

On the street

We asked people at Loyalist College the following question:

Question: Based on the NRA's comments that the Sandy Hook teachers should have been armed; do you support Loyalist campus security carrying weapons?



Justin Bulman, 29, TV new media, "No, because I don't support murder. However, I do support non-lethal weapons such as tasers or mace."



Brendan Kornblum, 18, police foundations, "Yes, I would support security carrying firearms with proper training, because there are circumstances that may call for weapons and it is better to have them and not need them than to not have them."



Taylor Dubeau, 20, recreation and leisure "I would trust one or two security guards to carry weapons like Wayne; it would make me nervous if the whole force was armed."



Justin Turner, 20, TV new media, "I do not support that because few people carry guns in Canada and there is no need. They are for soldiers and meant to kill."



Lauren Deans, 53, student services registered nurse, "I don't support that; it would give everyone an excuse to carry guns. Too many people live in the moment and weapons are too easy to use."



Samantha Jackson, 18, TV new media, "I am in support because people would listen to security and be more responsive. Weapons in the right hands mean authority."

Editorial

NRA takes twisted view on gun control

"The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun."

This was one of the National Rifle Association's main points recently when debating new gun control regulation. The topic of gun control has been brought to light after the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

Wayne LaPierre, the executive vice president of the NRA, gave a speech during a press conference on Dec. 21, 2012 doing his best to distance the organization from gun violence. I am fairly confident in saying that the majority of the people who heard LaPierre's speech were shocked and appalled by his controversial remarks, especially because of the very recent tragedy that claimed the lives of 27 innocent victims including students, teachers and the shooter's mother.

The NRA's outlook on the Sandy Hook shooting was absolutely ridiculous. Claiming that the only way to solve gun violence is with more guns is not only extremely irresponsible, but also extremely dangerous. The NRA's statement that the only way to control gun violence is with more guns is like McDonalds saying the only way to get rid of obesity is with more Big Mac's. We all know that more guns and gun accessibility will lead to more gun violence and that you are not going to lose weight by eating Big Macs.

The NRA needs to acknowledge that there is a problem with gun violence in the United States and the way to address it is not with more guns but with a more responsible gun control.

I do believe that people have the right to arm and protect them selves. But when we are talking about fully automatic assault rifles that have been manufactured with the sole purpose of killing human beings in a warfare situation, then I think there should be some reconsideration with regards to what weapons the public should be able to own.

The NRA has come up with the idea to put armed guards in every school across the United States, claiming that if there was an armed guard at Sandy Hook Elementary School, the massacre would never have taken place. This is interesting considering on April 20, 1999 there was an armed guard at Columbine High School in Colorado. The fact is that the armed guard was not the answer and did not, in the slightest, stop the two teenaged gunmen from murdering 12 students and one teacher before they committed suicide.

LaPierre also felt that the government is at fault for refusing to create a national database that keeps track of the mentally ill. Here, LaPierre is referring to Adam Lanza, the perpetrator of the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre. Lanza, however, was not mentally ill. He had autism, which is a brain-related developmental problem, not a mental illness.

Shortly after the tragedy at Sandy Hook, scared and concerned parents began going online and purchasing Ballistic Backpacks that can stop rounds from a handgun as a way of protecting their children while they are in school. It's pretty clear that if we are now living in a world where our children have to go to school wearing a bullet proof backpack to be safe, something has gone extremely wrong.

Richard Barclay

Defacement of prime minister's statue a sad statement

Happy birthday Sir John A. Macdonald. Let's celebrate your 19 years of leadership by defacing a statue of you.

It's sad people feel that an effective way to get their point across is by desecrating something.

"This is stolen land," "colonizer" and "murderer" were written on the statue's base.

Sir John A. Macdonald was Canada's first prime minister in 1867.

On the evening of Jan. 10, a day before his 198th birthday, the Sir John A Macdonald statue at City Park in Kingston, Ont. was vandalised with red and white paint.

Not only is this form of expression cowardly, but it's also a waste of money to pay someone to clean it up.

If you're that fervent about your cause or have something that important to say, why not take your passion and turn it into something you can be proud of?

Own it. Don't sneak out in the middle of the night and trash something.

It would be good to believe that people who vandalize other people's property or public property do so because they have nothing in their own lives of value - otherwise wouldn't they be able to relate the destruction to the impact it would have on them and their possessions?

However, thinking back to Remembrance Day last year, when the Afghanistan Repatriation Memorial site was vandalised, it doesn't seem to matter whether it's property, possessions or places of remembrance - all are considered equal when someone just feels like demolishing something.

A few days after the site was dedicated in Trenton, Ont. which was just days after Remembrance Day, security cameras captured footage of a man destroying flowers and plants at the location.

Whether you agree with war or not, have some respect for the fact that these men and women lost their lives in service of our country.

Is nothing untouchable anymore - not even the dead?

