



2404 E. Broadway, Alton, IL 62002

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MWHI receives



***IDNR Annual
Outstanding Volunteer Award*** (see page 7)

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Bob Schneider
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Don Taul
618-978-8285

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, October 1, 2012

MWHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
at 2404 E. Broadway, Alton at 6:15 pm

Wednesday, October 17, 2012

MWHI GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
at Alton-Wood River Sportsmen Club
in Godfrey, IL at 7:00 pm

Monday, January 7, 2013

MWHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
at 2404 E. Broadway, Alton at 6:15 pm

**MWHI is getting a new website!
Stay tuned for updates!**

Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Celebrates National Wildlife Refuge Week

In celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week, Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge near Brussels, Ill. will hold an open house from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 20.

At the open house visit with refuge staff and volunteers, build a bird feeder, tour the refuge on an auto tour or birding hike, and enjoy a wildlife photography exhibit. In addition, Tree House Wildlife Center will present a live bird demonstration at 12 p.m.

The *Sentry* is published monthly except for December and January by Migratory Waterfowl Hunters, Inc., 2404 E. Broadway, Alton, IL, 62002. The *Sentry* deadline is always the second Monday of each month.

Statements and opinions expressed in the *Sentry* are those of the individual and do not necessarily represent the views of Migratory Waterfowl Hunters, Inc. Officers, Directors, Advisors, Members or the Editor. The appearance of an ad in this newsletter does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of a product or service. We encourage our members to take note of those businesses advertising in our newsletter and shop with them when they are in the market for their product or services.

Was It A Good Teal Season?

By Duane Hahnenkamp

Well, it's the day before teal season and so far it looks like we are finally going to have a good teal season opener in most areas. For the last week, I have had every duck hunter I met tell me about seeing flocks of teal while they were at their blind or out dove hunting. You've got to admit that our areas have the most feed in them that anyone can remember. So all we needed was the water and a teal migration to hit at the right time to turn this season into a real winner.

The last few years it seemed like the main teal migration was after the season was over, but I have read that this year the hatch was 3 weeks early because of the early spring, so the young teal should be able to migrate several weeks earlier this season. For myself, I don't expect too much from my blind since we don't have that much water in the "Calhoun Point" area and our blind only has a couple of inches of water in it. A buddy and I have even talked about going to Stump Lake or the Glades for opening day, but we already know that those areas will be way too crowded. Well, it's raining pretty hard outside as I'm writing this and with a little luck we might pick up more water by morning so we might go to our blind anyway.

Today was opening morning and luckily it did rain a couple of inches last night. When we got to the blind this morning, the water level had come up just enough to make it look like a water hole. Our normal water level will be another 2 feet higher during duck season and that will sure make a difference when the ducks get here. Our blind is in a narrow area between timber and there is so much feed around our hole that a duck can't see any water unless they fly right over the pothole. This morning we didn't see any teal flying till about 10 minutes before shooting time and they were all pretty far off to the north. I was a little surprised at the lack of shooting off in the distance at sunrise. With all the teal everyone had been seeing, I figured Stump Lake would have sounded like a war zone early on. When the shooting finally started, it seemed like most of our teal were on a path between Silver Lake and Swan Lake Refuge, which kept them well out of our calling range. Finally, some flocks started crossing and we did get a couple of bunches to break our way, but it sure took a lot of calling to get them to head toward our pothole. In the next 2 hours we got into 2 flocks and 2 little groups that came in. We didn't kill out, but the 3 of us all killed a couple each and should have hit more. I spent half of my time helping the dog find cripples in the head high weeds that line our pothole, which I now see is going to be a every day chore during the season.

As an opening day teal hunt, it was not the best I have ever been on by far, but it was my best opener in the last 5 or 6 years. To be truthful, opening day around here is usually so hot, buggy, and has so few teal in the area that I usually just stay home. Odds are that I'm going to see more game wardens than teal, so it's just not worth it. This year, with the weather being cool and good teal reports around, it was worth the try, plus it was a good time to be out except for the killer mosquitoes. All in all, it was a fun day and a great morning to be in the outdoors

By the time you see this, the 2012 teal season will be over and I guess this teal season, good or bad, will be just another notation in you duck hunting journals. The problem is that I have heard rumors today that the water pumping has been stopped in most of our areas till a later date. I take that to mean after teal season is over and maybe closer to Oct. 1. I hope these rumors are wrong because if Springfield did shut down the pumps for the reasons supposedly given, then some of your local hunting partners did this to us and it may take a long time to get things right again. To all you duck hunters out there, keep your ears open and ask questions. Guys, it's an election year and things may be getting harder for you to enjoy your duck season.

