

Travel Considerations for Armed Citizens

by Art Joslin, J.D., Director of Legal Services

In the month of May, as we head into nicer weather (hopefully), folks will begin to travel. More specifically, May will bring thousands of patriotic Americans to Houston, Texas for the 2022 annual membership meeting of the National Rifle Association. This is a great time to remind all of us about reciprocity and traveling with your firearms.

In the early 1960s, a few states entered the driver license compact. This compact between states gave driver license reciprocity to those states that entered it. This gave drivers the ability to travel in states in the compact and have driver license reciprocity between their home state and state into which they traveled. Eventually all states had driver license reciprocity.

Our civil rights don't stop at the state line. The first ten amendments to the Bill of Rights are considered our civil rights. My right to free speech, fifth and fourteenth amendments, right to a jury trial, and right to counsel, aren't left at the state line. They are rights endowed by our Creator and not by any government. If this is so, then why isn't our Second Amendment also listed among those civil rights which we can take with us? Consider this: if I possess these rights, shouldn't I be the one to decide where I take them? Yeah, I know...we could write volumes about the issue. Let's leave this question to the Attorney-of-the-Month Q & A.

Let me continue with my analogy to driver license reciprocity. Granted, when driving state to state, some states have different motor vehicles codes, although most jurisdictions have adopted the Uniform Vehicle Code. By comparison, a cursory study of firearm travel laws across the United States can send a person's head spinning.

When traveling to each state, you need to know the laws of each jurisdiction and have studied the laws before your trips. For example, when my son and I traveled for camping trips to the Appalachian Trail in June last year, we both carried firearms. We carry under LEOSA, the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act. LEOSA is a federal law that allows law enforcement to carry their firearms in all fifty states, under certain conditions. We traveled through Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, and Vermont. Guess which state wouldn't let us carry?

While planning for this trip, I spent about an hour doing research on the various carry laws of each state to which we traveled. I found some interesting facts to which I paid attention in case we were questioned on our LEOSA carry. All the states I mentioned above, except New York, allowed us to carry without issue. Vermont, a constitutional carry state, allowed us to carry with only a driver license. At least one state restricted us from bringing our guns into our motel room, whether posted "no

guns" or not. The law left that restriction up to the innkeeper. Maryland wasn't as restrictive as I expected, but we were able to hike into Vermont and camp and hike fully loaded.

Here is an interesting note: on our trip back through the People's Republic, we had an extra day to stop and visit Niagara Falls. I stopped to talk to a New York police officer. He was, in fact, a command officer. I asked about carrying under LEOSA and he responded, "What's that?" I explained it and he said he never heard of it. Yes, true story. What's the point of the story? Even those who are supposed to know, often don't know. By the way, he said if we are going on the boat just lock our guns up in one of the storage lockers. Unbelievable.

Make sure your information comes from reliable sources. Don't take advice from Internet lawyers. They might be correct but if they're not, who suffers the wrath of the legal system? The Internet does, however, have a few well-researched websites that have taken great pains to bring accurate information to the concealed pistol carrier. One such website is <https://handgun-law.us>.

New York, among others, is not a preemption state so individual units of government can restrict the carrying of weapons in their jurisdiction. There are so many disjunct laws across the United States that it can be a harrowing experience. If you are traveling through a certain state, do you know if you can carry in their state parks, national parks, motel rooms, campground domiciles, rest areas, or houses of worship? The list goes on and on, almost forever.

Until we get national carry reciprocity or constitutional carry in this country, spend some time doing your own research before heading out to travel. A great place to start to search is the website I mentioned earlier. From there, actually browse to each state's website and read their laws, restrictions, where to carry, etc. PRINT this information. Do this for each state or jurisdiction you will visit. Place their printouts in a folder and keep them WITH YOU at all times. Careful study of this material will hopefully keep you out of trouble. Is that guaranteed? Of course not, but it is a great place to start. I teach my students if they are not sure they can carry, then do not carry. Please don't be the guy (or gal) who starts spouting their Second Amendments rights, hoping to try your case on the street, because your words will fall on deaf ears while the jail cell closes behind you. When you must make changes in your carry-travel arrangements, do it before you hit the next state line or jurisdiction, not five miles in.

When you fly, make sure you have called ahead to ask the airline you're booked on how their procedure works. I usually take an extra gun lock just in case I need to make someone happy

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at the airline or TSA (Transportation Security Administration). I don't normally give endorsements, but I have found Delta to be one of the best in this regard, in my experience. I try to fly Delta almost exclusively because of the ease of transitioning through this process.

