

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Rights with common sense

With the November election approaching, the Second Amendment is being discussed in campaigns around the nation.

What has become evident with an accidental shooting in Arizona is that all of our constitutional rights, and perhaps especially the Second Amendment, carries a responsibility to exercise common sense.

In the Arizona case, a 9-year-old girl at a shooting range was encouraged to shoot a submachine gun and accidentally shot and killed her instructor.

The August incident is an example of the need for common sense.

According to news reports, the Nevada girl's experience was to be a unique experience during a summer family vacation.

The problem is the girl was an inexperienced shooter and had never shot that size gun. The girl had shot the gun just once when the instructor switched the gun to its repeat firing mode and the small girl wearing pink shorts and a braid in her hair apparently couldn't physically handle the recoil, lost control and shot the instructor standing next to her.

Clearly, this was an accident in every aspect. But we wonder why the instructor would take the girl's shooting experience up a level to the repeat firing mode after taking just one shot with the gun.

Many of us recall learning how to shoot guns

as we were youngsters. It usually involved a first experience with a BB or pellet gun. With some experience and proficiency, as well as exhibiting safe handling of the gun, then perhaps an introduction to a shot gun. At some point, by showing competency and safety with the larger guns, rifles and handguns are introduced to youngsters. Who among us did not experience the bruised shoulder when the adult instructing us, stood behind us in an attempt to absorb the recoil, only to instead squish us between the gun and their body?

We just can't help wonder why what we believe to be this girl's first gun experience started with an Uzi. We can only bet this will be her last experience with guns, as she will likely suffer the trauma of that day the rest of her life.

Clearly, mistakes were made, the repercussions of which will last lifetimes for the family of the instructor and the girl's family which stood nearby watching and videoing what could have been the highlight of the girl's vacation.

That day cannot be changed, but we hope others understand that exercising our right to bear arms under our Constitution brings with it a huge responsibility to do it safely and with common sense. Offering a child with little or no experience with guns an Uzi on repeat mode just doesn't make sense.



PAID ELECTION LETTER

Get ready for the barrage

To the editor,

You can tell the November election is getting close by the barrage of political ads hitting the airways and newspapers. My opponent for the state legislature will run ads about what a great job he has done. Don't expect him to mention his votes for all the new taxes last year.

My opponent will likely mention Minnesota's low unemployment rate. He won't mention that what little job growth Minnesota does have is in the metro, nor that the local unemployment rate is twice that of the state average. He will brag about a 75¢ increase for folks earning minimum wage, but he won't mention that area families are a stunning \$27,500 below the state average annual household income.

Our incumbent House member will extoll a robust Minnesota economy, but he won't ask if you are feeling the growth and participating in the recovery.

My opponent will depend extensively on ads, but you won't likely see him at your door. Entrenched incumbents take a lot for granted; they don't see much value in campaigning. Collecting big checks from Political Action Committees (PACs), lobbyists and out-of-state interests is far easier.

His ads may tell us how he soaked the rich; but won't mention how the poor are disproportionately paying for Minnesota's massive government. He won't mention that he has voted against the taxpayers 123 times and never for the taxpayer in the last five years.

I have been meeting with people and learning the issues that affect their well-being and the long term sustainability of our communities. I have a good understanding of what is important to the people of our district. Once elected, I will continue to be accessible and involved in the communities listening to concerns and working my tail off to address those concerns in St. Paul.

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Editor's note: This letter and previous letters authored by Eric Johnson have been and are paid by on his behalf by the committee to Elect Eric Johnson, 409 14th St. W. #2, International Falls, MN 56649.

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