

Putting Teeth Into Concealed Carry

# Grass Roots South Carolina

P.O. Box 1181  
Sumter, South Carolina 29151  
Internet: <http://www.netside.com/~lcoble/grsc>

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GRSC Says,  
"Welcome Back!!"  
to

**RUSH'S RESTAURANTS**

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**LOWES HARDWARE CORPORATION**

**Burlington Coat Factory Little Pigs BBQ**

## Fears about gun laws appear unfounded

Relatively few have concealed-weapons permits; critics were wrong about bloodshed

By **HENRY EICHEL**  
Columbia Bureau

Glenn and Sharon Bickett of Chester, S.C., worry about crime. So when South Carolina enacted a law in August 1996 allowing most people to carry concealed firearms, the Bicketts were among the first to apply for permits.

But although they keep pistols in their vehicles, Glenn Bickett said, "I don't think either one of us has carried a gun." Going about armed really wasn't their purpose, he said, so much as making a point.

"We have both felt it should be a citizen's right, if they are law-abiding, to be able to carry a gun," he said.

When it comes to concealed weapons, the Bicketts are both typical and atypical of Carolinas adults.

The couple are different because fewer than 1 percent of Carolinas

adults have bothered to obtain the gun permits after lawmakers in both states passed bills within the last two years making it easier for residents to arm themselves.

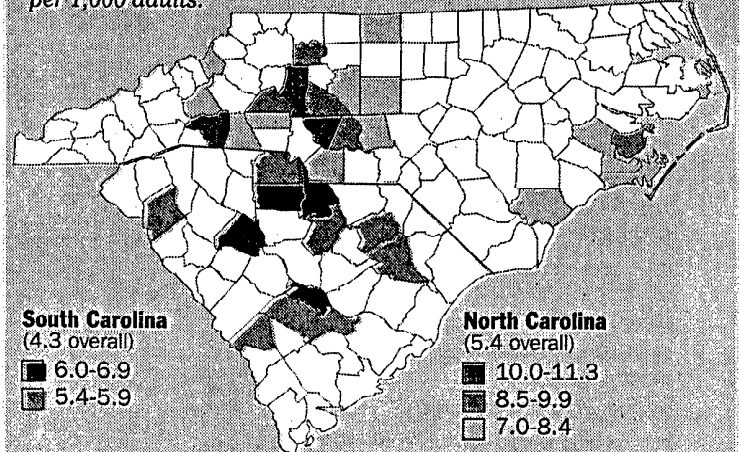
But the Bicketts also mirror the great majority of those who have permits: They're white, middle-aged, and live close to a big city, but not in one. And they're not looking for an opportunity to shoot someone.

In both states, critics of concealed-weapon permits had warned of deadly consequences. "As more people carry guns, they will use them," Sen. Leslie Winner, D-Mecklenburg, warned during a legislative debate. And in an editorial, The (Greensboro) News & Record raised the possibility of "70,000 to 90,000 people on this state's streets and highways with

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### CONCEALED WEAPON PERMITS

Carolinas counties with the most permits for concealed weapons per 1,000 adults.



GEORGE BREISACHER/Staff

handguns in their pockets."

Those predictions have largely failed to materialize since North Carolina's law took effect Dec. 1, 1995.

As of last month, the number of N.C. permits issued stood at 28,198, five of every 1,000 adults. South Carolina so far has issued 10,874 permits, four of every 1,000 adults.

"I just don't care to have one," said Karen Morris, 38, a Charlotte travel agent. "I know guns can be useful, but they're dangerous, too."

Bill Robertson of Charlotte said that although he has shotguns and rifles for hunting, he has no desire to own a pistol. "I think it's just inviting trouble if you carry one with you."

"I've never felt I needed one," said Robertson, 50, a manufacturer's representative. "My house has never been broken into, and I've never had a personal experience of being affected by crime."

Meanwhile, those who do have permits are apparently being careful with their guns.