Allow me to relay an interesting story. I once traveled from Detroit to Las Vegas with my firearm. It's important to note this was before 9-11. In Detroit, I was told I would need to go to the security office to retrieve my checked bag that contained my gun. I did just that, but there was no bag and no gun. I went back to the baggage claim area and lo and behold there was my bag and my gun. Anyone could have grabbed it and taken off. It was obvious there was a gun in the bag because the airline had placed a bright orange sticker on the outside of the bag with big letters that said FIREARM. Fast forward to my last trip a few weeks ago. Now, I had to go to TSA and retrieve my bag and gun as special baggage. It was much safer now. I've also had the experience of having to teach the TSA agent in the correct procedure of checking that the firearm isn't loaded and that the magazine is empty.

Keep in mind that firearms are not allowed in the sterile areas of the airport. This means you cannot carry a firearm beyond the entry point to stand in line at TSA. Airports set their own rules on this so be aware. When I was a bodyguard for the sales reps with LeVian jewelry, we had a special entrance through which we could travel. Of course, I had to be squeaky clean to get that approval. Most times, if we had been accosted, I would have had to use hand-to-hand skills to guard the rep. Were people after the rep? No, they wanted the 10 to 12 million dollars of cut and unmarked diamonds he had in his bags. The people I mention, whom we considered the biggest threats, were mostly drug cartels who could convert the diamonds to easy cash on the black market.

It is difficult to comprehend the vast scheme of gun laws that change from state to state and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. For example, in Michigan, you may not carry a firearm into a church, house of worship, or other religious meeting unless you have the permission of the presiding church official. However, Governor Ron DeSantis signed Florida's "Church Carry" law into effect in 2021. HB-529 allows concealed carry into churches, houses of worship, etc. HB-529 still allows churches to exercise their private property rights where guns are concerned but this bill allows concealed carry until otherwise notified, unlike Michigan, where one cannot carry in a church unless told they can carry. A subtle difference perhaps, but a difference, nonetheless.

Other restricted locations in some states may include a national park located in that state. As of this writing, the federal government allows the government of the state in which a national park is located to enforce their state laws about carrying guns. For example, in Bryce Canyon, located in Utah, as long as Utah

has reciprocity with your state and you are legally allowed to carry in your state, you carry in Bryce Canyon. Keep in mind that some larger national parks cover more than one state. Simply because you enter in one state and exit the park in another does not mean you are in legal possession of your firearm. Keep in mind, you cannot carry in federal buildings, which means no guns in any building in a national park. These can include the visitor center, ranger station, information booth, or other outbuilding.

Another important aspect of traveling with guns is magazine capacity. You may drive through one state where you are allowed to carry your firearm, but cross into another state where you may carry your firearm yet suddenly you are subject to the second state's magazine capacity restriction. Usually, the capacity is limited by the number of rounds the magazine can carry, not the number you have placed in them. For example, if I am in a state with a ten-round magazine capacity limit and I only have ten rounds in my fifteen-round magazine, I am still in violation of the law.

When we think of travel, we usually consider driving and flying. But what about the confusing restrictions on trains and buses? Amtrak rules are very similar to restrictions on transporting firearms on any commercial airline, with a few minor differences. You must contact Amtrak at least 24 hours prior to departure and make notification you are planning to transport a gun. The firearm must be in a locked, hard-sided case to which you retain the key. Check in no less than 30 minutes prior to departure. Firearms may only be transported in your checked baggage with no firearms in a carry-on bag. Greyhound does not allow transport of firearms of any kind, at any time, on any bus...period.

When people travel for pleasure, they sometimes avoid airports and choose to go in an RV. Transporting your gun with you in your RV can be tricky, too. Generally, if your RV is not hooked-up to utilities and you are on the move, it is considered like an automobile, and the state law about guns in cars applies. You would still be subject to state laws that may require concealed carry permit, etc. When stationary and hooked-up to utilities an RV is considered your home for that stay. Make sure the campground or park you stay at allows firearms; you could be in violation if they don't.

It's easy to see now why laws can be confusing when it seems each jurisdiction has set rules on carrying a firearm in their locale. Make one minor mistake or even misinterpret the law and commit what seemingly is a minor offense and you can land in jail. After attorney's fees, bail, fines and costs, you've dropped \$5,000 and missed out on your travel time.

Be careful, be safe, check and double check every single jurisdiction you enter. It will save you time and hassle when wading through the mud pit of firearm laws.



President's Message

by Marty Hayes, J.D.

We have two things to discuss this month. The first is the upcoming Lewis County Superior Court hearing where we get to argue our case against the Washington Office of Insurance Commissioner in front of a real judge (not an employee of the Insurance Commissioner).

