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What Art and Museums Are About

The current controversy over government funding of the arts goes to the heart of what art is about and what museums are about.

Among the many things that art does for us all is that it challenges us, it demands that we rethink our assumptions about every issue in life, from religion to politics, from love and sex to death and the afterlife. It is amazing how often those assumptions change as a result of this challenge, how often the unacceptable in one generation becomes one of the glories of the next. Thomas Eakins' images of the nude, Rembrandt's etchings of holy scenes in humble settings, Manet's "Olympia," Duchamp's urinal, Pollock's dripped and scattered "action paintings," German Expressionism, Rodin's "Balzac"—the honor roll of the reviled artists is long and is the oldest continuous government-owned firearms-including modern military-style semi-autos—as in the United States.

It is no accident that the United States has enjoyed the greatest freedom and is the oldest continuous government in the world. Our Founding Fathers planned it that way—and that freedom insurance plan embodied in the Second Amendment should not be lapsed because of the insane acts of a madman, whether his name be Patrick Purdy or Adolf Hitler.

NEAL KNOX
Executive Director, The Firearms Coalition
Silver Spring

How to Get Rich in Washington

Regarding the article "Kemp Orders Suspension of Third Housing Program" [front page, July 7]: I have never thought Republicans would become known for developing innovative programs, but they have created a new two-pronged approach to housing:

1. Allow severe mismanagement, giving profit to all involved except those for whom the program was intended.

2. Cancel the program because of its inefficiency.

This novel approach guarantees that absolutely no help is given to those in need. The Republican administration is proving quite creative in finding ways to enrich itself at the expense not only of the taxpayers but those for whom governmental programs were intended.

CATHY D. KNEPPER
Kensington