

Caledon Citizen

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The gun registry: should we kill it or fix it?

Prime Minister Stephen Harper is clearly right when he accuses his Liberal predecessors of not having done enough to prevent tragedies like the horrific Dawson College shooting in Montreal.

"Today's laws did not protect us and we take no pleasure on this side of the House from having warned the previous government repeatedly over the past decade that the gun registry would not prevent this kind of occurrence," the Conservative prime minister told the House of Commons in the wake of the shootings that left a young woman and the gunman dead and 19 injured.

The Liberals' efforts at gun control having failed so dramatically, the Conservative minority government is expected to proceed with its plans to wind down the firearms registry.

Harper says his government is looking at ways to strengthen the law so guns would be kept out of the hands of people like Kimveer Gill, who appeared to be a seriously troubled young man, fixated on violence and death.

However, the two real questions to be dealt with are what measures might succeed in attaining that worthwhile objective, and whether it might not be better to fix, rather than ditch, the gun registry.

Those questions become particularly interesting in light of the fact the Tories currently have only a 125-seat minority government in the Commons and would likely face stiff resistance among all three opposition parties in any bid to kill the registry.

The Liberals' acting leader, Bill Graham, says the party stands officially against any attempt to roll back the registry. They still hold 102 seats in the Commons.

Bloc Québécois Leader Gilles Duceppe says his 50 MPs would vote against any attempt to abolish the registry. And New Democratic Party Leader Jack Layton says he isn't sure where his 29 MPs stand on the registry issue but the party wants to ban all automatic and semi-automatic weapons.

"I can't speak for every one of our members at this point, but I will tell you one thing that we will be pushing very, very hard - and it is a position we have held for a long time - there should be no semi-automatic or automatic weapons in the hands of

citizens in this country."

Clearly, Gill, who wrote on the Internet about wanting to be the *Angel of Death*, never should have been licensed to own a restricted Beretta rifle and Glock pistol or a 12-gauge shotgun, advising the world that "anger and hatred simmers within me," and that he reviled police, while posting pictures of himself pointing weapons and fantasizing about going on a killing spree.

One thing that seems obvious is that the screening system for those seeking to register restricted weapons is deeply flawed. Although it would obviously be possible for police to conduct investigations as to the suitability of any applicant seeking to register a restricted firearm, we're with Layton in submitting that the simple answer is to ban personal ownership of automatic or semi-automatic weapons.

It would certainly seem that the procedures for those seeking to have any firearms beyond ordinary hunting rifles and shotguns desperately need to be tightened up.

Although we're advised that nearly 18,000 licences have been refused or revoked in the past decade, our suspicion is that refusals far outnumbered revocations, which presumably would require court orders. It may well be that most of the revocations took place after the licence holder became involved in violent crime or had made threats against another person.

Although some would favour ownership of firearms being limited to members of the military and law enforcers, surely all of the 2 million gun owners in Canada should not be punished for the acts of a handful of deranged killers, who could still easily acquire firearms on the black market or south of the border and who usually have suicidal as well as homicidal urges.

Clearly, ranchers and farmers need firearms to protect livestock from predators. Bush pilots, prospectors, back-country guides, trappers and others carry firearms to survive if they run into trouble. Natives and some other people hunt to supplement their winter food supply.

The gun registry has been far too expensive and ways must be found to streamline its management and toughen its provisions for keeping guns out of the hands of those who ought not have them.



Our Readers Write

Phenomenal support

What makes a fabulous community? Community spirit!

Hospice Caledon would like to take this opportunity to thank the wonderful group of practitioners and service providers who so generously donated their time and skills for our recent fund-raiser, *Afternoon of Affirmation*.

We would also like to acknowledge the generosity of many local businesses who made donations for our recent Hospice fund-raiser: Lisa Drolet, Clearly Organized; Lindy Lovering, Organized Matters; Susan Graham; Audrey Partridge; Bolton Electric; Rose Daley, Energies; Tonie Shampogna; Rose Camisulli, Cameo Esthetique; From Head to Toe Spa; Nancy Hall; Jenny Morden; Mary Fisco- Fisco Therapy; Core Solutions Physiotherapy and Wellness; Solange Croaker, Trim-U; Leah Mary Lynn Macleod, Lighthouse Healing Centre; Lisa Maciag, Southview Chiropractic; Monica Windmuller, Mary Kay; Jackie Clark; Pina Cellucci, Peace X Peace; Robert Petrungaro; Valerie McGrady; Andrea Fielding, Inspired Within; Maryann Herlinger, Joy of Yoga; Russell Scott, Ecology Retreat Centre; Sharon De Rose; Judy Malin, Onorato; Mary Hatch and Laurie Schmidt; Chef Talk Bistro; Nancy Brandolisio, Tupperware; Renee Cote, Close to My Heart; Kate Moura & students; Southview Chiropractic; HBC; Giant Tiger Bolton; Declutter 4 U; Water Depot; Cedar Highlands Ski Club; Cucci's Hair Design; From Head To Toe Spa, Christine's Flowers; Ardene Accessories; Iris Bowdery, Avon; Janice Byer, Docu-Type; Vichy Laboratories; Herbal Magic; Tanya Sciarra, Running Room; Donna Rhodes, Enchanted Weddings & Event Planning; Cathy Dance, Pampered Chef; Team In Motion; Nadia Vommaro, Party Lite; Goji Juice; Abruzzo

Italian Imports; Harvest Markets; Naturally Bulk; Country Style Donuts; Zehrs; Dollarama; Century 21; Garden Foods; Town of Caledon Friends at Play Program; Karen McNicol of MSBCI and Nicole Borsoi.

The group of people involved in the *Afternoon of Affirmation* was incredible. Their generosity will help Hospice to continue to deliver services in the Caledon area.

Hospice Caledon provides many different services for those faced with a life threatening illness or those grieving a loss. For more information visit our Web site, www.hospicecaledon.ca

Diane Morrison
On Behalf of
Hospice Caledon

Seniors say thanks

A sincere personal thank you as 2006 moves to 2007.

A thank you to Mayor Marolyn Morrison and Regional Councillor Annette Groves for your continuing voluntary support to the Caledon Seniors' Centre, Rotary Place, but particularly for your unfailing support to me in my role as director of publicity and promotion and chairman of our long-range strategic planning committee. Your support to our expansion program with opinions and suggestions, your attendance at our dinners and meetings bringing greetings, your membership and contribution is appreciated not only by myself but all our members. You are models of what "I would take home to meet mother!"

I might include Garry Moore, too. "Oh! Yeh!" Our annual meeting held Sunday, Sept. 24 was well attended and our appreciation to you was clearly demonstrated. Thank you!

Lloyd Bittle
Bolton

Caledon Citizen



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