



The following is an article forwarded to all Clubs that are part of the Fundy Royal Firearms Committee by Ron Whitehead:

Hello Fundy – Royal Firearms Committee Members – I am sure that you all know of the unfortunate shooting in Toronto. I have a 26 year old grand-daughter in Toronto and each and every time I hear of a shooting in that city I contact her.

As many of you know there has been a cry from within the City of Toronto and from other anti-gun people to ban handguns and ammo in Toronto. A friend forwarded me the following and I realize that this is a long read but please trust me it is worth your time. You may not agree with everything written but there are some good points. Handgun owners and perhaps ordinary duck hunters may also be in trouble. Note that Friday past I bought a Beretta semi auto shotgun from Ross Faulkner (Gun Dealer) – do you suppose that the CFO knows how many semi auto duck guns I have?

Anyway please take the time to read the following:

### ***A gun is never just a gun***

***A.J. Somerset  
Special to The Globe and Mail 11***

***A.J. Somerset is the author of Arms: The Culture and Credo of the Gun.***

***Toronto is frustrated and angry. City council is frustrated and angry. Mayor John Tory is frustrated and angry. And not without reason: When council met on Tuesday to hash out its response to gun violence, 162 people had been killed in 1,495 shootings since the start of 2014. Gang violence spirals ever deeper, for reasons nobody fully understands – although we hear the same old theories: the end of carding, absentee fathers, an indulgent court system and so on. Then comes the Danforth.***

***City council, in response, will appeal to the federal government to ban handguns within city limits. The city will also try to ban sales of ammunition. This will achieve nothing. Washington and Chicago banned handguns for years to little effect – the U.S. Supreme Court eventually striking down their laws. Cities are not islands. Gangs, lest we forget, are linked to international drug distribution networks. They will not struggle to bring ammunition from the wilds of Mississauga.***

***Municipal bans are dead ideas, but city council still stitched them to a hodgepodge of other old, discarded proposals, then threw the switch to send a gazillion volts of energizing lightning through the reassembled corpse, which now lurches off to Ottawa in search of love.***

***A handgun ban remains popular nonetheless. If you can't eliminate the guns already in criminal hands, you might as well strike at what you can. Thus Mr. Tory's question: "Why does anyone in this city need to have a gun at all?"***

***Presumably, the mayor is equipped with a cellphone and is familiar with its operation. Perhaps he could call someone and ask? Imagine the fruitful discussion that might follow. Imagine the possibility of compromise and consensus. But the question is not motivated by curiosity. It is the same old rhetoric. "Keep them out of my city," then-councillor Adam Vaughan demanded in 2008, apparently confused about just who owns Toronto. Then, in 2012, in a slightly less confused state: "There's no rational reason to own a gun in the city." Mr. Tory already knows his answer.***

***These are the flailing efforts of politicians who know that they must do something, but also know that nothing they can do will have much immediate effect. Violence surges and recedes for reasons no one fully understands. Reducing violence is a long game, and in the short term, all the city can do is ride it out. In the meantime, the mayor and council must be seen to have acted.***

***Ergo the handgun ban. Pass that highly visible problem to the feds and let them struggle with it. Also, a grab bag containing anything council could dream up: a gun amnesty, which makes good media but will be ineffective; a proposal to have the city buy up gun clubs and put them to some other, more wholesome use; ShotSpotter, a gunshot-detection technology of questionable effectiveness; a time-worn suggestion that gun owners ought to keep their firearms in a central arsenal; a Canada-wide ban on handguns and semi-automatic rifles and shotguns. The city also proposes investigating gun clubs and shooting ranges to ensure they are operating legally, even though nobody reasonably suspects they are not.***

***That last point is revealing: Rather than limit itself to tackling the known problem, gang violence, the city opted to invent another, in the form of presumed infractions by federally regulated shooting ranges that are already regularly inspected by the provincial Chief Firearms Officer. Why does council think such an investigation is necessary?***

***Its resolution, like those moronic bylaws that require residents of small American towns to own guns unless they insist on exercising their puzzling Second Amendment right not to own one, is pointless. It has no real effect except to stake out the moral high ground. But proposals such as this belong to culture war, not policy making. And the tactical goal of culture war is to seize that high ground by controlling the expressive value of the law – that is, to make it clear whose values are ascendant and whose shall be condemned.***

***Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar; a gun, on the other hand, is never just a gun. The gun is so freighted with symbolism that we rarely approach it rationally. Whether we hate them or love them, we don't think about guns. We feel about guns.***

