

Opinion

Our View

Warm summer days are upon us

It is finally June which means the first day of summer is fastly approaching. Soon enough we will have forgotten all about the cold windy days of winter and will be able to enjoy the great outdoors once again.

Summer is when students finally have free time to do whatever they want and not have to worry about going to school or doing their homework. There are also endless things to do. It's even a great time to take a vacation and see new places.

Instead of being cooped up in the house all day watching TV or playing video games, go outside and go for a walk or try a new sport. It's important to move your body, breathe fresh air and absorb all the sun's great vitamin D.

There are a lot of pickleball courts in the surrounding area and some of you may even find you have a knack for it. If you haven't heard of pickleball, it is basically a combination of tennis and ping-pong. It's fun, fast-paced and before you know it you'll be breaking a sweat.

There are also a lot of great walking trails in the area to get your steps in and enjoy a slice of nature while you're at it. If you want more of a challenge, the Quarry Park and Nature Preserve in St. Cloud combines a little bit more hiking and a place to jump in the water to cool off.

In our adjoining towns where there is so much river access, it is almost a crime not to go kayaking or boating sometime this summer. The Sauk and Mississippi rivers have some great parks along them to enjoy the views or have as a starting point to launch your boat. With the recent rainfall, both rivers have been higher than normal and could be a super fun, fast trip for an afternoon.

Hopefully everyone has a fun and eventful summer ahead of them, with plenty of new experiences.

Letters policy

Letters to the editor may be sent to news@thenewsleaders.com or mailed to 1622 11th Ave. S.E., St. Cloud, MN 56304. Deadline is noon Monday. Please include your full name for publication (and address and phone number for verification only.) Letters must be 350 words or less. We reserve the right to edit for space or to not publish.

Wake up! Guns DO kill people

Isn't it crazy every time there's a mass shooting, it's never the guns that take any blame?

So many lying lawmakers scold us that "guns don't kill people."

It's mental-health issues – not guns, they insist.

It's lax building security – not guns.

It's bad upbringing – not guns.

It's this, that and the other thing – never guns.

In this country, there are 400 million guns, many in the hands of mentally unstable people. There have been 230 mass shootings so far this year – mass shootings meaning the killing or wounding of four or more people per incident.

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz spoke at the National Rifle Association convention in Houston just days after the butchery of 19 school children and two teachers in Uvalde, Texas. Cruz is resorting to his smug mantra: It's mental illness; it's a lack of targeting felons and fugitives; gun-control efforts won't work; such efforts are just more "politicking" by Democrats and the media.

Cruz said the victims are in his thoughts and prayers. Oh yes, always thoughts and prayers. But no action.

Meantime, mealy-mouthed Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell is mumbling his usual charade, as he does after every massacre. The Democrats and Republicans, he said, should sit down and see if they can agree on "reasonable" legislation. By reasonable, McConnell surely means laws that won't pass (he'll make sure of that!) or laws with no teeth.

Finally! A verdict in the Depp vs. Heard case

Like many, in the last month or so I have heard, seen and read so much about the defamation court case that has been going on between actors Johnny Depp and Amber Heard. For those not familiar, Depp and Heard were married from 2015-2017 and then in 2018 Heard wrote an opinion piece for The Washington Post that claimed she had endured sexual violence in the past. Depp's name was never mentioned in the article but because of their marriage, the public treated him differently.

Depp also felt he saw a decline in the amount of acting roles he got after the article was published and he even got fired from one of his most well known series: The Pirates of the Caribbean. This led to him filing the defamation case against Heard. As an actor, the thing that makes the most money is your reputation and he said he felt Heard had damaged his reputation when she decided to publish the article.

Personally, I think as a celebrity it is very important what opinions you put

Dennis Dalman
Reporter



Ten years ago, after the killings of children and teachers in Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, McConnell and fellow Republicans blocked gun legislation. The bill called for expanding background checks to gun shows and online sales; and for banning military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammo magazines. The measures failed to pass.

McConnell and Cruz are just two of the Republicans (along with some Democrats) who have long danced like giddy puppets to the tune of the NRA. For worshipping at the Sacred Gun Altar, those politicians are handily rewarded by millions of campaign funds from the NRA, which, by the way, has been embroiled in financial corruption for years.

Like McConnell, some politicians get nervous by the public outrage about the latest killings. As always, they offer thoughts and prayers, hopes and wishes. Wispy words, idle sympathies. But no action. And God forbid, no action against guns that don't kill people. These politicians, so handcuffed by the Gun Lobby, know that the fuss will blow over – at least until the next election or until the next mass killings occur.

Should we strengthen the mental-health care system? Certainly. Should

we constantly review and reinforce schools' and other buildings' security systems? Absolutely.

But first and foremost, should we demand accountability from our legislators, insisting they pass a comprehensive gun-safety bill? Yes! Those who scorn such a bill as an "attack on the Second Amendment," as they always do, should be ashamed. Not doing everything in our collective power to at least try to prevent such shootings is inexcusable, criminal. Other countries have passed such laws, with provable success.

Those who devoutly believe the Second Amendment is untouchable have a few things to learn about the U.S. Constitution and how it has changed over time by way of amendments and new laws: civil-rights laws, Blacks' right to vote, women's right to vote, to name a few, and – last but not least – limitations of rights enshrined in the Constitution. For example, the First Amendment (Freedom of Speech/Press), which does not protect libel, slander or using words to incite violence.

Those so-called leaders who will not act to try to prevent mass shootings should be voted out of office at the first opportunity. Ask yourselves: do they want to protect the Gun Lobby or do they want to protect children from butchery?

Remember: Guns DO kill people. And if you don't believe that, go ask the murdered children's loved ones who will be grieving forever after.

Erin McIndoo
Editor



out into the world. For a long time sexual assault and violence was a touchy subject and it was hard to speak out about it like Heard suggested. It is important for women to have a voice and there is no way to know what really happened between Depp and Heard behind closed doors. However, I still appreciate she was willing to write an opinion piece advocating for women like she did.

That being said, everything I saw about this case seemed like a huge publicity stunt for some parties. Like I stated before, a celebrity's reputation means everything and I think Heard's reputation took a huge hit because of this case. There were so many ridiculous moments it seemed because of the questions that Heard's lawyers would ask. Plus, to have their lives so openly

discussed, I think many people would feel embarrassed if they had their lives on display like that.

It seemed like every time I went on Instagram or Tik Tok, every other post was a snippet of the witness from that particular day, someone explaining what happened and what it meant or a meme of Heard crying on the stand. But yet I was relieved to see this last week they had finally reached a verdict and I would be able to see more of my normal feed on social media. The jury ruled unanimously in favor of Depp and he will receive \$50 million in damages, which seems like an insane number, but maybe makes sense compared to all the jobs he lost because of the article.

While watching cases like this unfold can be entertaining, it's also important to pay attention to other breaking events that happen too. I think it's common that people get distracted by the happenings of celebrities and forget to see the state of the world around them sometimes.

Have an opinion? Share it: news@thenewsleaders.com