

Making a Difference



**By Genie Jennings,
Contributing Editor**

Six-year-old Nancy came home from school very troubled. “Daddy, why do you sell guns? They kill people don’t they?” Earlier that day her first grade teacher had asked the class what their fathers did for a living. Like many children of entrepreneurs, she was very familiar with her father’s trade. She knew he was well liked and respected by both his customers and his competitors. She was proud of her daddy, and lastingly disturbed by the disapproval she had seen on her teacher’s face when Nancy answered, “He has a gunshop.”

Her father “...explained in terms a six-year-old could understand, that if one person owns a gun, the rest of us need to own guns, too. I’ve been running with that simple bit of logic ever since,” she says today.

Jack First was a hero not only to his family, but also to the entire country. He had been one of the Marines who landed on Iwo Jima during World War II. When he returned from the war, he pursued his American Dream, and in 1954 he opened the Jack First Gunshop

Queen of Parts Nancy First

in Lancaster, California.

Jack was a gunsmith and did repairs as well as selling guns and ammunition. He quickly understood that when one person needed something fixed, sooner or later another person would need the same repair. Therefore, whenever he required a specific part he would order more than one. The extras went into stock.

be a bit more expensive, they were immediately available. Rather than ordering from the factory, which could mean a wait of six to eight weeks, they began ordering their parts from Jack. The parts business kept expanding, as did the building to house the inventory of parts, guns and ammunition. Eventually, Jack First Gunshop was one of the



Nancy First in front of the South Dakota gun shop that bears her father’s name.

It was not long before other gunsmiths in southern California realized that Jack had such a good supply of parts that there was a good chance he already had what they needed. Although the parts might

two largest parts dealers in the United States.

All was not easy, however. Nancy’s first grade teacher was not the only one who disapproved of the gun business. Throughout the

country there were expanding encroachments on the Constitutional right to keep and bear arms. Those in the gun industry were focused upon as a means to curtail the procurement of those arms. Their state was, and continues to be, in the forefront of that movement. In addition it also was guilty of taxation and other practices that severely impacted the business community. In 1994 the family moved to Rapid City, South Dakota to "...escape the unfriendly business, tax and anti-gun policies of California."

Nancy had been working on the parts side of the business, where she gained her fame and the name "Queen of Parts." Her customers knew that if she couldn't get it for you, she would have it made.

When she took over the total operation of Jack First Gunshop in 2003, she decided to go with her strength, and eliminated the retail sales of guns and ammunition. "Along with the new factory parts that we carry, the largest part of our inventory is newly-manufactured parts for obsolete guns. We are now the largest gun parts business in the U.S." She employs three full-time machinists, two gunsmiths, and two saleswomen, and continues to work full-time herself. "Between three of us parts girls, we have over 100 years' experience in gun parts."

The business is only one part of her gun involvement. When she moved to South Dakota, she joined a shooting club. As in many such groups, she was the lone woman among many men. She was a welcome addition and the other members sought her advice on how to encourage more women to get involved in the shooting sports.

She thought, "You know, I really don't like shooting with these guys. I don't like sliding on my knees in the dirt and shooting around the corner, and I don't like the competition." In fact "...the more I

thought about it, the more I realized that women shooting is completely different from men shooting. For the most part, we don't feel the need to compete; just hitting the target makes us really happy. For us it's not a 'macho' thing, and we don't assume we know it all before we start."

Nancy created a "Women Only" shoot. The first one in 1999 was comprised of Nancy, her mother, and her sister. A few weeks later she had six participants. Now, she con-

to accomplish that goal.

One evening in 2000 she was driving home when she heard G. Gordon Liddy mention a new group called Second Amendment Sisters. Someone had started exactly the organization she needed to create! She "...pulled the vehicle over, called the 800 number and became the South Dakota coordinator." In addition to that position she has served as Treasurer and is on the Board of Directors of SAS.

Inadvertently, Nancy's teacher



Nancy showing off some favorite guns.

ducts four each summer, with approximately 40 shooters at each, and estimates she has had around 1500 attendees since she began. These events are also an opportunity to engage women in the political side of gun ownership. She calls them "an introduction to the option of handguns for self-defense."