Winners of the 2011-12 MWHI Gun Raffle

One Winner Every Month

August	–	Benelli M2	-	Randy Koniak
September	–	Beretta Explorer	-	Arthur Zambruski

For more information, please contact Eric Rheude at 618-410-9853

IDNR Honored Volunteers at Illinois State Fair Award Ceremony

Annual Outstanding Volunteer Awards at Conservation World on Aug. 18

IDNR News Release 8/17/2012

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) honored Outstanding Volunteers of the Year for their volunteer service to the IDNR during a ceremony at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield on Saturday, Aug. 18.

“The annual volunteer awards program is one of the ways in which we say ‘thank you’ to some of the great volunteers who do great work at our state parks, state museums, and all over outdoor Illinois,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller. “Whether helping youngsters learn about wildlife and outdoor recreation, providing stewardship at natural areas, or assisting biologists in fish and wildlife management, these and many other volunteers provide a valuable service to their fellow citizens throughout Illinois.”

This year’s Outstanding Volunteers of the Year included (see IDNR website for entire list):

SCOTT BRYANT and THE MIGRATORY WATERFOWL HUNTERS of Alton have volunteered hundreds of hours, including more than 200 hours in 2012, for the free Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair at Pere Marquette State Park in Grafton. The 2012 Family Fishing Fair exceeded past participation numbers, with more than 2,000 youth plus nearly 2,500-3,000 adults in attendance. The Migratory Waterfowl Hunters provided 15 volunteers to help children learn how to catch a fish at the bluegill pond station. The group has dedicated assistance with the Free Family Fishing Fair at Pere Marquette for the last three years, logging more than 600 hours for the event to help facilitate, teach, mentor and develop children’s appreciation of fishing and the outdoors. The group is also instrumental in a number of other IDNR programs and projects, thanks to the leadership of President Scott Bryant and members of the Migratory Waterfowl Hunters.

To learn more about the IDNR Volunteer Program, check the website at this link:
<http://www.dnr.state.il.us/volunteer/index.htm>

Note from John Mabery, Manager Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge 8/20/2012

Scott, congratulations on receiving the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award from IDNR. You and the members of MWHI truly have done an outstanding job of running the Bluegill Pond at the Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair the past few years. It is people like you that make the Fishing Fair the very successful event that it has become. Keep up the great work!

Refuge Update Brian Arnold 9/10/2012

- **Going to take pump to Batchtown at end of the week to pump moist soil unit.**
- **Going to start pumping Swan and Gilbert at end of September beginning of October**
- **All feed looks good in all areas.**

Illinois Hunting and Trapping Digest:

Be alert to hunting and trapping regulations in Illinois by reviewing the *Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations* 2012-2013.

The digest is available at many IDNR offices and vendor locations, and is also available online in PDF format through the IDNR website at this link:
www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/Documents/HuntTrapDigest.pdf

IMPORTANT CONTACTS



Sierra Club Seeks Elk Hunt End

U. S. Sportsmen's Alliance, Posted on July 19, 2012

The Sierra Club has asked that the Grand Teton National Park complete yet another environmental review of its annual elk hunt. The group cites "changing conditions" since the park last completed a study in 2007 as the reason they want hundreds or thousands of taxpayer dollars again spent on the review.

The request was delivered as a letter to GTNP park officials and claims that the annual elk hunts habituate grizzly bears to eating gut piles and puts park visitors at risk. A pair of photographers urged the Sierra Club to send the letter. There was no report of whether the photographers had the required federal permits to take images on public lands as professionals, and definitely no mention that the Sierra Club hosts winter trips into Grand Teton and the vicinity with travel packages starting at \$2500/person.

Grand Teton Superintendent Mary Gibson Scott reportedly responded to the Sierra Club's request letter that their concerns about elk hunts had already been reviewed and that no additional steps would be taken.

