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Speaking Out

By Kathleen Morgan
DeSales High School

Throughout history, through a curious twist in evolution, human beings have had within their range of capabilities the means and often the desire to take the lives of others.

Whatever it is that leads a person to kill — whether it be an accident, a drunken rage or an emotional impulse — one thing has made the taking of a human life so easy as to be almost convenient: the handgun, which has been responsible for more deaths since the 1960s than World War II.

The many people who oppose gun control believe that guns are necessary for self-protection. For the most part, such proponents, who feel that the police force cannot protect them, are alarmed by the growing crime rate in the United States.

Most murders are committed on impulse, for no reason, and certainly for no good reason. It is also hard to convince gun advocates that by using a gun against any other person, they are making guns into society's great equalizers, and are actually placing themselves in the same situation as the criminals they fear.

I find that the stronger, saner arguments are those in favor of gun control. Although the rising murder rate in the country is a cause of higher gun sales, it is also an effect of such sales. Every 13 seconds, a gun is sold in the United States — which adds up to nearly 60 million every year. The laws controlling handguns are inadequate and inconsistent. While some states have a rather involved process of obtaining a handgun, other states, such as Arizona, require only that a potential purchaser fill out a form.

Whether or not rifles and shotguns are restricted, new laws should be passed

and enforced restricting at least the sale of handguns. While rifles and shotguns may be used for protection, few criminals will carry them, as they are hard to conceal. Handguns, however, are made for the purpose of firing at other people, rather than at targets or game.

The statistics are grim. The United States averages nearly 10 murders a year for every 100,000 people, while the averages in other countries, such as Japan, Britain and West Germany, are well under two for every 100,000. It is no coincidence that these countries have tough control laws that keep handguns out of circulation.

The frequent depiction of murder and other violent crimes on television has made society morally fatigued and difficult to shock. Every once in a while, however, a public figure takes a slug from a lunatic with a bizarre fantasy in his head and the secret weight of a handgun in his pocket. Through the senseless shootings of prominent citizens from Kennedy to King to Lennon to Reagan, we have become more and more aware of the increase in crime, which breeds uncontrollably because of the ease with which people may obtain handguns. As a reaction to the spreading fear of violence, people are arming themselves with guns as if they were still living on the frontier of the Old West.

To me, this does not alleviate any fear of violence. Instead, it instills in me a new fear — that handguns will become too common, too matter-of-fact or too convenient.

Those opposed to the control of handguns will argue that "guns don't kill people, people kill people." True, no gun has ever killed anyone on its own, but guns are more likely to kill a person than any other weapon, and handguns are the weapon of choice in most murders committed with firearms. In the past 20 years, handguns have killed more than 400,000 Americans, and I feel that it is time the handgun madness was stopped.



Religious News Service Photo

A bombed-out house provides a playground for two tots in a residential area of Belfast. Such scenes are common in the Northern Irish capital, where bombings are almost everyday occurrences.

In war-ravaged Northern Ireland, Jesuit holds out hope for peace

By Tom Nientimp

McQuaid Jesuit High School

Imagine a cobblestone street winding and twisting through a city that has been ravaged by violence and upheaval. The street is peppered with bullet holes and torn concrete. Young, frightened British soldiers carrying automatic weapons move up and down the avenues, which are flanked by fearful children who lose their childhoods along the way. A sense of fear lingers in every footstep. Like a blanket of fog, it surrounds and penetrates those who call this place home. It comes with the territory.

The above scenario may bring forth images of El Salvador, Lebanon or Nicaragua, but it actually describes Belfast, the capital city of Northern Ireland.

For some reason, we seldom pay any attention to the fighting going on in Ireland. Some people have deemed it unimportant, while the majority have failed even to notice. Yet these people are fighting for their freedom from British domination, and no one wants to help them. The violence and brutality have reached a point at which something must be done.

The problems began in 1922 when Great Britain carved out the six counties of Northern Ireland, separating them from the rest of the country. In order for us to realize the impact this move had on the Irish people, we might consider what would happen if Mexico or Canada moved into the United States and assumed control over six of our border states. That is exactly what Britain did to Ireland in 1922, but in their case nearly half the country was taken over. The year 1966 marked the start of a chain of events

that established the foundation for the present turmoil. These events include such shocking incidents as "Bloody Sunday," January 20, 1972, when British paratroopers killed 13 people who were demonstrating peacefully in the county of Derry.

Brother Patrick Flanagan, SJ, now at McQuaid, spent two years in Belfast and has seen first-hand the continued escalation of the problems in Ireland, including an unjust court system that favors British idealism; deplorable housing conditions; and widespread, horrifying, physical violence. Children are exploited. They are enticed into paramilitary activities and placed in military forces, destroying the hopes and the stability of large numbers of families. Firebombings are commonplace, just hinting at the large-scale emotional, physical, and psychological warfare that occurs on a daily basis. Still, Britain stands firm, refusing to listen to the appeals of the Irish people and any peace proposals they may have. Obviously there is a dire need for change.

