

The Independent & Free Press

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Firing blanks

What exactly were the provincial Tories thinking when they installed new regulations in the Game and Fish Act that allows children as young as 12 to be able to hunt legally?

While it may be a noble plan on paper to change these regulations so that young people learn how to properly handle a gun, the bottom line is, 12-year-old kids should not be getting comfortable with weapons.

Period. End of argument.

Oh sure, the Tories may just be recognizing what has been happening in Ontario for decades where a hunter takes his child out into the bush with him to kill a few ducks or drop a deer, but frankly, we'd rather not see youngsters around guns at all.

Actually the Tories are just filling a void that was created by the Liberals' gun control bill (Bill C-68) which allows children aged 12 to "possess and discharge" a firearm. Under the new provincial regulations 12-year-olds must complete an education program and must be under the "direct and immediate supervision of a person over age 18" with a valid hunting licence.

That's fine and dandy, but isn't there something wrong with the overall picture here?

You have to be 19 years old to buy a case of beer in Ontario and if you're under 25, you have to show identification.

If you want to drive, you have to be 18.

If you (heaven forbid) want to vote in a provincial election, you must be 18.

But now, in good old Ontario a 12-year-old can fire away, provided he/she passed an education program and has a licensed hunter next to them.

Have we already forgotten about the tragic school shootings in the U.S. earlier this year? Weren't those youngsters comfortable with weapons?

Sure, we know young kids, particularly those in rural areas, get acquainted with weapons at a tender age.

But we'd rather see gun use discouraged than encouraged — even if it's being done in the name of safety.

NEASE '98



SHUCKS! WE HAD T'GIVE THE YOUNG'UNS SOMETHIN' T'DO 'TIL THEM GOOD-FER-NUTHIN' TEACHERS GIT BACK T'WORK!

JOHN-BOY SNOBELEN

Taxpayer tired of government 'passing my bucks around'

(This letter was originally sent to Ontario Premier Mike Harris and a copy was made available to The Independent & Free Press for publication).

Dear Mr. Harris:

My annual municipal tax increase is \$571.38. That is a 23.4 per cent increase. I can have \$571.38 less net income, or work overtime (I'm lucky) to make \$1,000 more so I can pay \$430 income tax so my net income remains "revenue neutral".

Since my assessment remains the same (\$190,000), I presume everyone has to pay 23.4 per cent more in municipal taxes. Mr. Harris, you took over the school taxes because they were getting out of hand and the small municipal governments couldn't defend against the powerful teachers' association.

If you succeeded in cutting back on education expenses, then what on earth are all these governments doing with this unbelievably huge increase in municipal taxes, upon which, I repeat, we also have to pay income tax.

I'm sick and tired of all these governments passing my bucks around. I want accountability, and I want it now! Until then, I'll do without the \$571 and pigs will fly before I work to pay an additional \$430 in income tax.

Once again the economy will have to suffer as governments mug more money from people.

Steve Melville, Georgetown

Letter of the day

Youths to be congratulated

Dear editor,

As you may be aware, council approved the construction of a skateboarding facility to be located at the Alcott Arena at its meeting Sept. 14.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Const. Keith Bennett, Halton Regional Police Service, who recognized the need in 1996 and spearheaded a public meeting in the fall of 1996. Stacey Green of the Halton Hills Recreation and Parks Department facilitated a number of meetings which led to the formation of Skateboarders, In-Line Skaters, BMX Bikers Association of Halton Hills (SIBAHH) and has continued to provide facilitation support on an on-going basis.

Since that time, SIBAHH, together with many volunteer parents, the Halton Regional Police Association and countless others, have spent their time and energy on preparing plans and raising funds to build the project. Sherry Mitchell, Laurie Inglis and Mary Noonan, as parent volunteers, as well as others, are to be acknowledged for their encouragement and faith in this group of committed youth in reaching their goal. Scores of local businesses and organizations contributed, either through direct financial contributions or building materials.

At the end of the campaign, SIBAHH had raised almost \$19,000 — approximately one-third of the total cost. Their participation continues with laying the sod and erecting the security fence as well as establishing protocols for use and behavior. Municipal park cash-in-lieu funds will complete the project.

The contractor will be commencing work shortly, and it is hoped that some use will be made available before winter arrives.

Halton Hills youth have once again shown what dedication, commitment and teamwork can accomplish. Congratulations on a job well done! You are a credit to our community.

John Day, Regional Councillor, Wards 3, 4 Halton Hills

Our Readers Write

The Independent & Free Press welcomes letters to the editor from our readers. All letters must be signed and include an address and a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for content or length and can be mailed, delivered to our office address at 211 Armstrong Ave., Georgetown, Ont., L7G 4X5, faxed to us at (905) 873-0398 or e-mailed to: independent.freepress@aztec-net.com