Grand Teton's 61-year-old annual elk hunt was created by Congressional legislation in 1950. Called an "elk reduction program," the program enables federal, state and park wildlife managers to authorize the hunting of elk in Grand Teton to reduce the park's elk population to a goal of 1,600. To update a management plan for bison and elk in Jackson Hole, the park, the National Elk Refuge and the Wyoming Game and Fish Dept. conducted an environmental review of hunting, feeding and population objectives in 2007.

Last fall about 750 elk hunting permits were issued and hunters killed about 250 elk in the park's reduction program.

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NRA Update on Gun Bills **1-800-392-8683**

Federal Senate Office **1-202-224-3121**

Federal House Offices **1-202-225-3121**

Illinois State Rifle Association **1-815-635-3198** www.isra.org

Illinois Senate Information **1-217-782-4517**

Illinois House Information **1-217-782-8223**

Sen. Wm. Sam McCann – 49th District
Tel: 217-782-8206

Sen. Kyle McCarter – 51st District
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Sen. John O. Jones – 54th District
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Rep. John Shimkus - 19th District
Tel: 618-344-3065 E-mail: house.gov/shimkus

Sen. Richard J. Durbin
Tel: 312-353-4952 E-mail: dick@durbin.senate.gov

Sen. Mark Kirk
.....

IDNR News Release 8/29/2012

Baiting Laws

Dear Waterfowl Hunters:

Due to ongoing drought conditions in Illinois, some farmers are mowing or tilling their unharvested crop fields to collect crop insurance payments. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) reminds hunters that the manipulation, including mowing or tilling, of unharvested crop fields is not a normal agricultural practice for waterfowl hunting purposes. The IDNR has received guidance on this issue from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Federal baiting laws still apply, even during times of drought.

Therefore, it is a violation of the baiting laws under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act if scattered grain is not totally removed 10 days prior to hunting. Hunters should familiarize themselves with baiting laws in Illinois. For more information on waterfowl baiting regulations, refer to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service website link regarding baiting regulations at <http://www.fws.gov/le/waterfowl-hunting-and-baiting.html>.

Questions regarding hunting crop fields mowed or tilled due to drought insurance claims;

1. If a standing grain crop is 100% void of any ears (corn field produced no ears), can the field be mowed then hunted? Yes, as long as there is no grain present in the field. A field that produces NO ears of corn will probably be a rare occurrence.

2. If a standing grain crop has any amount of grain present after it is mowed, can it be hunted? No, it is a "baited area" until 10 days after the complete removal of the grain.

3. Can a standing crop that was mowed be disked and made legal for hunting? The field can only be hunted after all exposed grain has been completely removed or buried for a period of 10 days. Hunters should keep in mind that if a dry field is tilled to the extent that no grain is visibly present, strong winds or the first rain is likely to wash off some covered grain, thus still making it a baited situation.

4. Why can a person not hunt over a mowed area? Under federal baiting regulations, mowing or tilling of a standing crop is not a "normal agricultural planting, harvesting, post-harvest manipulation, or normal soil stabilization practice" as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension Service.

For questions about federal baiting regulations, please call 217-782-6431, Monday-Friday 8:30 am 4:30 pm.

IDNR News Bits, September 2012

Waterfowl Baiting Alert: Due to summer-long drought conditions in Illinois, some farmers have been mowing or tilling their unharvested crop fields. The IDNR reminds hunters that the manipulation, including mowing or tilling, of unharvested crop fields is not a normal agricultural practice for waterfowl hunting purposes. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports federal baiting laws still apply, even during times of drought. It is a violation of the baiting laws under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act if scattered grain is not totally removed 10 days prior to hunting. Hunters should familiarize themselves with baiting laws in Illinois. For more information on waterfowl baiting regulations, refer to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website regarding baiting regulations at <http://www.fws.gov/le/waterfowl-hunting-and-baiting.html>.

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Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Prepares for Fall Migration

Cortney Solum, Park Ranger/Visitor Services Manager, Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge

Brussels, Ill. - Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has nearly completed a summer of habitat management in preparation for fall waterfowl migration.

For the first time since 2007 the refuge was able to complete a drawdown of Swan Lake, a large, shallow backwater area of the lower Illinois River near Brussels, Ill. Approximately 2,200 acres of the lake were drained or lowered to allow growth of natural moist soil plants and consolidate loose materials at the bottom of the lake.

“This has been a great growing season for moist soil plants” said Refuge Wildlife Biologist Ken Dalrymple. “We have an abundance of food sources in the lower portion of Swan Lake for waterfowl migration this coming fall and spring. These were the best growing conditions we’ve had since 2007.”

