abused and at a tragic cost is not a sufficient reason to abdicate the responsibility people have of governing and ordering their own lives.

The last time the government, with the support of a large segment of the population, decided that ordinary folk were incapable of controlling their own lives in a major way was during Prohibition.

Not only did people continue to drink, but Prohibition contributed to not only a lucrative black market, but the introduction of graft on a wide scale to our judicial system.

The government's outlawing of certain drugs, while not in the form of an amendment to the constitution, has had much the same effect.

In Humboldt and Mendocino counties, known collectively as the sin-semilla capital of the world, marijuana growers have become a law unto themselves.

The traditional law enforcement agencies either ignore it because it keeps the economy in their counties healthy, or they don't have the resources and backing to control it.

Families who have lost members because of an accident or crime of passion with a handgun, or a simple assault by some punk with a gun, probably want gun control and understandably don't really care about the Second Amendment or the results of previous government infringements of rights.

But it is not feasible to maintain this society and still refuse to accept responsibility for anything.

When this country was founded, it was decided that the best government would be the people themselves.

Instead of founding a state religion, they carefully delineated a separation of church and state.

In order to keep an electorate that was able to make intelligent decisions on who their representatives should be, they gave us the First Amendment.

In another attempt at providing free speech and freedom of thought, a novel institution that required the government to prove a person guilty was introduced in the Fifth and Sixth Amendments.

It's doubtful that in this day and age private ownership of rifles and handguns is a detriment that prevents some type of governmental takeover.

But to reject a right and turn it over to the government because of abuses is a bad precedent.

Rights, as everyone has been told before, entail responsibilities.

To reject the responsibility of devising regulations that would prevent handgun abuse and still allow citizens to keep as many rights as possible is short-sighted and dangerous.

Living in a free society means being responsible for managing and maintaining it.

Every right surrendered to the government not only weakens society, but makes us less free.

the mailbag

Let's not forget what they said

Editor:

When I first read of the death of Anwar Sadat, one of my first thoughts was of John Lennon's death last year. Two of the most peaceful men in our world, two of the most ardent supporters of international understanding, two of the most dynamic men of the last decade were shot down by cold-hearted fanatics in the short span of a year.

What made it even more unbearable was that Lennon would have turned 41 just a few days after

Sadat's assassination. The ironies were devastating.

In this time of international strife, let us not forget what they said and what they did for this earth.

Finally, let us be calm, reasonable and understanding. We must not let their work go unfinished.

Remember Sadat. Remember Lennon. Remember their lives and their words: "All we are saying is give peace a chance."—John Lennon.

"In every decision I made, in every action I took I have been directed by my firm belief in the dignity of man and his right to

freedom, peace and equality."—Anwar Sadat.

Michael J. Vaughn
Journalism
sophomore

Education is not a spectator sport

Editor:

I read Jim Rowen's opinion piece on general education. A wise old marketing professor I used to know once said of education at SJSU: "Never have so many paid so much for so little and fought so hard for what little they got." I think the old marketing professor was a very wise man.

If I may presume to speak for the School of Business, I might mention that we do indeed want informed and literate graduates, and we do not think general education interferes with the education of the troops.

Actually, we believe that general education will provide a decent base upon which we might be able to build something more than an ignorant baboon who, having lucked out and made money, thinks he also gained status in the process.

We don't feel greedy as a department or school. We feel an English professor is capable of teaching our communications course if he is willing. We also

believe historians have something to contribute.

More importantly, a Business School without a university to support what it hopes to do is a very narrow creation. We hope to support the university where we can teach and depend on other qualified instructors to teach what they can.

The end result, which ultimately depends on the student, since education is not a spectator sport, we hope will be a reasonable well-educated person who has just begun to think and to read.

Edward Laurie
Chairman, Marketing/QS
School of Business

The Forum page is your page. The Daily encourages readers' comments on any topic. The viewpoints expressed in opinion articles are those of the author. Editorials appearing on this page are the opinion of the Spartan Daily.

feature

Bicyclists pedal coast-to-coast for a cause

**By Janet Weeks
Staff Writer**
Last July 1, SJSU student Mark Pasos broke away from his usual summertime routine for some free-wheeling, high-riding adventure. But it was not just the thrill of travel that inspired

Pasos and his buddy Mike Venning to pedal their bikes 3,500 miles from California to New York. About \$500, generated from trip sponsors, was donated to the Diabetes Society. "We decided to go, then we decided to do it for the Diabetes Society,"

Pasos said. In preparation for the 47-day trek, Pasos stashed many things into his 60-pound backpack. Among them was a thermos filled with insulin and ice. Pasos is a diabetic. "I tried to keep the insulin cold," Pasos said,

"but sometimes we were riding through rural areas where it was hard to get fresh ice." The insulin started to go bad, and as the trip wore into weeks, Pasos found himself using three times as much insulin as usual. "My blood sugar level wouldn't come down. I felt really tired and began losing a lot of weight."

