

Dirty Harry pastime not for everyone

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So, when the teacher appeared, discomfort set in. With blue jeans and a corduroy shirt, range safety officer Jim Drysdale looked every bit the quintessential good ol' boy.

But the teacher's detailed breakdown of the various hand positions needed to properly load guns showed he's anything but carefree. His four basic rules were equally strict: point guns safely, remove all ammunition, inspect chambers or cylinders and look into bores before doing anything.

Drysdale's frustration at "unintentional discharges" showed he expects others to handle guns properly. People who clean loaded guns, he said, are stupid.

Hollywood portrayals of Wild West bandits jumping out of windows and blowing away several people within a few seconds, he added, are "crap".

Guns are heavy and accurately hitting targets requires skill, he said.

An hour or so on the range quickly proved him right.

My skinny arms were shaking all over when I looked through the .22-calibre's sight and obliterated a target less than 10 metres away.

All 10 shots from that and a related weapon landed within seven inches of the bullseye. One shot even hit the



STAFF PHOTO/ERIN RILEY

Gianni Colavecchia takes aim at the Sports Shooting Range.

centre.

Despite the success, switching to a Glock .40-calibre self-loading pistol did not engender enthusiasm.

"Want to pick that up?" the teacher asked.

"No," I replied.

I relented, but the force of the gun firing caused my arms and fingers to hurt a lot.

Surprisingly, all 10 shots landed within three inches of the bullseye. To ensure greater accuracy, he added, I needed to

develop my chest muscles a little.

"Tell me something I don't know," I deadpanned.

Afterward Drysdale introduced Larry West, a new member of a gun club.

"It's a lot of fun. It's a stress reliever," the 45-year-old Pickering resident said. "It's not for everybody."

No kidding.

Been There, Done That is a regular column where staff try to keep up with experts in a wide variety of recreational activities.

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it's kids stuff.

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