

Reading the Tuesday Times Standard I noticed some good news and a lot of bad news coming at me, starting on the front page. The good news is that summer is coming and the picture of people preparing for summer by relaxing under sunny skies in Fortuna while sipping wine, listening to music and buying jewelry, well: it made me happy to be alive and living in the north coast. But the good news only lasts so long.

~~On the front left there was an arrest of a man alleged to have committed perjury.~~ Reading further, I noticed a sad story about a man drowning on the Klamath and descending on down the bad news ladder, behold, a picture of a 45 caliber pistol and an accompanying story about the guy who owned it, or rather, had been wielding it, til cops caught him. I guess they could not find a picture of the guy himself, but I wish they would have because he happens to be a convicted felon who was on parole, and is now out on bail. This set me to thinking we are not a very intelligent society if we can't keep 45 caliber semi-automatic pistols out of the hands of convicted felons. ~~The article mentioned that it was a stolen gun from Ontario, CA.~~ On page three there was another parolee who was caught by police packing a .22 caliber revolver in his pants: along with car keys, pry bars and stolen credit cards.

Do you think the omnipresence of guns in America, (I hear there are about 300 million of them) is a good or a bad thing? One thing I know for sure, prime time TV thinks they are a good thing because so many ~~big~~ ^{crime} programs are drenched in gun violence.

When I was a kid we *did* have some cop shows: who could ever forget the Lone Ranger, or Wyatt Earp, The Rifleman, Gunsmoke, ~~or Sargent Joe Friday and Dragnet.~~ There were occasional shoot outs with the bad guys. But today's television has taken cops, and guns, guns, guns, to whole new quantum level.

I try not to watch television too often because I am convinced it softens the gray matter between my ears. But, when I do, I am amazed at how many shows, show cops with guns going after criminals with guns: inevitably, there is the showdown with the bad guys and the much anticipated shoot out at OK Corral, with the bad guys usually ending up with a bullet or two to end their career and perhaps their lives. Whether it's NCIS, Law and Order, Castle, or, that list could go on and on, the implicit message of these shows could hardly be more explicit: guns solve problems. Find the bad guys, squeeze them into a corner: shoot them if you have to, the audience will like it; *justice served.*

it's face it, Americans not only own, use, and occasionally brandish firearms, we like to watch others shooting people for entertainment. The shoot out seems to be the prevailing form of justice on the boob tube, and I haven't time to mention violent video games. *believe even* The problem is that everybody who wields a gun *think* they are doing it for a righteous cause, ~~and~~ that simply can not be the case in real life. I worry about the moral direction of our country where guns are firing on almost every channel. *Not 300 million!* A cure? Not easy! But for starters, I suggest we throw out the TV, go outside, and welcome summer.

This has been Dan Price for community comment...