Overall, Pasos lost 15 pounds on the trip. And it was not all smooth sailing. On the sixth day out, Pasos took a spill just outside of Alturas, Ca. "We were going down a six percent three-mile grade. The weather was pretty stormy. My friend pulled out ahead while I was watching for cars. When I turned around, my weight shifted and the back tire locked-up."

Pasos estimated that the bike was travelling at 50 miles an hour when he fell. Months later, his badly skinned leg is still healing. Still, the duo managed to average 85 miles a day, much of it through some mighty tough terrains. "In Wyoming, we rode 9,450 feet up the side of the Bighorn Mountains," Pasos recalled.

While visiting Yellowstone National Park, the cyclists ate a bad can of beef stew, and consequently suffered through a bout of food poisoning. Perhaps it was this bad experience that led Pasos to eat peanut butter. At the start of the venture, Pasos carried with him a two-pound jar of peanut butter. In Minnesota, he bought a four-

afford to stay there." Of all the places they traveled, Pasos was most impressed by Mt. Rushmore, he said, and least impressed by New York. "New York is too busy for bikes."



Cyclists Mike Venning, left, and Mark Pasos rode their bikes from California to New York last summer.

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sports

Two-for-one football ticket sale

Tickets for Saturday night's Homecoming game against Fullerton State are on sale at a two-for-one price in the student section.

The regular cost of a single student ticket is \$2.50.

The decision to sell the ticket at the special price is "because of the great student support

for the team," Sports Information Director Lawrence Fan said.

Tickets are available only at the Athletic Ticket Office outside the Men's Gym.

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All Evening Movies will be shown in Morris Dailey Auditorium. All Matinees will be shown in the S.U. Ballroom. We hope that this change will help clear up the confusion.



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Big first half carries SJSU

Cardoso connects on two goals as Spartans improve to 9-1-1

By Mark J. Tennis
Staff Writer

Not even questionable officiating could stop the SJSU soccer team from jumping all over the UC-Santa Barbara Gauchos Sunday afternoon at Spartan Stadium.

Despite being called for 15 fouls to the Gauchos four, the Spartans connected for four goals in the first half and went on to defeat Santa Barbara 4-1.

The victory was the Spartans fourth straight and improved their record to 9-1-1.

The first half explosion was not apparent in the Spartans' two previous games when they began games sluggishly.

"We took it to them right away," Giulio Bernardi, the team's leading scorer, said.

Sergio Cardoso also enjoyed the fast start.

"It seems like sometimes we score all our goals in the first half and sometimes all in the second half," Cardoso said. "It's much better to score them all in the first half."

Cardoso played a big role in the game against Santa Barbara as he scored the first two Spartan goals.

On his first goal nine minutes into the game, he headed a crossing pass from Tom Vischer and deposited the ball over the Gaucho goalie's head. Two minutes later, Gonzalo Sandoval sent a pass to Cardoso and the senior striker drilled the ball past the goalie again.

The Spartans third goal of the half was scored approximately four minutes later by Alex Guarachi, but the goal could prove to be costly for the Spartans because Guarachi twisted his foot on the play and had to leave the game.

"I faked the goalkeeper and my foot twisted," Guarachi said late in the game with his foot encased in ice. "But I took the shot anyway."

"It could be a ligament," Guarachi added. "I hope it isn't serious, but I don't know. I really want to be ready to play UCLA next week."

Dave Pickett then put the Spartans ahead 4-0 in the 37th minute of the half when he stole the ball in Santa Barbara's backfield and connected for a goal.

Santa Barbara's lone goal occurred just a minute later when Graham Wietherall scored off a rebound shot. On that play, Spartan goalie Ryan Moore made a diving save, but the ball trickled just out of his reach. Wietherall was standing at the right place and easily scored.