The Irish are a fantastic lot of people, and Brother Flanagan believes that any hope for better times is linked with forgiveness. "Forgiveness can heal all wounds if only we work at it," he said. He envisions a peace forum, similar to Camp David, as a possible key to the closed and locked door of conflict.

Maybe it's time that we, the American people, who hold our own freedom in such high esteem, lend a hand to those crying out for help in Ireland. They have as much a right to live their own lives as we do. All we have to do is open our eyes and ears, and realize that we can make a difference.

'How to Succeed' pronounced rousing success

By J. Peter Huggins

McQuaid Jesuit High School

In McQuaid High School's spring musical, a window washer named J. Pierpont Finch finds a book entitled "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," and ends up as chairman of the board of World Wide Wickets, Inc.

Finch, played by Andy Keller, starts out in the mailroom of the mighty wicket manufacturer, where he starts his rise in the company, later meeting his nemesis, Bud Frump, the boss's nephew.

I played Frump, who has worked his way up the corporate ladder by using a phone system that involves his mother, his Aunt Gertrude and his uncle, J.B. Biggley. Biggley, portrayed by Phil Frey, is a gruff corporate head who is more interested in a young lady named Hedy la Rue than in the company.

While working at World Wide Wickets, Finch is befriended by secretary Rosemary Pilkington (Lisa Dotolo). Rosemary is immediately attracted to Finch, who is more interested in climbing the ladder of success.

Yet Rosemary gives Finch the confidence essential to the rise of a young executive. She doesn't give up hope until Finch's ego simply becomes too much for her to handle.

Meanwhile, Bud Frump is planning Finch's demise. Frump is threatened by Finch, so he does his best to undermine him by suggesting an advertising gimmick in-

volving a treasure hunt.

When the time comes for Finch to enact his treasure-hunt scheme, he buys air time on television for the "World Wide Wicket Treasure Hunt," which is to be hosted by Hedy la Rue. Chaos erupts when Hedy is asked to swear that she does not know the location of the hidden treasure — 50,000 shares of stock. But she does know, and breaking down in tears, discloses the location to the TV audience.

The ensuing chaos brings about an awakening for Finch, who realizes what is truly important in his life. Finch then goes to the chairman of the board and explains to him, in song, about the "Brotherhood of Man." Thus, Finch saves the day for everyone but Bud Frump, by convincing Mr. Womper not to fire the employees of World Wide Wickets.

The musical was highlighted by the outstanding performances of Andy Denee, Lisa Dotolo, Andy Keller, Tom Nientimp, Phil Frey, Sandra Imperati, Cara McCormick and many others. It is rare for a musical to have so much talent and to be able to use it to potential.

I learned a great deal from the story of J. Pierpont Finch, who neglected the person who truly cared for him, realizing much later what he had been doing. This realization was the real message of the musical for me. I found working with other cast and crew members to be infinitely more important than the applause of the audience.

Equal Time

Aquinas Institute
What are the positive aspects of high school rivalries?

ANN MARIE SKATELL, senior

One positive aspect of high school rivalries is that they promote greater high school spirit. Rivalries tend to pull students together, to show others that their school is better in everything from athletic talent to the amount of spirit that the students have.

JON CARL SCHWAB, senior

High school rivalries help teams set goals for themselves. This promotes a demand for hard work toward the best possible performance for an individual and a team. Rivalries also unify school spirit,

so that not only the team members get psyched for competition, but also the student body. A team may lose all its games or meets, but if it defeats its rival, the season isn't that bad after all.

MIKE COMPISI, Sophomore

High school rivalries are positive in a number of ways. Most importantly, rivalries bring out the best in school spirit; rivalries show the pride that we have in our school. Another positive aspect of rivalries is that they bring people out of the house where they can be with their friends.

HOUSE OF GUITARS

We received 34 correct entries identifying "Toto" as the group that named themselves after Dorothy's dog in "The Wizard of Oz."

The winner was
Jessica Norton
of Fairport



MUSIC TRIVIA

This week's question:
From what 1976, Neil Sedaka song do the following lyrics come from; "Don't take this love away from me, don't you leave my heart in misery?"

A: _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip Code _____
School _____

Rules:
Each week, the Courier-Journal, in conjunction with the House of Guitars will feature a Music Trivia contest. All you have to do to enter is answer the question, fill in your name and address and the school you attend (if applicable), cut out the coupon, and send it in to the Courier-Journal. If more than one correct entry is received, a drawing will be held and one winning entry will be drawn.
If yours is the winning entry, you will be mailed a coupon for a free album or tape of your choice redeemable at the House of Guitars, 645 Titus Ave.
All entries must be received within seven days of this paper's issue date. Winning names and answers will be printed the week following each drawing.

The Courier-Journal
Music Trivia
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