

Pistol offers emotional support

Like many citizens of the post-modern world, I too feel a sense of loss and alienation, as if there were something missing from my life. Last week, while watching the CBS Evening News, I finally discovered what it was I lacked.



Debra Cumberland

"I polish it every night to protect me from my next door neighbor, who polishes her little pearl-handled pistol to protect herself from me."

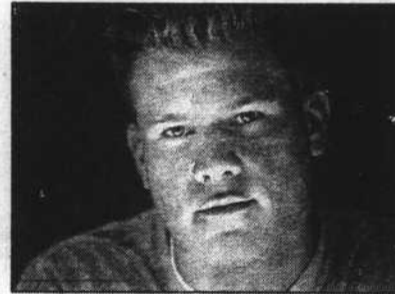
Firearms.
There, right before my eyes, a beefy, middle-aged man with a hairy tattoo let me in on The Big Secret. As a Texan, he said he would soon have the right to carry concealed weapons. While other, more wimpy left-wing liberal states expressed concern over increased crime rates resulting from enacting such a law, this Texan let me know that carrying a concealed weapon had two main benefits:
1. It made him feel safer.
2. It gave him a sense of self-confidence and power I couldn't agree more.
People who know me as a pacifist, bleeding heart liberal may be surprised to find out that I have a little pearl-handled pistol. I polish it every night to protect me from my next door neighbor, who polishes her little pearl-handled pistol to protect herself from me. We both fear that the other will break into our respective homes and steal our used books and Goodwill furniture. However, simply keeping a gun in your home is obviously not enough, as the Texan pointed out. While I may feel safe at home, thanks to my pearl-handled pistol, it's a mean world out there. Unfortunately, it's an especially mean world for insecure, angry young white men, the primary activists for concealed guns. Attacked by feminists and affirmative action groups, insecure young white men seem to turn to firearms for emotional support. Unlike bleeding heart liberals, who are concerned with enforcing such trivial issues as health care, education, and the environment, young white male Texans know that the right to carry concealed weapons is one of the most important — and most overlooked — issues in the

Love Library, fondling the water pistol nestled in my pocket. "I'd like to check out this book," I said, slapping it on the desk with a careless flick of my wrist. "I'm afraid you can't," gulped the circulation worker, in a thin, high voice. His hands trembled, and his bony body quivered in fear. It was obvious that my new, water-pistol toting demeanor overwhelmed the boy.
I laughed a low, menacing laugh deep in my throat. "I'm afraid you don't understand," I growled, my new, powerful gaze boring deep into his thin, watery blue eyes. "I want the book, and I won't take no for an answer." He handed it over, his hands shaking. Moments later, he fainted. I never looked back.
But it didn't stop there. Restaurants offered me free tabs. Financial Aid sent me a letter informing me that I could ignore my student loans. The shuttle bus driver handed me a steaming cup of coffee and a box of chocolates every time I boarded. I headed home that evening, a happy, satisfied smile on my face, and sat polishing my pistol, watching old John Wayne movies on my VCR and dreaming of the time that Nebraska enacted such a law.
But it wasn't enough just to sit there bonding with my pearl-handled pistol: I needed to make a commitment.
I called my friend Dirk, and asked him what he thought. Should I make the commitment? Should I put my beliefs on the line? He told me that I couldn't stay in the closet about firearms any longer. While I might be in support of concealed weapons, I shouldn't conceal my beliefs.
And so I made the move. With trembling hands, I called the National Rifle Association and became a member. Firearms. They could change your life.
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nation.
I'm proud to know that Texas is leading the way in looking out for the rights of wimpy men. However, I wasn't satisfied just taking the Texan's word for it. I wanted to experience the thrill of carrying a concealed weapon for myself.
Because I couldn't take my pearl-handled pistol with me — Nebraska isn't as enlightened as Texas — I opted for my water pistol. Although it wasn't the same, the adrenaline rush still overwhelmed me as I left my apartment.
My face lost its pale, pasty graduate-student look. I carried my shoulders back instead of hunching them over. My eyes glittered with a strange, almost radioactive gleam.
People scurried by me as I headed to campus, taking strong, powerful strides. I smiled inscrutably. I had gotten a letter from the library, threatening to withdraw my library privileges if I didn't pay up. I decided to try my new-found power on the innocent workers behind the circulation desk.
I swaggered into sleek and sterile

Farmer's plight needs thanks

If tonight brings the season's first freeze, like the forecasters are predicting, it would be the perfect end to an absolutely terrible year for the farmer.
And once again, it will be the farmer who comes up on the losing end.
Some might say he asked for it. After all, it does take an odd sort of fellow to put most of his life's earnings in the ground every spring, not knowing if it's going to rain too much or not enough; if the bugs will be bad; if one storm is going to wipe out his entire yearly income.
And come harvest, if the farmer's crop does survive, he's stuck with a product that won't last long. So he must sell it soon, for a price that he has no say about.
And on top of all his hardships, the farmer has outsiders constantly working against him.
As consumers, we put pressure on farm prices by demanding lower prices at the supermarket. And even though he gets only 4 cents for the grain in a \$4 box of cereal, the farmer gets blamed whenever food prices go up.
Then there are the well-fed environmentalists, most of whose Birkenstocks have never set foot on a farm. They complain that the farmer uses too much fertilizer, too many chemicals, and too much water. Then they scarf down their low-priced veggie burger.
There are the bankers who charge high interest rates, coupled with their politician pals who allow foreign countries to flood our market with cheaper foods.
And then there are the bureaucrats who demand that agricultural subsidies be cut, while the government is the only thing that keeps them employed.
All and all, it is an uphill battle. The farmer, who makes up less



Jamie Karl

"Our ability to grow food is America's greatest asset. While the farmer may not be the brains of the nation, he certainly is the backbone."

than 2 percent of the work force, provides food and fiber for himself — and the other 98 percent of us.
Yet rarely, even in an agricultural-based state such as ours, do we urbanites think about how we get our food? Few of us seem to care about agriculture, or how it works, or what takes place in those fields right outside of town.
We tend to take it all for granted. We go on believing that the farmer will forever be there, that he will forever provide for us.
But the truth is, he won't — not if those outside forces continue to bring him down.
Last year, \$7 billion were lost on farm loans. Fewer and fewer farmers can afford to keep their land, and do the work they love.
America's agricultural exports made her a record \$58 billion. That is what the fat-cat politicians should

be hailing as national security. Instead, Congress is currently cutting billions from programs designed to help the hurting farmer. And in their effort to trim the budget proposal by Friday, further cuts have been recommended, by Democrats and Republicans alike.
Meanwhile, spending on unwed mothers, food stamps and other social programs of no investment goes unscathed.
It's time we — the consumers, the bankers, the politicians — realize that if the farmer goes out of business, so do the rest of us.
Before we are Republicans or Democrats, before we are liberals or traditionalists, we are humans. We need the farmer and his service simply to exist.
Our ability to grow food is America's greatest asset. While the farmer may not be the brains of the nation, he certainly is the backbone.
So even though he has shrunk in numbers, and has wrongly lost his political influence, it is the American farmer who fills the world's food basket and keeps his country on top.
It's time we no longer take him for granted.
Indeed, this year has been particularly difficult for the farmer — bad weather, continued bad prices.
The last thing he needs is some ingrate condemning him and his livelihood, or some legislator trying to run him off his land.
Why he does what he does, and puts up with the rest of us, is beyond me. But the farmer probably doesn't want our understanding anyway.
I'm sure a simple "thank you" would suffice.
Karl is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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