

Daily
Nebraskan
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Gun decision risky

Colt owners reverse gun control spirit

Last March, the owners of Colt Industries took it upon themselves to follow the spirit of gun control policies by stopping production of the Colt AR15, a U.S.-made assault rifle.

New owners of what is now called Colt's Manufacturing Co., of Hartford, Conn., are considering reversing that decision to resume production of the rifle.

What a shame.

Colt Industries was not required by law to end production. Their action occurred the day after the federal government imposed a temporary import ban on foreign-made weapons with similar features. Last July, the import ban was made permanent on 43 styles of rifles.

And although they weren't targeted in the law, Colt Industries never resumed production of the AR15.

Their move was made in good faith, following growing public opinion that semiautomatic assault weapons were not necessary for civilian sales.

At the time of the decision, the AR15 was the most popular U.S.-made semiautomatic rifle. The company sacrificed profits for civil safety, something that is admirable and rare.

Ron Stilwell, executive vice-president and chief operating officer of Colt's Manufacturing Co., said the company is seriously considering producing the rifle again, according to The Associated Press.

"We firmly believe it is a legitimate sporting system and in fact the only system that can be used for certain national target matches," Stilwell said.

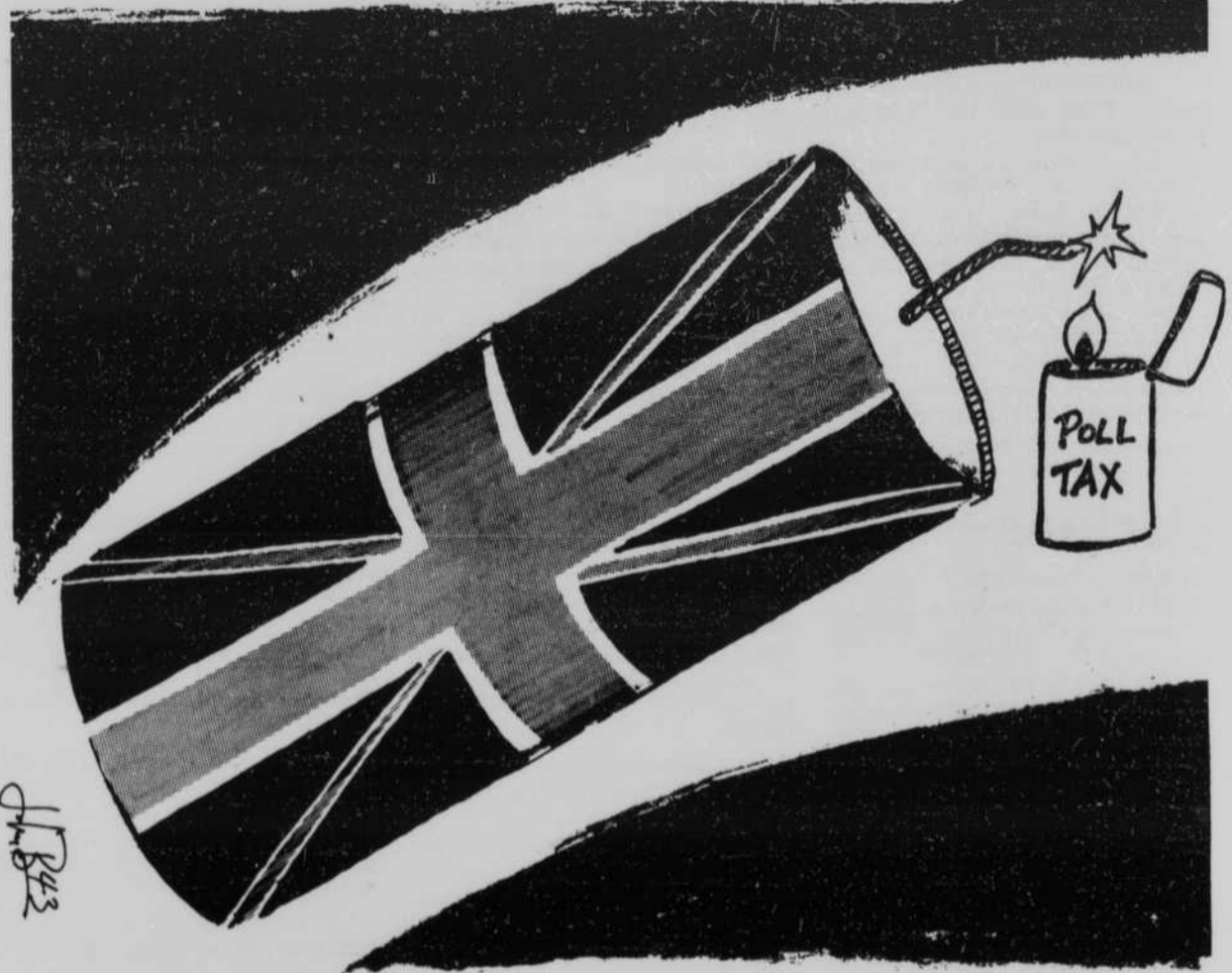
Fine. If the company could guarantee that the AR15 would be used only for target matches, there would be no problem. But assault rifles are used for more than national matches.

They are used to kill.

Even if the number of semiautomatic weapons purchased for that purpose were less than one percent of all sales, that is one percent too high. Any chance that one more semiautomatic weapon could fall into the wrong hands is a chance the Colt's Manufacturing Co. should not be willing to take.

No matter what the profit.

-- Amy Edwards
for the Daily Nebraskan



America's Ideal Woman underweight

Media portrays distorted images of how thin bodies should be

The Ideal Woman -- now there's a concept to think about.

In American society, the Ideal Woman seems to be many things, not the least of which is anorexic, according to a recent study.