A partial drawdown was completed in the middle portion of Swan Lake to promote growth of submergent plants. One example is Lotus, a plant similar to the more well-known water lily. These plants provide food and shelter to aquatic insects at the base of the food chain.

“Lotus hasn’t grown at the refuge since the 1960s,” said Dalrymple. “The plant is too delicate, and high flood waters, murky water and predation make it difficult for the plant to grow.”

This year there was a successful crop of lotus for most of the summer season.

Similar water drawdowns were performed in the Batchtown and Gilbert Lake Divisions of the refuge. These drawdowns also allowed for many moist soil plants grow on refuge lands along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

The lakes and moist soil units will be re-flooded with river water in early September to make foraging for seeds easier for waterfowl.

The refuge staff was able to perform prescribed burns at a few refuge sites near the visitor center and along Highway 100 north of Grafton. Burning these small areas reduce invasive species and help promote prairie habitat suitable for nesting birds.

In addition to the prescribed burns, some refuge grasslands were mowed or hayed to prevent invasive species from growing.

The refuge acts as an important rest stop for migrating birds on the Mississippi flyway. Bird watchers and visitors can expect to see high numbers of migrating birds especially waterfowl in late October and early November.

The refuge is open during daylight hours Jan. 1-Oct. 15. The refuge visitor center is open year-round Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

For more information, call Cortney Solum at 618-883-2524 or email Cortney_Solum@fws.gov.



The Telegraph/JOHN BADMAN

Congratulations! Trapshooting brothers

Rural Bethalto trapshooting brothers Gage Thornton, 9, left, and Hunter Thornton, 11, right, show off their award-winning aim after being recognized in a trapshooting competition. Gage recently set what could be a world record for his age, breaking 100 straight targets at the Grand American competition at the World Shooting and Recreational Complex in Sparta. Hunter was the No. 2 shooter in the 15 and under division for the Amateur Trapshooting Association event and Gage was No. 5.

Response from State Representative Donald L. Moffitt in regard to SB 1566

The letter was read at the September MWHI Board meeting and we would like to thank Representative Moffitt for his detailed explanation. This is the kind of professional response we expect and appreciate from our legislatures.

ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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August 16, 2012

Mr. Scott Bryant, President
Migratory Waterfowl Hunters, Inc.
2404 East Broadway
Alton, Illinois 62002

Dear President Bryant:

I am in receipt of your letter dated June 4, 2012. In your letter you stated in the opening that “We, Migratory Waterfowl Hunters, Inc. (MWHI), are very disappointed in your ‘No’ vote on SB 1566 on May 31, 2012.” You went on to close with the following... “We are asking you to give us a written explanation for your ‘No’ vote so that we can inform our 700 members. We would like to have immediate response.”

I did not support SB 1566 as it included a fee increase on Illinois residents, some of which can ill-afford even a small fee increase. However, in sharing my response, I trust you will also inform your 700 members that:

- 1) I have a 20-year record of supporting hunters of Illinois and working to improve the habitat for waterfowl,
- 2) I voted for HB 5789 (Osmond) that, if it became a law, is estimated to generate \$8 to \$12 million per year for DNR,
- 3) I voted for SB 1849 (Gaming bill) that, if it became a law, is estimated to generate \$3 million per year for funding parks and conservation projects,
- 4) I have a 100% rating with the NRA and have always voted to protect the rights of law-abiding hunters and sportsmen,
- 5) SB 1566 did in fact pass in the House but was held in the Senate,
- 6) In the governmental, legislative and political arena it is always better to “build” relationships, coalitions and “bridges” than to destroy them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don Moffitt".

Donald L. Moffitt
State Representative
74th District

WHERE'S YOUR SUPPORT?

Craig Sondker

Just last night I attended the MWHI Ducks Unlimited Annual Dinner. The food, prizes and auction items were at their best. However, the support by attendees was less than spectacular. Yes, we at MWHI have an annual fundraiser of our own that draws capacity crowds every year, and we thank you for that. However, the yearly cost for the MWHI Ducks Unlimited dinner, MWHI Annual Banquet and an MWHI membership has a combined total of only \$160.00. Is this too much to pay to enjoy the hunting in Region IV for waterfowl?

