

Opinion

Halton Hills THIS WEEK

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Violence cannot be condoned

The recently released \$1.9 million Canadian Centre for Justice national survey on violence against women in Canada, is being hailed as the "most accurate snapshot ever of the rate of physical and sexual violence against Canadian women."

The study was announced in 1991 as part of the then Progressive Conservative government's \$136 million four-year Family Violence Initiative.

Statistics Canada reportedly surveyed 12,300 randomly selected women - by telephone - and the study is being touted as the "most comprehensive look at the issue in the world."

Among other findings, the survey reported that one in two women reported being assaulted since they turned 16 and that one in 10 women reported being assaulted by their spouse in the previous year.

Violence against females or children can neither be condoned or ignored. It is a blemish on our society.

By the same token, violence against any member of our society, male or female, should similarly neither be ignored nor condoned.

I am neither a male chauvinist, nor a particularly violent type, but can we please back off a bit and view the whole picture before we accept surveys such as the afore-mentioned as gospel and imprint into gullible - particularly young - minds that all males are ogres and not to be trusted.

While certain findings from the survey will no doubt prove invaluable to sociologists, essentially, it is a flawed report.

Women who don't speak either English or French weren't surveyed; no attempt was made to contact women without telephones (in many cases, these women could be living below the poverty level); women who live in the Northwest Territories or the Yukon weren't contacted and disabled women weren't included in the survey either.

Of prime importance, however, in attempting to give a truly comprehensive look at violence against women, or why it happens, those involved in the survey totally ignored the accused - namely men - and the obvious part they play in this sad scenario.

Ian Harvey of the Toronto Sun interviewed Dr. Eugen Lupri, a sociologist at the University of Calgary, and Lupri suggested the survey "was a waste of \$2 million. The data they have produced is very close to existing data."

Lupri, who has gathered data on domestic violence since 1979, told Harvey that a Decima Research survey done in 1987 found that women and men were equally capable of violence.

That survey found that while 17.8 per cent of men admitted acting violently towards women, 23 per cent of women admitted the same.

It was also found that while 9.1 per cent of men said they had hit or threatened to hit their partners, 15.1 per cent of women reported the same reaction.

Lupri concluded that we still know almost nothing about root causes of domestic violence.

Without being facetious, in many instances of domestic violence, it takes two to tango.

I will admit, here and now, that yes, I have been guilty of striking a female. It wasn't planned, I didn't derive pleasure from it - either from the physical aspect or the dominant male theorem - but there was some provocation. Still, I felt ashamed.

What with the rise of feminist issues - long overdue - gender equality in the workplace, economic uncertainty for both males, females and families, and what could be perceived as attempts to neuter the male in every sense of the word, is it any wonder domestic violence is on the rise.

Surveys, like political polls, serve little, if any purpose unless acted upon.

This survey should undoubtedly be acted upon, but in a constructive way. It should be used to improve our societal problems, rather than manipulated as a gender-biased whitewash with no solutions forthcoming.

Colin Gibson

The People's Corner

Turner defends passage of NAFTA

To the Editor:

I was interested to see that the editor of Halton Hills This Week has become an international trade expert and, as such, has condemned the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The editorial you printed on Nov. 20 was stunning for its invective, lack of facts and sheer ignorance. Calling the president of the United States "the hog from Arkansas," for example, says a lot more about the writer than it does about Bill Clinton.

Of course, this is consistently childish with calling our former PM "Baffle Baloney" and saying the American Congress accepted promises "no self-respecting hooker on Jarvis Street in Toronto would make to even her most debased supplicants."

Colin Gibson must have been having some rare day to come up with insightful comments like those about Canada's trade policy. What a splendid addition to the debate!

Now, how about the facts that your editor murdered?

First, this statement: "Mulroney force-fed the Free Trade Agreement down Canadian throats."

Really? I seem to remember an election in 1988 in which the people spoke, and the anti-free traders went down to defeat.

And this, from the pundit at HHTW: "And Canadians have suffered - oh, how we have suffered. Loss of jobs, loss of savings, loss of livelihood and in an unfortunate number of instances, the breakup of families."

Actually, Canada's exports to the US have surged ahead by some \$40 billion since the Free Trade Agreement came into effect. Figures published on the same day as your editorial appeared revealed that Canadian exports to the US in September hit a record \$15.6 billion and that, for the first time ever, Canada enjoyed a trade surplus of more than \$1 billion in a single month.

There are many excellent companies here in Halton Hills which are competing, and winning, in the North American market. And they have created good jobs as a result.

So much for Free Trade hurting the economy.

Loss of savings? Last week, Statistics Canada said that family net worth in Canada rose last year and is now at an average \$78,000 per person.

Loss of jobs? Well, Liberal Trade Minister Roy

MacLaren, who supports free trade, himself said that critics of the deal would blame every sparrow that fell from a tree on the FTA. Clearly it was the recession that stole jobs. Equally clearly, it was free trade that increased exports and has helped end the recession.

