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Smoking restrictions should be legislated by Province: council

• from MOST on page 1

a more stringent stance on restaurant smoking and Milton must act to keep in line with those areas, councillor Ken Keates said. "I certainly am an advocate of a no smoking policy."

While most councillors feel stronger smoking regulations are necessary, several said they felt uneasy about addressing the issue at the municipal level.

"I'd like to eliminate smoking (in restaurants and bars). I think that's the way we should be headed," councillor Ron Furik

"It's not right to have municipalities make that decision."

RON FURIK

said. "But in fairness to all the townships and the regions and the businesses, it's not right to have municipalities make that deci-

sion."

Numerous councillors echoed Mr. Furik's comments, suggesting smoking restrictions should be provincially legislated. "It is a health care issue, a workplace issue, which is all provincial jurisdiction," Mr. Malboeuf said.

While the majority of councillors say they favour toughening up the smoking bylaw, they are also concerned the move could be detrimental to area restaurant owners. The fear is that smokers will no longer frequent establishments in which they are prohibited from lighting up.

"I don't think it's (restaurant smokers) a real hot issue with people. I think people are handling it better than legislation can handle it. I think smokers are pretty sensitive now about blowing smoke your way," councillor Rick Day said. "In my experience it hasn't really been a problem. The practice, the habit out there has moved ahead of where government is. It seems to me, in Milton anyway, to be working pretty well."

Councillors Wally Hunter and John Challinor agreed, adding that they feel the current bylaw is aggressive enough to curb restaurant smoking. "I want to hear from the restaurants in our community before I make a decision on what to do. As a principle, I certainly am supportive of a non-smoking environment in a restaurant, but that's my personal view. I'm always very concerned about dictating my personal views on the general public," he said.

The flip-side to that coin is all the non-smokers who may be more inclined to visit a smoke-free restaurant, Mayor Gordon Krantz suggested. "If I want to go to a restaurant but it's smoky, I don't go. If the restaurants are non-smoking, maybe more non-smokers will go."

Mr. Krantz said he supports a strengthened bylaw.

Councillor Art Melonson told The Champion he is undecided if restaurant smoking should be hardened. It's too early in the discussions to choose a side, he said.

"I don't smoke myself, but I do believe smokers have rights as well. I have mixed feelings about the whole thing."

Councillor Cindy Lunau was unavailable for comment at press time.

Smoking bylaw discussions are not currently on the council agenda, but are expected to begin after regional council formally requests a tougher stance.

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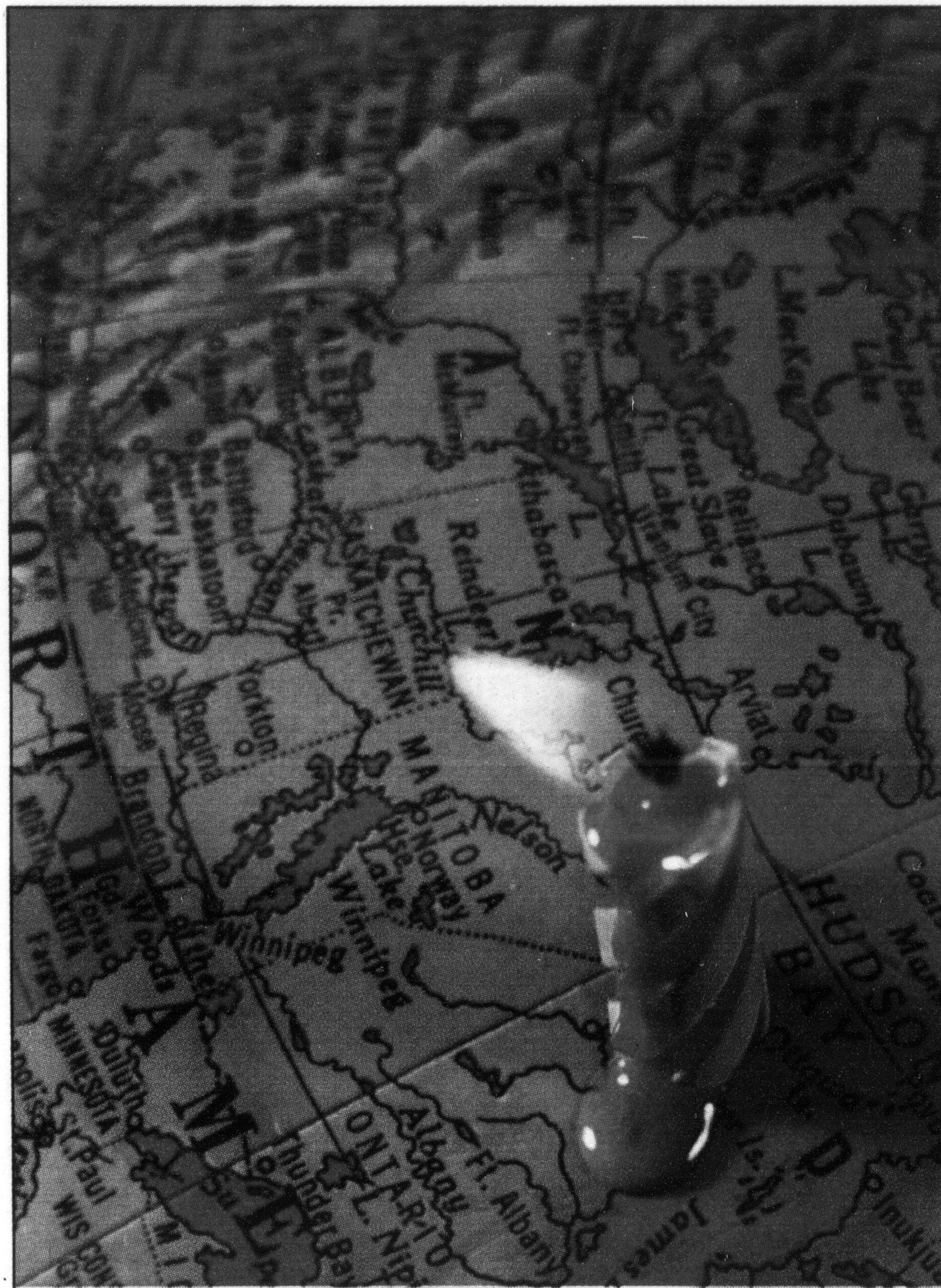
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The ambassador represents the Fair at local events and the Canadian Exhibition in August 2002. Contestants must be 18 years of age by August 16, 2002.

Entry forms and rules can be picked up at the Milton Fairgrounds office (136 Robert St.) Tuesdays and Thursdays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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