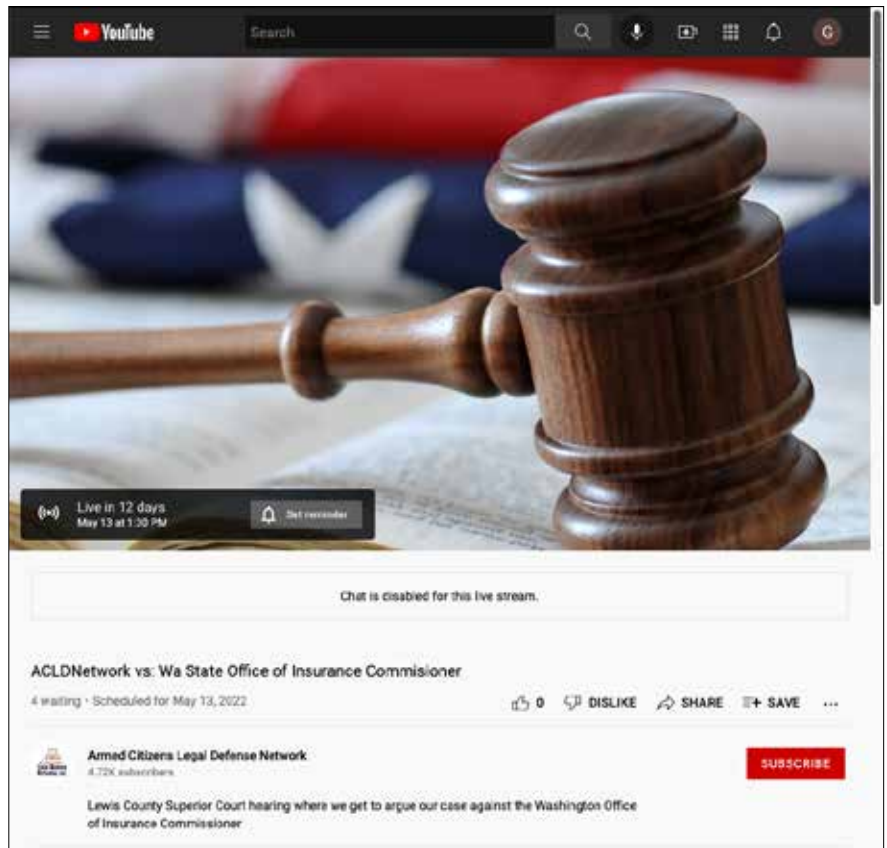
The hearing is scheduled for May 13 at 1:30 p.m., in Judge Lawler's courtroom, if anyone wants to come and support us. Personally, I would love to see a contingent of Network members present, but not at the expense of people taking a day off work or making any other great sacrifice. The hearing will be in person, but those who would like to observe have the option to watch on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtAgoLpDCiY>.

The briefing is on schedule. We just received the OIC reply brief to our argument. If anyone is tracking the legal argument, I've added that brief to <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/members/resources> (member log in required). If you missed my column last month, see <https://armedcitizensnetwork.org/april-2022-presidents-message> for a detailed explanation of this case.

The second item I'd like to mention is the upcoming NRA Annual Meeting, to be held in Houston on Memorial Day weekend. We will have a booth in the exhibit hall, of course, and would love to visit with our members and meet new people who are interested in joining. I will be in the booth, # 2331, most of the days as will be our new Director of Legal Services, Art Joslin. Vincent and William round out the Network contingent working the booth. We just moved to new offices, so Gila will stay there to work the bugs out of the new location.

But wait, there's more! Most of the advisory board will be popping in and out of our booth throughout the three-day event. We've set a time of 5:00 p.m. on Saturday to gather the whole group consisting of Massad Ayoob, John Farnam, Dennis Tueller, and Manny Kapelsohn in our booth. Of course, Vincent, Art, William and I will also be there. Come visit with us and our advisory board! For details about the NRA Annual Meeting, browse to <https://www.nraam.org>.

It will have to be a quick message this month, as I have lots of stuff to work on.





Attorney Question of the Month

Half of the states have laws allowing permitless concealed carry of firearms. Before members happily let their

state-issued carry permit expire, some are asking if we know of unexpected pitfalls in permitless carry. This is a great topic for discussion in our online member journal, so we reached out to our affiliated attorneys, asking their thoughts on the question. While encouraging them to go beyond our questions, we tried to start the discussion by posing the following questions:

In general, what is your opinion of permitless carry laws?