"The concerns that I had — with more guns on the street, folks may be more apt to square off against one another with weapons — we haven't experienced that," said Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Chief Dennis Nowicki.

Carolinians who hold concealed-weapon permits are overwhelmingly male (84 percent), white (95 percent), and middle-aged (47 percent are over 50).

In other words, they're like John Arant, a 58-year-old retired salesman from Rock Hill who said he and his wife, Frances, each got a permit because they travel a lot to their beach and mountain property.

They keep their pistols in their cars, but rarely carry them. Said Arant: "I never plan to use a weapon unless it comes to a life-or-death situation."

Alex Amos, 26, of Rock Hill says his pistol has twice gotten him out of potentially dangerous situations.

An environmental engineer, he checks abandoned houses for asbestos before they are torn down. The houses frequently shelter drug users. So far this year, Amos said, one man approached him asking for money, and another came upon him from behind.

"I told them I was permitted to carry a concealed weapon, and that I would act if I had to," he said. "In both cases, they left."

Amos said he carries his pistol at least twice a week on asbestos inspections, but "if I'm going out shopping or to the corner store, I don't take it."

Stevens Clarke, a criminal justice expert with the N.C. Institute of Government, said he isn't surprised at either the low numbers of permits or the absence of mayhem. "I think there was just a bunch of people who wanted these things, and they got them. And perhaps they're just not dangerous folks."

While the most populous counties naturally have the most permits, the heaviest per capita concentration of concealed weapons in the Carolinas is in the ring around Charlotte, on both sides of the state line.

As explanation, many authorities point to the steady diet of crime news emanating from Charlotte.

"It seems like every time you turn on the TV from Charlotte, somebody's being murdered or raped or mugged every minute," said Iredell County Sheriff Phil Redmond. "Folks watch that, and they think it's like that all over the county."

Mark Wolfe of Lincolnton said he is seriously thinking of getting a concealed-weapons permit. "Our crime here is not what it would be in Charlotte, but I feel it could happen anywhere," he said.

He added, "If I and my family are ever in that situation that it's either us or them, we have the right to make it equal."

In fact, crime rates in the Carolinas, as well as crime across the United States, have been falling for several years.

Charlotte's rate of murders, rapes and robberies fell 13 percent from 1995 to 1996, to 49.7 occurrences for every 10,000 people. "Random victimization of folks who are not involved in any illegal activity is even more rare," said Nowicki.

But there really is more violent crime in the Carolinas nowadays than there used to be, said Clarke of the N.C. Institute of Government.

"I don't think we're talking about media hype scaring people," he said. "We have more people per square mile in these parts . . . so people hear a lot more stories about bad crime."

Despite a higher rate of violent crime than anywhere else in the Carolinas, permits for concealed weapons in Mecklenburg County have been issued at the same rate as statewide: half of 1 percent of adults.

Neighboring counties had twice Mecklenburg's rate of concealed-weapons permits. Cabarrus County leads the Carolinas with 11 concealed-weapons permits per 1,000 adults, though its rate of violent crime is one-third the statewide rate.

Cabarrus Sheriff Robert Canaday said the county's crime rate had been falling before the new concealed-weapons law passed.

"I haven't seen any impact whatsoever," Canaday said. "We haven't had any incidents where these folks who have the permits have done anything wrong, and you can't draw any correlation between concealed-weapons permits and the crime rate."

Noting that more than 20,000 Cabarrus residents work in Mecklenburg, Canaday said, "I think people want a permit, not to carry the gun around on them, but just to have it in their vehicle as they're commuting."

In North Carolina, if you don't have a concealed-weapons permit, you can't keep a firearm in your unlocked glove compartment or console. But you can do so without a permit in South Carolina.

Both states restrict where someone may take a concealed weapon. Schools, government buildings, places that sell alcohol, and businesses that post a sign are off limits in both states. North Carolina also prohibits concealed weapons in banks, funeral homes, movies theaters, concert halls and stadiums.

