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MARBLE FALLS' PAPER OF RECORD SINCE 1959

SERVING THE HIGHLAND LAKES REGION

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Dealer: 'Obama greatest gun seller in history'

By DANIELLE ANTONETTI AND
GEORGE HATT
HIGHLAND LAKES NEWSPAPERS

Democrats have—according to Larry Bowles of Bowles Guns in Marble Falls—shot themselves in the foot, again.

“(President-elect Barack) Obama has now become, probably, the greatest gun seller in American history. He’s put more

assault weapons on the streets than any president before him,” Bowles said. “Just by being elected.”

Sales of assault weapons in Burnet County, at least at his shop located on the fringes of Marble Falls at 2401 US 281 N., have soared, he said.

“I only had a couple of assault weapons (on Election Day), and they both went last week.

They’re gone,” Bowles said.

Assault weapons, according to the wording in the expired ban on their sale, are semi-automatic long arms with at least two of the following accoutrements: carrying handle, flash hider, barrel shroud, pistol grip, bayonet lug, a folding stock, or detachable magazine with a capacity of more than 10 rounds.

“Right now...people are buy-

ing them as fast as they can get them,” Bowles said. “It’s been nonstop since last Wednesday morning. Everything’s sold.”

Assault weapons, which the Clinton administration banned in 1994, have been readily available—and more affordable—since President George W. Bush allowed the sun to set on the ban in 2004. The sunset law required the next president of the

United States to either renew the ban by signing the law or allow it to expire.

“So the guns that were selling for \$2,000 the day before (President Bush let the ban expire) became guns that were selling for \$1,000 the next day. Just by a mere blink of the law not being there, things changed,” he said.

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Giving Thanks

Finally, some sign of relief for our 'flooded' streets

Zoning case draws comment

By GLYNIS CRAWFORD SMITH
HIGHLAND LAKES NEWSPAPERS

The last visible scars of the July 2007 flood in Marble Falls—damaged parks and bridges—are scheduled to begin receiving car-

that have been completed. The city has not received a reply on its requests but Hendricks told the council “FEMA has been very good about granting extensions.” Hendricks said there

Dealer: 'Obama greatest gun seller'

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A reverse of that is happening now, according to Bowles.

"Just by Obama's being elected, guns that were selling for \$800 or \$1,000 are now selling for \$1,200, and prices are going up," he said.

Guns not classified as assault weapons have been left alone on gun shelves around the country, and Bowles explained that people are unsure of the next president's agenda regarding Second Amendment rights.

"Everybody expects something to change," Bowles said, so "people are putting all their money into assault weapons because they think they will be banned first."

Bowles explained that people who've never felt an urgency to own an assault weapon are making it a priority to purchase one before Obama takes office on Jan. 20, 2009.

"The other day, (a wholesaler) called me and said, 'We have three AR-15s.' Within an hour and a half to two hours, I had sold all three by just calling people and saying, 'Do you want it?' They did. They never saw the gun, never looked at that particular gun before, and they bought it."

In Llano County, the people are as secretive about gun sales as they are open about their commitment to conservatism. More than 75 percent of the county cast its vote for the Republican presidential candidate John McCain, but it is hard to find a gun dealer willing to talk about his sales.

"We don't disclose that kind of information. Thank you," was the succinct an-

swer given by Carl Russell, owner of the History Store in Llano, which specializes in single-action revolvers, antique and re-enactor firearms, when asked if he had noticed an increase in gun sales.

But Greg "Weasel" Wesel, who organizes the familiar gun shows in Kingsland and Buchanan Dam, noted that sales were brisk at a small show he worked in Rockport.

"(The show's organizer) had a real good crowd—and they were all buying," he said. "One of the big sellers was ammunition. People who sold knick-knacks like sunglasses didn't do so well."

Nationally, observers have noted a perceived spike in firearm sales since the election, according to National Rifle Association spokeswoman Rachel Parsons.

"We don't have any numbers...but we have a lot of anecdotal evidence," she said. "A lot of the firearm dealers we've talked to have seen their best sales days in years."

She credited the spike to Obama's stated opposition to concealed carry laws and his support of renewing the assault weapons ban earlier in his political career.

"I think it reinforces the fact that gun owners don't trust Barack Obama to protect our Second Amendment rights. I think it's as simple as that," Parsons said.

On the other side of the gun issue divide is Doug Pennington, spokesman for the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, who said that groups such as the NRA have cranked out misleading information about Obama's supposed agenda to disarm

law-abiding citizens.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June the Second Amendment is an individual right that is subject to reasonable restrictions, not just a state's right to field a militia.

"Barack Obama agrees with that. But the NRA says that Obama will take their guns away," Pennington said. "They won the biggest philosophical battle of the last 30 years, but the NRA still runs false messages that Barack Obama wants to somehow repeal the Second Amendment."

A key argument on the gun rights side has been that stricter gun control laws will lead to weapon confiscation. Pennington said that won't happen.

"You have folks to the left of the Brady Campaign who want to ban all guns," he said. "It was an academic debate before, but now we have this legal, constitutional Supreme Court backstop. Those people are out of business."

As with most issues political, there is little meeting of the minds between the two factions.

Bowles maintained, "Democrats pass these laws because they make people feel good, but the same guns are on the streets and can still be used by the bad guy. So it's all politics."

But he makes clear he feels the Constitution is on his side.

"We have a right to own guns," he said "We have a right to back up that freedom with those guns."

Those guns right now seem to be one of the hottest commodities in an economy when few other items are flying off the shelves.

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