For our Affiliated Attorneys in states with constitutional carry--

- 1. Have armed citizens violated other laws by exceeding the allowances of your state's permitless carry legislation? What problems have most frequently arisen?**
- 2. Are citizens keeping concealed carry licenses for reciprocal license recognition when they travel outside your state? Are there other reasons to keep your state's carry permit?**
- 3. Without carry permits, how have police procedures changed when officers have contact with armed individuals?**

Attorneys practicing in a state that has not passed laws allowing permitless concealed carry--

- 1. Do you wish your state would allow permitless carry? Why or why not?**
- 2. What advantages, if any, do your armed citizen clients have because they have a carry permit? If your state passed a permitless carry law, would you suggest armed citizens in your state let their permits expire or continue to renew their permits?**

We then stepped aside and enjoyed learning from an extremely wide-ranging set of opinions. This question will run both in May and June, and we hope you learn as much from our affiliated attorneys' contributions as we did.

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In Maine, when I attended the legislative discussion on constitutional carry, I knew the Wild West would be brought up, and it was. Classic example of predictable liberal alarmism. Anyway, Maine's results have been positive. Very low crime rate here. I

have been affiliated with Armed Citizens for years and have yet to get a call to defend a member in a self-defense situation.

Some people, myself included, do keep their permits to make it easier to carry in other states. Not required but it makes sense. Also, it's impossible to predict when Biden or some other liberal power broker will try to limit the right of states to allow permitless carry. That could result in a court fight, but people don't want to be unarmed in the meantime.

Otherwise, I've noticed no particular changes since we went to constitutional carry. Bad people are still bad, and good ones are still good.

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New York has no permitless or constitutional carry.

My opinion of permitless and constitutional carry laws: Wonderful. No license. No "administrative state" with fiat rules. No surly licensing officials who think they are doing you a favor by permitting you to have your rights.

Do I wish New York would have permitless or constitutional carry? Yes, I see no negatives, but, that will never happen here, unless there is another revolution.

What advantages would there be in getting or keeping a carry license, even if permitless or constitutional carry existed? The first advantage is that other states with reciprocity laws might recognize the license, whereas without a license there could be less reciprocity. This assumes that New York reciprocally would recognize out-of-state carry licenses, which New York does not.

The second advantage is that — and this sounds strange to those who do not live in super-left places like New York — having a permit makes the gun possession appear more legitimate.

I have often seen this in criminal cases. The DA takes a kinder view of an out-of-state defendant who illegally brought their gun into New York if the defendant has a license in their home state. The mentality here is so oriented toward government permission that having a license makes you appear more legitimate. This would apply to in-state residents, also. If you find yourself on trial for a gun-related incident, the fact that you have a license gives your gun possession extra legitimacy; "you were approved by the police."

The negative to having a license is that you come under the rules of the licensing agency, and those might be much more restrictive than if you just rely on permitless carry. If you violate the rules, your license is revoked, and now you have a license revocation on your record, which can affect many other things.

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Depending on how the permitless carry law is written, the revocation might affect your ability to carry without a permit thereafter.

An analogy is the difference between police shootings and ordinary citizen shootings. Ordinary citizens can use deadly force if the law permits that privilege in a particular situation. The police have the same privilege, but they also have department rules which additionally govern their use of deadly force. So, if the police shoot someone, they may have had the privilege under law, but if the shooting violated department rules, they lose their job.

The same idea applies to gun licensing. Having a license almost certainly will subject you to rules that will not apply with permitless carry. The rules may not restrict the use of deadly force precisely, but very likely they will restrict other things, like display (“brandishing”), the method of carry, the type of gun or its characteristics, e.g., size, barrel length. These and many more are restrictions which have been imposed by New York pistol licensing offices.

So, if you can be very attentive to the rules and not cause the licensing agency any concern, get or keep a carry license even if permitless or constitutional carry exists, because if you must use the gun for self defense, and you do not violate any of the license restrictions, the DA or the jury may look more favorably upon you.

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To further protect Second Amendment rights, Utah adopted a constitutional right to carry a concealed firearm without a permit in 2021. Utah joined several other states that have adopted a constitutional right to carry a firearm without a permit. In 2021, Utah Governor Spencer Cox signed into law H.B. 60 that allows Utah residents to carry concealed weapons without a permit. Utah residents can still obtain a concealed carry permit to allow gun owners who want to concealed carry out-of-state. The law amends Utah Code § 76-10-523 which provides for those persons who are exempt from certain weapon laws. The exemption applies to any person 21 years old or older who “may otherwise lawfully possess a firearm.” The language “may otherwise lawfully possess a firearm” is key. Some individuals may be restricted as a result of convictions. For example, certain individuals who have been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence are prohibited from carrying a firearm. Those individuals who are on probation or parole may also be restricted from carrying a firearm. Individuals who are restricted can file an expungement to restore their gun rights if they qualify.