"There aren't a whole lot of places someone can carry a weapon," said Lancaster County, S.C., Sheriff Johnny Cauthen. "That may have held the numbers down some."

## GRSC Article of the Month

### Why I Carry a Concealed Handgun by Marc Bockmon

When I was growing up in small-town America in the late fifties and early sixties, doors were left unlocked in the evening. Drugs were something you picked up, by prescription, at the other end of the soda fountain. A teacher survey found the biggest problems in school were gum chewing and talking in the halls. And every child knew that criminals were the scum of society and that the police were our defenders, who at great personal risk, took them off the streets and put them behind bars, where they belonged. (And if they were sentenced to "five to ten years," we expected to see them in five to ten -- years, not months!)

In the world I grew up in, I would have never carried a concealed handgun. Unfortunately, this is not the world I grew up in. Therefore, when my state began offering a course to allow civilians to carry concealed, I signed up, as did my wife and four neighboring families. Here's why:

1. It's a dangerous world out there. Criminals tend to be armed and run in packs. It is bad enough when they take your hard-earned money and/or property. But often, even the most compliant victim is injured or killed. A concealed weapon offers a defense of last resort against predators.

2. I don't know when danger will threaten. While, naturally, I avoid high-risk areas, any area can become unsafe in a matter of moments. People have been attacked by criminals and crazies in churches, in restaurants in the middle of lunch,

and in parking lots and sidewalks in broad daylight.

3. I know the police can't be everywhere. A highly-visible police presence and quick response time are effective crime-preventive measures. However, our law enforcement resources are stretched too thin to cover "all the bases"-- and I may be on one of those uncovered bases!

I know my family's safety is my responsibility. An American proverb goes, "If you're looking for a helping hand, look on the end of your arm." Even if we had an officer personally assigned to us for protection, it would be unfair and unreasonable to ask him or her to do what I could, and should, do for myself. True, I could pack a cellular phone instead of a pistol, but the phone would only enable me to report the crime afterwards -- if I survived. The pistol could deter an attack or defeat one in progress.

4. I know the law. My training tells me when I can legally use deadly force. My concealed weapon is for protection, not intimidation, and I am responsible for anyone or anything I may hit. Therefore, unless I'm justified in taking another life, my gun stays in my holster!

5. I know my own heart. My life, and my record, prove that I am one of the "good guys," otherwise, I would never have been issued a concealed carry license. I am not a threat to anyone who is not a threat to me. If at the moment I drew my pistol, the perp turned to flee, he is free to go. Otherwise, as Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "Detached reflection cannot be demanded in the face of an uplifted knife." So if it appears it's either him or me --it's him.

6. I know how to use the weapon. Although I have spent a lifetime shooting, every applicant in my state must qualify by firing fifty rounds of major caliber ammunition during timed stress fire. In the gravest extreme, I know I could hit my target and not an innocent bystander. If I had any doubts, I wouldn't fire.

7. I know not to take foolish chances. A concealed handgun is a valuable "ace in the hole," but not a substitute for a brain. I continue to observe all home and personal safety rules. Any area considered unsafe before I obtained the license is still considered unsafe.

8. I know my limitations. I am a legally armed citizen, not a junior cop. Cops are taught to look for trouble. I am taught to avoid trouble. However, should trouble appear, my concealed handgun and my training provide an extra-measure of safety for me and my family. In addition, any citizen or police officer set upon by criminals will find me an armed ally.

9. I know society is safer when criminals don't know who is armed. Surveys prove that concealed-carry laws do deter violent crimes. (See the Fall, 1996 issue of On Patrol.) Criminals care nothing about our lives, but they do care about their own, so the fact that I am carry not only makes me and my family safer, it makes you and yours safer too!

Why do I carry a concealed handgun? For the same reason I carry health insurance -- because I never know when I might need it. If I should need it, then well and good. If I should never need it, then better still. After all, this isn't the world I grew up in.