Jessica Nyznik



Opinion

Disaster relief continues to be vital service

By Benjamin Priebe

In 1997, Manitoba's Red River burst its banks and over 8,000 Canadian Forces troops were mobilized in relief and rescue efforts, the largest mobilization of troops since the Korean War in 1951. In true Canadian spirit, the government was there for its people when they fell on hard times and Ottawa absorbed the cost of saving lives.

On Thursday, Jan. 10, in Ottawa, Defence Minister Peter MacKay, announced the Department of National Defence will consider charging municipalities and provinces for disaster relief services rendered by the Canadian Armed Forces. Saving lives is no longer an essential service. Traditionally and in true Canadian spirit, Ottawa has picked up the cheque for aid and the mobilization of Canadian Armed Forces such as the 2,500 troops deployed to forest fires in northwestern Ontario in 2011.

MacKay's parliamentary secretary, Chris Alexander, told CBC that Treasury policy has always given the Department of National Defence the power to recoup funds and they have simply not considered acting on it until now. This is not a change in policy but a prudent and heartless shift in dynamics between Ottawa and the Canadian public, sparked by

a 7.4 percent cut to Canada's military budget in 2012 and a tough fiscal year.

With a tsunami warning for the coast of British Columbia last week and a mild winter causing flooding all over the interior, disaster relief may be more important than ever for coastal communities who could now be wary to request intervention for fear of the cost to their bottom line. The 1997 flooding in Manitoba cost \$500 million in damages to the Red River community. Could they possibly pay the prudent Harper government back a short time after being flooded out of house and home? A community that has just been struck by natural disaster needs the support and understanding of the Canadian government and military, not to be sent a billion dollar cheque as they rebuild a crumbled town. Knock knock, Prime Minister Stephen Harper wants his money and it can't come from Sapphire, his new satellite observation program.

The Canadian Armed Forces have six mandates of operation under the Canada First Defence Strategy, one of which is to "support civilian authorities during a crisis in Canada such as a natural disaster". CF's priority is not to spend \$9 billion on fighter jets in a peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan while pinching pennies to save our own

countrymen here at home. Canada First? Harper does not need to balance his cheque-books on the backs of disaster victims.

The recouped funds are meant to be put towards PTSD support and medical clinics for returning soldiers, says Alexander, yet only 1,500 of our 98,000 soldiers and reservists are deployed out of country. If our troops are pulling out of Afghanistan and so unoccupied, why can't we focus on handling the inclement weather and environmental conditions impacting remote communities?

This policy shift leans strongly towards Harper's right-wing government and away from the peaceful and humanitarian nation many Canadians see ourselves as. Ottawa has put into motion the capitalization of a necessary service funded by the Canadian people for the Canadian people. Saving Canadian lives and rebuilding homes and infrastructure cannot be a service provided to those who can afford it, lest we end up with a privatized disaster industry like the U.S.A. For only \$50,000 you can have your home sprayed with fire retardant in the event of a woodland inferno, and of course - not your neighbour's.

What's next? Firefighters sending out bills to families who have lost their homes to flames?

Civil disobedience a matter of perspective

By Jeff Peters

Whose streets? Their streets.

In my foray into photojournalism, I have taken it upon myself to seek out events that would allow me to capture scenes of great emotion and obvious conflict. To this end, I've made it a personal mission to seek out protests where, in some way or another the dissidents of these protests walk a fine line between the right to a peaceful assembly and civil disobedience.

Appropriate use of civil disobedience is in the eye of the beholder. It's a matter of perspective. The passion the protestors feel for their beliefs is a direct indicator of how far they are willing to push legal boundaries.

In the case of Idle No More, there have

been blockades of rail lines and highways. In Cornwall, a blockade, which occurred two weeks ago, was justifiable.

If the purpose of the protest is to bring their voice and message to the government, that has stifled your efforts democratically, then I agree. What better way is there? No one seems to care until you hit their pocket books. Once they are feeling it in the wallet they can't help but take notice. With the blockade of these major links, it will cut through redundant political games and angling.

The matter of public opinion is a fickle one, regardless of political ideology. If people are forced to put up with a relatively mild inconvenience of the use of a motorway, they will quickly turn on the protest. In this sense, this form of protested is flawed.

I've spent time at various Occupy camps, from Kingston to Zuccotti. I've seen mass arrests and many small protests.

There always seems to be a transition, at one point or another, where the movement is co-opted by a group of people with a mentality that was not within the movement's original vision - from the drug idled hang outs of the occupy camps, to the random acts of violence at the G20.

Given the baggage that native politics has on the Canadian psyche a clear end game of the latest movement is unclear. The movement has yet to experience a major crackdown due to its tactics. If we can step back for a moment and examine the strategies that are being employed, we might realize that they aren't necessarily criminal.

The Pioneer

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The Pioneer welcomes your letters and comments. Please send material to the editor at the address below before Wednesday. We reserve the right to edit submissions for content and length. All letters must be signed and include a daytime phone number.

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