Since Utah did away with the law requiring a permit to carry a concealed firearm, the number of in-state applications for concealed carry permits has declined significantly. Some Utahns, however, still have a concealed carry permit issued by Utah as they travel out of state. Others may keep a permit for sentimental reasons. In contrast, the number of out-of-state applications has surged. Utah concealed firearms permits have always been popular, and out-of-state applications are typically higher than those coming from Utahns. Utah has a high reciprocity rate which is valid in more than 30 other states.

Based on anecdotal evidence, police procedures have generally not changed when officers have contact with armed individuals. Utah has passed, however, new legislation restricting the use of no-knock warrants and other warrants. On March 22, 2022, Utah Governor Spencer Cox signed into law H.B. 124, which restricts so called “no-knock warrants” and other warrants. The law created a new statute, Utah Code § 77-7-8.1, which requires exigent circumstances for so-called no-knock warrants. Furthermore, the law bans no-knock warrants for misdemeanor investigations. The law requires officers serving knock and announce and no-knock warrants to wear readily identifiable markings or clothing that identify them as law enforcement officers. In addition, the law requires that officers knock and announce themselves more than once before forcibly entering a building and sets a preference for warrants to be served during daytime hours.

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I live in New Jersey, a state which does not even have “shall issue” permits. (Note: most everyone in the pro-gun movement outside of NJ likes to forget about NJ, because they think my state is a lost cause...) However, the “shall issue” issue is not your question.

I don’t believe in so-called constitutional carry. The public policy, criminal justice and safety issues are immense. I am very wary of being in a place where most everyone can carry a firearm with no oversight whatsoever. I can’t even think of a corollary. A concealed firearm is, or should be, a last ditch method of self defense.

Constitutional carry psychologically elevates the concealed firearm to a much higher level. I don’t want to go down the “toxic masculinity” rabbit hole, but we shouldn’t easily dismiss the psychological and sociological aspects of being armed—and needing to be armed—24-7. I have lived in cities and suburbs and smaller towns throughout my 65 years, including New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia. I have never, I repeat, never, been in a situation where a concealed firearm would have helped me or held any advantage. I suppose if I had a permit

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or was able to carry concealed permitless, I would carry when I am hiking in the woods or hunting, but that would be more for black bear protection than anything else.

Some in the movement may think, incorrectly, that these views are “anti-gun” and that I sold out. However, I believe that we should be able to purchase most anything we want—large magazines, any kind of semi-auto, etc. If the pro-gun movement espouses “it’s the person, not the gun,” in which I believe, then we should take that statement to heart.

So my answer to your questions above would be:

Do you wish your state would allow permitless carry? Why or why not?

No; see above.

What advantages, if any, do your armed citizen clients have because they have a carry permit? If your state passed a permitless carry law, would you suggest armed citizens in your state let their permits expire or continue to renew their permits?

Keep and renew your permit; it is evidence of fitness.

One more thing: It’s time to dispel the notion, which has never been true but which has always been believed by urban and suburban anti-gun people, that all gun owners are camo-clothed, rural, extreme conservatives that only care about “freedom” but ignore the social responsibility that must go hand-in-hand with the freedom. There are many suburban and exurban liberals like me who favor gun ownership but are very wary of the “all guns, all the time mindset.” The pro-gun community cannot be one size fits all, or it will wither and start racking up legislative losses. Every time there is a road-rage incident with unpermitted drivers, which is bound to happen in some states but which is virtually non-existent in New Jersey, besides the obvious tragedy there will be a whole mess of bad press.

Before we forget, we have one last entry to add to last month’s Attorney Question of the Month in which our Director of Legal Services, Art Joslin, who also does expert witness work, queried our affiliated attorneys about their experiences working with expert witnesses in self defense cases. We asked—

What has been your experience using self defense expert witnesses? What issues have you found most common in getting an expert admitted?

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Frankly, I’ve never had to use an outside expert. Often, there are “experts” within the incident who are also fact witnesses, only getting paid overtime (maybe not even that if it is during work hours) and who aren’t as likely to be viewed as “guns for hire.”

My very first jury trial was a shooting of a police officer by a subject, and the above worked just fine for me.

Another approach is focusing on reconstructing the event. In the *State v. Williams* case (my wife is working on the appeal for the state), the focus was on an animation and graphic reconstruction of the shooting. Once the dynamics of the event were laid out, the rest was easy. The officer was on the ground on his knees and one hand, raising his arm up in a futile attempt to ward off the bullet that followed.

