

Not Regulating Armageddon



Good morning, y'all. Another gorgeous day here in the high country. We're needing a little rain, but otherwise, just gorgeous. I'd certainly like to get the precipitation in before it gets any colder, though. I've got a feeling we're going to have real strong storms this Winter. I guess you might say I'm getting a case of pre-cabin fever. Being trapped in a 12X65 without power is one of those circles that Dante was talking about.

I guess thinking about apocalyptic situations consumes about fifty percent of the American zeitgeist now. Maybe it's more. I'm not seeing anybody doing any studies on it. If there are studies being done as to why we are so consumed with bad news, the reports are not being published. At least in any media I've found. I suspect that those whose financial well being would be negatively impacted by such a report, are running roughshod on the news. Surprise! We're not all going to "hell in a handbasket".

Crazy as it sounds, it's like all businesses out there benefit from our fears. Whether it's based on the fear of getting a zit, or the fear of being gunned down at a concert, all advertising seems to exist to manipulate our fears. Now, I admit, there is a wide chasm between worrying if our face will clear up in time for the big dance and getting gunned down at the dance, but the marketing is basically the same. The drug companies at least have a bit of a constraint placed on them by the FDA. If you're having a little acne problem, and you're thinking about a solution, at least the makers of the drugs have to tell you about their side effects in the advertising. It puts things more in perspective to say, "I'm getting tired of being called 'pizza face'", or, "I could take 'Zit Away' and possibly go blind from taking the cure."

I'm not sure how many folks objectively weigh the choices laid out in drug advertising. How many teenagers have said, "I'd rather die than go to the dance with my face like this". At least with the FDA restriction on advertising, you know that dying might be a possibility. Not so with the purchase of a gun. Now, before you say

"whoa Uncle Bud, you've crossed a line", let me ask you when was the last time you saw any mention anywhere of what the proliferation of weapons in our society has done? Never. You're likely to see an ad on all of the merits of owning a high capacity semi-automatic hunting rifle, '***Guaranteed to bring home a kill, even if you're blind***'. You're never going to be presented with the "side effects" of gun ownership, as you would in a drug ad.

The Gun Violence Archive reports there have been [49,095 incidents of gun violence in the U.S. in 2015](#), resulting in 25,105 injuries and 12,430 deaths. I had to Google that. Brenda Wood at Channel 11 News didn't do a "Last Word" segment on it. Bashing guns, or actually reporting accurately on the effects of guns on our society, runs counter to the "fear formula".

What is the "fear formula"? I think it can be best exemplified by what happened after the Sandy Hook shootings. If you don't recall Sandy Hook, on December 14, 2012, in Newtown, Connecticut, a nutjob with a gun killed 20 children and 6 adults. To me, seeing children being gunned down should have been the wake up call needed to do something like [Australia](#) did. Instead, gun sales went up by as much as 60% after the shooting.

Sturm, Ruger & Co., the largest publicly traded gunmaker, saw its net sales for the first nine months of 2013 jump 44 percent to \$506.4 million, from \$350 million in the same period a year before. Think about that, children are being gunned down in their schools, and our solution is to buy more guns. Why? Well, the head of the N.R.A. tells us that what's needed to stop bad men with guns, is good men with guns.

Not to call the scummy sleazeball Wayne LaPierre a lying scumbag, but here are a couple of interesting facts that don't support his assertion.

- In America, there are approximately 270 million firearms possessed by civilians, and only 897,000 carried by police.
- Approximately 20% of gun owners own 65% of the guns.
- The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms reports that about 5.5 million new firearms were manufactured in America in 2010. 95% of these were for the U.S. market.
- Close to 33,000 Americans were victims of gun-related deaths in 2011 and an average of 268 citizens are shot every day.

Let's be real here, we have a serious, serious problem. It's not fundamentalists of whatever persuasion, as the news agencies and the gun lobby want you to believe, it's fundamentalists with guns. Take their guns away and then we can at least argue the merits of their beliefs.

By the way, George W. Bush, that great moralist, took away the ability to sue gun manufacturers for their "side effects" back in 2005. So much for that Republican value of accountability. The N.R.A., not regulating armageddon since 1871.