

Private ownership of guns should be outlawed

By JOHN SOMMER
Herald Special

At this time of the year "peace and happiness" is on many people's minds and lips. They will write it on Christmas cards and they will say it to each other. It is a phrase that has become a part of the Christmas celebration and it is a kind of prayer. Condensed into the phrase are all the good things we want our friends to enjoy: A peaceful neighborhood and workplace, freedom from fear, a mind that is at peace with itself.

I thought about all that when I came across a question in the "Halton-Peel Constituency Survey", that was sent to each household by our esteemed representative in Ottawa, Garth Turner, a few weeks ago. The question asked: "Do you feel that by taking guns out of the hands of responsible gun owners,

armed violence and crime will decrease."

A loaded question, indeed. If he had asked: "Are you in favor of outlawing all guns in private hands, in order to battle armed violence and crime.", the answer could have been a straight "yes" or "no", according to one's opinion about the matter. By wording it the way it was worded, however, any direct answer became impossible, and I suspect the result of the survey will be ambiguous, to say the least.

What is a "responsible" gun owner, and how do we find out that somebody is "responsible"? We could give people a test, of course, like a driving test, and repeat the test every year in order to find out if the applicant is still in a "responsible" frame of mind, or if he has developed, in the meantime, murderous thoughts of one kind or another,

that would disqualify him or her.

It would have to be a pretty complex test, with many questions asked that probe the deepest recesses of the applicants psyche. The past record of behavior would have to be questioned, what he said to whom in anger, etc. etc.

We would quickly need a network of informers who report about marital quarrels, fights at work, and threats uttered while drunk.

On the plus side, we would give work to an army of investigators. On the negative side, we would create a powerful thought-police that would eventually undermine our whole system, all in order to accommodate gun ownership in an increasingly dangerous world.

Let us rather admit there is no certain way to find out who can be trusted with a gun. Therefore let's outlaw gun ownership for the individual completely and without exception, and give very stiff penalties to everybody who owns or uses guns.

At this point in the conversation somebody will always ask: "What about the hunters, what about the gun collectors." Well,

what about them. Do we really need them. In my opinion, hunting as a sport is an outrage. There might be a need to eliminate sick animals, or to reduce the number of animals that have taken over a territory to the exclusion of all other animals.

But this should be done by foresters specially trained for the job, who are handed guns for this purpose only and for a very limited time. The killing of animals is not fun and should never be treated as fun or as a leisure time activity.

I know a huge assortment of terrible hunting stories, braggingly told by keen sports hunters, that would make you vomit if I repeated them here.

These stories illustrate to me that the handing out of hunting permits to everybody over a certain age is barbarous and out of tune with our civilized country.

Where are the fighters for animal rights in this. Shouldn't they protest. And as to the collecting of guns: This should be solely a job for museums.

Yes, the gun, like almost

everything made by man, is also a work of art. But at this time in our history, the private collector, who hasn't the security devices to make absolutely sure that none of his treasures get into the wrong hands, can not possibly insist to continue with his hobby. Our collective "peace and happiness" is of greater importance than his pleasure.

Michael Mesure, photographer and painter of watercolors, has moved into the Gallery of the Halton Hills Cultural Centre for the duration of the Holiday Season.

His paintings are very fine and as detailed as handcrafted jewellery. His photographs are even better. The frames, and in particular the many different colored mats, arranged in shadow boxes, are however too much of a good thing.

They are demonstrations of the framer's art, and as such tend to lead the viewer's eyes away from what should be the sole focus of his or her attention; in this case the work of an accomplished artist.

Local hospital hosts Christmas celebration

After a year-long celebration, Georgetown District Memorial Hospital is wrapping up its 30th Anniversary with an invitation to all staff and the community to enjoy an evening of carol singing, tree lighting and Christmas goodies.

The event begins at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, (tomorrow) with a fun-filled program that's sure to appeal to old and young alike. The events, to be held near the Hospital front lobby, include the formal lighting of the tree, as well as carol singing with choirs from Park and Centennial schools, and St. George's Anglican Church, and plenty of hot chocolate, spiced tea and

Christmas cookies.

According to Linda Dawson, the Hospital's 30th Anniversary chairperson, "The Hospital's 30th Anniversary has been a great success thanks to support from staff and the community."

"In fact, we're optimistic that the carol singing will not only wind up the year-long celebrations on a high note, but that the event will become an annual festivity at the Hospital."

The "Buy a Light" campaign also continues until tomorrow. Christmas lights for the Hospital tree will be on sale-one light for \$2.00 or three for \$5.00. All proceeds will go to the Georgetown Hospital Foundation.

