

Standard online reader survey



Q: Do you think there are any laws which can be passed that will slow gun violence in America?

YES 34 percent
NO 66 percent

GUEST EDITORIAL

School shootings can't be called unthinkable

The opening phrase of Congressman Randy Weber's statement Friday afternoon about the horrific shooting at Santa Fe High School was pretty standard. "Earlier today, the unimaginable happened."

The same with the first statement put out by U.S. Sen. John Cornyn. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those injured and killed at Santa Fe School District."

All of those expressing varying degrees of astonishment a teenager with an affinity for symbols of darkness would walk into a school and attempt to slaughter teachers and classmates must have been deceiving themselves.

But did they find it unthinkable? Unimaginable?

"It's been happening everywhere. I always kind of felt like eventually it was going to happen here, too," a young girl who was inside the school during the shooting told reporters not long after it happened. "I wasn't surprised, I was just scared."

That feeling of insecurity should horrify all of us. We as parents, as adults in our communities, are tasked with safeguarding future generations, and it is a task we fail to live up to. Our children clearly know it.

Our response to tragedy after tragedy, however, is not to take action. It is to cling to the same mindsets that created the circumstances that led to the carnage of Columbine, Sandy Hook and Parkland. We

The Facts Clute, Texas

cannot even say our leaders are coming up with bad solutions, because in almost two decades after Klebold and Harris, they have offered more politics and fewer answers.

Better mental health care is one possibility, but funding for programs keeps eroding. Broader background checks are fought at every turn. Police presence during the crisis and a Santa Fe ISD officer who attempted to intervene becoming one of its first casualties.

Suggestions banning certain classes of weapons won't go anywhere, and even if they do, they don't address the "who" part of the problem — the troubled kid, disgruntled adult or mentally unhealthy person intent on bloodshed.

It is far past time for children obviously displaying anti-social behavior to go unnoticed in our homes, schools and communities. It is equally past time for no avenues of help to be available when they are noticed. And it is well past time for people to find such horrors as 1,400 Santa Fe High School students lived through Friday to be unimaginable.

They are not only imaginable, they are — as that young Santa Fe girl said — to be expected. Each of us should be working at every opportunity to make them unthinkable again.



Does meeting prove collusion?

If there is an Exhibit A in the case the Trump campaign colluded with Russia to fix the presidential election, it is the June 9, 2016, meeting in Trump Tower between three top campaign officials — Donald Trump Jr., Paul Manafort and Jared Kushner — and a group of Russians who promised dirt on Hillary Clinton.

And if there is a key document about the meeting, it is the email from British music promoter Rob Goldstone to Trump Jr. proposing the get-together. Read in light of the accusations leveled against President Trump and his campaign after the election, the email almost screams: WE WANT TO COLLUDE WITH YOU.

But did it really? Newly released testimony from several participants in the meeting suggests the answer could well be no.

In the email, Goldstone told Trump Jr. a powerful Russian had "offered to provide the Trump campaign with some official documents and information that would incriminate Hillary and her dealings with Russia and would be very useful to your father. This is obviously very high level and sensitive information, but is part of Russia and its government's support for Mr. Trump."

But what, precisely, did the Goldstone email mean? What were the intentions behind it? The just-released testimony, which includes transcripts of two interviews with Goldstone, is from the Senate Judiciary Committee's Trump-Russia investigation. It suggests the language of the email were less an invitation to collusion than what Goldstone called "publicist puff," that is, inflated phrases used to entice the candidate's top aides to accept a meeting.

And then, when Trump Jr. agreed

to the meeting, the Russians, far from offering the promised dirt on Clinton, made a conventional, lobby-like pitch to win Trump support for getting rid of U.S. sanctions against Russia in the Magnitsky Act. There's no evidence anyone proposed a deal.

Goldstone's email pitch made the meeting sound like something much bigger. But reality did not back it up. Investigators asked Goldstone why he told Trump Jr. the Russian government supported Trump. Goldstone explained he had been to Russia several times, including during the 2013 pageant, and "I had seen and heard

firsthand people of all levels, whether it was business people, whether it was friends of Emin, friends of his father, talk in very glowing terms about Mr. Trump. I had also

seen on television in Russia many, many reports in which government officials, including the president, Mr. Putin, had praised Mr. Trump, who, in turn, I had seen on CNN had praised Mr. Putin."

So, he basically just made up the stuff about Russia's support of Trump.

Goldstone was asked if he was aware at the time of any Russian efforts to interfere in the presidential election. He said he was not. He was asked if he knew anything about the supposed documents being offered to Trump Jr. He said he did not.

In the end, unless some startling new evidence appears, the notorious Trump Tower meeting seems more like a clumsy attempt at lobbying than a conspiracy to interfere with a presidential election.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

COLUMNIST

BYRON YORK



Hair today, gone tomorrow

"Did you just wake up?" asked Ralph from behind the counter as he poured my breakfast coffee.

"No."
"Something looks different. Did you gain a lot of weight?"

