

TV violence

What effect is it having on Halton's children

by Bill Johnston

Seven people were killed violently Saturday night, perhaps in your home.

A couple were gunned down with a small pistol. A double-barrelled shotgun claimed a few of the others and the one or two left got it with a police pistol.

There was a touch of rape, a bank robbery, a wild car chase that claimed two (or was it three?) police cars, a fair amount of swearing including some words that still haven't made it into Webster's New World Dictionary (only one word was bleeped out) and, oh yes, there was a suicide by hanging.

In the end the "good guy", or perhaps "hero" is more applicable, managed to stick up a bank, kill a few of his partners, slude the police and escape to Mexico.

Not bad for a two-hour movie. Not bad for a television show. Not bad for our children to see?

The movie was "The Getaway" CFTO's Saturday night movie. The only warning about the movie's content was a brief message before it which warned that the show could be offensive in both material and message. But that was it.

In comparison to the build-up in the movie had received during the previous seven days by CFTO, parents who could switch the channel after that late message should be envious

for their ability to put up with protests and tears.

What affect is television violence, such as that offered Saturday night, having upon children?

According to a study titled "Television's Children" carried out among Halton students including a number from Halton Hills, the more violent the action, the better young viewers like it.

'75% of students get pleasure from violence'

It's also making it more difficult for youngsters to differentiate between fact and fiction, reality or fantasy.

The study also showed that television today is becoming many youth's "best friend". The final product of too much television, according to

the study's co-ordinator Sandra Birthelemer, is a generation of very passive, somewhat confused spectators who would prefer to watch rather than participate in life around themselves.

Television's Children is the outcome of a request from the Royal Commission into Violence in the Communications Industry to all school boards in Ontario for their feelings on the subject media violence and its affects upon school students.

The six-month study by Miss Birthelemer centred on surveys taken of 300 students from grades 1, 4 and 7 from 24 schools throughout Halton. Parents of the students were also questioned, as were teachers.

From the findings Miss Birthelemer produced some intriguing facts.

For instance when asked how they felt when viewing a policeman on TV chasing a robber and seeing the robber get shot, 70 percent of the primary grade pupils indicated pleasure or excitement. Once the aggressor was defined as "good" or "on the side of the law" the exhibition of violence was seen to have created "acceptability" in the eyes of grade one respondents.

When asked how they felt when a policeman was shot 97.1 percent indicated that they felt bad or very sad.

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Of the teachers surveyed 84.2 percent felt that the main effect viewing television had on their students was to make violence more acceptable.

The majority of primary teachers did not feel that their students could differentiate between the fantasy of TV and the reality of life, whereas two-thirds of junior and indicated that their children made program selections most or all of the time.

Because difficulties in solving problems have been linked to aggressive behaviour, the report recommends to parents that they "support the development of problem solving and decision making skills in their children by helping children learn to exercise selectivity and judgement regarding program choices on television."

Miss Birthelemer also suggests to parents that they watch television with their children "so that misunderstandings can be clarified, fears discussed and full advantage taken of capitalizing on the positive learning possibilities."

"Too much television viewing," she adds, "can prevent children from socializing with others to develop skills needed for rewarding personal interaction." To abate that problem she recommends that parents "establish and encourage the establishment of warm personal relationships with their children, so the

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A special report

of the parents felt that television had a significant effect on children's view of life and accepting it as such.

Of the 76 grade 7 parents who responded 23.7 percent indicated that one of the reasons their children watched television was because they had nothing else to do, while 15.5 percent of the 97 grade 4 parents gave a similar response.

In addition, 10.5 percent of the grade 7 parents indicated their children watched television for companionship.

Approximately 14 percent of the grade 4 and 7 parents felt that their children watched TV to learn something, compared to grade 1 parents where approximately 28 indicated a similar response.

Of grade one parents 34.7 percent indicated that they selected programs for their children's viewing most of the time. Of grade 4 and 7 parents, 15.3 percent and 14.4 percent respectively, made their child's program selections most of the time. Parents of grades 1, 4 and children, (18.3 percent, 29.8 percent and 42 percent respectively) in-

dicated that their children made program selections most or all of the time.

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children gain experience living as active participants within our society."

The establishment of similar relationships with their peers was a goal that Miss Birthelemer recommends that Halton's teachers aid their students in reaching.

To the Halton Board of Education itself Miss Birthelemer recommends that because of the student's difficulties in differentiating between fact and fiction a "strong emphasis be continually put on the development of decision-making skills within our courses of study."

As well, "The implementation of the Values Education Program be continued in an effort to aid students in developing and becoming more aware of their own value systems in the decision-making process."

Further recommendations will be made to the province and the Royal Commission when the commission holds public hearings in Hamilton on February 4.

Miss Birthelemer notes that the Royal Commission should "undertake a full longitudinal study to establish more fully the importance of televised violence on elementary school age children."

However, because of television's obvious benefits as a teaching medium, Miss Birthelemer also suggests that "direction be given to the educational television net-

works so that programs and techniques used on these programs may better meet the needs and interest levels of children."

'Networks should produce content guides for parents'

To the networks Miss Birthelemer suggests that they provide programming that offers variety for children at different age levels. As well a guide outlining program content and appropriateness of the content for various ages of children be provided.

Violence in television, Miss Birthelemer notes, must be put into its proper perspective for "viewing an excessive amount of violence in the media desensitizes the impact of violence on society as a whole."