Thank you, affiliated attorneys, for sharing your experiences and opinions. Members, please return next month for more commentary on permitless carry

Book Review

What Every BODY is Saying An Ex-FBI Agent's Guide to Speed-Reading People

William Morrow Paperbacks 2008
ISBN 978-0061438295
250 pages, illustrated, softbound
6x9, \$9.99

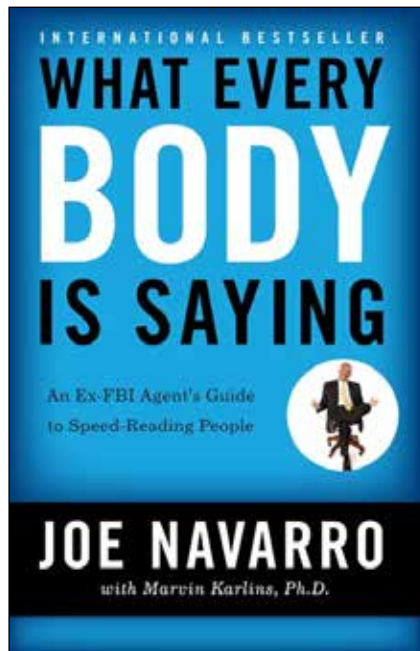
Reviewed by Gila Hayes

Joe Navarro, retired FBI nonverbal communication expert marvels that of all the social behaviors we are taught, “we’re never instructed on how to observe the nonverbal clues of others.” *What Every BODY is Saying* sets out to teach readers to recognize those many indicators and make accurate assessments. Navarro observes that for those who can decode nonverbal signals, that subtle knowledge reduces conflict through insights into the other’s thoughts, feelings and intentions. Using unspoken communication requires deliberate effort, he writes, and draws on “all your senses, not just your sense of sight.”

Navarro discusses the three-brain principle that defines “the human brain as a triune brain consisting of a ‘reptilian (stem) brain,’ ‘mammalian (limbic) brain,’ and ‘human (neocortex) brain.’” Adaptation from the primitive to the modern has not removed the primitive instincts, although they are revealed more subtly than freezing, running away or fighting. For example, the instinctual freeze is still seen in the utter stillness of one who is being reprimanded. That motionless posture may display an echo of the freeze, or feet and legs orienting toward an exit communicates how attractive escape is, he illustrates.

Navarro believes that the key to nonverbal communication is reactions instigated by the limbic system. “One of the best reasons for studying nonverbal behaviors is that they can sometimes warn you when a person intends to harm you physically, giving you time to avoid a potential conflict,” he writes, noting that when a person has a “limbic response” to negative or threatening stimuli, they will react with pacifying behaviors like rubbing the face, to name only one of many. “To be successful at reading nonverbal behavior, learning to recognize and decode human pacifiers is absolutely critical,” he urges.

“Understand that pacifying behaviors almost always are used to calm a person after a stressful event occurs,” he writes. “Thus, as a general principle, you can assume that if an individual is engaged in pacifying behavior, some stressful event or stimulus has preceded it and caused it to happen,” he writes. A person may deny it, but the body tells the truth. Perhaps the most



truthful of all body language are the “intentional cues” given by foot and leg movement, Navarro continues. We’re taught early to smile and to keep our hands still to feign relaxation or confidence, but feet and legs are not as controllable. Navarro quotes body language great Desmond Morris, who observed, “the feet and legs are ‘the most honest.’” A foot pointing toward an exit, both hands on the knees and shifting weight under the feet, are common examples that indicate a desire to get up and leave. “When you note these cues, particularly when they come from your superiors, it’s time to end your interaction; be astute and don’t linger,” he quips.

Legs can also display territoriality or attempts to control a situation as demonstrated by splaying legs. “This sends out a very strong message to the careful observer that at a minimum there are issues afoot or that there is potential for real trouble. When two people face off in disagreement, you will never see their legs crossed so that they are off balance. The limbic brain simply will not allow this to take place,” Navarro teaches.

He writes, “Territorial leg splays signal the potential for tempers to flare; thus, whether you find yourself observing or using this type of nonverbal behavior, you should be on the alert for possible trouble,” adding, “predators (e.g., psychopaths, antisocials) often use this leg-splay behavior in conjunction with eye-gaze behavior to control others.” Chest puffing is another territorial display and can escalate to chest bumps. “If next, the person takes off a shirt or hat, expect a fight,” Navarro adds. Later in the book, he advises that if you’re uncertain whether a person is preparing to act, watch their nostrils. “As people prepare to act physically, they will oxygenate, which causes the nostrils to flare.” He even suggests teaching children to watch for “nasal wing dilation,” to avoid dangers at school or playgrounds.