"No, it's just a new haircut."
"You paid for that?"

"Yes, I did. And unlike you, I had to pay full price for having so much hair. You must get a 75 percent discount?"

I shouldn't have said that. For the next two weeks, I'll get runny eggs and day-old coffee. Ralph's service will be slower than usual, there will be no refills and it'll take forever to get the check. But Ralph knows I've been trying to find a new barber ever since Charlie moved away.

"I heard he got carpal tunnel from the repetitive motion of giving everyone the exact same haircut for 30 years," Sue contributed.

Since Charlie's been gone, I've been to every place in town, and no one seems to get my hair right, or care.

Tonae's House of Hair in the mall won't take reservations. So each time I go, someone new cuts my hair. Someone who wasn't there last time.

"What happened to Jeannie?" I asked Madame Tonaie, the proprietor. "She's having a baby."

"I was here three weeks ago. She didn't mention it. She didn't even look pregnant."

"Did I say having a baby? I meant she's in a safe house hiding from her boyfriend. But Tiffany's free."

Tiffany has rainbow-colored hair: blue, red, yellow and purple with black tips. Her eyebrow, nose, lower lip and ears were pierced. I'm guess-

ing she's 40 years younger than me. "How do you like it?" she asked, running a hand through my gray hair.

"Oh, as Goth as you can make it." She laughed and did a great job. She gave me a haircut that didn't look like I'd just gotten a haircut. Finally, I thought, someone who understands me, someone who knows I don't want to look like a person who spends a lot of time on their hair. Tiffany and I bonded. From now on, she would be the only person to touch my hair.

Three weeks later she was gone. "Don't tell me she's

hiding from a boyfriend," I asked Madame Tonaie. "No, she was having money problems."

"Really? She looked so busy. I'm sure she got good tips, too."

"Yes, that was the money problem. Someone offered her more money to work elsewhere."

"Where'd she go?" Tonaie looked at me as if I had just crawled out of a sewer.

Next I went to Nick's, the jock barbershop with all the sports magazines and pictures of athletic heroes covering the walls. Nick wanted to carve the logo of his favorite team into my hair. I said if I'm going to be their billboard, they should pay me.

Since then, I've had my hair gelled, waxed, foamed, thinned, thickened, clipped, razored, buzzed, shaved, marinated, and souffled. But worst of all, Ralph is chatting with a bald guy at the other end of the counter.

Ignoring my empty coffee cup. Contact Jim Mullen at mullen.jim@gmail.com.

VILLAGE IDIOT

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LACY GARRISON



A few things you should go buy

It's been such a great couple of weeks! This past weekend I watched some inspiring women run the Viola Valley Half Marathon and I'm ready to start running again after a nearly two year hiatus. (Sarah Hoover, you're a rock star!)

Anyway, I wanted to share with you all some of my favorite things I have been loving lately. I cover everything from glasses to a zit-zapping product in this column. So without further ado, here they are.

WARBY PARKER GLASSES -- I just bought my second pair of Warby Parker prescription glasses and I'm so pleased. This go-around I chose the Percey frames in petal tortoise. I love the way these frames match my skin tone and hair giving me a bookish reporter look. This company is great because most of their glasses cost less than \$100 and they partner with nonprofits like VisionSpring to ensure that for every pair of glasses sold, a pair is distributed to someone in need.

PONS AVARCAS -- My friend introduced these shoes to me and now I'm obsessed. They are so comfortable, don't rub my heels and my toe nails don't have to be painted! PONS Avarcas features flat and platform styles in a variety of colors perfect for summer. They're timeless, comfortable and available for men, women and children. So far, I have two pairs of Pons Classic style in black and sand.

LUSH SLEEPY BODY LOTION -- I stumbled across this lotion a couple of months ago in Lush at the Green Hills mall and now I'm hooked. I love to slather on the pale purple lotion right after I hop out of the shower. It smells wonderful with the lavender and tonka perfume. Plus, the glycerin, cocoa butter and almond oil make my skin soft without feeling sticky. You know it's good stuff when your husband starts swiping it!

PINK PEWTER STRETCH BANDS -- This has been the absolute best hair accessory I have ever owned. I've lost count on how many stretch bands I have. I love the beautiful patterns trimmed with rhinestones and beads, as well as the velvet backing that prevents slipping. I simply slide the stretch band over my hair then tuck it creating a complicated looking hair-do. The best part is I don't need any bobby pins and it takes only five minutes to do.

ERADIKATE ACNE TREATMENT -- Ladies, I don't know about you, but typically the week before I ride the red dragon, I'll break out a bit. When I use this product by Kate Somerville, my problem spots vanish within days. The key ingredients include sulfur, BHAs and Zinc Oxide which effectively fight blemishes, reduce acne and keep my skin free of further breakouts. It really works so try it out!

Next week, I'll share my favorite Walmart and local drugstore products. I hope you all have a fabulous week full of laughs and happiness!

Standard reporter Lacy Garrison can be reached at 473-2191.