In the second half, the Gauchos played the Spartans much tighter. Unfortunately for them, the Spartans also played tough defense resulting in a 4-1 final score.

"We're doing well," SJSU coach Julie Menendez said after the game, evaluating the team's play. "We played well in the first half, but it was a different ballgame in the second half. They made some good adjustments."

Menendez was also pleased with the return of Joe Pimentel and the play of reserves Nick Kupkow and Mike Thomas. Pimentel had been missing for the past few games due to a stress fracture of his right ankle.

Another result of the victory could be a number one ranking for the Spartans on the West Coast because top-ranked USF lost to San Diego State and second-ranked UCLA was tied. Last week, the Spartans were tied with UCLA for the second spot in the poll.

The Spartans will seek victory number 10 tomorrow with a 7:30 p.m. match against Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo at Municipal Stadium.



Photo by Gary Feinstein

Nick wins again

SJSU's Nick Constantine (on the left above) has built up a reputation as a player that doesn't lose many head balls. In the action above, Constantine wins another head ball.

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Athletic injuries: knee damage

Surgical technique speeds post-operative healing

By Mark J. Tennis
Staff Writer

The development of arthroscopic surgery a few years ago has revolutionized the treatment of knee injuries.

In the past, a doctor would have to operate to repair any kind of knee injury—either ligament or cartilage damage.

The operation would then leave the athlete out of action for several months.

With the use of arthroscopic surgery, a doctor can now repair cartilage damage without opening the knee and an athlete can

be back on the playing field the next week. A torn ligament, however, must still be repaired through an operation.

Interest in knee injuries is high right now in SJSU athletics because five performers have suffered ligament knee injuries in the past month.

The five are football star Gill Byrd, soccer player Vanlee Waters and field hockey athletes Jeannie Gilbert, Carolyn Shears and Allison McCargo.

SJSU men's athletic trainer Charlie Miller is

one who can explain how arthroscopic surgery works.

"This arthroscopic looks inside the knee through small holes punctured on either side," Miller said. "If cartilage is only damaged, the arthroscope then minces up the cartilage and removes it."

Unfortunately for SJSU, the five athletes injured in the past month could not take full advantage of the arthroscopic. They had ligament damage.

One athlete who did take advantage of arthroscopic surgery was Tom Racanelli, a football player at Bellarmine High School in San Jose.

Last summer,

Racanelli suffered a knee injury in a pre-season practice. After arthroscopic surgery repaired torn cartilage, Racanelli was back on the field in ten days.

The arthroscope also helps doctors better diagnose knee injuries.

"Doctors are recognizing anterior cruciates much earlier," SJSU women's athletic trainer Sue Anthony said. "If they are recognized later, then the knee ligament has to be reconstructed. It can't be repaired."

Arthroscopic surgery has definitely added a new twist in the repairing of knee injuries.

SJSU battles Pacific

After being derailed by the University of California last week, SJSU's volleyball team will attempt to get back on track tonight at 7:30 when they take on the University of the Pacific in Stockton.

Pacific, currently ranked eighth in the nation with an 8-6 record, was the pre-season favorite to win the Northern California Athletic Conference.

As a result of the Lady Spartans' dismal showing against California, head coach Dick Montgomery is considering some line-up changes.

Montgomery is contemplating moving setter Joyce Sprout to outside hitter, a position she played her first two years at SJSU.

SJSU is 1-1 in conference play and 7-8 overall.

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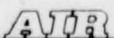
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The Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles will present a movie at 1 p.m. today and tomorrow in the S.U. Pacheco Room.

The SJSU Concert Band will present a program at 8:15 p.m. tomorrow in the concert hall. The program will include works by Souza and Persichetti.

The Advertising Club will meet at 6 p.m. tomorrow in the S.U. Costanoan Room.

At 2:30 p.m. today Chet Davis will interview Ruth G. Watson, a representative of the Better Business Bureau, on KSJS, FM 90.7.

Model United Nations will meet at 6 p.m. tomorrow in the S.U. Guadalupe Room.

Asian Students in Action Now will meet at 3:30 p.m. today in the Asian-American office in the Social Sciences Building.

University Committee in Solidarity will present a film entitled, "Hearts and Minds," a documentary on the Vietnam War, at 7 p.m. today in Dudley Moorhead Hall, room 227.

The Society of Women Engineers will present Dr. Aiken as a guest speaker on solar energy at 12:30 p.m. tomorrow in Engineering Building, room 132.