***We can abandon rational ideas when proven wrong, but we do not abandon feelings. When Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam warned colleague Joe Cressy that his motion to curb handguns and ammunition in Toronto would be ineffective, he decided to go ahead with it regardless. Ms. Wong-Tam, in turn, voted for a motion she knew would not work simply because it was “symbolic.” Marion Barry said exactly the same of his support for Washington’s handgun ban, way back in 1976. A ban may have no rational basis, but we want it anyway, to express our feelings about guns.***

***The natural reaction for most Torontonians in the wake of a terrifying mass shooting in a summer of gang shootings, and for council, is to feel about guns. We express that feeling by reacting not only against guns but against the people who own them – people who conveniently react against our feelings and often say conveniently stupid things. Those people make an easy target. Thus, demands for a futile handgun and ammunition ban and a plan to investigate gun clubs.***

***The most serious problem with such measures is not that they are futile but that they may well be counterproductive. Canada’s gun owners, ever beleaguered, complain continually that they are punished and persecuted for the acts of criminals. The gun bill now wending through Parliament is fundamentally innocuous, yet it has provoked a firestorm of opposition and complaints that the government is getting tough on duck hunters while giving gangs a pass. Ordinarily, these complaints are overblown, even laughable, but when Toronto city council reacts to a summer of violence by promising to investigate gun clubs for regulatory violations, one cannot dispute the point. Toronto is scapegoating licensed handgun owners for gang violence.***

***And so Toronto will touch off another bitter battle in the culture war over guns, to no real end, a distraction that will suck up attention that ought to be given to marginalized communities struggling with gang violence. And the culture war has a habit of escalating: A fight over a useless ammunition ban will surely energize a fight over whether to invest in communities or to police them, to bring back carding, to jail the “sewer rats” longer. More posturing, more mud wrestling, more noise. More white people shouting at other white people about things that won’t help anyone.***

***We have been here before. In 2008, in a similar spasm of self-righteous indignation, council effectively evicted the Toronto Sportsmen’s Show from the CNE grounds by barring the display or sale of firearms. There was no indication that gang members were sitting down with duck hunters over coffee to chat about decoy layouts, goose calls and retriever training. But this was not the point. The point, in the words of Councillor Gord Perks, was to strike a blow against “the culture of guns in our city” – to express council’s frustration by giving gun owners the finger.***

***Another parallel jumps out in comparing 2018 to 2005, the Year of the Gun:***

***Then, as now, Toronto at large fretted and fussed and clucked in disapproval until the violence reached out and killed a white teenager in a place violence is not supposed to touch. When black and brown people die in gang-related shootings, even if they have no relationship to gangs, Toronto at large is not frightened. But the Danforth, like the shooting of Jane Creba on Yonge Street, shakes the foundations. It distorts our perception of risk. In reality, the risk of being shot at random remains tiny, as most shootings are targeted. But when bullets punch through restaurant windows on the Danforth, they also shatter our assurance that we can manage our risk by dividing the city into “good” and “bad” neighbourhoods – an admittedly racist psychogeography in which the problems that affect “them” do not affect “us.” It is not that Reese Fallon and Julianna Kozis are getting too much attention, but that the dozens killed in recent years and forgotten too quickly have received too little – all these intolerably nameless names.***

***Earlier this month, Mr. Tory warned that there is “no easy answer” and “no simple explanation,” that “nobody has a magic wand.” But politics begets posturing. So too does the natural urge to do something, anything, to take whatever action comes to mind, regardless of its futility, just to feel we are making progress. But Mr. Perks made a trenchant point on Tuesday evening: “Often, the first available idea is not the best one.” Action is overdue, but the victims of violence deserve effective action. Idle posturing, we have had in plenty.***

***Effective solutions take time. Effective action calls for a deeper understanding of the causes of violence, the role guns play in amplifying violence, and how we might attack not only the supply of guns to violent criminals but the demand for crime guns. We must recognize that gang shootings, mass shootings, domestic violence and all the other forms of violence in which guns figure do, in fact, differ and require differing solutions. We must stop feeling about guns. We must instead think and communicate and co-operate.***

***The major gun problem in Toronto remains gang violence, which according to Police Chief Mark Saunders accounts for as much as 90 per cent of shootings. We cannot simply legislate this problem away. Nor can we arrest our way out of violence, as former chief Bill Blair, the new Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, has pointed out. Carrying a handgun is already illegal, as are possessing a handgun without a licence, trafficking handguns and ammunition and smuggling handguns over the border. Little can be gained by making these things more illegal.***

