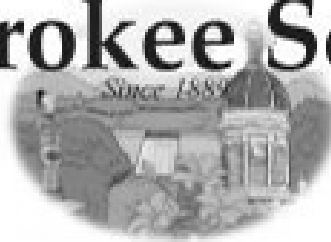


Cherokee Scout

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Feb. 21, 2013

The readers have spoken, and the *Cherokee Scout* has heard you – loud and clear. That’s a good thing, regardless of the circumstances. We are here to serve, and if we head down a road you don’t agree with, we appreciate it when you let us know.

That’s what America is all about – an open discussion of issues, with various ideas given and taken away, before a final decision is reached. We do this for every edition with what articles to place on the front page and what “Our View” will be that week.

We should have expected Sheriff Keith Lovin’s posting of his correspondence with Editor Robert Horne, because he knows he can’t win in a court of law but wants to win in the court of public opinion. He also knows he’s breaking the law because if the list wasn’t open, he wouldn’t have been pushing the state Legislature to close it. He also knows that since there are no criminal penalties in North Carolina’s open records law, he has nothing to lose by openly defying it.

However, despite the fact that the Scout likely would win a lawsuit, we have no intention of taking it to court. That would only give Lovin more opportunity to grandstand about his alleged protection of personal gun rights while taking aim at a U.S. Marine and veteran of Operation Desert Storm who instructed members of the military on the firing range during his service – a Marine who actually has been threatened today by near-hysterical residents as a result of the sheriff’s actions.

The truth is, as Horne wrote in his column on Feb. 20, we never had any desire nor intention to publish any names of any person carrying a concealed weapon. We did, however, want to see why Lovin objected to it being published. He is the person who grants such permits, and we’ve been told you have to have the right name or know the right person in order to get one, so we wanted to take a look and see if that’s true.

We also thought it would be revealing to share, for example, how many residents in a specific area had gun permits. If we reported that, say, a large percentage of Tar Heel residents were packing, do you think criminals would be anxious to break into homes in that neighborhood? We think not.

We must be vigilant in maintaining the public’s right to know. We cannot give away our rights to access public records. If we do, soon there will be no way to hold government officials accountable for their actions, which will lead to that dystopian future so many gun advocates dread.

That said, this matter is not a priority with the *Scout*. We didn’t want to publish the names anyway, as Publisher David Brown was adamantly opposed to the New York newspaper that did, and we have no interest in costing taxpayers money through a court battle. Our readers have spoken, and we always listen to you. We are retracting our request, and the matter is closed.

Sincerely,

David Brown
Publisher
Cherokee Scout

Robert Horne
Editor
Cherokee Scout