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## Re: No Concealed Weapons Allowed

The GRSC "Don't Buy and Don't Carry" List identifies merchants who prohibit concealed handgun permit holders from protecting themselves and their families on their premises.

We acknowledge a merchant's right to prohibit firearms. However, we feel that there are fundamental flaws in the logic of posting against concealed carry permit holders. By publishing a list of those businesses which prohibit permit holders we hope to educate the permit holder, who has proven lifetime of following the law, so that they will not enter a "posted" establishment. A boycott of the merchant results as the customer is encouraged to take their business elsewhere!

The following is a letter received by a recipient of our newsletter. It reflects his frustration towards a merchant in his area:

Dear Business Owner:  
For your informed decision:

Your sign on the door is doing you a disservice in two ways.

First, your sign is *not* doing what you want it to. That is, assuming that the signs are put up in an attempt to thwart armed robbery or to put felons on notice that they are not welcome. Fact: an armed felon intent on robbery is not going to heed your sign even if he could read it or make out what the icon means.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, your sign is doing what you *don't* want it to. It is advertising loudly and clearly a few unintended messages:

1. To criminals: This place is easy pickin's. Everyone in here is law-abiding and, for your safety, *unarmed*. So come on in and rob us.
2. To customers: This place is dangerous. The owner fears armed robbery so much that he had to put up a sign. This must be a high crime area.
3. To lawyers: The owner assumes full responsibility for the protection of his customers since he is denying his customers an effective means to their own self protection and the protection of others. It's almost the same message sent to the criminal: this place is easy pickin's.
4. To law-abiding legally armed customers: You are not welcome here. Shop elsewhere.

With unintended messages come unintended consequences. Signs which encourage criminals and discourage customers cannot be conducive to business -- that is, if the purpose of a business is to make a profit and not a statement.

## GRSC Advisory Committee

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Grass Roots South Carolina, P.O. Box 1181, Sumter, South Carolina 29151

## "DON'T BUY" and "DON'T CARRY"

**These Merchants Don't Want You In Their Stores So Shop Elsewhere!**

List 12/97 \*\*\* PLEASE COPY & DISTRIBUTE TO OTHERS

### Merchants Currently Reported as Posting Against Concealed Weapons Permit Holders

Mr. Bill Hancock, Owner  
**Hancock Motor Company**  
3905 West Beltline Blvd.  
Columbia, SC 29250  
803-252-7271

Mr. Keith Mink,  
Corporate Manager  
**The Factory Outlets**  
Corporate Headquarters  
5244 Festival Trail Rd.  
Salley, SC 29137  
803-258-3426

### **BB&T** All Midlands Locations

Mr. Max Crowe,  
Regional President  
**BB&T**  
309 Columbia Avenue  
Lexington, SC  
803-359-5111

Mr. Bill Hampton, Owner  
**Hiller Hardware**  
710 Lady Street  
Columbia, SC 29201-3020  
803-799-3131

Ms. Mary Barnes,  
General Manager  
**CVI - Cablevision Industries**  
1125 B Avenue  
West Columbia, SC 29169-6772

**First Citizens Bank**  
All Midlands Locations

### **Hardee's Restaurants**

All Midlands Locations

**Taco Bell Restaurants,**  
All Midlands Locations  
Mexican Restaurant Ventures  
P.O. Box 24709  
Columbia, SC 29224

Mr. Ed Sellers, President  
**BC&BS of South Carolina**  
I20 & Alpine Rd.  
Columbia, SC

**State Farm Insurance Claims**  
I20 & Bush River Rd.  
Columbia, SC  
803-731-3000

Mr. Edward Rust, President  
**State Farm Mutual Auto  
Insurance**  
One State Farm Plaza  
Bloomington, IL 61710-0001  
309-766-7554

**Piggly Wiggly Food Stores**  
4360 Augusta Rd.  
Lexington, SC

Mr. Larry Brigham,  
Owner/Agent **State Farm**  
605 W. Church St.  
Batesburg, SC 29006  
803-532-4485

