

Unbearable

Congress' lust for assault weapons sickens

I will never own an electric can opener.

I have a great jackknife that not only works its way around a can of soup, but also pushes those nifty triangular openings in Hi-C Punch cans, among other things. And a hand-held can opener costs about four bucks. Dandy gizmo for the price, really.

I will never own an electric mixer. I stir cookies by hand. I'm no Betty Crocker, admittedly, but I get the job done with just a little extra muscle.

There's a glorious sense of accomplishment I get from using my hands to perform a task that manufacturers would have me believe I'm not capable of doing without an electric gadget.

It's a small matter, really. But I just don't believe in buying things manufacturers make that create a false need.

I will never own an AK-47.

I guess my needs are simpler than most folks because I just can't imagine what I would do with an assault weapon.

I suppose the next time I locked my keys in my car, it'd be quicker to blast the lock open than to wait for Joe Locksmith.

If I were an avid gamesman, I suppose I could shoot myself one heck of a moose with a super powered, heavy-duty weapon.

Of course, I'd have to find a moose. That would mean a trip to the Boundary Waters of Minnesota. And I'm not sure what I'd do, as a vegetarian, with the beast's pulverized meat.

I suppose if I feared perpetrators, I might find some solace in a brute of a gun. Who has time to take a self-defense class or install an extra deadbolt?

I'm not sure it'd fit in my handbag, however. And it'd be a burden to carry the bulk of an AK-47 and its attachments with me at all times.

If I were paranoid enough, I might carry the gun everywhere. To the dry cleaners, the movies, the



Kelly Johnson

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market. I suppose I'd be anticipating some random act of violence in the deli section. It's an area I don't frequent, you know, so one never knows what might be lurking there.

Right now, I couldn't legally carry an AK-47, even if I wanted to. They were banned in America two years ago.

The GOP majority in the House has a motto. "Promises made, promises kept."

What kind of promises did these politicians make? And to whom?

House GOP Leader Dick Armey of Texas said that members who ran on the gun issue in 1994 wanted voters to know they kept their word. Read: Voters = National Rifle Association.

So AK-47s and the like could be legalized soon — if the \$3.5 million in political contributions the NRA has made in recent years works its charm in the Senate.

So, if Newt can get his cronies in the Senate to play along, each of us should be able to purchase a whole array of assault-style rapid-fire weapons in the near future.

The list includes: TEC-DC9, Steyr AUG, UZI, Beretta AR-70, Street Sweeper, Striker 12, M-11/12 and Fabrique Nationale FNC.

Politicians aren't the only ones who make promises.

When parents bring a child into the world, they make a promise, barring life's strange quirks, to give that child a future.

Is it more likely that these guns will enhance a child's future or eliminate it?

Society provides its own answer.

A man, best described as a monster, killed 16 beautiful, innocent children in Scotland last week. Thomas Hamilton, a.k.a. Mr. Creepy, walked into a Dunblane elementary school with four guns and committed a round of heartless, heinous murders.

Tragically, the only defense available to those 5- and 6-year-old children was their small legs. And as their only means of escape carried them away from terror, Mr. Creepy picked them off, one by one. With his 9mm semiautomatic pistol. Imagine if Mr. Creepy had had a really big gun.

During the House debate, Rep. Gerald Solomon, R-N.Y., said, "My wife lives alone five days a week in a rural area in upstate New York. She has a right to defend herself when I'm not there."

Americans still have the right to bear arms. Mr. Creepy's weapon of choice can be had, legally, here in the United States. Certainly, Mrs. Solomon could find a gun on the market to defend herself with — she doesn't need an assault weapon.

And so I have two questions. Why would I need an assault weapon? Why would anyone need an assault weapon?

I don't need an electric can opener or mixer. I don't need an AK-47. And I don't need politicians, a.k.a. manufacturers of fear, who'd have me believe I need any of these.

Johnson is a senior news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Letters from Dublin



Student fondly recalls things missed, learned

Editor's note: This column is the final installment in Paula Lavigne's "Letters from Dublin" series.

Paula Lavigne

"I've been here long enough to sum up what I've missed, what I'll miss and what I've learned."

I shook a handful of quarters this morning. They seemed lighter, like pieces of scrap metal or play money. The last time I used American currency was to buy a newspaper in the Atlanta airport in early January. It seems very foreign to me now.

I came upon the quarters while looking for my passport. I'm going to London and Paris for three weeks. When I come back, I'll have a week in Dublin before I come home. I've gone past the point of being a tourist. Technically, I'm a legal alien. I've worked here and lived here for long enough to feel like I'm almost part of the system. I've been here long enough to sum up what I've missed, what I'll miss and what I've learned.

I never allowed myself to get homesick, but I missed the familiarity of home. My friends, family and dog were obvious things I missed, but I kept in touch (well, my dog might not know who I am anymore). On top of that, I am sick of not being able to jump in the car and take off. I can't wait to get back in the driver's seat again, as long as I remember which side to get in on.

