

# OPINION

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Box 248, 191 Main St. E.,  
Milton L9T 4N9  
878-2341  
Toronto Line 821-3837  
Fax - 878-4943  
Classified Advertising: 875-3300

**Ian Oliver** Publisher  
**Neil Oliver** Advertising Director  
**Jane Muller** General Manager  
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## Still no home improvement

And now for an update on my main renovation man's near accomplishments. I say "near" although they are nowhere near accomplished.

First, let me tell you at this point that hubby has a bathroom fixation. Two summers ago, he attacked the cottage bathroom — his perpetual (I fear) work in progress. He relocated the toilet, dragged the hot water heater into the bathroom, installed other mystery machines related to water, seen only in a country setting, and added a new sink with an unfinished cupboard. The tongue-in-groove pine climbs partway up two of the walls. He also bought a shower door on sale — with some vital parts missing. Instead of catching the drips in the tub, it collects dust in the hallway. I can't even shame the man into completing the job.

At the beginning of this past summer, hubby announced he was going to renovate our basement bathroom at home while the kids and I were at the cottage. Yeah, right. (Are these things just not working out because my expectations are so low?)

Actually, I didn't have a lot of problems with that bathroom, even after we moved our bathroom downstairs to one end of the rec room. Hubby hammered up a tongue-in-groove wall (his specialty) in record time so there we were, he and I in our little burrow. Living in a hole in the ground is not my ideal accommodation, but it was cozy with our private toilet and sink.

That wasn't enough for mister renovator, however. No, he had to have a "real" shower (upstairs it is a mere tub/shower combination). That meant tearing down the wall between my office and the original bathroom to make room for this grand new installation (probably also bought on sale and also missing vital parts — we'll find out one day — maybe).

His goal was to complete this job during the summer. Guess what? When we arrived home on Labour Day, I walked into what looked like the aftermath of a home-made mini bomb. His rented jackhammer had spewed out concrete, electrical wires hung down ominously from the ripped-open ceiling tiles, and drains and



### ON THE HOMEFRONT

with ESTHER CALDWELL

waterpipes were exposed for everyone to see. It was not a pretty sight.

I had made one small request before renovations got underway: "Please cover my stuff in the office before you start working." Was that too much to ask? I found my books, papers, desks, shelves, chairs, and filing cabinet covered with a film of cement dust. Hubby's reply when I questioned him about the debris was: "I didn't think it would make such a mess" — "I didn't think" being one of his pet phrases. He figures that excuses his stupidity.

I remember when I complained a couple of years ago about the dry wall guy "forgetting" to confine his drywall dust to our kitchen. I thought his behaviour was an isolated case. I know better now.

The entire male species (Am I generalizing too much here?) exhibits an annoying lack of concern for "neat and tidy."

Winter is approaching. How much longer will I have to camp out in my temporary office in the rec room, with books and files in milk cases under a makeshift desk and kids' toys underfoot?

The latest snag in hubby's work in progress on the home front is the water that leaks into the basement bathroom when it rains. Who knows how long water has been dripping down inside the walls?

Oh, and one last thing. Since the waterpipes are accessible right now, hubby says, we may as well replace the upstairs tub. I've looked at that tub. It's a tight fit in that little room. It looks to me like the tub went in before the walls went up. I can't see how we'll get it out and a new one in, unless we tear down the bedroom wall...

## Studies show it's possible to turn your kids off strangers

Child abduction. It's every parent's worst nightmare. A whole nation prayed for the safe return of three year old Kayla, 15 year old Jennifer... we all saw our own child's picture in the paper.

A study at Western Michigan University suggests that most young children are in fact easy prey for child abductors. Approximately 90 per cent of preschoolers would easily, voluntarily, happily, go with a stranger who simply coaxes them with small talk or promises.

At the same time, however, studies reveal that child molesters use physical force only 10-17 per cent of the time. The majority try to develop a quick relationship, coax the child, use incentives. Consequently, it is possible that many child abductions can be prevented if children can be taught how to resist the inducements, and act quickly.

Teaching prevention strategies to preschool-aged (3-5 year old) children presents some special problems.