Although, Navarro writes, much of literature about body language ignores the torso, the natural instinct to protect the vital organs in the torso results in many protective actions that occur unconsciously when we’re stressed, uneasy or fearful. Just like feet and legs, the upper body instinctively angles away from the unpleasant and if circumstances don’t allow actual withdrawal, a person may insert items as barriers – a briefcase clutched to the chest or items nervously rearranged on a desk or table – or arms crossed over the chest as a shield. More subtly, “fiddling with wristwatches, adjusting a tie knot” and other socially-allowable fidgeting allow arms to shield one’s torso.

Conversely, leaning closer or angling toward another is, “A very powerful way to let others know that you agree with them, or are consciously contemplating what they are saying...This tactic is especially effective when you are in a meeting and you don’t have the opportunity to speak up,” Navarro adds. Similarly, arm position communicates very effectively. “When approaching a stranger for the first time, try demonstrating warmth by leaving your arms relaxed, preferably with the ventral side exposed and

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perhaps even with the palms of your hands clearly visible. This is a very powerful way of sending the message, 'Hello, I mean no harm' to the other person's limbic system. It is a great way of putting the other person at ease and facilitating any interaction that follows."

It should come as no surprise that hands are highly expressive and so hand gestures "merit our attention as a rich source of nonverbal behavior to help us understand the thoughts and feelings of others." Navarro discusses and illustrates use of hand non verbals when we need to be effective and persuasive. His suggestions?

- Keep your hands visible during face-to-face communication;
- Handshaking is the wrong time to establish dominance; there are far more effective, less offensive ways;
- Understand that different cultures use touches to hands and arms differently; to establish bonds, be accepting;
- Different cultures imbue different gestures with different meanings; avoid offering offense.

One of the things I really liked about Navarro's book over other body language books I've studied was his repeated theme of learning posture, expression and gesture to express confidence. While interpreting others' body language is useful, understanding and managing our selves is where our real power lies.

So much of the pop science about body language purports to detect untruthfulness. Navarro discredits much of it. Contrary to popular belief, sweaty hands don't indicate lying, he writes. It happens when the limbic system is activated, so probably does reveal discomfort and, depending on the circumstances, you may choose to demonstrate behavior to put the other person more at ease. Instead, people who are lying "tend to gesture less, touch less, and move their arms and legs less than honest people," Navarro offers.

Hands may express high confidence signified by steepled fingers, and "Steeping of hands, fingertip to fingertip, is one of the most powerful displays of confidence we possess," he explains. Conversely, fingers interlaced shows doubt, shaken confidence or "high distress," and can devolve into anxiety-pacifying rubbing or hand-wringing. Even the position of the thumb while grasping a lapel or partly thrust in a pocket is indicative. "Thumb displays are so accurate that they can help you effectively assess who is feeling good about himself and who is struggling."

Watch carefully for behaviors that are fleeting, "micro-gestures," quickly suppressed, because "the more reflexive and short-lived the behavior is, the more truthful it tends to be," Navarro writes. "One of the most important observations you can make in relation to the hands is noticing when they go dormant. When the hands stop illustrating and emphasizing, it is usually a clue to a change in brain activity (perhaps because of a lack of commitment) and is cause for heightened awareness and assessment."

While decoding so many nonverbal communications (and we've only mentioned a few in this review), Navarro urges readers to consider context, look for clusters of behaviors and, in an echo of another great book, *Left of Bang*, whenever possible establish a baseline. For example, "You need to look for clusters of behaviors, constantly evaluate what you see in its context, and note whether the facial expression agrees with—or is in contrast to—signals from other parts of the body," he writes. "Only by performing all of these observations can you confidently validate your assessment of a person's emotions and intentions."

What Every BODY is Saying is long and covers a lot of material, so I was really pleased to find a companion reference book by Navarro, *The Dictionary of Body Language* (HarperCollins 2018 ISBN 978-0062846877) that distilled the postures, gestures and expressions into one and two sentence explanations of 407 different behaviors that are discussed in much greater detail in the longer book. Together, they're a great way to listen to more than words, evaluate more than expressions, and better understand and prevent conflict with others.



Editor's Notebook

by Gila Hayes

I've long been interested in how hard it is to objectively listen to different beliefs held by others. It's even more challenging when people within our own circle hold opinions and beliefs opposite our own.

A few years ago [Pacific Standard Magazine](#) reported on a study into why people show so little interest in the reasoning behind opinions that differ from their own. "The researchers found participants avoided hearing out the other side for two basic reasons. They feared doing so 'would create cognitive dissonance' – the psychological discomfort that arises from simultaneously holding two opposing beliefs. And they felt it would...disrupt the comforting delusion that we hold similar values."

