



# COMMENT



## THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## Accomplishments of Hadfield are inspiring

Thursday's launch of the Space Shuttle Endeavour was an amazing sight.

We've seen many launches before, but this one was extra special since Astronaut Chris Hadfield was about to make history by being the first Canadian to perform a space walk.

However you feel about the space program, you have to admit the accomplishments of Col. Hadfield are inspiring.

First, he was selected by the Canadian Space Agency as one of four astronauts out of 5,000 applicants. That's stiff competition. He's gone up in space not once, but now twice, and this time he walks in space. It's a reminder that achieving your dreams in life may not be out of reach even if they seem that way.

In a story published in our special Space Walk 2001 section Friday, we asked Col. Hadfield's proud father Roger if he thought his son was a hero. He responded modestly, "I suppose he is." Then he added that Canadians need to recognize their heroes. Well, we would like to recognize him right now as a true hero — a true inspiration.

## Providing a steak sandwich is the least I can do

He was a homeless person in downtown Toronto and I knew he was going to ask me for money because he was looking straight at me and there was nobody else on the sidewalk.

I've become accustomed to ignoring them, like most of us. I normally just shake my head and keep walking.

I work hard for my money and have debts, so I'm not in a position to give it away to somebody whose job it is to panhandle.

As I approached him he said: "Can you spare \$150,000 so I can buy a house?"

That was pretty funny, and I couldn't help but smile. Mostly, I was trying to keep the parking money in my pocket from jingling so that he wouldn't hear it when I told him I had none.

"Sorry," I shrugged. "No change."

"Well," he said, as he crossed the street, "Somebody bought me a steak sandwich last night and I want to get me another one."

He didn't say it in a way to convince me to change my mind, or even to feel sorry for him. He smiled and his face lit up in a way that suggested it was the most exciting prospect that he could possibly imagine. And it was believable

because he wasn't hanging around waiting for me to say anything else.

It made me stop. He had just gotten personal, unlike most of the panhandlers who make it easy for you to ignore them when you walk by.

It was around dinnertime on Easter Sunday and I had been feeling sorry for myself because I had to go to work without an Easter dinner. I was headed into the Hockey Night in Canada studio where they would lay out all kinds of treats, bottled water, coffee, or anything else we wanted.

The streets were deserted as I watched him shuffle away in his raggedy clothes. A steak sandwich? Easter Sunday? I fingered the loonies and toonies in my pocket. The parking prices down there are ridiculous.

"Wait," I called out, putting down my things and reaching into my pocket.

He didn't hear me. He turned a corner and disappeared out of sight.

I stood there for a moment longer, picked up my things and went on my way.

I'm as compassionate about the homeless as anyone else, maybe even more so, but they're not a part of my daily life, so it's like out of sight out



## OUR READERS WRITE

### It's because of dedicated volunteers that the Cancer Society leads way in fighting cancer

Dear Editor:

In recognition of National Volunteer Week (April 22 to 28), I want to thank the many wonderful volunteers of Milton who support the Canadian Cancer Society. This is also the United Nations' International Year of Volunteers, a special time to celebrate the work of volunteers.

It's thanks to our many dedicated volunteers that the Canadian Cancer Society leads the way in the

fight against cancer.

Our volunteers work as council members, sell daffodils and go door-to-door during Daffodil Month in April. They drive patients to and from cancer treatments. They offer compassion and support in cancer clinics and lodges. They plan and organize our special fundraising events and put on public displays and forums.

Our volunteers are committed to our goal of eradicating cancer and

improving the quality of care of people living with cancer.

I'm fortunate to work with such committed people who dedicate their time and efforts to the Canadian Cancer Society and their community.

To all volunteers, please accept my sincere gratitude. We couldn't do it without you.

**Davina Burns, unit manager  
Burlington unit and Milton  
branch**



with MURRAY TOWNSEND

### On the loose

of mind. Like most of us, I think this is bad and they should do something about it. Now, pass the steak sauce.

I wouldn't give a cent to the squeegee kids or other younger panhandlers in downtown Toronto. They're con men as far as I'm concerned, who intimidate a lot of people and give the city a black eye. They can work; they just choose not to because they're lazy, although I wouldn't say they're not smart because getting money for nothing is a good gig if you can get it.

I don't see the squeegee people with squeegees anymore, they just walk around at stoplights in

Toronto with a cup, seeking donations. Not a chance from me.

Most of us give to charity in some form or another, whether it's donations at work, or something else. We know it's important and we care. But, we rarely see where the money goes or what they do with it, so we're able to keep a certain distance between ourselves and the people in need.

I think we like it that way. Keeping it impersonal, so as not to remind ourselves how fortunate we are and that it's possible that we could be in the same situation as them.

The key is that they're people. It's too easy to forget, unless you come face to face with them.

Since Easter Sunday, I've taken to parking further away from where I need to go, where it's considerably cheaper.

Instead of keeping my eyes on the sidewalk, I've been searching the crowds, looking for the same man, making sure I have money in my pocket beyond my parking fees.

A steak sandwich to make one person's life a little more tolerable?

That's the least I can do.