First, we can't assume instructions or explanations will be helpful at this young age. Will they really understand the dangers, complex strategies or their rationale. In addition, the 3-5 year old is just burgeoning with new independence and mobility — going outside,



### PSYCHOLOGY IN THE '90S

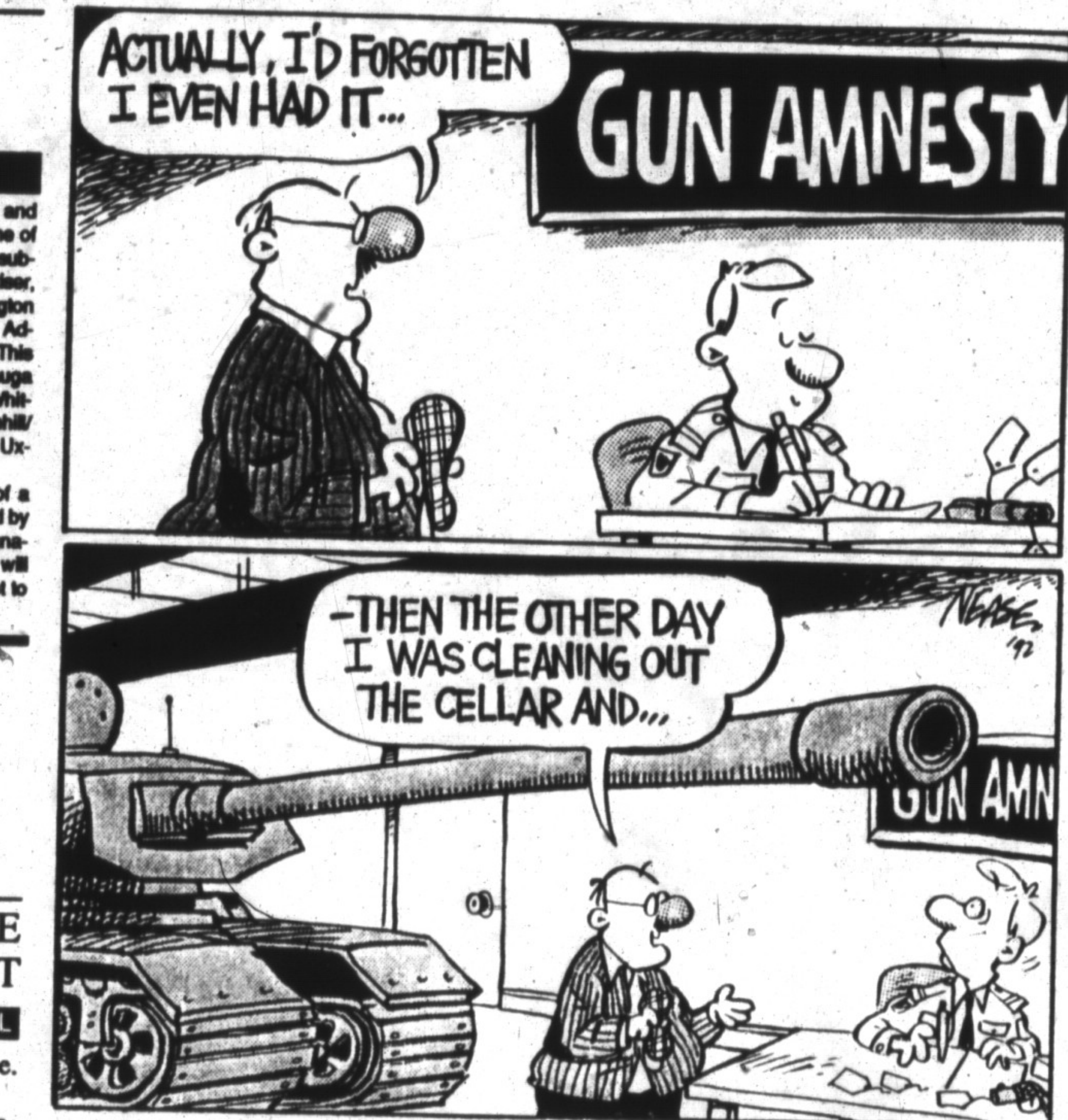
with DR. ARNOLD RINCOVER

to preschool, to the park or a friend's houses. They haven't learned the limitations that go with it (eg. getting lost; telling parents when they're going out, where they're going).

