

LETTERS

Where is the outrage over the shutdown?

To the editor:
Government shutdown! Grown men and women playing a game of chicken with our finances and our future. A Congress unwilling or unable to govern is an indication of a country with no future.

How could the Congress be so cold hearted and uncaring?

The bipartisan answer is m-o-n-e-y. Great big gobs of money from an infinitesimally small segment of our population that funds and controls the aspirations of our legislators. Very few have been able to resist the siren song of the almighty dollar. If you want to be reelected you play the game.

The unfortunate part is that once again we are reminded that the rules of the game don't include us. We demonstrate our power at the ballot box only to see it disappear the following day as monied interests on both sides remind the successful candidates who got them there.

Money, big money, only exacerbates partisanship. Nothing inflates the hubris of our legislators more than the knowledge that if they do as they're

told the funds for their reelection are assured. Sure a few will fall on their own swords and no amount of money will save them.

Where is the outrage? We have been divested of our government and yet the streets are quiet. Howard Zinn in his book "A People's History of the United States" maintains that "The American system is the most ingenious system of control in world history ... There is no system of control with more ... rewards for the chosen. There is none that distributes its control more complexly."

I believe that Zinn is saying that "the people," as we have from time to time, need to assert ourselves and breach that control, at least temporarily, if the common good is to be attained.

As Ben Franklin said just after the completion and signing of the Constitution, in reply to a woman's inquiry as to the type of government the Founders had created, Franklin said, "A Republic, if you can keep it."

If we can keep it.
Dick Pollock
North Conway

Please return my daughter's lost iPod

To the editor:
On Monday, Oct. 1, my daughter dropped her iPod on the late bus North Conway route coming home from her field hockey practice.

She put it in her bag, however the pocket was open and when she discovered that the bus had already made several stops.

Her iPod could have slid forward or backward on the floor. She and her friends looked all around them and one of her friends was the last one off the bus.

At that time he looked carefully as did the bus driver. They did not find it. She looked throughout her entire

bag when she arrived home, thinking it possible that she just had missed it. No luck.

The following day we emailed Gredel Shaw, the transportation director and she made an inquiry for us as well. Nothing.

I realize that people take stuff, but I have taught my daughter to never take what does not belong to her. Several weeks ago we found 30 dollars in the parking lot of the Gray Hannaford.

She was thrilled. I told her there was no way we were keeping it, what if it was someone's only food money?

see next column

Tom McLaughlin

Time To Arm Teachers



School has been back in session for a month and there hasn't been a mass shooting — yet.

Will there be one this year? Most likely. Where? When? By whom? We can't answer the first two, but we can place a fairly safe bet on the third. If the past is any guide, it will most likely be a mentally and emotionally-disturbed, teenaged, white boy.

He'll enter the school's formerly gun-free zone with at least one gun, and possibly several. He'll know that he'll be the only armed person in the school for at least several minutes until police arrive — plenty of time to kill many, many children as well as any adults who try to stop him because they'll all be defenseless, and the killer will know that.

When did our schools become gun-free zones? After the "Gun Free School Zones Act" passed in 1990. It was modeled after the "Drug Free Zones" established around schools — and both were intended to increase penalties against students who brought drugs or guns into schools, against gang members who might shoot at each other. It wasn't intended to prevent teachers or other responsible adults from carrying concealed firearms. That, however, was an unintended side-effect of the act, and it's leaving our schools vulnerable to the mentally-unhinged and/or evil individuals who like to kill.

Can anything be done to prevent school killings? If some adults in a school were armed and trained to confront intruders with guns, killings could be dramatically reduced. Take the Newtown murders for example. If the people in the office had been armed, 20 children would likely have been saved. The principal, a psychologist, and a teacher rushed out to meet the shooter, Adam Lanza, when they heard him shoot the door open. Defenseless, all three were shot. The rest of the people in the school could only cower and hope police would come before he could get to them. What would Lanza have done if someone were shooting back at him? He wouldn't have been free to shoot so many children if he were busy defending himself, would he?

It's bad enough that our schools became gun-free zones, but it's absurd that now our military bases are as well. Remember when we used to call the military the "Armed Services?" Well, now they're the unarmed services thanks to President Clinton. One of the first things he did after being inau-

gured in 1993 was to disarm our military personnel while they're on base. That's why Radical Muslim Major Nidal Hasan was able to shoot 42 soldiers at Fort Hood before being shot himself by a civilian

police officer who came onto the base. The wife of one of the wounded was asked after the shooting how she felt about her husband's pending deployment to Afghanistan. "At

least he's safe there and he can fire back, right?" she responded.

Aaron Alexis was able to kill 12 people at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. a couple of weeks ago. There were Marines stationed on base with guns who could have stopped him, but they had no bullets thanks to President Clinton.

Evil jihadists like Major Hasan as well as the mentally ill like Adam Lanza and Aaron Alexis seek out soft targets to play out their malicious schemes. That's why a group of jihadists targeted a shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya a couple of weeks ago. However, two armed men — an army ranger from Ireland and a British soldier — were able to rescue 200 terrified shoppers by shooting back at the jihadists. Otherwise, the death toll there would have been much higher.

As the NRA's Wayne LaPierre put it: "The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun." Haven't we learned by now that "Gun Free Zone" signs don't work?

Shortly before I retired, our school went into lockdown because of a gun threat. I followed protocol and covered in my classroom until the all-clear and I wrote about how helpless I felt without a gun. It would make so much sense to train volunteer teachers at each school in how to deal with an armed intruder. Give them an extra stipend for their extra duty as if they were coaching a sport. I would gladly have taken the training. It would be cheaper than paying a policeman at each school. Children at daycare centers in our federal buildings have armed guards to protect them ever since the Oklahoma Federal Building was attacked. Those guards are trained for only a few weeks. Why not give public school personnel the same training? Are children in our public schools any less valuable than children in federal daycare centers?

Tom McLaughlin lives in Lovell, Maine. He can be reached on his website at tom-mclaughlin.blogspot.com.

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She saw it my way and we returned it. As far as I was concerned it was a good teaching moment.

I believe that someone has found her iPod. My daughter is a good kid and a good student. Her dad and I have no plans to replace it as it was her responsibility. That said, I would hope that the person who has

found it would do the right thing and return it to the middle school. Anonymously is fine. Perhaps someone right now knows that person who has a new Ipod. Maybe you can convince that individual to do the right thing. I believe what comes around goes around. So maybe if you return it, something good will happen to you.

Kristen Carey
Conway

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