



Ban on filtered cigarettes urged

It's basic math. If 50,000 smokers reside in a river's watershed and 10 percent dispose of their cigarette remnants outdoors, there will be significant environmental impact.

Each smoker consumes about a pack a day. That's 5,000 smokers at 20 cigarettes a day, which equals 100,000 butts a day.

Cigarette filters are not biodegradable, and they contain carcinogenic chemicals and particles that will leach into the soil and water.

For that reason, I think filtered cigarettes should be banned worldwide.

Steven M. Bergey, Mountville

Stop the scourge of gun violence in U.S.

How many more children have to die? How many more teachers? How many more police officers? How many people have to die from gun violence before our Congress members step up and do their jobs. How many more communities have to be devastated? How many more families have to be torn apart?

We need action from Washington, D.C. now. In many ways, the debate is over assault weapon, semi-automatic pistol -- it doesn't matter. If you point any weapon at me, it is an assault weapon.

Yes, we have tremendous challenges in the area of mental health and we need to tackle them. That's not a reason to do nothing.

You need a license to drive a car, to be a contractor, to be a doctor, to own a dog! Why is it a big deal to have a permit to own a gun? Why is it a big deal to undergo a five minute background check? Do you really need a 30-round magazine to target shoot? Of course not!

The Second Amendment is not under attack. These common sense measures now being debated in the Senate will not take your guns away. They won't keep most people from buying more.

The president doesn't want your guns. You bought them, you own them, nobody is going to take them away.

Jim Sandoe, Vietnam Veterans of America
Local Lead Organizing for Action, Ephrata

DA "rubber-stamped" shoddy Manor Township shooting probe

Following is an open letter to Lancaster County District Attorney Craig Stedman:

I am writing regarding the Feb. 1 murder of Christopher Leonards by his half-brother, James Leonards, and the absolutely unbelievable investigatory conclusions reached by the Manor Township Police Department.

I have been practicing law for almost 30 years and cannot say that I am shocked by the fact that a township police department reached other than a logical conclusion after conducting a less-than-thorough investigation of a crime.

I am, however, disheartened by the fact that the slipshod Manor Township Police Department

investigation was apparently rubber-stamped by the Lancaster County District Attorney's Office.

In point of fact, on Feb. 1, an intoxicated James Leonards began a physical altercation with his half-brother, Christopher Leonards. Being on the losing end of the altercation which he began, James Leonards retreated down a hallway, retrieved a handgun from a bedroom, returned and shot and killed his brother in cold blood.

The Manor Township Police Department attempted to whitewash the murder by releasing toxicology information on the deceased, but not the perpetrator.

Further, for everyone's benefit, there is apparently a new law in effect in Lancaster County by fiat to the effect that if you are in a physical altercation with someone who weighs the same amount as you (in this case 200 pounds), but is 8 inches or more taller, it is permissible to leave the room, retrieve a gun and murder them without any consequences whatsoever.

I have no doubt but that the Pennsylvania Legislature will be quite interested in this new joint legislative pronouncement of the Manor Township Police Department and the Lancaster County District Attorney's Office.

Given the facts of this matter, as any first-year law student learns in criminal law class, James Leonards is guilty of classic second degree murder. Even ignoring certain facts the charge should, at a minimum, be voluntary manslaughter. But self-defense? Not a chance.

The Manor Township Police Department and the Lancaster County District Attorney's Office should be ashamed of themselves. A promising 27- year-old young man is dead, murdered by his brother with absolute impunity . How truly, truly sad, as well as embarrassing for Manor Township and Lancaster County.

This matter clearly cries out for a re-opening of the investigation by a qualified prosecutor who actually paid attention in criminal-law class. I hope that the same will be forthcoming.

Preston B. Howard, Las Vegas, Nev.