

LETTERS

Put lives before image

To the Editor: Universities are notorious for trying to play down crimes committed on school grounds for fear their campus will appear unsafe in the eyes of current and prospective students and their parents. Victims of these campus crimes, most notably rape, are often victimized again by an unsympathetic system more worried about the image of safety on their campus than the actual safety and well-being of their students. The tragedy at Virginia Tech seems to be a horrifying reminder of this practice.

An emergency medical technician interviewed on NBC News said he responded to the dorm Monday morning after receiving a call about a student who had fallen from a loft. School officials waited two hours before notifying anyone on campus that a shooting had occurred. Those officials defended their decision to go on with the school day, saying they believed the shooting was an isolated incident, and that most of their student body was already en route to class by that time. I wonder... when the school president and campus police chief made the decision to hold classes without warning students about the first shooting, was their primary concern student safety or image rescue?

If anything good can come out of this tragedy, perhaps universities around the country will begin warning their students of potential campus dangers rather than trying to sweep the crimes under the rug.

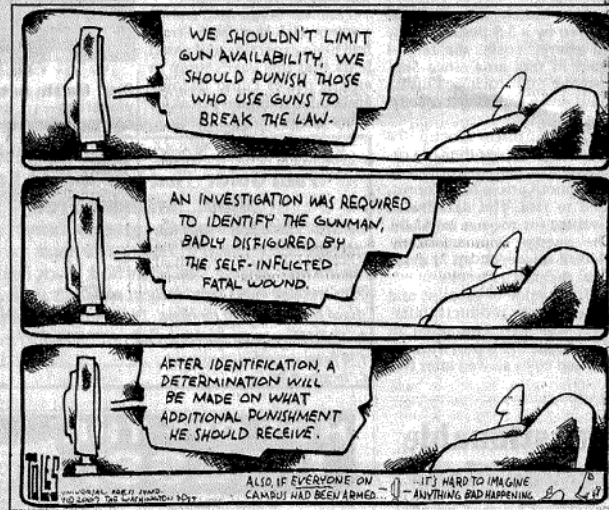
Kimberly Aldrich-Ceja, Lorain

OK Ridgeville school levy

To the Editor: When the Ohio Supreme Court first held that our educational funding system was unconstitutional more than 15 years ago, the legislature did not resolve the funding issue. The result is a broken school funding system. Every school district in the state is left to its own devices to piece together some type of funding that will pass muster.

Voters see a levy and immediately think *more* taxes. However, the school levy in North Ridgeville will not increase taxes because it is a renewal of an existing levy first passed in 1983.

No one likes to pay taxes. We also don't like to see our home values decline, businesses close, professionals, teachers, friends and neighbors move out of our community because of our schools.



Our teachers and school staff are striving to provide our children with a superior education despite larger class sizes and limited resources.

Many people are choosing to make North Ridgeville their home, and the building has been remarkable. However, as these young families have children, they will want to send them to a school they can take pride in and receive the best quality education possible. We will want these families to stay in North Ridgeville.

As a parent and an educator, I hope the citizens of North Ridgeville rally around the schools; otherwise we risk letting our children be left behind. Our world is increasingly complex. We must make sure our children have the best possible preparation. Support our children, our schools, and our community on May 8.

Rebecca J. Tiller, North Ridgeville

Fighting foreclosures

To the Editor: Thank you for Alex Parker's fine article of April 10 on the alarming rise in foreclosures in Lorain County. As the news media has recently discovered, this is a national problem for low- and middle-income home owners. The Legal Aid Society has been fighting predatory lending for the last 15 years. Generally, we see low-income home-owners who are in foreclosure because they have been stripped of the equity in

their homes by unscrupulous home improvement contractors and mortgage brokers. After many years when predatory lending has been off the radar screens of the news media, we are heartened by the coverage now being given to this important issue.

Our experience with predatory lending leads us to make the following recommendations to deal with this important problem:

- **Legal assistance:** The Legal Aid Society and Lorain County private attorneys can assist qualified clients in foreclosure where they are victims of predatory lending.

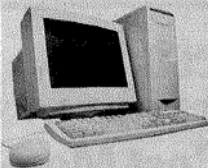
- **Financial literacy education:** Community organizations supported by local government can promote classes in financial literacy to protect consumers from the economic scourges of predatory lending, payday loans and tax refund loans.

- **Government assistance:** Local government can marshal their resources to help victims of predatory lending escape foreclosure.

- **Law enforcement:** Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies should enforce applicable criminal laws that make robbing home owners of the investment in their homes as heinous a crime as robbing a bank.

Philip D. Althouse, Jessica Baggett, David B. Dawson, Margaret A. Molnar
Lorain County Office of
The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland

Add your vote to the reader poll at www.MorningJournal.com



Question: In the wake of the Virginia Tech massacre, is it time for the United States to tighten access to firearms to reduce our annual toll of about 30,000 gun deaths in the U.S.?

Question: Was it justified, or was it overkill for CBS and MSNBC to dump Don Imus, despite his apologies?

ANSWERS — 370 votes:

Definitely justified 27%
Definitely overkill 74%

To write: All letters are subject to editing. Letters should be brief (about 200 words at most) and must include the author's name, home address and home telephone number for verification. Send letters by e-mail, preferably, to: letters@morningjournal.com or by regular mail to: Letters, The Morning Journal, 1657 Broadway, Lorain, OH 44052.