For years I have kept track of what I spent at Ducks Unlimited, MWHI and Delta dinners and memberships; it is always between \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00 a year, depending on my bidding success. Even at this amount, it's a small price to pay for what we get. In comparison, you could have your blind brushed for you, decoys set out for you, all maintenance and repairs to the hunting area done for you and the ONLY effort you have to do is write a check for \$5,000.00 at a private hunting club. I don't know about you, but for me, half the fun of duck season is preparing the blind and working the decoys.

Lack of participation is really getting to be bad to help support what vast opportunities we are offered. I have often heard the words, "They can't do that!" spoken from a bar stool perch when it comes to problems with our M.R.A. hunting areas. Let me ask you – without the help of MWHI would Batchtown have what is there now or would they still be wondering if they will have water on opening day? Would Calhoun Point have a beast of a pump that can add noticeable water overnight, or would you have ever seen the bottom of Silver Lake and all the stumps we've been hitting for years, not to mention more feed than we have ever seen in one year? Would Stump Lake be anything but a weed patch without the levee, pump system and two totally separate rest areas, one at each end of the lake? These are just a few examples of what they can do with our help; we wouldn't have those things without this type of support.

I was taught at a young age that in the outdoors you must always give back more than you take. I have always tried to live by that. All I see with the generation 2000 waterfowlers is all take and no give back. It's about time to start giving back whether a hunter is 9 or 90. You can start by coming to the MWHI General Membership meetings to see where you can get involved, help out and give back. Remember, giving back doesn't always mean a monetary gift. We are the shepherds of our own areas and without our vigilant watch, help and support, our areas will go away.

We are, by all indications, looking forward to one of the best seasons in a long time. Spirits should be high with birds in the skies. I challenge every one of you to sign up at least one new member to M.W.H.I. this season, as well as attend at least one general membership meeting and help with at least one event (annual dinner, wood duck box, NILO day, fishing fair, etc.). For all of you that do this, I will give you my personal thank you and our membership should double by September 2013. Let's see what happens!!

Good luck hunting and remember, a safe hunt is always a good hunt.

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MWHI donates \$100 to Riverbend Memorial

The mission of the Riverbend Memorial reads: To create a charitable and patriotic fund for Military, Police and Firefighters who have been injured or have fallen while serving our country and communities.

Contact information: info@riverbendmemorial.org or www.riverbendmemorial.org

Thank you, Riverbend Memorial, for serving our local heroes.

Thoughts and ramblings on the Aurora, CO Massacre and Why We Are Sitting Ducks

By Gary A Liley

Unless you live in a cave without electricity or have been on a deserted island somewhere, you have no doubt grieved with the rest of the country in the aftermath of the tragedy in Aurora, Colorado. On July 20, 2012, in what has now been declared one of the worst mass shootings in America, a terrorist, a monster, a wolf, a subhuman demon, of whom I won't even mention his name, killed at least 12 and wounded over 50 in a barrage of gunfire and assault at the Century theater which was hosting a midnight showing of "The Dark Knight Rises", the latest movie in the Batman series.

The media hasn't missed a tear or an emotion in the most private, intimate moments many of these victims and survivors will ever face. As former chief of staff for President Obama, and now Mayor of Chicago, IL Rahm Emanuel said a couple of years ago, "*You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. And what I mean by that is an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before.*"

Consequently, many Democrats and liberals alike are crying for more gun control as a means to stop these kinds of things. If it was possible to rub a bottle and immediately make all guns and ammo disappear, you still could not remove the evil that lurks in the hearts of men. People intent on committing heinous crimes against mankind would still find a way. I don't intend to list them here, but there are many ways to kill people and institute wide spread destruction without using a firearm.

Most folks in the media are looking for someone or something to blame. They point out that this monster purchased all his tactical gear and bomb materials, as well as his arsenal and ammo from perfectly legitimate and legal sources. And, because of his lack of any criminal history, he was able to pass all background checks without a problem. All the safeguards and myriad of gun laws in effect still didn't stop him. Their conclusion: We must strengthen and further restrict our current laws on gun and ammo purchases. "It is the only solution," they say. Well, I contend to you that you can no more legislate firearm laws against these kinds of acts anymore than you can legislate morality.