Teachers learn to react to students' problems

Society-conditioned responses, common ways which people tend to react towards someone who voices a problem, are not necessarily the best or the most effective ways to react, Margaret Brillinger of Acton, told 53 teachers at M. Z. Bennett and Robert Little Public Schools. The teachers of both schools

gathered at Robert Little School on Friday, to participate in the Halton Board of Education's Professional Development Day.

Mrs. Brillinger, an instructor in both Parent and Teacher Effectiveness Training, pointed out to the teachers that the Teacher Effectiveness Training Course

involves a 30-hour course and with the five to six hours allowed on Friday she could merely explain the basic concept of the course.

"If either a child or a teacher has a problem then teaching techniques and learning are at a minimum. The teaching will not be effective. If teachers can in-

crease the teaching-learning, no-problem area, then teachers can teach effectively," explained Mrs. Brillinger, speaking from experience as a former high school teacher.

Touching on the topic of what is labelled "the 12 roadblocks to communication", Mrs. Brillinger gave the teachers three

problem examples and asked the teachers to record their initial reactions to each example.

Mrs. Brillinger next produced a chart covering the 12 most common reactions if faced with any one of the three situations. The "12 roadblocks to communication" as titled in the Parent and Teacher Ef-

fectiveness Training Course are: ordering; commanding; warning; threatening; moralizing; preaching; advising; giving solutions; teaching; using logic trying to convince; judging; blaming; praising; agreeing; name-calling; interpreting; reassuring; probing; questioning and distracting.

"Even in these are the most common responses, they are not as effective as we think. They all convey non-acceptance, that one does not accept where the person is at who has the problem," told Mrs. Brillinger.

"Some of these responses such as name-calling, do nothing but put a child down, farther than he or she already feels. Many of the responses

take all the responsibility away from the person who has the problem. They all convey that the parent or teacher wants the problem person to change - that they can't cope with these feelings of his or hers. They all tend to, in some way, block off communications," continued Mrs. Brillinger.

Mrs. Brillinger explained

that these conditioned responses take the initiative and that all responsibility is lifted from the person who has a problem and that in fact the one who is told about the problem always takes the lead to the solutions.

Mrs. Brillinger said that "active listening feedback", a process in the course which involves five or six hours of discussions, is the most effective means of responding.

The concept is to try to discover what is really going on inside the child and to receive the feedback feeling which is behind the message which the child is sending.

Air Canada pilot retires with 10 M miles under him

After having flown some 26,000 hours covering a distance of over ten million miles, Captain Charles Robert Fogal, RRI Georgetown, made his last flight in a Douglas DC8

"I grew up in Edmonton which at that time was the hub of flying for the west. My friend started to fly and when the war began I went with air force. We lived by an airport

dreds of flights he has had the pleasure to Captain and meet many well known persons. Former Prime Minister of Canada John Diefenbaker, other former Prime

Sack, a famous German soprano singer, plus many, many more, have flown under Captain Fogal's command.

Captain Fogal and his wife Bernice have lived in Georgetown for the past 15 years, raising their three sons, Rick, Ron and Robert. Rick, following in his father's footsteps, aims at becoming a Captain for the airlines. Ron is playing professional hockey and Robert is an accountant.

"The boys are six generation Ontarians, something of which I am very proud."

Captain Fogal is the immediate past-president of the

"We have planned for my last flight for some time now so it wasn't a great emotional thing last Wednesday. We have planned and anticipated my retirement for quite some time and to think, it is finally here," told Captain Fogal.

As a token of appreciation from Air Canada, Captain Fogal received a solid brass plaque with the long service insignia commemorating his many years of devoted service to Air Canada.

Captain Fogal and his wife plan to live in Georgetown during the summer months and will retreat to California to their winter home during our cold winter days.

Monday, Captain Fogal and Bernice left for California, only this time Captain Fogal can sit back and relax as a passenger and leave the flying to another Captain.



Captain Fogal made his last flight last Wednesday before retiring.

and the entire area was very flight oriented," reflected Captain Fogal.

As a result of Captain Fogal's hundreds upon hun-

Ministers, the late Lester Pearson, Louis St. Laurent, and Joan Fairfax, Gary Cosper, Barbara Ann Scott, Andre R. Leens (the first person to receive a commercial license in Europe in 1907), Billy Bishop and, for those who remember, Erna

Fall Fair Board, was once president of the Glen Williams Minor Baseball Association and was very much involved in minor hockey in Georgetown.

Ontario has a new "Seat Belt Law."

This is what you should know about it.



- The shoulder harness is not part of the system in back seats—and need not be installed.
- It is not illegal to carry more passengers than there are seat belts.
- The driver is responsible for all children aged 2 to 15.
- All adult passengers, 16 and over are responsible for themselves.

There are exceptions:

- (1) Children under two years of age.
- (2) Persons with a medical exemption certificate from their doctor.
- (3) Delivery personnel driving in their drop-off zone at 25 mph or under.
- (4) Rural mail delivery personnel
- (5) Convertibles do not require shoulder harness

The fine for breaking the law is from \$20 to \$100, plus costs. But life and health are precious, and accidents which cause death or injury to people, or damage to property, cost far more than the fine.

Whether you are a driver or a passenger, from now on you must wear a seat belt. Your Ontario government asks for your co-operation.

For more information, contact: Public and Safety Information Branch, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, 1201 Wilson Avenue, Downsview, Ontario M3M 1J8. Ministry of Transportation and Communications, James Snow, Minister



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