MAILBOX

MORE BRADY DEBATE

Contrary to Mr. Browne's diatribe on the decision of the College (MailBox, Spring 2009 issue) to award the highest alumni award to Sarah Brady '64, I applaud it. Assuming it's the College's aim to recognize and honor distinguished alumni, it has accomplished that aim with its selection of Sarah Brady.

Sarah Brady and the organization she founded are to be admired and supported for their efforts in putting the brakes on the senseless and preventable deaths at the hands of those who feel compelled to own and use — legal or not — handguns, assault rifles, etc. in the commission of a crime. One only has to look at the recent deaths of police officers in Oakland and Pittsburgh, the carnage in Binghamton, N.Y., and the tragedy at Virginia Tech a few years back to realize the scourge caused by the proliferation of guns in this country.

The problem with the NRA — and those like Mr. Browne — is that they are unwilling or unable to separate the legitimate and lawful use of firearms for hunting or other sporting activities from the lawlessness and killings brought upon by the lack of effective laws on gun ownership and responsibility related hereto. It is appalling that otherwise clear-thinking individuals can't distinguish between the need to balance rights of the majority of our law-abiding citizens with the necessity of stopping the wanton violence caused by guns and rifles in the hands of those who have no respect for life.

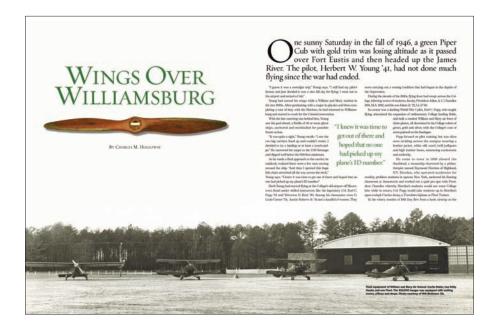
Bravo to the College for its courageous decision and to Sarah Brady for her dedication to an honorable and supportable cause to improve the liberties (and possibly lives) of all Americans.

Marcus H. Higginbotham '62 Troy, Mich.

I was shocked and outraged when I opened my William and Mary Alumni Magazine and discovered that Sarah Brady had been awarded an Alumni Medallion [Winter 2008 issue].

While I bear Mrs. Brady no ill will and indeed am sympathetic with her personal tragedy, I feel that the organizations she supports are beyond the pale and beneath the dignity of William and Mary recognition.

Under the guise of "protecting children"



and "keeping guns out of the wrong hands," Handgun Control Inc. and the Brady Center for Handgun Control have spread a web of disinformation about firearms and used every devious method conceivable to deprive citizens of their rights guaranteed under the Constitution. In addition, these organizations have cost industry and individuals millions of dollars in frivolous lawsuits. In my opinion, the ultimate goal of Mrs. Brady and her followers is to remove firearms from the hands of the public entirely. Such action would have been abhorrent to our Founding Fathers as witnessed by their many writings on the subject and is in contradiction to the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution.

By awarding this medallion, William and Mary places its imprimatur on these nefarious organizations and their actions.

I have spoken with a number of William and Mary alumni and supporters and can assure you that I am not alone in my perspective.

EUGENE R. THURSTON JR. '66

Goode, Va.

TALES OF AIRPORTS PAST

I enjoyed reading "Wings Over Williamsburg" in the Spring 2009 issue and learning of the celebrities, both national and local, who visited and flew from W&M's Scott airport. The article seemed to imply, however, that the College withdrew from aviation at the onset of World War II, when in fact it operated a military flight training facility during that war.

Subsequently, Williamsburg Airport, as it became known, was operated for a number of years on land just north of Route 60 and east of Airport Road. Floyd and Ruby Clark, who had previously operated Central Airport in Richmond, were the last to operate it (and called it "Central Airport"), their tenure ending circa 1970, when Floyd died.

Clark was a dynamic senior; he gave flight instruction at the airport, rebuilt aircraft and handled the airport's management, which included clearing aggressive pines that persistently invaded the field's two short turf runways. An old barnstormer himself, he taught students the basics of aviation that he had acquired over years of flying. I had the good fortune to fly with him, and to rent for \$7 an hour "wet" (including fuel) several of his restored planes. Local pilots also kept private aircraft there.

Somewhere around 1990, I walked through the former airport. Its runways, again opened to the pines, were well-camouflaged, and the hangar shown in your initial photograph was being used by the College to store furniture!

The Waltrip family opened their airport shortly after Williamsburg Airport closed, and it has been quite successful. Today, the only obvious tangible evidence that the College's airport ever existed is that road sign on Route 60 that marks the area.

RICHARD A. REPP J.D. '68 Richmond, Va.

We welcome letters from our readers and reserve the right to edit them. Brevity is encouraged. Please send correspondence to Melissa V. Pinard, Editor, William and Mary Alumni Magazine, P.O. Box 2100, Williamsburg, VA 23187 or e-mail alumni.magazine@wm.edu.