Even more, there are many people who believe the best way to stop gun crime is to outlaw the total possession of guns. With no guns, the argument goes; there won't be any gun deaths. (I guess the same thing could be said about 40,000 to 50,000 automobile deaths that happen every year in the United States.) Of course, criminals don't pay attention to gun laws. In fact, they don't pay attention to any laws. There are laws against stealing, rape, and murder, and yet there are still people who steal, rape, and murder. That's why they're called criminals. There are strict laws against certain illegal drugs and illegal immigration, and yet we have a lot of both.

I say that the shed blood of these innocent victims lies more on the hands of our legislators, governors, and elected officials, as well as business's who consistently refuse to give law abiding citizens the right to protect themselves by carrying a concealed weapon if they so choose. Colorado, thankfully does have a concealed carry law, but the theater in which the shooting occurred didn't allow (it was their right to restrict under Colorado law) concealed permit holders to bring their weapon into the building. There was, no doubt, CCW permit holders in the theater that night that left their weapon in their vehicle to remain legal, who could have stopped the carnage.

The Second Amendment isn't much use if (1) law-abiding, sane, and moral people can't legally carry a weapon if they so choose, (2) public businesses don't allow citizens to exercise their rights by allowing them to carry their weapon into their establishment, and (3) people aren't trained on how to use a weapon in high-pressure situations. (Illinois is currently the **ONLY** state that doesn't have some form of concealed carry which allows a qualified person to carry a firearm to protect themselves and their family. You can exercise your 2nd amendment rights in your home or business, but that is where it ends, in Illinois. **We would have concealed carry in Illinois right now** if it wasn't for an anti-gun Governor and a few Chicago politicians.)

If just one, or more preferably 5 or 6 licensed concealed carry holders would have had their weapons with them in that theater Friday morning, perhaps the carnage would have been greatly reduced. At least the victims would have had a chance. As it stands, they had none. Where were the police? Oh, they got there, and God bless them, but it was after the fact. If you are in a situation like that **YOU ARE** the first responder! And if you are properly prepared, your first response may be to control the situation.

There was another shooting in Aurora, Colorado, in April of this year. (2012) It didn't get much media attention, maybe because someone with a gun killed the gunman before he could finish his rampage: A man crashed his car outside a Colorado church and opened fire on people who had come to his aid, fatally wounding the mother of the church's pastor before an off-duty officer attending the service shot him dead. Betcha didn't hear about that one, did ya! There are hundreds of incidents per week where a gun prevents or stops a crime, often times not even being fired. But we seldom hear about it because it doesn't fit the agenda.

Nut jobs, Islamic extremists, and people with grudges know that most of us are unarmed. We really are sitting ducks! Predictably, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg opened his big mouth about the Aurora Colorado massacre. And, predictably, the topic was one of gun control. Isn't it just a little bit ironic that the guy who's had little to no effect on gun violence in his own city seeks to lecture the rest of us? Bloomberg even had the nerve to call out President Obama and Mitt Romney for their responses to the massacre with these words: "Soothing words are nice, but maybe it's time that the two people who want to be President of the United States stand up and tell us what they are going to do about it, because this is obviously a problem across the country," he said. I have a few unsoothing words of my own for the mayor (and Obama or Romney can feel free to plagiarize them at will): "Hey, Bloomberg, let us know when you get criminals to stop using guns in NYC and then we'll look at

implementing your brilliant plan elsewhere. But until that happens, SHUT UP!" (FYI, New York has some of the most restrictive gun laws in the nation. Try even going there legally with a handgun.)

Liberal politicians can be thoroughly mind boggling, shallow and trite! Guns were not allowed in the movie theater and murdering people is already against the law. So what makes Bloomberg or any other knot head politician think that more laws will stop gun violence? Anyone hell-bent on mass murder has little concern for whether something is against the law. A mass murderer *plans* on breaking the law at the very outset, so what could possibly make a person with half a brain believe that *more* laws are the way to deter him? It really is beyond comprehension. Then again, maybe I'm being too generous. Maybe they don't have half a brain. The nation is reeling from a senseless act of violence at the hand of a barbaric sociopath and callous fools like Bloomberg think it is the perfect time for political grandstanding. Unbelievable.

Not surprisingly, I think Bloomberg is out of step with his fellow Americans:

In 2011, Gallup's Frank Newport and Lydia Saad noted that: "Gallup trends on gun control shows that Americans have grown less supportive of strengthening gun laws in the United States over the last two decades, notwithstanding a number of tragic gun attacks during that period."