She began thinking that if our Second Amendment rights are going to be saved, it will be women who save them. Because she had the idea, she felt an obligation to create a union of like-minded women

long ago set the little girl on the path to preserve and protect our Constitution. In high school Nancy "...wrote several term papers on the gun issue and participated in debates defending the rights of gunowners." Now, she discusses those issues with legislators and the media.

Women have an advantage when they speak to their congressmen, other officials, and news people. There is an assumption that women will be tak-

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ing an anti-gun stance. The shock value of a female, especially a soft-spoken, friendly blonde mother of two and (hard to believe) grandmother of six, promoting gun ownership and usage gets positive attention.

Her goals for South Dakota, and the rest of the country by extension, are legalizing concealed carry on campus and eliminating all gun-free zones. Both situations preclude the basic human right of self-defense, the single issue that Nancy's group espouses. We have a right to

life; we have a right to defend that life and the lives of those around us; we have a right to the means to do so. If we are denied the means to protect our life, we are denied the right to life.

Jack First Gunshop and the Queen of Parts have been extremely busy since the election of 2008. Possibly more than other segments of the industry, there has been an impact on them because they sell parts. "I think that many people are thinking that they had better get that old gun out of the closet and get it repaired while they still can."

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Purse Carry

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requires the attacker to be in contact with you when you fire your first shot. That might happen, but there are many, many other, more likely situations in which you are better off shooting while he is still a few feet away.

The second is his assumption that just one contact shot is all that will be needed to take him out of action. He believes that the gasses from the muzzle of a semi, at contact, will produce gasses powerful enough to kill, as well as the bullet. But the space inside the purse, the material of the purse, and any coat or clothing on the attacker may dissipate the gas bubble, even if you do manage to get a contact shot. Every major shooting school teaches that you can't count on any gun/ammo/technique to result in a reliable one shot stop. Sure, sometimes they do occur, but not reliably. That's why police and private citizens are taught to expect to have to keep shooting until the attacker is no longer a threat. So, being able to shoot several quick shots from a revolver is better than having to draw the gun and clear it after the first shot.

The third is that no matter how carefully one practices his suggested maneuver, in real life—in a life or death situation where an attacker is already on top of you and perhaps has friends behind him—you won't be able to smoothly draw the gun, rack the slide, and get back into the fight in a timely manner.

My conclusion is that, though a revolver might be preferable, carrying a semi in a purse is OK if you clearly understand the tradeoffs. With a revolver, you can shoot multiple times through the purse if necessary to stop an adversary who is close to you, or upon you. With a semi, you should draw the gun before shooting, which means that you have to be able to recognize a serious threat who is rather far away from you. (The exact distance will depend on your purse, holster, and amount of drawing practice.)

I'd really like to take a poll of *Women&Guns* readers. If you carry in a purse, do you carry a revolver, or a semi-auto? Do you plan to shoot through the purse if necessary, or to always draw the gun fully?

Answer to bates@aware.org, and I'll provide the results in a future article here.

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Keep it Clean!

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you may have to pull the bolt out of the action and clean the breech face off," Buck said. "Shotgun shells, by their nature, are the dirtiest shells that you can fire in a firearm except for anything involving black powder. So you have to clean more on a shotgun than you do a rifle."

Last, check the trigger assembly.

"The number one mistake people make in cleaning a gun is to either over clean or under clean trigger assemblies," Buck said. "They either saturate them or ignore them. The rule of thumb is 'less is better,' so what you want to do is wipe off the trigger springs if you can get to them. Sometimes you have to use a Q-tip. This is a very exposed area of the gun, so it gets dirty or can freeze up in a cold environment; you want to get them as clean as you can without pushing dirt down into them. If the trigger assemblies are made to come out, take them out and clean them."

After that, very light lubrication is all that's needed.

"Generally a light oil is all you need," Buck said. "Then wipe down the whole outside of the gun. If you're going to store the gun for the season, pull the bolt and leave it out of the gun so air circulates through it and no residual oil or debris can run down onto the bolt. Stand the gun on a paper towel or a rag so if there's any oil left in the gun it can run out."

It pays to take care of your firearms, just as you take care of your car or your house. Spend a little time when you come in from the field or the range and that firearm you were so proud of the day you bought it will last a lifetime.

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