



Letters to the editor, Feb. 22



Keeping our schools safe

Editor's note: This was originally written as a letter to parents from Barbara Pinsak, interim superintendent of the Montclair Public Schools:

[On Feb. 14] we went to sleep thinking about yet another community that met with the tragedy of a school shooting.

Watching young people running in terror from a place that should be a safe haven was disturbing for all of us.

It takes all of us to protect our children. In addition to our security measures, we follow the "see something, say something" approach for student and staff safety.

Please know that if you have concerns or want to alert us to any security situation, you may contact us at contactus@montclair.k12.nj.us or call your school principal.

The safety and security of our students and staff is of utmost importance to us, and we remain vigilant in our emergency preparedness work.

We are focused and working on keeping our schools safe as we send our heartfelt thoughts and condolences to those in Florida dealing with this horrific tragedy.

Hoping for good will

With all the unhealthy divisions within our nation and most prominently in our Congress, I sincerely hope that at the grass roots of our country we can respect one another's views and keep a lid on acrimony, bitterness

and shouting.

I have read of some efforts in Congress in which senators from each major party are working together in a bipartisan effort. We the people can effect this on a local level with that in mind and listen to one another.

It bodes well for our nation's future if all of us display mutual good will.

Peter Giuffra

Montclair

Let's ban assault weapons

Now is the time to make assault weapons illegal for ordinary citizens. They are appropriate only for law enforcement and the military. AR-15 assault rifles quickly killed many people not only this week, but also at a church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, a concert in Las Vegas, Pulse nightclub in Orlando, and Sandy Hook Elementary School. Let's stop this senseless empowerment of terribly misguided people.

The only two defensible uses of guns for ordinary citizens seem to be hunting and self-protection. As a vegetarian, I have misgivings about hunting. As the granddaughter of someone who used his bedside gun to kill himself when he was in pain, I am keenly aware of the statistics that say that guns in a home are more likely to be used to kill someone who lives there than an intruder. Thus I would oppose all gun ownership for the general public, but I know this is not going to happen.

However, banning assault weapons seems sensible even for those who disagree with me in the paragraph just above. Also, requiring background surveys for those who buy at gun shows seems compatible with their concerns.

The second amendment was written at a time when firearms were muskets. They would not be used for school shootings.

Also, I'm glad we live in a part of the country where people entering schools must introduce themselves to someone at the protected door who cares about the students. The idea that last week's shooter could simply walk in a back door with his weapons is shocking to a New Jersey reader.

Let's do more than just give sympathy for the survivors of gun disasters. Let's make them much less likely to happen again by eliminating assault weapons in the general public.

Pat Kenschaft

Montclair