NOTE: *Less* supportive of strengthening gun laws. Gallup even hits on a potential reason for such a public reaction, although it seems to treat it as a misnomer when it says "notwithstanding a number of tragic gun attacks during that period." Could it be that Americans are smart enough to understand that a more violent environment requires *fewer* restrictions on firearms instead of more? Could it be that Americans are able to figure out that most criminals don't care about laws, even if lawmakers write thousands more? Gun restrictions only make it more difficult for the law-abiding folks to get guns: you know, the very ones who are guaranteed that right by the second amendment. If one lives in a violent neighborhood, he or she are only going to be able to defend their family by *having* a gun, not by *not having* one (or five or ten). It's really not that difficult to understand.

But you see, facts and figures don't matter. Logic doesn't matter. Your family's safety doesn't even matter. Politicians like Bloomberg have no real concern about stopping gun violence. Their primary concern is not one of public safety and welfare, but one of control and intimidation. If they were really concerned about public safety, they would be just as vocal about knife and gang control; victims can be stabbed or bludgeoned to death just as easily as they can be shot. But when was the last time you heard a politician tooting their horn on either of these public menaces? The silence on knife and gang control laws will continue as long as guns are around to star as the current political scapegoat.

I read a good analogy recently by Tom Burnett and I'll try to condense it and briefly share it with you.

Most of the people in our society are sheep. They are kind, decent people who are not capable of hurting each other except by accident or under extreme provocation. They are sheep. They are not bad. They are like a blue Robin's egg -soft and goeey inside but growing to something wonderful. But the egg can't survive without its hard outer shell. Police officers, soldiers and warriors are like that shell, and the egg needs them to survive.

Then there are wolves - and the wolves feed on the sheep without mercy. There are evil men in this world and they are capable of evil deeds. The moment you forget that or pretend it's not so, you become a sheep. There is no safety in denial.

Then there are sheepdogs. We need sheepdogs. They live to protect the flock and confront the wolf. If you have no capacity for violence then you are a healthy and productive citizen: a sheep. If you have a capacity for violence and no empathy for your fellow citizens, then you have defined an aggressive sociopath: a wolf. But what if you have a capacity for violence, and a deep love for your fellow citizens? Then you are a sheepdog. You will walk into the heart of darkness, into the universal human phobia, and walk out unscathed. You have chosen the Way of the Warrior.

Most sheep live in denial. They know evil exists, but they believe if they don't acknowledge it, it won't harm them. That's why they're sheep. They realize the need for fire alarms and fire extinguishers but they don't really expect ever having to use them. The idea of someone coming to kill or harm them or their children is just too hard to contemplate; so they choose the path of denial.

The sheep generally do not like the sheepdog. He looks a lot like the wolf. He has fangs and the capacity for violence. The difference, though, is that the sheepdog must not, cannot and will not ever harm the sheep. Still, the sheepdog disturbs the sheep. He is a constant reminder that there are wolves in the land. They would prefer he didn't go around armed at all. The sheep would much rather have the sheepdog cash in his fangs, spray paint himself white and go "Baaa". Until the wolf shows up. Then the entire flock tries desperately to hide behind the sheepdog. Sheepdogs are benign creatures, but they have a job. They have no choice but to do it.

"The sheep and the sheepdog think differently. The sheep pretend the wolf will never come, but the sheepdog lives for that day. After 9/11 most Americans said "Thank God I wasn't on one of those planes". The sheepdogs, the warriors, said "I wish I could have been on one of those planes. Maybe I could have made a difference". Another Tom Burnett was on United flight 93. He made a difference. His last words over the phone were "Let's roll." That plane didn't make it to its target. He was 38 years old and married. He, and many of his fellow passengers, were warriors."

Thank God for Sheepdogs! If I or a loved one are ever in a public place like those unfortunate victims in Aurora, I pray to God that there are some sheep dogs asleep nearby. There are many sheepdogs in Illinois. So far, because of our obstinate, liberal, stiff necked officials, they remain muzzled.

The solution is this: a happy heart doesn't do violence. And the way to have a happy heart is to love and obey God and just be tied to people who do the same. It's that simple. But the mainstream institutions constantly work to keep God out of the media and schools. So then kids are pressured to go along with the mainstream. And we end up with a violent society and things don't appear to be getting any better.

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