I dug up that study after reading a recent column in Firearms Marketing Group Publications' *Inside News* in which the editor of *GUNS Magazine*, argued that the media darlings who speak out in favor of "reasonable" gun restrictions while claiming to support the Second Amendment are traitors, pure and simple. "We need to raise a hue and cry among the 'real' responsible gun owners to challenge these so-called 'friends' whenever they pop up in the media, during political debate or when they are fundraising," editor Brent Wheat urged. We should, he wrote, educate the misinformed, and correct without fail the many lies told to support political anti-gun agendas. He's right and the underlying challenge, as identified by the research I mentioned at the beginning, is how to effectively communicate about heavily sensationalized and highly emotional issues.

We explore some unusually wide differences of opinion in this edition of our online journal as the Attorney Question column considers varied viewpoints about licensing concealed carry. In that column, our affiliated attorney Edward Zohn, who hails from New Jersey, speaks from his personal perspective: "I have lived in cities and suburbs and smaller towns throughout my 65 years, including New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia. I have never, I repeat, never, been in a situation where a concealed firearm would have helped me or held any advantage." He adds, "Some in the movement may think, incorrectly, that these views are 'anti-gun' and that I sold out."

Network members include people who have indeed been attacked with such inescapable violence that they have shot their attacker to avoid being killed or crippled themselves; we have members who have displayed a weapon (defensive display) to communicate, "Stop! Do not harm us," others have extracted themselves quietly and carefully from situations before things turned violent. They were capable of fighting back but were smart and saw danger far enough in advance to avoid it. Finally, I suspect, a good number of members, practice caution to avoid risks, and while possessing the ability to respond with deadly force, have never come close to needing to use it.

How, then, do members across such a widely-varied spectrum

present a cohesive front against a power-mad government bent on removing our means of defense?

In correspondence with Edward Zohn while working on this month's column, I commented that I can't relate experientially with his viewpoint. He urged, "There are many suburban and exurban liberals like me who favor gun ownership but are very wary of the 'all guns, all the time mindset.' The pro-gun community cannot be one size fits all, or it will wither and start racking up legislative losses." If you haven't already done so, please read our affiliated attorneys' thoughts on permitless concealed carry in the Attorney Question of the Month column.

I often try to figure out the mindset of people and organizations who make the dual claim to support the Second Amendment and to promote "reasonable gun restrictions." Most lose me by parroting the nonsensical term "gun violence." Inaccurately attributing the ability to do violence to an inanimate piece of machinery reeks of lies and manipulation that make my blood boil. If guns were capable of violence, surely the ones on my house these many decades would have risen up but it has never happened, nor have I even seen a firearm move from its shelf in the gun safe or the holster all on its own. Have you?

Meanwhile, the Journal of the American Medical Association is again pursuing its own disinformation campaign. They've published an analysis attempting to link Stand Your Ground laws to increases in homicides. Claiming a 30% "upsurge" in "homicide and firearm homicide" in 2020 without acknowledging, as did a Pew Research Center study into the increase in homicides, "the economic and societal changes brought on by the coronavirus pandemic and changes in police-community relations after the murder of George Floyd in Minnesota last year," although Pew Research Center, which I'd thought reasonably even-handed, opined that "the exact reasons remain unclear."

The American Medical Association, though, enthusiastically played the race card, quoting critics who claim self-defense laws harm ethnic minorities and "exacerbate social inequalities in experiencing violent crime, since implicit and explicit biases of threat perception discriminate against and cause disproportionate harms among minority groups, such as Black people." This they boldly claim, despite admitting that according to their data crunching, "No statistically significant differences by race, age group, or sex of individuals who died by homicide were identified. However, stratified models showed more pronounced increases in some demographic groups. The largest increases were seen for White individuals and for males." That must have been a confusing outcome for the AMA's vaunted "analysts."

The thing that confounds me most is a medical association blaming increasing homicide rates on laws that acknowledge Americans' rights to defend themselves against homicidal attack. The AMA's study refuses to recognize concurrent upticks in crime that expose honest, decent citizens to predators they'd ordinarily be buffered from if prison sentences were not cut short at the same time cities defunded our police. I wish the AMA would devote its energy to curing cancer and diabetes, genuinely curbing the novel coronavirus and addressing life saving breakthroughs to save victims of heart attack, stroke and injuries suffered in accidents.

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About the Network's Online Journal

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In addition, material presented in our opinion columns is entirely the opinion of the bylined author and is intended to provoke thought and discussion among readers.

To submit letters and comments about content in the eJournal, please contact editor Gila Hayes by e-mail sent to editor@armedcitizensnetwork.org.

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