By the way, Jean Chretien will proclaim NAFTA, just the way it is now, because it's going to be good for Canada.

But then, he's only the prime minister.

**Garth Turner
Georgetown**

Editor's note: Since Mr. Turner is obviously directing this missive at me personally, I feel I have a right to reply directly.

The "editorial" Mr. Turner refers to was in fact an opinion column printed on the page with the large Masthead, "Opinion".

President Clinton is a former Governor of Arkansas and the University of Arkansas' football team is called the Razorbacks or simply, "The Hogs." I have a right to my own opinion of Brian Mulroney.

At a campaign stop in Burlington with Kim Campbell, in the recent federal election, Mr. Turner, then the National Revenue Minister, referred to present Prime Minister Jean Chretien as "a meathead." This insulting remark was printed in a number of newspapers.

As far as Mr. Turner's point about Canadians benefiting from Free Trade - the Progressive Conservatives bragged that Free Trade would create 250,000 jobs in its first five years of operation - Daniel Schwanen of the C.D. Howe Institute begs to differ.

According to Schwanen, who has examined most of the studies on Free Trade, Canada is down 50,000 jobs.

A published newspaper article in October, out of Ottawa, had the Canadian Labor Congress pointing out some interesting Free Trade insights.

CLC economists looked at six high-tech manufacturing sectors and found that employment in all, but one, fell between 1989 and 1992.

The CLC study concluded, "Canada simply lacked a strong base of technologically sophisticated companies capable of expanding sufficiently to absorb the many workers displaced through negative restructuring in response to new competitive realities."

CLC economists, in the story, argued that free trade provided a perfect out - shut down the Canadian plant

and boost production to the United States.

Free Trade made money for some people, but not the average Canadian worker.

Bankruptcies continue to plague our economy, especially in Ontario. Federal statistics just released show that 2,122 Ontario consumers and businesses went bankrupt in September. In addition, in Ontario, 58 more construction companies went bankrupt in September bringing the total for the year-to-date to 510.

Pat Thompson, analyst with the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses was quoted as saying, just this past Nov. 13, "Things are not good, let's face it. So many firms are just hanging on in a very delicate situation that we expect bankruptcy figures to jump around a bit."

The people who have lost their jobs in Halton Hills because of Free Trade, can speak for themselves - as I'm sure they will.

In reference to Mr. Turner's boast that individual net worth in Canada rose to \$78,000, this same report, touted by Mr. Turner, by Statistics Canada, proves quite revealing.

The report noted that total household debt, including mortgages, bank loans and credit-card balances grew by five per cent in 1992 to \$461 billion.

It also reported this represented an all-time high of 86 per cent of an individual's after-tax income, compared to about 50 per cent in 1984.

This same report also noted that personal debt grew by \$600 to \$14,400 per Canadian in 1992.

Colin Gibson

Tenants and pets

Provided by The Halton Hills Legal Clinic

A dog is a person's best friend, right? Or, in some cases a cat is a person's best friend. But if you are a tenant in residential premises, and your landlord knows about your cat or dog, he may not want an animal on the property. He may even tell you that you must get rid of the pet or you will be evicted. Can you be evicted for having a pet, or for refusing to get rid of it?

Before 1990, a tenant who signed a lease with a "no pets" clause could be evicted for having a pet simply because the lease said that no pets were allowed. That is no longer the case. A landlord cannot evict a tenant of residential premises for having a pet without taking proper steps under the Landlord and Tenant Act and applying to court. A court cannot permit the landlord to evict you unless the landlord proves certain requirements set out in the Act. He must show one of three possible circumstances exist.

First, he must show that the past behavior of an animal of the same species as your pet has substantially interfered with the reasonable enjoyment of the premises for all usual purposes by the landlord or other tenants. If he can show this, you may still avoid eviction by showing that your own pet has not caused or contributed to the substantial interference.

Or, instead, the landlord could show that the presence of an animal of the same species as your pet has caused the landlord or another tenant to suffer a

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serious allergic reaction. You may avoid eviction if you show that it is not your pet that is causing or contributing to the allergic reaction.

Lastly, the landlord could show that the presence of an animal of the breed or species of your pet is inherently dangerous to the safety of the landlord or other tenants. If so, the landlord may get an order allowing him to evict you whether or not your own pet is dangerous.

In deciding whether the necessary grounds for eviction exist, a judge cannot consider the fact that the tenant may have signed a lease with a "no pet" clause or promised that he would not have pets.

The requirement that a landlord prove these grounds before he can evict a tenant for having a pet was a response by the Ontario government to a decision by a Toronto judge who on May 31, 1990 evicted three tenants, because the lease had a "no pets" clause. There were no complaints about the cats involved. Today, tenants with well-behaved pets which have not caused harm and are not dangerous are much better protected.

The above information is general information. The situation may be different if you are renting in a condominium.

For advice on your particular situation, you should contact a lawyer or you may call the Halton Hills Community Legal Clinic at 877-5256.