Mr. Doug Collins, Owner  
**Collins Jewelry**  
142 N. Oak St.  
Batesburg, SC 29006  
803-532-4008

**Kroger's Sav-On Food Stores**  
7467 Woodrow St.  
Irmo, SC 29063  
803-732-0423

**These Merchants have  
removed their signs in  
response to the efforts of  
GRSC and other Pro Right  
to Carry Organizations.  
To them we say,  
"Welcome Back!"**

Mr. Pearson Amerson, C.E.O.  
**Rush's Restaurant Corporate  
Office**  
2332 Sunset Blvd.  
West Columbia, SC 29169-4716  
803-796-5034

**Office Max**  
All 3 Columbia Locations

**Lowe's Hardware**  
All 3 Columbia Locations

Mr. David Brady, Manager  
**Burlington Coat Factory**  
1310 Bush River Rd.  
Columbia, SC 29210-6832  
803-798-7885

Mr. Lawrence Britton, Owner  
**Little Pigs Barbecue**  
4927 Alpine Rd.  
Columbia, SC

If you have a business you  
would like to report we'd love  
to hear from you! Drop us a  
letter with the following  
information:

**Business Name**  
**Owner or Manager**  
**Address Including ZIP**

## *Guess Who Doesn't Like Sara Lee?*

### **BOYCOTT SARA LEE CORPORATION!**

Women Against Gun Control urges its members and gun rights supporters everywhere to participate in a world-wide boycott of Sara Lee products. The boycott is to protest Sara Lee's presentation, November 6th, 1997, of its "Humanities" award to Sarah Brady, as well as its donation of \$50,000 to the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence.

The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence is chaired by a person who has repeatedly called for bans on the private ownership of defensive weapons. Such measures are not only violations of the Constitution but also disarm law-abiding citizens, making them easy targets for criminals. Please do what you can to help spread the word about this important citizen initiative.

#### **You can make this boycott successful**

- Stop buying products distributed by Sara Lee or it's subsidiaries (Sara Lee, Ball Park, Hillshire Farm, Jimmy Dean, Aoste, Douwe Egberts, Hanes, Hanes Her Way, L'eggs, Bali, Playtex, Champion, Coach, Dim, Sanex and Kiwi).
- Let your friends know about the boycott.
- Let Sara Lee know that you disapprove of its efforts to undermine your second amendment rights.

Call, write, fax, or email Sara Lee today!

#### **Contact Info**

Sara Lee Corporation  
Three First National Plaza  
Chicago, IL 60602-4260  
(800) 621-5235  
Fax: 312-558-8653

To send your message electronically, go to the Sara Lee web site ([www.saralee.com](http://www.saralee.com)), click on the *mission* link, scroll to the bottom of the page, then click the *suggestions* link.

## Letters to the Editor

(the views represented here do not necessarily represent the membership or staff of GRSC or its affiliated organizations)

### The Second Amendment

by Dr. Robert Butler

Mr. Brad Warthen  
Editorial Page Editor  
The State Newspaper  
P.O. Box 1333  
Columbia, SC 29202

Dear Mr. Warthen:

How ironic that you would actually print an editorial bemoaning the fact that "when it comes to the Constitution, most Americans don't know diddly squat." Just the day before you exhibited your own "diddly squat" knowledge of the Constitution when writing about the Second Amendment and Charlton Heston, vice president of the NRA. Since you obviously believe the Constitution consists of only the First Amendment, with the rest being mere filler, please let your readers be exposed to what you refuse to understand.

When reading words written long ago, it is necessary to understand the words with the meanings that were used at the time the words were written. For example, when the Christmas season gets here and we sing "Don we now our gay apparel," we will not be singing about homosexuals and lesbians coming out of the closet. The word "gay" is now being used in a way different than it used to be, but the song is properly understood to use the old usage. Likewise, when Shakespeare wrote the words "Get thee to a nunnery," he was not advising admittance to a convent. The vernacular of the time used nunnery to mean a house of ill repute.