***This is not to say that gun control is out of bounds. We have seen a trend of straw buying, in which gang-affiliated people with no criminal records get firearms licences solely to traffic guns. We must actively look for buying patterns that suggest trafficking. We ought to consider how we screen licence applicants. And whether handguns ought to be legal at all remains a legitimate debate. The news that the Danforth shooter had obtained his gun illegally, likely through his brother’s gang connections, does not invalidate concerns about our existing***

**system – although a report that the gun may have been stolen in Saskatchewan highlights the futility of a municipal handgun ban.**

**Gangs are a unique problem. Defeating gangs is a long-term project. Smart policing that targets gang members themselves, rather than entire neighborhoods, will help repair the damage done by carding to the relationship between police and communities. Good police work is also necessary to disrupt the supply of guns. Creating jobs to give young men opportunities outside gang life must be a priority. Above all, we must invest in marginalized communities as an ongoing project.**

**But gang violence will continue. The reality, which seems to have entirely escaped city council, is that gang violence is not caused by racism or unemployment or poverty. Gang violence is caused by money.**

**Day to day, gang members carry guns not to do violence but to protect themselves. The blunt facts of the drug business dictate that violence is the sole resort. You cannot call the police when your drugs or cash are stolen; neither can you bring in lawyers and sue partners or competitors who break agreements. In the drug trade, a gun is not an accessory; it is an essential tool. Thus, handgun violence in Canada has steadily increased since the 1980s, even as long-gun violence has declined – a trend directly tied to the war on drugs.**

**As long as drug money continues to flow, gangs will continue to get guns and do violence. Responsibility for gang violence reaches far beyond the gangs themselves. The money that buys the ammunition that kills Toronto's youth is up the noses of drug users. And money will flow to gangs until we abandon the war on drugs, treat addiction as a public-health problem and take the profit out of the black market, as we did in ending prohibition.**

**In fairness, ending the war on drugs lies somewhat beyond city council's power – and the continuing cannabis fiasco shows that legalizing drugs is more easily said than done. But council is already asking Ottawa to do things that lie beyond the city's powers. The problem is not that council can't ask; it's that politicians can't be soft on drugs. Indeed, Ms.**

**Wong-Tam cited narcotics as a social ill that must be controlled while defending her proposal for the confiscation of more than two million legally owned guns. No gun-control proposal is unreasonable, it seems, but addressing the cause of gang violence is. The ultimate solution to the gang problem lies outside the Overton window established by 50 years of moral panic.**

**And so we must continue to muddle through. Toronto will remain frustrated, angry and afraid. Ottawa will consider council's proposals, study the problem and do little. Our culture war over guns will continue to derail meaningful conversations about practical and effective gun controls. And the current wave of violence will eventually recede. But before that happens, more people will die – a point underscored on Wednesday morning: Even as Toronto residents read about**

***council's solutions, police were investigating the city's 30th gun-related homicide this year.***

***Our best hope for reducing gang violence and easing its toll on marginalized communities remains investing in those communities, which thankfully forms part of council's solution. The solution will not be quick, nor will it satisfy the urge to do something, anything, to stop the bloodshed. But the victims, their families and the communities that suffer under the everyday threat of violence deserve real solutions, not promises and posturing.***

MORE OF Ron Whitehead's COMMENTS BELOW:

Interesting article to say the least.

I believe that we (hunters & shooters) cannot let our guard down at all. We must keep at it. Note that it appears that the handgun used in this latest shooting was illegally brought into Canada from the USA. Should we get together with President Trump and build a wall?

In spite of all this the federal liberal government has been first up to say how they have been working hard to get Bill C-71 going and will leave no stone unturned in persecuting legal gun owners. This is now even more urgent in light of this recent shooting

Here on the New Brunswick front it is of interest to note that DNR/DERD had now stopped those gun clubs/shooting ranges from allowing archery on their leases. This in spite of the fact that some of these clubs have been holding leases from DNR to operate since the 1960's and 70's and as far as I can find out NEVER has there been an incident with a BOW on one of these leases. Apparently this might change if the CFO (Provincial employee) who enforces the federal Firearms Act and Regulations, can get control of archery on our ranges. Unfortunately no one who manages these ranges seems to care since I have not read even one word about this in any media. I am of the opinion that CFO's across the country are still hurting from Mr. Harper's *Common Sense Firearms Act* and their loss of authority to make arbitrary decisions regarding firearms rules in their province.

Unfortunately it seems as though DNR/DERD has followed this lead even though they promote Bow Hunter Education and bow hunting and shooting in general. Enough said on this issue. If they get our firearms will bows be next?

In any case please do not let your guard down and stay current.

Ron Whitehead