



Focus on mental health, not guns

The vast variety of methods in which humans kill each other -- with bombs, planes, knives, vehicles and hand-to-hand combat, not to mention guns -- raises the question, can we find something other than the implement of death on which to focus in our efforts to reduce mass homicides?

If we simply focus on the 22 mass killings between 1949 and 2010 described in Al Cimino's book "Spree Killers," it becomes apparent that 238 of the 251 deaths could have been prevented if law enforcement had intervened when the killers' first erratic behavior took place.

In most cases, these guys are ranting, taking wild shots, or waving guns at people, and yet there is no effective use of mental health evaluation, confinement or any attempt to secure their firearms.

Our president talks about a gun-control plan that would save a few lives at the costs of the rights of many people. Simply enforcing the laws on the books would save not a few, but 95 percent of the victims.

David Milisock, Washington Boro

Utah center threatens our rights

What is the Utah Data Center? This center is based Bluffdale, Utah.

This center will be operating by this September. It will cost up to \$2 billion. It will cost \$40 million a year to operate, and, of course, we the people will pay through taxation.

What this center does is collect private emails, cellphone records, Internet searches and other personal data.

In 2012, Congress passed a bill allowing this center to collect our personal data to counter terrorism.

I believe, as citizens of the United States, we are covered by the Fourth Amendment, which guards against unreasonable searches and seizures. I would only assume that a lot of warrants will be written for any information taken from all of us.

The agency that will run this is the National Security Agency.

Please use the Internet to look up this center and form your own opinion.

I wish they never started to build it. We all have rights, and this center is depriving us of our rights as citizens of the United States of America.

Jerry Keller, Columbia

"Voodoo numbers on Susquehanna

It would appear to this reader that some of the voodoo statistic techniques used by the government in determining that the Susquehanna is not an impaired river are now being used by the Lancasters Newspapers Inc. staff.

The front-page article touted, "Susquehanna on the mend," and displayed a report card that showed me just the opposite.

Percent of streams impaired up from 8 to 17 percent over two years, miles of streams impaired by sediments or nutrients up by 76 miles, miles of streams impaired by stormwater pollution up by 30 miles.

These things are bad. When we have more impaired streams, that's a bad thing. Impairment is bad. Are there any questions on the meaning of the word impaired?

None of this suggests to me that anything is on the mend. Was your chart put together wrong? I didn't see any good news in your article.

If this is any indication of the government's understanding of the term impaired, it is no wonder that they looked past the disease, dieoffs and intersex characteristics of our smallmouth bass population and determined that the Susquehanna is not impaired. I firmly disagree.

Albert Storm, West Hempfield Township