

Firearms: Killing our nation?

By: John Stengel

Feature Reporter

When a judge regarded Virginia Tech shooter Seung-Hui Cho as a danger to himself in 2005 that should have disqualified him from purchasing a handgun under federal law. It didn't. Through a loophole, the spree killer was able to buy firearms and carried out the largest massacre in United States history.

Let's briefly take a trip back to the birth of our country. The year was 1787 and James Madison was drafting the Bill of Rights. "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

Why did our founding fathers be sure in include this in the Bill of Rights? Was it made so that we could hunt? Or is the Second Amendment there so we can have target practice or skeet shoot? No, they made sure in include this so when the time came to overthrow the government, we had the physical force needed for a Coup d'état

Gun rights were established in preparation for the next great revolution. States have the right to a well-regulated militia, which assisted the American Revolution immensely but teenagers with assault rifles

have nothing to do with a well-regulated militia. In this day and age, guns are not used to revolt against the government. Now, firearm owners claim to own guns to protect their family, belongings, and their country. The Second Amendment protects the right to bear arms, but that does not translate into protecting the individual ownership of firearms.

Guns in the home for self-protection are very dangerous. Children and adults in an altered state of mind can misuse or brandish the firearm, causing it to discharge. A gun kept in the house is 43 times more likely to injure a family member than it is to injure an intruder.

Every year, in the United States alone, guns kill thousands of people. In 2000, nearly 30,000 people died from gunshot wounds. Although half of those deaths accounted for suicides, 11,000 people were murdered. Another 1,500 were accidental shootings. When you break it down, firearms kill 3 people every hour and 9 children every day. In 2005 and 2006, there were over 100 shootings in the Quad Cities.

In 2000, handguns killed 13 people in Australia, 15

in Japan, 30 in Great Britain, 106 in Canada, and 213 in Germany. Then, we come to the United States. In 2000, 9,390 people died from handguns. The sad truth is these stats do not include suicides, homicides by rifles, or accidental gun deaths, but only murders committed by handguns.

It is evident that Americans have abused their "right to bear arms" for far too long. We need more gun control in this country. I am not saying that all firearms need to be banned, confiscated, and melted. That is purely communistic in theory. We need to make sure handguns stay out of the grip of non-law enforcement officials, regulate rifles for hunting, and make the punishments for firearm violence stronger.

With stricter gun laws, we could have prevented massacres such as the Virginia Tech Shootings, Columbine, the D.C. highway sniper, the North Hollywood bank robberies, and other such tragic shootings. Ordinary gun owners going ballistic have scared America. It is time for change. The prevention of gun crime is necessary. "From our cold, dead hands." If that is the way they want it, that's what they will get.

The King and I attracts students... etc, etc, etc

By: Josh Hendricks

Feature Reporter

On the Moline stage, audiences have been "getting to know" a show of vast proportions, hard work, and theatrical excellence.

Moline High School's most recent musical production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The King and I* has come to a close after three prosperous shows and two exciting grade school matinees.

The show is centered around English schoolteacher Anna Leonowens and her struggle to improve the international views of The King of Siam, who wants to become more aware of cultural and "scientific" ideas etc. etc. etc.

Senior Alex Ryser played the role of the King and senior Lindsay Anderson played the role of Anna. There were also a hundred or so more cast members from the high school and area elementary schools.

Mr. Ron May, the show's producer, quoted *The King and I* as being "A solid ten performance."

The most memorable part of the show from Mr. May's perspective was the kissing scenes between Lun Tha (Andy Gibb Clark) and Tuptim (Cara Chumbley) and the elementary kids' reactions when the curtain opened to reveal the palace set from what the letters he got from the elementary students told him.

"Overall I thought the students were impressed with the costumes and pageantry. Also the songs that were familiar to them are now even more familiar to them," he remarked.

The cast members put lots of time, effort, and dedication into the show according to May. "Eight weeks of rehearsal plus outside time to memories lines and music, that's a big commitment" May replied.

"From the first rehearsal to opening night, the cast improved consistently and steadily throughout the eight weeks of rehearsals. There were no surprises or disappointments, it was a planned process. The acting proved to be every bit a "professional" quality. One grandparent wanted to know how many professionals we had to hire to supplement the cast in order to get such a quality production. The answer: none, we just have that quality in our students"

With a cast of a hundred or more members there could have been a lot of chaos, but according to the directing staff, most problems worked themselves out. "Very few problems or issues arose considering that we often have to put out little fires between personalities. This went remarkably smooth considering how many were involved in the production" May replied.

After two student matinees and three evening performances 2200 or more people came to see the shows. *The King and I* proved to be truly, "Something Wonderful"



The royal wives and the king display the brightly colored costumes designed for The King and I. (Photo by: Hurty)