

OPINION

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Holster the Taser

It's been said before but we'll say it again—maybe it's time we take a closer look at the police use of Tasers.

A Brampton man died in hospital last Wednesday, 12 hours after being hit by a Taser in a struggle with police in a Mississauga police station.

The Special Investigations Unit is now investigating just how Sean Reilly, 42, died.

In Canada there have been at least 21 Taser-related deaths, yet police maintain the devices are a safe alternative to lethal force.

However, if you look at the ages of many of the Taser victims—they are surprisingly young in their 30s and 40s—and one would assume in good health.

How many 30 and 40-year-olds do you know who just drop dead? Tasers appear to be pretty lethal to us.

One study found Tasers caused cardiac arrests in pigs but another police association study done in 2000 said the devices are safe.

Somewhere in the middle lies the truth.

The police use the fancy term “excited delirium” to describe Taser deaths, but even psychologists say the condition is rare and controversial.

A person with excited delirium acts agitated, violent, sweats a lot and is unusually strong and insensitive to pain. Then, the victim's heart races and eventually stops beating.

The jury may still be out on Tasers, but until there is evidence that the devices are not killing people needlessly, they should be holstered.

At the very least, Tasers should not be used as a standard weapon to enforce compliance without the threat of serious injury or death of the subject, a member of the public or a law enforcement officer.

When pepper spray or four burly cops will do, leave the Taser in its holster.

What do you think?

Below are the results of our most recent online poll. For the current poll go to www.independentfreepress.com

Should Canadian law enforcement agencies stop using Taser guns?

- Yes 29%
- No 71 %

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!

Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Candidates should address oil issue

Dear editor,
Dear candidates,

As are most Canadians, probably yourselves included, I am not just outraged by the circus surrounding fuel prices in Canada but by the fact that neither the government nor the opposition parties are honestly addressing the issue in their campaigns.

Given that:

1. Almost all the oil refined in

Good Samaritans put smile back on face of boy who had bike stolen

Dear editor,

I would like to really thank you for publishing my letter in the paper on Sept. 12.

My family and I want to express many thanks. No sooner did the paper get out did we receive two phone calls from Good Samaritans.

A wonderful resident of Georgetown, Gary Tucker, called us Saturday morning and offered my son a BMX bike that he had.

I especially would like to thank Sara Pring, the kind, considerate manager at the Georgetown Zellers. She called us Friday night to offer my son a bike of his choice... Georgetown rocks.

My son now has a new bike from Zellers that is under lock.

Thank-you.

Angela Hojevac, Georgetown

Eastern and Central Canada comes from offshore sources i.e. none from the U.S .

2. All the oil for Western Canada refineries comes from Western Canada

3. Hence, Canadian oil supplies are not affect by hurricanes hitting the U.S .

4. The price of a barrel of oil did not change significantly this week (Sept 15-22).

5. The same week, gas prices at the pump across the U.S. averaged an increase of less than \$0.01 per gallon.

6. Pump prices in Canada average \$0.13 per litre or about \$0.42 per U.S. gallon.

How can you, in good conscience, allow the oil companies in Canada to continue to exploit the people of Canada? How can you allow this continued erosion to Canada's economic well-being?

You know that these outrageously

Media left some in the dark about listeria outbreak

Dear editor,

With the recent outbreak of listeria the public was not informed properly of all the information regarding this outbreak.

You were told to go online for the information. There was no list of affected products published in the papers, on TV or in the stores.

If you don't have a computer, how do you get this info?

The media caters to the public who

high prices ripple down into the economy, inflating prices and costing jobs in every industry except for the oil patch itself. How can you, as political leaders, not discuss this and not promise and develop a plan or policy which your party would implement if in power?

I understand that some of you will argue that high fuel prices contribute to reducing the strain on the environment. I would support those prices only if the money did NOT go into the pockets of greedy oil executives and their minions.

If the higher prices were a result of a carbon tax and the funds were fed back into the economy through income and corporate tax breaks as well as other economic incentives, I could accept paying inflated prices. But please, this election campaign must address this ongoing criminal activity on the part of big oil.

Dan Poirier,
Acton

have these gadgets. But what about the portion of the public who don't have the know-how to use them or the means to purchase them? What do we do— stay ignorant of the facts to be part of the death statistics?

We have the right to be informed by the good old-fashioned way called “proper reporting”. Our only means for information is our newspaper.

Judy Kearsey,
Georgetown