Nobody asked me, but, in the aftermath of the Newtown, Conn. tragedy, a number of discussion possibilities leap to mind.

I prefer not to address the racial aspects that occur to me and, instead, focus on the drivel I'm hearing about the Second Amendment to the Constitution and how, "If guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns."

Let's begin with a look at the amendment in question. It states, "a well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

Our Founding Fathers were precise with their word choices. Their concern was the right of a state to form a well-regulated militia from among its citizenry rather than hosting an occupying federal – read British – militia. This "security of a free state" seems to have been the issue on which the British and our Founding Fathers disagreed. The right to bear arms was never intended to assure an individual's protection from his or her fellow citizens, at all.

Moreover, the Constitution always seems to be invoked as some perfect document, crafted by men with the wisdom of Solomon.

For good reasons, the document has been added to and subtracted from numerous times over the centuries. The world has changed drastically since it was written.

For example, for the purposes of establishing the population (and therefore the electoral votes apportioned to states) African-Americans were originally counted as five-eighths of a person. A significant number of its framers were themselves slave owners. All references to men in the document were understood to mean white, male property owners. Not only did women not merit a mention; they could be committed to insane asylums on the word of their husbands. What would Solomon have said to that?

Women and African-Americans got the right to vote over a century later, after a long struggle, and the Civil War. The right to vote came sooner, and more quietly, to non property owning white males.

So, we can safely separate the Second Amendment from any discussion of gun violence. After all, our revolutionary militia used muskets and they fell out of military use even before bayonets and horses did.

So that we're clear, I do not advocate banning all guns. It's clear that modern hunters need guns. Our Native-American brothers could get close enough to a deer, buffalo or whatever to fill a stewpot without telescopic sights, semi automatic rifles or even modern bows and arrows. When modern hunters are hunting wild game, they do their best work from a distance.

I do, however, believe that folks who wish to own and operate assault weapons should be required to join the Armed Forces. I also believe that the source of every donated campaign dollar should be disclosed to the public. Then, there'd be a potential downside, at election time,

to being supported by the NRA.

Now, lest we forget; guns are only part of the problem. People are also in the equation. This country must face its own nature squarely. We have, as a nation, always killed to support our (sometimes twisted) beliefs. Ask the natives and former slaves.

Other developed countries have “head cases” among their citizens. Other developed countries have widespread private gun ownership. But, we lead the world in head cases with guns mowing down innocent people for no apparent reason. We lead the world – by a lot – in what I will call non-military gun deaths. We also lead the world in hand wringing, weeping and saying, “I didn’t think that sort of thing could happen here.” Believe it; every last one of us lives in a *here* where
it
could happen. Some of us live in a here where gun deaths are already all too common.

We all must decide to lead the world in harassing our elected officials into making mental health services easier to get, and guns harder to get. If not, we’ll all too soon find ourselves in the news crying and hugging some other bereaved survivor. And when it happens, don’t blame it on the Second Amendment.