Last week, the Eastern Psychological Association revealed its findings in a study of body dimensions and weights of the 1979 to 1988 Miss America contestants and Playboy centerfolds.

The study showed that the tested women's average body weight was 13 to 19 percent below the normal weight of American women. That low body weight is one clinical symptom of anorexia nervosa, according to one of the study researchers quoted in a Philadelphia Inquirer story.

These ultra-thin Miss America contestants have been held up for public inspection as the ultimate American young women. And while Playboy centerfolds aren't exactly the epitome of young women's ideals, the phrase "she has a Playboy body" is familiar.

Is it a wonder, then, that one out of every 100 American females between ages 12 and 18 has an eating disorder such as anorexia or bulimia?

It's not too puzzling, as I realized while watching a daytime talk show a few weeks ago. The show's guests were anorexics and bulimics who appeared on the show to, in their own words, "help others."

I didn't plan to watch the show. I thought I'd heard enough about those problems.

But as I was flipping through the channels with my free hand dipped in a pounder package of M&Ms, a tiny redhead caught my eye. Maybe it was her ghastly appearance, maybe it was the part of me that gawks even when I don't want to, but I couldn't change the channel -- even when the commercials came on.

And the commercials were very

interesting. Commercials for Cal-Ban 500 diet pills, for the Easy Glider cross country ski simulator with a man's home video of his miraculous thinning, and for Slim-Fast diet drink "to help you lose weight."

That irony was a slap in the face. The more I watched, the more dis-



Jana
Pedersen

gusted I became.

While the talk-show cameras were on, women and men revealed the sad tales of their own or their loved ones' battles with eating disorders. But when the cameras took a break, manufacturers played right to the weaknesses of those who most need help.

What's a young woman supposed to believe?

Yes, we'd like to think that the anorexics/bulimics in television land paid close attention to the talk show and its preachy advice. But what would an anorexic do during the commercials -- skip on over to the refrigerator for a snack?

Even during a program aimed at combatting the serious problem of eating disorders, anyone with the problem was smacked with conflicting messages.

We'd like to believe that advertising doesn't affect people. As an advertising major, I've been told that advertising can't force anyone into action but can be an influence.

And we'd like to believe that young women know they don't have to match the body dimensions of Miss America or Playboy centerfolds. But even in our own speech we reinforce that notion with Playboy-body analogies.

Eventually, the influences of advertising, ultra-thin Miss Americas and Playboy bodies pile up. A few daytime talk shows or articles in teen magazines can't do much to sway the load pressing on a young woman's insecurities.

What's even more discouraging is that the picture of the Ideal Woman as painted in the media appeals especially to those most susceptible to eating disorders -- those super-achievers who want and seem to do it all.

Perfection isn't an easy goal, but a typical anorexic, and I've known some, strives with every muscle to achieve it. And as a society, we strive to cultivate that impossible Ideal Woman.

That cultivation is shown specifically in daytime TV and studies like the one by the Eastern Psychological Association. And it's a big problem.

A secondary problem is the newer observation that there has been a flood of information presented about eating disorders and a subsequent increase in the number of anorexics and bulimics.

That attitude is only destructive. There can never be too much information handed out to combat the mass of perfectionist influences young women face. And any increase in the number of anorexics and bulimics is only in reported, recognized cases. The problem always has been there.

If one piece of that flood of information reaches a young woman with an eating disorder or someone who cares about her, let the flood continue.

Maybe a flood will be enough to stand up to the other images Americans present. Maybe a flood will be able to fight the problem.

And maybe then we'll realize that women don't have to be ultra-thin to be Ideal.

Pedersen is a sophomore advertising major and a Daily Nebraskan night news editor and columnist.

opinion READER

STAND sold out by Bowman

I beg to differ with Joe Bowman's letter in the Daily Nebraskan on March 21. Joe claims to not want to "risk my integrity on an unsubstantiated rumor," and says the Fiddelke-Lindau deal is a fact. Joe goes on to say that he will not reveal his source for fear she would be ostracized. So it is quite another matter to reveal this information to the media, without first checking both sides, in order to see to it that others are, in fact, ostracized in print? If indeed a deal took place, why shouldn't the source step forward herself instead of using Joe as a mouthpiece? I find it hard to imagine underhanded political deals being announced right in the middle of dinner at a sorority.

Mr. Bowman has also gone down the road of two wrongs making a right, by striking a deal with the VISION party for his endorsement, without prior approval of the members of the STAND party, the party he led until two weeks ago. I do not believe in some of STAND's causes, and did not vote STAND in the elections, but I feel that this small dedicated group really believed in what they were trying to do, and had some of the most original ideas in the campaign, as well as a grass-roots organization that was refreshing in its understatedness. I feel they were sold out for every reason that the party was formed to combat. A mishandled at-

tempt at power politics has greatly diminished any chance STAND has to have a say in student government at UNL.

It probably never will be determined if Joe Bowman brought down the TODAY party with his press conference, but by jumping into the political game he has repeatedly said he despises, he has defeated the ideals he claimed to stand for in the first place.

I had friends running with all three parties -- some won, but some lost -- but that's life, and most of them took it like mature adults, accepting defeat graciously. The members of TODAY did not deserve to be dumped on as they were. Joe Bowman was defeated in a fair election, and if he really believed both TODAY and VISION were evil, he should have retired graciously from the political arena and worked to get his ideas implemented, instead of forging a deal with a group that he purportedly despised.

Joe said in his letter, "... when you pick up a sword, you must use it!" Very poetic, but one should not use that sword capriciously, or to gain a measure of revenge in a moment when one is blinded by ambition.

Don Curtis
senior
biology

letter

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.

Readers also are welcome to sub-

mit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not to run, is left to the editor's discretion.

Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Letters should be typewritten.

Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.