I also miss spending evening hours on one mug of coffee at the Mill, and I miss spending the early morning hours on six cups of horrible coffee at Perkins. And, although I enjoyed the food here, there were things you couldn't get, such as TCBY yogurt, Vic's Popcorn and Dr. Pepper (after three bottles a day, that was hard going cold turkey).

Instead of making pancakes in the morning with my roommate, I had to switch to scones and tea (although I never got used to putting milk in it).

I fell out of step with university life. I kind of missed going to classes, dodging shuttle buses and hanging out in the basement of the student union. Heck, I even missed the NU Board of Regents.

On the flipside, there are things I'll miss from Ireland. They're less specific, though. Although I missed the familiarity of home, I'll miss having every week be a new adventure. I'll miss the challenge of learning new customs. I'll miss being

unique (although, in Ireland, being a tourist is hardly unique).

I'll miss being in a smaller country where there's more emphasis on international events, and I'll miss being so close to Northern Ireland and the debates that go with it.

Of course, I'll miss my friends here, and I'll miss the "Cat of Trinity College" even if he tried to bite my arm off.

But even when I go and leave all these things behind, I'll take with me what I've learned.

Things are much the same here, but the pace of life is a bit slower. The American influence is great, but they won't let it take over. America is recognized as a superpower, and I've realized that because of that, people here know more about America than people in America know about Europe.

On that note, I've learned that it is important to think globally and not nationally. We are confined by a nation, but we live in a world. We have to face up to that or suffer out of ignorance.

I've learned a lot about acceptance, and how people are willing to welcome you into their way of life and have confidence that you can assimilate.

I've learned that the lessons vary from place to place, and that universal truths are rare.

So there. That's the summation of one of the greatest experiences of my life, and I hope that any of you who have the chance to go to a different country take it.

Grab your passport, Visa card, and comfortable shoes; kiss Mom goodbye and hit the road. Do it while you're young, and do it in the summer.

As for me, I'm nearing the end of my road. And when I get to it, I'm going to drive on the right side.

Lavigne is a junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan contributing columnist.

Help wanted

The jobless get nervous as graduation nears

I want a job. It is that simple. I don't care what it is. Sales, financial, leg breaking — it doesn't matter to me. I'm not picky when it comes to money. I only want enough to live. I work cheap. There has got to be a job out there with my name on it.

For the last month and a half, I have been sending out resumés after resumés. In all, I have sent out about 50. In the last couple of weeks, I have had three interviews. All have been productive. In fact, I am a lot more positive about the whole experience because the interviews have gone so well. I have received only a couple of flat out rejection letters. Everyone I know says I should keep my head up, that I am doing well.

I, on the other hand, would rather someone make me sit through physiology again than continue the process. It's driving me nuts.

A long time ago, I actually thought I would just go ahead and stay in school. I thought, hey, the academic world looks pretty gnarly. My professors look as if they are having fun lecturing, grading papers, holding class out by the Greenspace on a warm spring day. You get to work when you want, and you get a cramped, moldy office to do the work in. Who wouldn't want to be a professor?

Then I started looking into the whole process. Of course, therein lies the problem. No one is really sure how the process works. I went to office after office, asking secretaries, professors and counselors how to go about getting started. I consulted books, looked in journals, even asked the Magic Eight Ball what to do.



Jody Burke

"Most of the adults I have met have jobs, except professors and politicians."

No one had a clue. Finally, someone mentioned that I should take whatever professional tests I need to get into whatever programs I would be applying to.

So I took the GRE and was humiliated beyond belief when the results came back. The worst of it is that the monkey that takes the test every year and picks his answers at random scored better than I did.

So I thought to myself, I know, I'll get a job. Everyone I know has one. Most of the adults I have met have jobs, except professors and politicians. Corporate America must have a position for a real go-getter like me. Dammit, I was involved on this campus.

Which leads me to the present state of my problem. It all kind of reminds me of the John Cusack line in "Say Anything," where he is telling the girl's father that he

doesn't want to make anything bought or sold and so on. I have no idea what I want to do, or where I want to do it. Here, or in Denver? Chicago? Bora Bora?

There has got to be a better way. Maybe all of the people who need a job could get together in an arena with all of the companies who need to hire someone. Rather than the runaround we get at job fairs and then the eventual interviewing, the employers could take a look at all of the candidates at once and hire the ones who aren't wearing ties with shamrocks on them or otherwise don't look too inept. The prospective employees could walk around and say:

"Hi. I'm desperate. I have little experience besides retail sales. I regularly would show up late for class, if I went at all, and the only real thing I learned at the university was how to skim the paper for the best beer sales."

The prospective employers then could ask some of their astute questions like "So why are you applying?"; "Your resumé says you are graduating in May, is that true?" or "Do navy and black clash or match?"

At the end, everybody could match up and be happy. It would be like a gigantic singles bar. Instead of trolling for love, you'd be trolling for dollars. Seems to me as if there aren't any major events going on for a while at the Devaney Center. We could just do it there.

All I know is I am getting really desperate, and if I am not careful, I might try my hand in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Burke is a senior English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