Poinsetta is native to Mexico

By TOM CAVAN
Herald Special

POINSETTIA'S THE NEXT GENERATION HISTORY AND MYTH

The poinsetta is native to Mexico and originated in a present day region called Taxco. The Aztecs of Central America where the first people to cultivate the poinsetta and they called the plant Cuetlaxochitl because of its brilliant colour. The poinsetta was a symbol of purity and highly prized by King Montezuma. The Aztec's made red dye from the bract and a medicine from the latex sap which proved to be a cure for fever. In modern times poinsetta's have been incorrectly labeled poisonous, they are not toxic. How this myth started was in 1919 a two year old child of an Army Officer stationed in Hawaii died of accidental poisoning. The cause was incorrectly diagnosed to be a poinsetta. They are harmless and, according to Aztec history it was used as a medicine!

A Southern Plantation owner and botanist named Joel Poinsett was appointed Ambassador to Mexico 1825 was so impressed with this luminous red flower he brought some cuttings home and began to cultivate them in his greenhouse. They performed so well that he gave some to his friends and the popularity began. The botanical name Euphorbia pulcherrima had already been given by a German taxonomist in 1833 so the common name poinsetta became the accepted name in english speaking countries.

MODERN DAY SYMBOL OF CHRISTMAS

Since the 1920's the Ecke Poinsetta ranch has been the front runner in research and development of the poinsetta. Paul Ecke Sr. developed the first poinsetta variety that could be grown as an indoor potted plant. This was quite an accomplishment of the times considering that a poinsetta grows approximately 12'-15' high in its own habitat. He then set out across the countryside selling his vision of a living symbol of Christmas—the poinsetta.

Today the poinsetta is not only the popular plant at Christmas it is the number one selling potted flowering plant in North America. Even with its approximate 6 week selling time it has ranked No. 1. To further its strong hold on the floricultural market place the poinsetta breeding of new varieties is now producing colours before never dreamed of. In the beginning there was red of course. Then came pink and white, followed by a marble poinsetta which was very slow to popularity but in the last ten years has become more popular than pink or white. The bract of the marble has white petals with a flush of pink and blends richly as does marble.

THE NEXT GENERATION:

Jingle Bells: This poinsetta features dark red bracts with pink flecks. It has a real good Christmas look to it and is great for decorating because it is very compact in nature.

Pink Peppermint: I think this should have been named peach peppermint because it has a resplendent peach bract with a

soft pastel tone which is so welcome in modern-day design and fashion.

Lemon Drop: I think that this is one variety that became popular only in California. It appears a dull yellow and leaves absolutely no impression of Christmas whatsoever. Me thinks modern times breeding has produced a dog!

Whether or not these new varieties turn you on or not the poinsetta will always be the flower of Christmas.

STEPS FOR SUCCESS WITH POINSETTIA

1. Select plants with green foliage all the way to the bottom. This is a good indication that the plants have active healthy roots.
2. Look for plants that have small green bottoms (cyathia) in the center of the coloured bracts. This is actually the flower and will open up yellow in colour.
3. When taking your poinsetta home make sure it is protected for cold temperatures. Chilling the plant will cause leaf drop.
4. Place in a bright location, you should be able to observe a strong shadow with your hand.
5. Check for watering needs. When it appears dry thoroughly water and discard the excess water. Be sure the plant is dry between waterings and never allow a poinsetta to stand in water.
6. Fertilize the plant approximately every fourth watering for long lasting colour and strength.
7. Poinsetta should have at least a half day of sun to thrive.
8. Keep plants away from draughts, radiators and hot air vents. To prolong the colourful bracts, night temperatures should not exceed 72 F in the day and 60 F at night.

THE CORPORATION OF THE
Town of Halton Hills
1 Halton Hills Drive — P.O. Box 128
HALTON HILLS (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 5G2
873-2600

NOTICE

Notice of intention to stop up, close and convey a portion of the unopened road allowance between Lots 27 and 28, Concession 2, Town of Halton Hills.

The Council or a Committee of Council will hear any person who claims that their land will be prejudicially affected by the By-law and who applies to be heard at its regular meeting, to be held in the Council Chambers at the Civic Centre located at 1 Halton Hills Drive, Georgetown, the 13th day of January, 1992, at the hour of 7:00 p.m.

This notice was first published on the 11th day of December 1991.

Janet Lunn Stewart
Clerk for the Corporation of
the Town of Halton Hills

AD NO. 1488

Carol Service

Halton Hills residents met at Knox Presbyterian Church in Acton Sunday evening for a carol service. This service was prepared by the carol groups of St. Albans Anglican Church, Churchill Community, Christian Reformed, Knox Presbyterian, Trinity United, Acton Baptist Church. (Herald Photo)