

(http://ads.nj.com/RealMedia/ads/click_lx.ads/www.nj.com/hudson/voices/2013/01/golden_gun_ownership_and_we_di.html/L24/1151605902/Leaderboard/NJONLINE/AVE05_NJ_RoS_Multi_02/AVE_Union_728x90-2-0930.jpg/687449334f3036304a77554141545a32)



Sign in | Join

If the subject is a current or retired public employee, the salary is available along with any pension received. As someone who had a career in government, I accepted the public's right to know my compensation; the public, after all, paid it.

The uproar over the release of gun permit holders is another indication of the passions that surround discussions of gun rights or efforts to limit them. It has always been a debate dominated by extreme elements, which, in turn, has crowded out efforts to reach common ground or develop sensible and reasonable steps to address gun violence and its causes.

The paper's position smacks of a "we did it because we could" defense, ignoring the point that simply because some information IS public, should it be MADE public. At the same time, the reaction of gun owners -- thinly veiled threats against children, in particular -- will only serve to reinforce arguments that they are typical of rabid "gun nuts" consumed by a belief that their rights trump all else.

The paper might have better served its readers by first publishing a story about the number of gun permits issued in the county, seeking input from law enforcement, academics, social scientists and others involved in the debate.

The decision to publish the names and address should have been explained in detail, along with those arguments management felt persuaded it to proceed and publish. After all, informing readers their neighbor owns a gun isn't calculated to send him next door to borrow it like it's a new pair of electric hedge clippers.

While the young reporter I was in the '50s was tasked with the often distasteful chore of tracking down embarrassing details about someone's personal life, today's media has become infinitely more intrusive and needs, perhaps, to step back and reassess its role in serving the public interest and its right to know.

If that happens, something worthwhile may come from the uproar in Westchester County.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Carl Golden is a senior contributing analyst with the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. You can reach him at cgolden1937@gmail.com.

Tweet { 4 } Like { 1 } 0 Foursquare Email

com ments)
84
(hp: /nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/01/anticipating comments)
(hp: /nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/01/jury_award comments)
See more

/jump/N4789.400:
/B6746162.6;sz='

/golden_gun_owr
/L24/1314002350
/SaffarOrtho01_N
/saffar_031912_b
/687449334f3036

/golden_gun_owr
/L24/849542924/I
/HCIA03_NJLT_S
FREEWebAds12C
/687449334f3036

/golden_gun_owr
/L24/1323017016
/LibertyH05_NJL
/197502_LH_NJc
/687449334f3036

Add Your Comment



(ht

/upload.html) (<http://www.nj.com>
Submit your videos /myevent/
(<http://videos.nj.com>
/upload.html)

Mobile

Mobile site (<http://mobile.nj.com/>) |
iPhone, Android apps
(<http://www.nj.com/mobile-device/>) |
Tablet apps (<http://www.nj.com/mobile-device/>)

Follow Us

Twitter (<https://twitter.com/njdotcom>)

|

Facebook
(<http://www.facebook.com/NJ.com>)

Google+ (<https://plus.google.com/u/0/b/103270407631392618549/103270407631392618549/posts>)

|

foursquare (<https://foursquare.com/njdotcom>)

(<http://www.advancedigital.com/>)

Registration on or use of this site constitutes acceptance of our User Agreement (<http://www.nj.com/useragreement/>) and Privacy Policy (<http://www.nj.com/privacypolicy/>) (Revised November 1, 2011)

© 2013 New Jersey On-Line LLC. All rights reserved (About Us (<http://www.nj.com/aboutus/>)).

The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of New Jersey On-Line LLC.

Community Rules (<http://www.nj.com/forums/index.ssf?rules.html>) apply to all content you upload or otherwise submit to this site. Contact interactivity management. (<http://www.nj.com/contactus/interactivity.ssf>)

Ad Choices (http://www.advance.net/advancedigitalUserAgreementPP/#opt_out)