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Hoopeston man pleads guilty to first degree murder

DANVILLE—A Hoopeston man could face 60 years in prison after pleading guilty to one count of first degree murder.

Steven A. Miller, 31, with an address listed of 227 W. Lincoln, pleaded guilty to the charge Friday in Vermilion County Circuit Court.

Miller was charged after his wife, Eva Miller, died of a gunshot wound on Sept. 5, 2005. Miller was arrested on a preliminary charge of aggravated domestic battery. He was later charged with four counts of first degree murder and three counts of aggravating factors.

In a plea agreement, Miller pleaded guilty to one count

of first degree murder; other counts were dismissed.

Police and ambulance personnel were called to the Millers' home at about 10:04 p.m. Sept. 5 where they found Mrs. Miller's body. Miller originally said his wife had committed suicide, then later recanted, saying he and his wife struggled over the gun, which discharged.

Miller testified the couple, who had a history of domestic problems, was having a domestic dispute when he fired a .380 pistol shot into Mrs. Miller's face.

Miller had been held without bail in the Public Safety Building in Danville since his arrest.

He now faces 20-60 years in the Department of Corrections. He is scheduled to appear in court on March 29 for sentencing.

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WEDNESDAY: Cheeseburger, pickles, tater tots, oranges.

THURSDAY: Chicken nuggets, mashed potatoes, green beans, peaches, bread, butter.

FRIDAY: Burrito, gogurt, corn, pineapple, bread, butter.

5th Anniversary Sale

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Dangerous animal bills unfair, unnecessary

This is directed to Illinois residents who have pets or are interested in animal control. Rep. Michael Tryon is sponsoring HB-4212 which seeks to amend the Animal Control Act by authorizing municipalities and other subdivisions to ban specified dog breeds and regulate dogs by breed. The Illinois legislature rejected breed bans when it passed the Ryan Armstrong Act, which strengthened the Animal Control Act. A study of pre and post breed ban dog bite rates in the United Kingdom concluded that their pit bull breed ban had no effect whatsoever on reducing dog bites. The CDC does not support the breed specific approach and has noted many other factors beyond a dog's breed may effect a dog's tendency toward aggression; such as reproductive status, heredity, sex, early experience, and socialization.

Seventy percent of all dog bite cases involve unsterilized male dogs, and an unneutered male dog is 2.6 times more likely to bite than a neutered dog. Ninety-four percent of all dog-related human fatalities in the United States involve unsterilized canines. Breed specific bans cause unintended hardship to responsible owners of entirely friendly, properly supervised and well-socialized dogs that happen to fall within the regulated breed category. Although these dog owners have done nothing to endanger the public, they may be forced by the municipality to either give up their dogs or move out of their home. The pets that are given up are usually killed.

Rep. William Black is sponsoring HB-4367 which changes the definition of dangerous and vicious "dog" to dangerous and vicious "animal" and includes cats and other animals. Under these provisions, cats could be deemed dangerous or vicious for injuring a pet bird, and a dog that killed a cat that came into its yard could be deemed vicious and subsequently, euthanized.

Just the Facts welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must be signed and must include the author's daytime telephone number. Letters may be mailed to Just the Facts, P.O. Box 441, Hoopeston, IL 60942; faxed to (217) 283-9348 or emailed to publish@justthefacts.net.

Letter to the Editor

Further, it expands where a dog/animal can be deemed dangerous by deleting "anywhere other than upon the property of the owner or custody of the dog." Thus, if a fenced dog on its owner's property barks at someone and the person feels threatened the dog could be deemed "dangerous" by animal control. It deletes "without justification" and a dog that is justified and protecting its owner can be deemed vicious.

HB-4367 threatens the public safety because it cuts the funding mechanisms for the Pet Population Control Fund which funds spays, neuters, vaccinations of pets owned by disadvantaged or disabled residents and feral cat caretakers. Also, it impacts cats by mandating a statewide "leash" law and restricts the definition of feral cats making feral cat caretakers "owners", essentially prohibiting feral cat colonies.

Last year in the state of Wisconsin a small group tried to get a law passed that would allow the shooting and killing of any cat that was found in the open without any collar (nothing mentioned about animals that had ID chips under their skin), without regard to whether they were personal pets or not. This was validated by them because wild birds were killed by cats. With the governors help, and the majority of its citizens outcry, this nonsense soon was dismissed.

If you would like more information about these bills, you can log on to ASPCA website. The majority of the content of this correspondence is from that website.

If you disagree with these bills, contact your representatives and let them know how you feel.

Tom Evans
Hoopeston

Bill would hurt history teaching, economy

There is currently a bill in Springfield that would greatly effect living history and historical reenactments in the State of Illinois. House Bill 4132 reads as follows: Synopsis As Introduced

Weather



Chance of snow today. High 36. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 25. Tomorrow, partly cloudy. High 44, low 31.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

Amends the Criminal Code of 1961. Provides that it is unlawful for any person to purchase, possess, use, sell, give away, or otherwise transfer, or to engage in the business of selling, or to exhibit for sale, any replica rocket propelled grenade launcher, bazooka, artillery piece, grenade, mine, bomb, or items similar to weapons designed and manufactured for military purposes or replicas of those items. Provides that a violation is a Class A misdemeanor.

The wording on this bill would make it illegal for any replica of a military weapon. That includes replica 18 and 19th century flintlock and percussion weapons used for French and Indian, Revolutionary, War of 1812, Black Hawk, and Civil War living history programs and reenactments throughout Illinois. This would kill programs done at various historic sites, including large annual events at Fort de Chartres, Fort Massac, New Salem, and the planned Civil War reenactment at Danville. This not only would effect historical programming and our ability to interpret history to the public, but also greatly effect local community and historic sites economies in regard to cultural heritage tourism.

If you think living history is an important way to teach history, and is important to cultural heritage tourism, call your state representatives or email now.

Kevin Young
Champaign, Illinois

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