The Second Amendment states: "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." Your editorial accuses patriotic citizens of forgetting the phrase "a well regulated militia." In the vernacular of the time "well regulated" meant well trained, and that is how the phrase is properly understood. Our

forefathers recognized the importance of our citizens being able to shoot straight and hit their targets. It is the same principle used in Switzerland where the citizens keep fully automatic military weapons in their homes and have local marksmanship tournaments the way we have golf tournaments.

When the Second Amendment was written the militia was understood to consist of all able bodied male citizens, not just those in uniform. Proof of the accuracy of this meaning is embodied in the United States Code, Title 10, Section 311(a) wherein it states: "The militia of the United States consists of all able-bodied males at least 17 years of age and . . . under 45 years of age who are . . . citizens of the United States . . . ." Furthermore, United States Code, Title 10, Section 311(b) goes on to state: "The classes of the militia are (1) the organized militia, which consists of the National Guard and the Naval Militia; and (2) the unorganized militia, which consists of the members of the militia who are not members of the National Guard or the Naval Militia." The militia is the people.

But let us not dwell only upon the phrase that the editors of The State did not understand, let us look at the Second Amendment in its entirety. "A well regulated militia" has been shown above to mean well trained citizens.

"Being necessary to the security of a free State" is a condition precedent that must exist for the continued existence of a free people. Without a well trained armed citizenry, there will not long exist a free people because an unarmed populace will become the subjects of tyrants, either foreign or domestic. This is why every totalitarian government throughout history has always disarmed the people. A disarmed people is necessary to allow the tyrants to continue in power. A just and fair government need not fear its citizens.

"The right of the people to keep and bear arms" is clearly and explicitly a right of the individual. This meaning is consistent with the placement of the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights, which was adopted as protection for individual rights, not government powers. Just as the First Amendment is not a protection of the Government Printing Office, the Second Amendment is not a

protection of the National Guard or standing armies. It is a right of the people.

"Shall not be infringed" is a prohibition against the government's taking any action to deny citizens the right to defend themselves with firearms from all enemies, both foreign and domestic.

The First Amendment does not allow the government to exercise prior restraint of the press, but does allow civil punishment for the abuse of the right of freedom of the press by letting injured people sue for libel when the press has overstepped the bounds of decency.

Likewise, the Second Amendment does not allow the government to exercise prior restraint of the right to keep and bear arms, but does allow punishment for the abuse of the right to keep and bear arms by providing both civil and criminal sanctions when the right has been abused.

You chastise Mr. Heston for daring to believe the First Amendment is not the most important part of our Constitution. You should read more history. Freedom of the press did not get our forefathers our freedom, but our forefathers' firearms did. Words did not stop Hitler from the atrocities he perpetrated upon a citizenry that he had previously disarmed (subsequent to firearms registration so as to know where the firearms were), but firearms did. Words did not get the Russians out of Afghanistan, but firearms did. Words did not get freedom for the citizens of Hungary, and neither did their rakes and shovels when used as weapons in their revolution for freedom against the firearms of their oppressors. Words did not get freedom for those at Tiananmen Square, rather firearms kept their oppressors in charge. The point Mr. Heston was trying to make is that freedom of the press is a freedom that can only exist when a free people have the power to overthrow tyranny because tyrants do not allow freedom of the press. It is a lesson you would do well to learn, because once the Second Amendment is gone, so will go the First Amendment.

**We Welcome Your Opinions and Comments! Please send any material to GRSC for inclusion in future newsletters.**

Send this sheet to GRSC for a free Newsletter!

**Grass Roots South Carolina, P.O. Box 1181, Sumter, South Carolina 29151**

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(Please send donation to defray our printing and postage.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my donation to support your efforts !

\_\_\_\_\_ I am a merchant requesting more information and GRSC Alternative Signs.

Name/Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_