

The Right to keep & bear Arms

Time and time again the news covers stories, in some US cities daily, about children and teenagers who are shot to death with handguns. The NRA might have you believe that this is more or less coincidental to the preservation of the right to keep and bear arms as guaranteed in our second amendment, which thereby causes a lot more people to own/use guns in North America than in many other parts of the (civilized) World. Some people, parents in particular, may view such claims more as “collateral damage” due to preserving something in a far more aggressive manner than needed. What most people are not aware of however, is the fact that other civilized countries such as Germany or Great Britain have only a fraction of homicide by handguns due to better, more sensible gun control laws. The NRA may lay claim to the fact that many other countries have much smaller populations, but consider this: Germany has little more than 1/3 the population of the United States which, if such a claim was correct, would mean that handgun homicide rates in Germany should be equal to just a little bit more than 1/3 of the handgun homicides here in the USA. In fact though, homicide deaths by gun violence are actually 16 to 30 times higher here, than in Germany. Yet citizens in Germany also have the right, under certain conditions which are not overly extreme, to own and use firearms. As a matter of fact, there are plenty of shooting clubs all over Germany. The only real reason for such massive differences in deaths by gun homicides is the fact that Germany has more sensible firearm ownership laws which makes it far more difficult for criminals, gang members, and non-collectors to own such weapons.

Memories of Ripley (a true story)

This story is about Ripley, a retired Greyhound Racer aka North American Greyhound that we adopted back in 2003. His racing name was “Luck runs out” which we felt was quite sad since every living thing eventually has their luck run out, as life nears its end. We decided to name him Ripley, after Lieutenant Ripley from the science fiction movie, Alien, hoping that he would prove to be just as tough, with many wonderful years as our family member ahead of him. When we were letting him run in the yard of a home that we'd just moved into, he decided to stop at the end of the property near a chain-link fence, to peer into the neighboring yard because it appeared that he'd heard some kind of noise coming from there? But try as he might, Ripley couldn't figure out what those sounds were being made by. None of us who were out in the yard with Ripley could see anything either. Then, all of a sudden, two tiny toy poodles came charging from behind a small vinyl enclosure that was located near those sounds. Those tiny dogs were racing unbelievably fast toward the chain link fence where Ripley had been pacing back and forth, all the while yapping as loudly as they could. Poor Ripley never expected this (neither did we) and turned in utter fear, charging off toward the opposite end of the yard just as the toy poodles were reaching the area where he'd been standing. The sight of our huge racing dog, easily 8 to 10 times the size of those poodles, racing away from them in sheer terror was one of the funniest things that I'll remember about Ripley. Sadly he got cancer and died just one week after my wife's birthday, in October of 2008. We'll miss him dearly forever.