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is a former national team rifle shooter. He was 1984 Ontario champion and competed in Canada's 1984 and 1988 Olympic trials.

Janet Bagnall's column, "Gun-owners win; women lose" (Opinion, Oct. 28) merits a reply. Does Ms. Bagnall truly believe it is that simplistic? Is she aware that some women are gun owners?

In 1984, Linda Thom, a pistol shooter competing in the Los Angeles Olympic Games, earned Canada's first gold medal since 1968. And Susan Natrass, a trap shooter, is a five-time Olympian and seven-time world champion; in 1981 she beat out Wayne Gretzky for the Lou Marsh Award as Canadian athlete of the year. This is not about men and their toys. Canadian female shooters proudly represent this country, and some have obtained spectacular success in their chosen sports.

The debate about the long-gun registry always comes with the emotional link to Marc Lépine's carnage at the École Polytechnique in 1989. The suggestion is that if you oppose the registry you must have forgotten – or are belittling – the victims of that horrendous massacre.

As a former national team rifle shooter, I was just as horrified by Lépine's actions as anyone else. People objecting



Canadian trap shooter Susan Natrass is a five-time Olympian and seven-time world champion.

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to a useless registry and the sophistry that accompanies it are not forgetting the victims of a senseless crime. They are simply stating the obvious: the registry does not work.

Recently, The Gazette published a three-part series about the registry and some of the horror stories that came with it. One of the stories recounted how, in 2008, a Toronto police tactical unit from the Guns and Gangs Task Force, acting on a tip, invaded the home of a gun owner in Toronto. All his legally registered and properly stored weapons were seized. He was dragged into the street in his underwear

and charged with 14 firearms-related criminal offences. All the charges were later dropped. This raises a question: Why didn't police check the registry? Ms. Bagnall's comment to gun owners who have had – or who might face – similar experiences is, "Get over yourselves." How would she react if a woman were treated in this manner?

Gun owners have raised the fact that Lépine's gun, a Ruger Mini 14 purchased lawfully, would have been registered when he committed his mass murder. Ms. Bagnall counters that gun owners should demand that this gun be banned. This is an inter-

esting method of controlling potentially dangerous objects: If someone owns a certain kind of car and kills someone else while driving intoxicated, just remove all such cars from the road!

Ms. Bagnall says that the registry has saved women's lives, yet she fails to provide a single example of that superb accomplishment.

The registry failed to prevent the death of Laval police officer Valérie Gignac, and it failed spectacularly in preventing the Dawson College shootings. Every weapon used during all three armed attacks that have taken place on campuses in Montreal was

lawfully obtained and registered. A unifying thread in the three cases was bureaucratic incompetence.

All three murderers had previously exhibited behaviour that should have rung alarm bells when their backgrounds were checked for gun ownership, as is required by law. Instead, firearm-acquisition certificates were issued to them – with devastating consequences.

Ms. Bagnall reports that 30 per cent of women who die as a result of domestic violence have been shot. This means that 70 per cent are killed using something other than a firearm. It also means that the

point is domestic violence and how to eradicate it, not that guns need to be registered.

She also notes that nearly half of the guns legally seized by police in 2009 were listed on the registry. But it follows that more than half of them were not.

Ms. Bagnall acknowledges that the registry has cost \$2 billion but says there is nothing that can be done about that because the money has been spent.

The response is twofold: First, where were registry supporters when the runaway cost of this registry was annually decried by the federal auditor-general on down? They were busy telling the rest of us to be quiet and sneering: "How much is a life worth?" There was little, if any, concern for taxpayers' money being utterly wasted.

Second, there is a lot more at stake here than just the existence of a white elephant. There are files with personal information on citizens whose sole crime is to practise the sport of shooting. The federal government is quite right to destroy this data to protect honest gun owners. Yet, the Quebec National Assembly has voted unanimously to tell Quebec's chief firearms officer to disobey the law and take all measures necessary to preserve the Quebec data in the firearms registry.

Interesting, isn't it? The Quebec government is willing to break the law to get its way, just like criminals do. Perhaps we should set up a registry to protect society from such scoundrels.