

Dick Bernard
6905 Romeo Road
Woodbury MN 55125-2421
651-730-4849
dick_bernard@msn.com
www.outsidethewalls.org/blog
www.chez-nous.net
www.amillioncouples.info

February 13, 2013

To my local State Senator, and two local State Representatives

GUNS

I have been aware for some time that the conversation about guns usually centers on visuals of gun-toting Second Amendment purist types, usually following the NRA lead; and generalized statistics that lose sight of the mood of the public.

Last Friday I decided to survey the 46 people who are on my regular 'peace and justice' mailing list just to try to find out where they were at on the issue, and very importantly what their own experience was with guns. Ultimately, 23 responded, which is a very high percentage response for such surveys. (Three of the respondents were from Woodbury; most of the rest were from elsewhere in Minnesota. One each were from Vermont, Ohio, and Wisconsin.) I had engaged none of them personally on the gun issue. I know few of them very well.

I suppose they'd plead guilty to association with me. I'm a professed moderate pragmatic Democrat. Most of them would probably be to the "left" of me, (which to some interpreters might make a difference, but is no difference at all. They are citizens.)

I think my results are as valid, and as significant, as any other data I have seen on the issue of gun management and control. Particularly interesting to me was the respondents own personal proximity to guns, and the incidence of gun deaths they were personally familiar with in some ways, as well as their recommendations.

There was no way to effectively condense the responses, without losing context, so I presented all the responses exactly as received, and in the order received. This survey was completely open-ended and personal - no phone calls, push-polling or otherwise. My own response to the survey is #1. I just wanted to get an idea of the groups own experiences. **The generalized compilation of their suggested solutions is at the end of the 22 pages.**

In my February 3, 2013 blog (to which this survey is attached), <http://www.outsidethewalls.org/blog/2013/02/03/>, I muse that a rational resolution might be to consider what U.S. gun policy was in the later 1930s when my relatives, pictured in the blog, used guns as part of their respective profession and sport. Their years are as good a starting point as any. I would guess that machine-gun toting ordinary citizens were frowned on in those days, while the struggle now seems to be to protect the sanctity of private ownership of similar killing devices today...all in the name of the mis-applied Second Amendment.

Personally, I view the visually (and sometimes verbally) intimidating gun-toting types as (possibly) armed bullies, probably terrified of actually doing anything if they are challenged. Talk is cheap. They can, after all, see what happens to their fellow gun-toting citizens, the most recent the rogue policeman in California. The end game is always the same: the gun-toter might do some damage, but in the end loses.

(My first memory of these rogue citizens was of a guy out in rural North Dakota, near where I grew up, who was part of the anti-government Posse Comitatus. He ended up dead, in 1983. If interested, put Gordon Kahl Heaton ND in your search box. He, too, had it all figured out, simply by association with only like-minded people who hated something about "government". I paid attention to this one, since I graduated from high school 25 years earlier, in 1958, in the next town over, Sykeston ND, and the tiny hamlet, Heaton, was very well known to me (my guess is the town no longer exists). This was a simpler time, of course, with limited technology for use by even the FBI, but Kahl ended up dead anyway. He would be a good lesson for today's wannabe's who think they'll bring the government and civil society to its knees by being armed and dangerous.)

As my own little survey shows, the issue is complex. I am hoping that law-abiding Americans (which includes everyone I know) insist on substantial tightening of policy, both state and especially Federal.

I wish you well.

Most sincerely,

c: the Governor,
my Congresswoman and
our two U.S. Senators