

The Delray Democrat

A Very Personal Note¹

June Sandra Neal

I chatted on the phone with Dawn Hochsprung in the evening of December 13, 2012 about a caterer for a wedding reception. Her daughter and my son were engaged to be married. I never spoke to her again.

Dawn was the beloved principal of Sandy Hook Elementary School. The next day, Dawn, five other educators and 20 first-graders were massacred by a crazed gunman who had access to his mother's firearms.

Our pain was insignificant compared to the searing agony of the parents, families and close friends of the victims. Still, it smashes you in the face. Sandy Hook was an important part of my life. Years before, I taught English lit and creative writing at Newtown High in Sandy Hook, and I still knew some of the families. An old friend, Rabbi Shaul Praver, conducted the service for one of the children at his nearby synagogue.

I thought this unspeakable event would be the crucible upon which people of good will would gain the power to turn the madness around. But the Republicans are hell-bent to treat firearms as casually as cell phones in the public square. It's an affront to all those we lost and all we will lose.

¹ *The Delray Democrat*, May 2022, page 6.