

## Are guns really the problem?

Mark Pavilons

"French fries kill more people than guns and sharks, yet nobody's afraid of French fries."

Robert Kiyosaki

Given the rash of gun violence south of the border, I'd like to examine the issue and reflect on the whole, "guns don't kill people, people kill people" idea.

U.S. President Obama will expand background checks and make other changes to America's gun rules via executive action. In the process, he has received some flak.

We are too familiar with mass shootings around the world and have found ourselves hanging our collective heads in shame. You can read some of these laws, for example, maine gun laws, [here](#).

The gun control controversy will likely never end. It's almost as divisive as debates on homosexuality and abortion.

Firearm-related violent crime has received considerable attention in recent years. In October 2007, the federal government's Speech from the Throne identified "tackling crime," particularly violent crime involving firearms, as one of its five key priorities.

Using data from Statistics Canada's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) and Homicide Surveys, it's clear the vast majority of violent crime in Canada is not committed with a firearm. According to 2006 data reported by police to the UCR Survey, most violent crime (75%) was committed by physical force or threats, without the use of any weapon. Weapons were used against 18% of victims of violent crimes, with knives (6.2%) and clubs or blunt instruments (3.0%) being the most common. A firearm was used against 2.4% of all victims.

Police reported 8,105 victims of firearm-related violent crime in 2006, representing a rate of 27.5 per 100,000 population. Robbery (49%) and assault (29%) were the most common violations, accounting for about three-quarters of the total number of firearm-related violent victimizations.

Growing up in rural Caledon, I was exposed to small calibre rifles as a teenager. I remember buying ammunition for my dad at Canadian Tire. While they were always around the house, I don't think I shot anything other than a few targets or cans. I do currently have a small assortment of bb guns and "airsoft" guns. [For the largest range of BB Guns in the UK](#) you could try Only BB Guns, if you are interested in firearms in a non-violent capacity.

Despite the easy access to rifles, those of our generation would never think about using them for criminal purposes. It never entered our minds.

In my opinion, law-abiding gun owners have never been the problem. Products like gun holsters, as reviewed on [outdoorempire.com](#), and other such firearm accessories are enjoyed by responsible Americans across the country and the actions of others shouldn't remove their right to own them. More often than you'd think, law-abiding gun owners become embroiled in legal issues that may require them to enlist the help of a [criminal attorney](#) to help them defend their rights.

"After a shooting spree, they always want to take the guns away from the people who didn't d



o it. I sure as hell wouldn't want to live in a society where the only people allowed guns are the police and the military."

William S. Burroughs

Looking abroad, maybe we can learn a thing or two.

It's been a little over a year since gun owners in Australia were forced by a new law to surrender 640,381 personal firearms to be destroyed by the government, a program costing Australia taxpayers more than \$500 million.

The first year results are now in:

Australia-wide, homicides are up 6.2%; assaults are up 9.6%; armed robberies are up 44%.

This is in the face of figures over the previous 25 years that showed a steady decline in armed robberies.

Australian politicians are at a loss to explain how public safety has decreased, after such monumental effort and expense was expended in "successfully ridding Australian society of guns ..."

The Australian experience speaks for itself. Gun-control laws affect only the law-abiding citizens.

It's hard to know exactly just how to crack this nut or solve this dilemma.

"Guns are part of the American identity."

Henry Rollins

Americans stand behind their Second Amendment rights, which they contend gives them the right to bear arms. The pro-gun lobby is a very strong one.

America's bloody history is filled with armed conflict and how guns ruled the land and changed the landscape.

While weapons of all kinds fill the pages of humankind's history book, I would contend it all has to be put in perspective and considered in context.

Does it make sense to allow citizens to carry handguns in public??Not really. But tell that to Texan lawmakers, who just recently passed a new law, allowing them to tote their sidearms openly. In that state alone, there are roughly 800,000 citizens licenced to carry concealed weapons. Just as an aside, Texas does have the death penalty.

And the majority of Americans surveyed (56%) feel safer due to concealed-carry laws.

While I smile inwardly at images of pistol-packing grannies at the supermarket, I still find it one of the weirdest things I have ever seen. I can hardly wait for this year's Black Friday sales in Texas!

And, to "combat"?the rise in gun violence, the Americans have risen to the challenge. There is a huge demand for gun training programs that "will help responsible gun owners master their weapons and protect their families."

Will closing loopholes and curbing the supply of guns reduce violent crime?

The jury's out on that one.