

Today's students - social media savvy and passionate

Young people are master communicators in gun debate, writes Ted Brown

I've been following the events with our U.S. neighbours and President Trump.

The most recent reason was the Florida high school shooting, where 17 students and staff were gunned down by a lone shooter with an assault rifle.

I've been watching the coverage of the events and try to understand it all - it troubles me.

I watch the U.S. lawmakers and the President to see how they respond, and wonder what actions will be taken to ensure safety for students across the nation.

But the scenario repeats with every occurrence. The event happens, the President and his politicians stand in front of the people of the United States with their long faces and hide behind that age old statement - "This is not a time for action, rather a time to grieve."

It infuriates me to hear them hide behind that same old rhetoric to dodge the bullet (pun fully intended).

As a result, the 'time for action' conveniently slips by, (especially when Trump's best idea is to arm school teachers?)

The Feb. 14 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida seems to have hit a nerve.

The gun laws in the U.S. make me shake my head. The National Rifle Association (NRA) has millions of members and pours millions of dollars into the politicians' election budgets, ensuring they have a good network with the politicians. It was reported on CNN that President Trump himself



TED BROWN
Column

received \$30 million from the NRA for his election campaign.

The NRA is quite vocal about maintaining their right to bear arms, part of the U.S. Constitution - "The Second Amendment provides U.S. citizens the right to bear arms. Ratified in December 1791, the amendment says: A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

Did you catch that? That amendment was written in 1791, when they were armed with muzzle-loading muskets, not assault rifles capable of unleashing 45 rounds per minute. It's time for NRA members to get their heads out of the sand and face reality - guns kill.

Though the politicians are still standing with their long faces and consoling words, there's another group who is not ready to accept those condolences. Young people and they are demanding action.

I've been watching the dialogue on CNN, and as those young people come forward with their observations and proposed actions. I was cat-

apulted back to the 1960s and 1970s, a time when the young people rose up in defiance to their politicians - even to the President of the United States of America, and in doing so, created enough negative popularity and passion to force the President to pull U.S. troops out of Vietnam.

Ellen DeGeneres hosted three students on her show who were at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Feb. 14. They had met with President Trump the day before appearing on Ellen's show.

Students Emma Gonzalez, Cameron Kasky and Jaclyn Corin said their meeting with President Trump wasn't going to change things, so they are organizing a student march. Their rapidly expanding movement is March For Our Lives, a march on Washington to demand legislative action on gun control. They hope to bring their concerns to the attention of the people of the U.S., the lawmakers, and most of all, President Trump himself.

As these kids prepare for the March 24 event, the President might want to think back to the 1960s and 1970s and how much influence that youth voice can carry, especially from those a year or two from being eligible to vote.

And this group has a lot more going for it than those of 40-odd years ago - they have social media, they are communication savvy and most of all - they have passion.

And I truly wish them luck.

- Ted Brown is a freelance writer for the IFP and can be reached at tedbit@hotmail.com.

THE WAY WE WERE



Esquesing Historical Society

Looking today much as it did back when this photo was taken in 1930, this home at 484 Guelph St., sits next to the United Church in Norval. An excellent example of Gothic Revival architecture, featuring a centre gable and decorative bargeboard, it was owned by Robert Leslie, a prominent Norval resident. It is listed on the Halton Hills Heritage register. Text courtesy of Heritage Halton Hills.

OPINION

Reader spreading anti-cannabis propaganda says reader

Re: 'Marijuana's negative impacts rarely mentioned says reader', letter, Feb. 22

Did John Kozak seriously write to you "one legal token will lead to another, and then, when he/she feels the need for something more euphoric, they will need to get something stronger."

So, is this person generalizing that every cannabis consumer is an addict?

I can tell you from being an avid cannabis consumer for close to 20 years I've never thought this isn't working for me let's get the needle out and do something "harder"!

With regards to the government using taxpayers' dollars to show the harmful effects of driving high - the government has been running ads regarding the effects of cannabis while driving an automobile for quite some time. Not to mention MADD has been running ads against driving while high for more than a decade.

And the statement of the Liberals winning an even larger majority because everyone will be high is ludicrous. Here's why ... We would all be too high to ever remember to vote! But seriously maybe voters may al-

so want to vote the Liberals back in because of other issues such as a raise in child care benefits, the increase in funding for other social programs and/or name your cause.

The point is this person is spreading anti-cannabis propaganda. And you as news publication have now taken part in it once again. Like it or not cannabis prohibition is coming to an end in Canada. There will be mistakes made but the government, law enforcement and consumers are all trying to figure out the process as we move forward.

Tim Hales

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