Finally, kids are impulsive at this age. Children playing outside can easily become interested in other children or activities and they are drawn to them, quickly disappearing from a parent's sight and supervision.

What can we do? Research at Western Michigan University suggests we can quickly and easily teach children — even preschoolers — how to react to the lures of a stranger.

Initially, the researchers surveyed parents, asking what they would like their child to do. Most parents preferred that children refuse in a nice way ("No, I've got to go ask my mommy or teacher, so as not to offend



## This sounds much too easy

Upon reading the many comments from politicians at all levels of government on the referendum, it has become apparent they haven't listened to us.

If politicians are to become more responsive, we as individuals must lead the way in getting back control of our governments. Therefore, in total self-interest, I offer the following to one of my local councillors so he may lead the way in a municipal tax revolt.

Dear Mr. Ron Furik

I can appreciate the cutbacks from federal and provincial governments have made it necessary to increase my municipal taxes, however for every dollar they cut it costs me \$1.30 in after-tax money to make up the difference.

My property taxes are now \$2,800 and I must earn \$5,000 to actually "take home" this amount. I understand that if I make a donation to the Town I get a tax receipt. I also read on page 37 of the Town's operating budget that Milton received \$522,352 as payment in lieu of taxes. I would like to make a donation in lieu of taxes.

This would save me \$840 in income tax and the Town would receive the same amount of money as before. In a spirit of generosity I would donate half my tax savings back (\$420) to the Leisure Centre debt.

We could be onto something here Ron. Of the \$40 million the Town collects for the Region, school boards and itself, our citizens could reclaim almost \$12 million in income

### VIEW POINT

with PATRICK KELLY



tax. If everyone donated half to the Leisure Centre it could be paid off in two years.

Regardless of where our citizens spent their savings, putting this amount of money back into the local economy would be like having a good sized employer move to the area and much more acceptable than the feds cutting a crummy 2 per cent off the GST.

Since many of the recipients of my municipal tax dollars are charities, everyone should be satisfied. Could you please investigate the feasibility of my plan with council on my behalf?

Best regards, Pat Kelly

P. S. Reading the budget was fascinating. Was the \$13,500 for wolf claims paid to the councillors who ran around crying wolf about the referendum?

P. P. S. I also thought the \$250 budgeted for fence viewing was a unique way of disguising the purchase of the mayor's new chair and then I noticed he got one last year too. Does he really 'fence view' that much?

strangers who are actually just being nice. Second, parents wanted their child to get away from there, quickly. So, training consisted of two goals: Say "No" in a nice way, and head toward safety (a parent or teacher) within three seconds.

The second step was to find out what a "typical" abductor would say to the child, so the trainers could use similar "lures" during training and make it as realistic as possible. Interviews with child molesters revealed three common types of lure.

In the "simple lure", the suspect would first engage in small talk. After a few moments, the suspect would say, "would you like to go for a walk (ride, play a game, etc)?" In the "authority lure", the suspect would assure the child that his/her parent or teacher said it was okay. In the "incentive lure" the suspect would try to entice the child, eg. "I've got a surprise for you in my car".

The training consisted of demonstration, practice and praise. Two trainers acted out a scene in the child's schoolyard, one playing the "suspect" and one playing the child's role. The "suspect" tried to lure the "child" away, and the trainer playing the child's role demonstrated what to say and do. Then the child was asked to practice the same scene.

The child was praised (and sometimes given stickers) if (s)he responded appropriately; if (s)he did something incorrectly, the trainer described what was wrong and demonstrated the right way.

Practice sessions were only 15 minutes per day, and each child learned the correct way to react to each lure in only one to three sessions. The total training time required for all three lures was "up to 90 minutes" or six sessions.

After training was complete, and the children knew what to do and say, the trainers "tested" each child several times in the community. Using new strangers, in new settings, they found that the children consistently used these new skills and quickly left the vicinity of the stranger.

This study showed that children as young as 3-5 years of age could be taught how to avoid the lures of strangers.

It does not provide all the answers, of course, since some abductors aren't strangers but people the child knows, such as neighbours or acquaintances.

While more research is needed to see what will be effective in these cases, there is no question that teaching children how to respond to the lures of strangers can help to prevent many abductions.