

Editorial

Who Needs Them!

There is some questions on the legality of the blowguns being sold in this area through the mail by a Utah firm. See story on Page 2. The section of the State Penal Law referring to weapons is vague on this particular instrument.

For instance, Section 265.05 specifically bans certain weapons as illegal — among them are switch-blade knives, billy clubs, cane swords — but does not mention blowguns.

Another part of that section adds "any air gun, spring gun or other instrument or weapon in which the propelling force is a spring of air" to the list. But whether a blowgun falls into this category is open to interpretation.

The company selling the blowguns claims that they are not illegal in any state and no permit is required.

The oddity of the weapon leaves the Post Office unsure. Blowguns are not mentioned specifically in postal regulations.

One thing is for sure, it is not legal to hunt with a blowgun in New York State. And although true sportsmen would probably disdain use of such a weapon for hunting, that presumably is its main purpose.

The Monroe County Health Department already has passed on information concerning the blowgun to the proper authorities, including the State Attorney General's Office. We hope that office will see to it that the penal code is amended to include blowguns, blowgun darts and poison intended for such darts among banned instruments.

We also hope that postal regulations be expanded to include blowguns among harmful materials already banned from the mails.

We also think someone should look into the legality of the company offering free material explaining how to make poison to be used with the blowgun darts.

The threat to safety inherent in these weapons needs no amplification.

Duke's Lesson

Although the strictures of being a weekly newspaper make us late in paying tribute to Duke Ellington, we nevertheless cannot let the occasion of the death of such a great man go unnoticed by this newspaper.

He was a religious man throughout his life and the gathering of clergymen of many faiths at his funeral was an ecumenical happening in itself.

More important, when a man of such immense talent has the innate good sense to see himself as merely "a messenger boy" for God, he supplies a sorely needed lesson in true humility for us all.

Still Effective

The presence of Pope John XXIII is still being felt in many ways in the world and one of the more edifying instances is described by Dr. Donald Coggan, the new archbishop of Canterbury and thus the head of the Anglican Church.

Dr. Coggan is 65 and has already been referred to as a "caretaker." Sound familiar?

"I welcome such a title," he is quoted by Religious News Service. "There is a passage in the New Testament which says, 'Take care of the Church of God' and I can think of no greater or better job than this."

Then he added:

"I would like to be like Pope John in many ways. I am not ashamed of the word 'caretaker.'"

Opinion

Gun Control Dangerous

Editor:

This is in reply to article on gun control. (Courier-Journal 5/15/74).

It's about time the record were set straight. The U.S.A. is becoming a country of total government control; a control under which we will lose our liberty and freedom; a control without any loyalty to God or family unity. One of the main obstacles to totalitarianism is that our citizens' right to bear arms is protected by the Constitution.

All of sorts of dramatic and misinformed news articles are used to justify registration.

We are not told, however, that registration precedes confiscation, as happened in Cuba, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Poland.

Only honest citizens would register. If their guns were confiscated, they would be at the mercy of criminals. While on one hand, we see groups asking for gun registration, simultaneously the Supreme Court rules that criminals are exempt from registering illegal weapons, claiming that such a requirement would violate their constitutional rights under the 5th Amendment. According to FBI statistics:

* of the arrested killers of policemen, 71% had been arrested previously and 57% had been convicted, mostly of crimes of violence. They were already violating the federal and state or local laws forbidding convicted felons to have firearms.

* between 15% and 20% of the policemen murdered with handguns were killed with their own guns snatched by their assailants. This could be the consequence of "don't shoot" orders given police in some cities.

* in a period of three years, Black Panthers have murdered nine law officers and wounded 56 more with gunshot; most of the guns traced to them had been obtained by theft.

Clearly, criminals will always be able to obtain arms and circumvent illegal registration requirements.

There is not a shred of evidence that gun control whether by registration, licensing or outright prohibition is of any benefit at all in deterring or even detecting crime. On the contrary, it has been amply proven that criminal activities dramatically increase where such regulatory measures are enforced. Instead of trampling on citizens' rights by gun registration and ultimate

confiscation programs, I believe that the penalties for crimes committed by criminals using guns should be much stiffer, so strong that a criminal will think twice before he acts.

Nick Koomen
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Nixon's Priest In Question

Editor:

On the editorial page [Courier-Journal 5/15/74], it states that a Father John McLaughlin, a Catholic priest who is assigned to the White House, says that "Tricky Dicky" will go down in history as the greatest moral leader in the world during the last part of the 20th Century. Indeed he will go down but in another way, Watergate.

I would like to know in the time that the Catholic Church is so short of priests why he is assigned to the White House. King Nixon already has Billy Graham in the White House several times to pray for him, perhaps if he could get a rabbi in his clutches he would have all faiths covered.

If he is so innocent why not turn over all the tapes.

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Write to Congressman

Editor:

I am writing to ask all members of our diocese who oppose abortion to write a letter to their U.S. Congressman, insisting that he sign the Hogan discharge petition. When 218 House members sign this petition, the House of Representatives can vote on an anti-abortion amendment to the Constitution. Otherwise, the amendment will not be acted upon.

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Claims Paper Too Liberal

Editor:

With the passage of time the Courier-Journal resembles the daily publications of the Gannett press. Editorials and articles on social and political subjects appear with ever increasing frequency. Unfortunately, a liberal bias is obvious. It would



"LOVE THY NEIGHBOR" INCLUDES THE PRESIDENT, RALPH!"

appear that any Catholic espousing traditional views regarding his religion, social or political beliefs is looked upon with disdain and not to be mentioned. It is fortunate, however, that the Courier-Journal is not the only Catholic publication which is available to the serious Catholic layman interested in moral and ethical issues in our present amoral society.

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Why the Silence?

Editor:

Why do so many moral positions have to be enunciated by people or agencies that are no part of our Christian establishment?

Recently Metro-Act members confronted the Pittsford town board on a housing proposition that would effectively eliminate low income units from a development receiving subsidy from public funds. This whole problem has distinct moral implications and its resolutions challenge our Christian beliefs.

So far the episcopal offices have been silent. Pastors of Pittsford's Christian churches have issued no moral directives. Seminaries and colleges are mute. Christian organizations diddle away. One explanation is that those in authority or positions of responsibility lack the courage to explore the morality of open low income housing or if they have the knowledge they are unwilling to express it. If fear of offending those who contribute to their affluence has kept the Christian institutions silent, then they have pandered their principles.

Catholics in the pews have probably had more formal Christian training than most people of the other religions, yet so little evidence of Catholic belief has been demonstrated by concern for housing, for integration, for unfair mortgage tactics and for political duplicity. If there is an explanation it escapes me.

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Opinions to the editor should be addressed. Letter to the Editor, Courier-Journal, Richard Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed, double-spaced. Names and addresses should be included. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

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