

From the Editor

About the time I start writing the “From the Editor” for the Nov./Dec. issue, I start bugging family members to come across with their Christmas gift lists. My sister always wants a Buffalo-themed sweatshirt (she must have the largest collection in southern Connecticut); my dad always wants handkerchiefs and my mom always wants a long sleeved t-shirt. Various other friends and relatives shrug the requests off, but, fortunately, I get just about every mail-order catalog known to woman, so I generally am accounted to be a good gift giver. The kids in my life are the easiest of all—since they are still at the stage where toys are appropriate, and all that is required is a little parental consultation so that Santa doesn’t duplicate anything.

Even so, I was appalled to find that Christmas items are already showing up in brick-and-mortar stores in early October, crowding out the Halloween goodies. To everything there may be a season, but in the world of retail, woe betides to anyone who skips even a heartbeat in transitioning from one holiday to the next.

So, the end of the year is still a good two months off, but I’ve learned to couch my year end column in such a way as to leave room for what may yet occur before the Winter Solstice.

This year, New Year’s Day was

just beginning and we continued to answer media phone calls about the Newtown school shooting, which had occurred two weeks earlier.

It’s worth noting that in the immediate aftermath of the Sandy Hook murders, the media seemed determined to blame, as much as possible, the mother of the killer, Adam Lanza, because she had purchased the guns he used to carry out his crimes. There was initially a lot of breathless reporting (a term that we use very loosely here) that Nancy Lanza was a “survivalist,” or a “prepper.”

This was not the first time the media’s fascination with women gunowners was evident, but it did mark the first time women gunowners were treated—individually and as a group—as badly as our male counterparts. Instead of the giggly “woman bites dog” stories, almost inevitably headlined with some variant of “Annie Gets Her Gun,” this time the media seemed determined to make Adam Lanza’s first victim the cause of all the misery, and to chafe their hands with worry about the rise of all these so-called militant women.

I spent a couple of hours on the phone with a *New York Times* reporter one winter evening discussing women gunowners and it was clear her focus was to “understand” women gunowners. But it’s hard to

understand anything when your understanding comes from your already-formed own opinions.

Because The Times is “the mothership” to a lot of other media outlets who follow in its tractor beams very closely, spending two hours on the phone when you’d rather be baking cookies is all part of the job. But it is frustrating to talk, talk and talk about women gunowners, citing as many outside sources as possible, asking the reporter to think about the watershed changes in women’s lives in the last 25-30 years, and then to have your efforts reduced to essentially a print sound bite—an amusing detail to polish off the story.

There was a lot of talk about mental health records, talk that would reappear eight months later, but very little action on the subject because, as even the media admits, in cases such as Lanza’s, even knowing he had problems would not have prevented his murderous rampage.

Where mental health records *would* have made a difference *if* they had been entered into the NICS system—in Tucson, AZ, and Aurora, CO—the media dismissed the notion in favor of posturing about so-called assault weapons and allegedly “easy access” to guns.

One thing I stress to reporters is that buying a gun is not a V-8 moment. You can’t crack a hand

against your head and then go out and buy a gun, end of story. Even in Constitutional Carry and in Shall Issue states (which now prevail the majority of states), there are more hoops to jump through, more forms to fill out—and in the case of several high-profile killers, forms to *lie* on. Forms that require you to knowingly break the law and to which criminal penalties are supposedly attached.

When the Navy Yard shooting occurred in September, it was clear any number of systems had broken down which allowed Aaron Alexis to legally purchase the shotgun he used to begin his rampage. It emerged rather quickly that he was a deeply disturbed individual who by rights should have been caught up in any number of government safety nets before he went wild. Alexis is nearly a textbook case of the type of person who should be barred from buying firearms and yet despite his being known by the military and police in several jurisdictions to be a potential danger, everyone involved kicked the can down the road, ignoring warning signs that did everything but jump up and wave their hands at officials.

That's why the responses to Newtown legislatively this year have been so disheartening. In my home state of New York, our governor, determined to be the first to act after Sandy Hook, rammed through the SAFE act under cover of "emergency" so that it did not have to bear the scrutiny of most legislators and certainly not the inspection of citizens.

Eight months later, no one,

not even the people charged with enforcing it, really know what's what with the SAFE Act.

Connecticut also enacted "strict" new laws, and is also trying to figure out what to do with them now that they are on the books.

Colorado passed strong new gun laws championed by their governor. But Colorado citizens had the means and the will to recall two of the key architects of the new law. Grassroots activists worked hard to push back, even as billionaire New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg poured money into the state to try to keep the out-of-step legislators in office.

It should be noted that not all states have petition recall processes, just as all states do not have relatively easy "ballot proposition" laws. But states that do have proposition options, such as Virginia and Washington, are looking at big gun rights battles next year.

Even as the year is not quite over, the presents not quite bought, the cookies not yet made, it is important to remember that seasons mark time, but they don't stop it. There's always next year, but before that, there's next week.



As the year ends for the print edition of *Women & Guns*, we are looking forward to next year, in which we will celebrate our 25th anniversary. It wouldn't be possible without the stalwart support of the Trustees of the Second Amendment Foundation, of our advertisers, and especially our readers. My personal thanks to all.



Corrections:

In my Sept./Oct. column concerning the Trayvon Martin case I referred to the governor of Florida as "Rick Perry." Rick Perry is, of course—as several friends from Texas pointed out—the governor of the Lone Star State. Rick Scott is Florida's governor. Both are Republicans. Since neither of them is named "Cuomo" I trust that readers and supporters in Florida and Texas will forgive my—and my two proofreaders—error.

Our cover photo from that issue also brought commentary from more than a few readers. They all felt that it looked very much as if the student in the picture had her finger on the trigger, in controvention of everything we are all taught from the very beginning.

I think, in retrospect, I would have served the magazine, and readers better if I had used the other picture in the series in which there was no question that the gun was being safely handled.

Sometimes we don't see what's right in front of us. The picture we did use worked much better for the cover layout, but its ambiguity about safety should have disqualified it for use on the cover.

Peggy Tartaro,
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