Campus Ministry will hold a Bible study at noon today in the S.U. Almaden Room. The book of

Galatians will be studied.

SJSU's Linguistics Association will present Professor Robin Lakoff from the University of California at Berkeley at 12:30 p.m. today in the S.U. Council Chambers. Lakoff will speak on "Talking about Talking."

The ACM Computer Society will meet at 3:30 p.m. tomorrow in Engineering Building, room 300 to discuss future events.

The American Institute of Industrial Engineers will meet at noon tomorrow in Engineering Building, room 317. A speaker will discuss "The New I.E." For more information, call Gabe Castillo at 996-1687.

Campus Ambassadors will meet at 1:45 p.m. today for a Bible study on the book of Ephesians. This non-demonstrational study will be held in Engineering Building, room 332.

PRSSA will hold its October chapter meeting at 7:30 p.m. today in the S.U. Almaden Room. Guest speaker for the meeting is a public information officer for PG&E at Diablo Canyon.

The Art Department will sponsor a lunch-time lecture with Helen and Newton Harrison at 11:30 a.m. today in the Art Building, room 127 (Gallery One). The topic will be "Transactions with Cities."

KSJS, FM 90.7, will host a live interview with Officers David Gonzales

and Mike Amaral of the University and San Jose Police departments at 2:30 p.m. today.

The Physics Department will hold a seminar at 1:30 p.m. today in Old Science Building, room 253. The speaker will be Robert K. Nesbit on "Resonances in Electron Scattering by Atoms and Molecules."

The Lady Spartans Basketball team is looking

for an interested person to become manager. Work hours are from 1:30-4 p.m. daily. Call Rene Laverman, 277-3750, for an interview.

Intramural sports is taking sign-ups for in-tube water polo now through Thursday in the Student Programs and Services office.

Eric Luse, photographer for the San

Francisco Chronicle, will speak at 7:30 tonight at a meeting of the National Press Photographers Association in Journalism Building, room 112.

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"burgle"

(burgle) verb To break into and enter a residence with intent to commit a felony

In the time it takes you to say "burgle" a thief can break into and enter your home. In fact, there were almost one-half million burglaries last year alone and over one-fourth of these were the result of no-force entries — through unlocked windows or doors.

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Judge frees inmates at overcrowded jail

By Julie Levy Staff Writer

County judges worked around the clock last weekend to release prisoners in a move designed to correct dangerously overcrowded conditions in the downtown Santa Clara County Jail.

Deputies were ordered by Superior Court Judge David Leahy Friday to release 100 prisoners over the weekend.

The jail, built to house 546 prisoners, reached populations of up to 1,000 several times last week, said Sgt. Frank Navarro. He said 100 to 150 prisoners were released under the new criteria Leahy ordered.

Most of those released were being held on misdemeanor warrants for missed court dates and failure to pay parking citations, Navarro said.

Judges reviewed every release he said. The jail population was reduced to 768 by 7:30 a.m. yesterday.

Donald James Cummings, 25, accused of two campus-area murders and

other charges, and Rodolfo Loa, 28, charged with the attempted rape of a female SJSU student, were not among those released.

Leahy ordered the releases after jail administrators said overcrowded conditions in the jail was causing fights among the prisoners, some of whom were sleeping on the floor.

The three-day weekend threatened to increase the overcrowding since judges normally do not work on weekends.

"Of course it's still tense, but it's much improved," Navarro said. "It's more relaxed. There's definitely an improved atmosphere in the jail."

Sherriff deputies were diverted from patrol to work in the jail this weekend, he said. Yesterday one patrol officer was still left at the jail.

Judges worked in shifts at the jail to release prisoners considered not to be dangerous to themselves or others said Steve

Shaffer, pre-trial specialist.

Judges arrived at the jail at 2 a.m., 10 a.m., 4 p.m. and 10 p.m. during the weekend and stayed until the releases were completed he said.

A measure that could provide up to \$30 million over 20 years for jail construction in Santa Clara county was signed into law by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.

The bill, introduced by Assemblyman Dom Corcese (D-San Jose), would allow each county to impose a \$1 surcharge for every \$10 in fines for criminal and moving violation convictions. It would also allow a \$1.50 surcharge on parking violations.

The money would be placed in a fund for the construction of jail expansion and improvement, detention facilities, juvenile halls, courtrooms and women's center, if the county opted for the program.

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