



COMMENT



THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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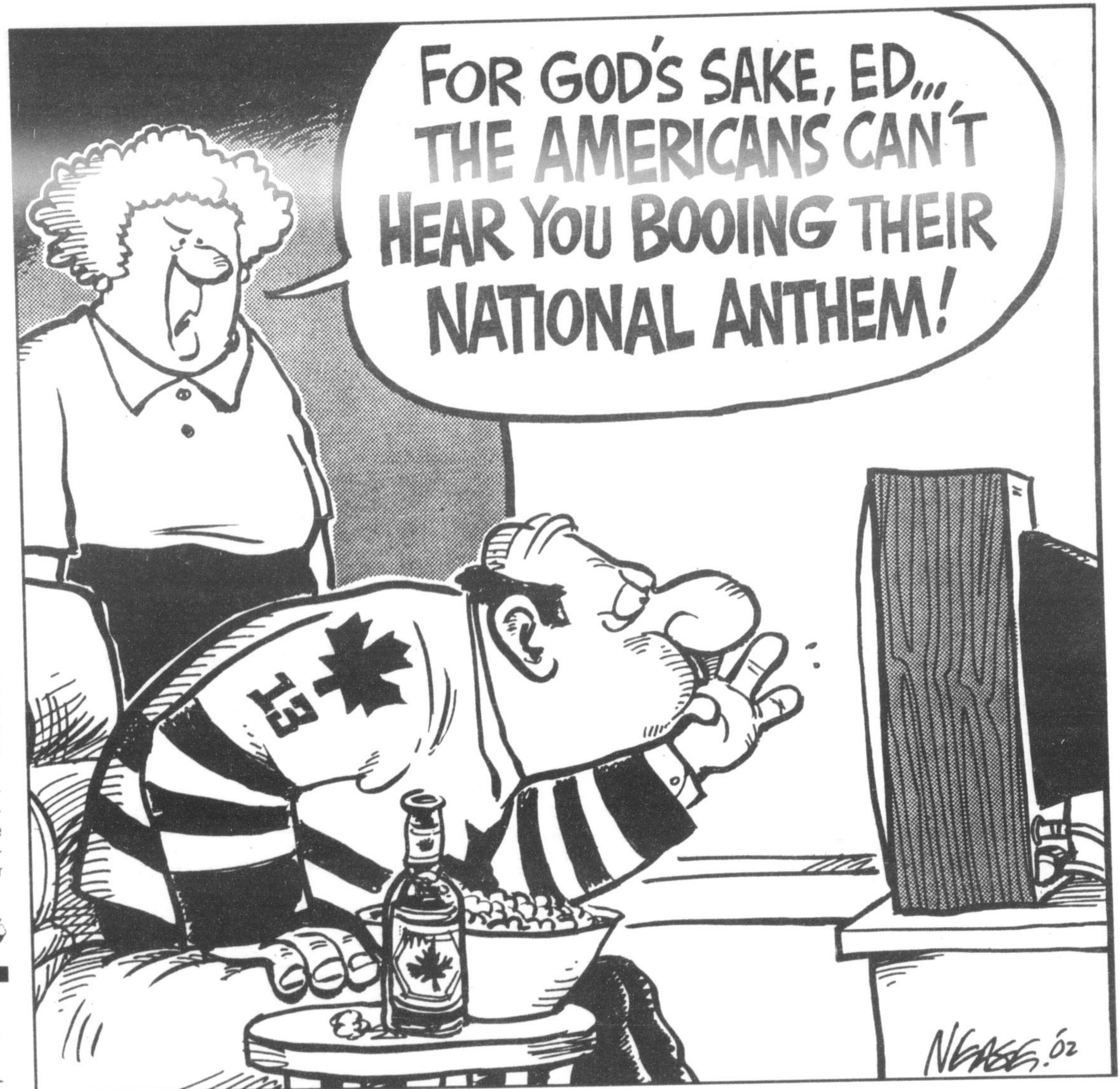
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Halton needs to look after its own youths

As you drive along our tree-lined streets or pass our numerous businesses, it's hard to believe that in Halton we have nothing available to help our young people in crisis.

The homeless youth of Halton — and, yes, they exist — are in need of the community's assistance. There are no beds here for teenagers who have been kicked out of the house by parents or roommates, or evicted from their apartments. Where are they supposed to go?

There are no emergency shelters in Halton that are capable of accommodating them while they try to get back on their feet.

There's a program, however, that's doing its best to find temporary housing for the displaced youth. It makes much more sense to find homes where the teens live instead of shipping them off to Hamilton or Mississauga for care. We need to look after our own.

Bridging the Gap, which has received short-term funding from the federal government and the United Way, is appealing to the community to assist our homeless teens. What can we do?

Easy, says program co-ordinator Catherine Dove-Smith. The biggest obstacle is finding beds. So if you are in a position to host a teen for four to six weeks, then Ms Dove-Smith wants to hear from you.

If you'd like more information, Bridging the Gap hosts an orientation meeting at 7 p.m. Monday at the Halton Regional Building in Oakville.

OUR READERS WRITE

Reader hopes school board won't be intimidated by opposition to its Holocaust teaching methods

Dear Editor:

I want to thank The Champion for its editorial regarding the Holocaust that appeared in its Tuesday, Apr. 16 issue.

I agree with you entirely and hope the few letters received won't intimidate the Halton Catholic District School Board.

It can't be easy for Frank Junger to share his painful experiences of the Holocaust, but what could be better than a first-hand account.

I commend him for his courage and I'm sure the students learned

the truth in a way that doesn't come from a history book. We need to hear the truth.

Of course, it's an emotional issue. I can remember as a young teenager seeing the pictures in the newspapers as the Allies freed the death camps. It was a painful subject for years, indeed, but it's history.

As for hating the Germans, we were all responsible for what happened. We turned a blind eye to what was happening to the Jews in Europe, and Canada even refused to accept the children of the refugee

ship St. Louis.

This attitude gave the Nazis permission in a sense to carry on with their ethnic cleansing.

But, it's not about blame. It's about joining with Prime Minister Jean Chretien as he declared when visiting Auschwitz, "Never again!"

Let's hope students in 2002 will grow up to be more compassionate than their forefathers in 1935 to 1945, not only to Jews but also to all races.

Mary Cummings
Campbellville

Fax your letters to the editor to 878-4943.

I have to admit, these guys had me close to tears

I must confess, I had a hard time keeping my tears in check when I spoke to two of the four Milton District High School students moments before they shaved their heads in support of their friend who was diagnosed with leukemia several months ago.

It wasn't that they were all teary eyed and emotionally distraught — just the opposite, in fact.

When I spoke with Fraser McGaffin and Sean Magee just prior to the shaving, both spoke matter-of-factly of why they wanted to shave off their locks to support their friend, 17-year-old Craig Mitchell.

And Jon Christink and Colin Mont — who said he's been best friends with Craig all his life — showed no regrets post shaving.

In just a few days, the boys managed to raise

\$3,513.04, which will go toward leukemia research, at the request of Craig's family.

When the boys sat down and said goodbye to their hair (Sean told me it took him an entire year to grow his dread locks the way he wanted them to be), they did so without the slightest bit of hesitation.

After all, as the guys put it, it's just hair.

But it was more than just hair. It was that somewhat subtle compassion hidden underneath the more obvious cause that really struck a sentimental note.

When speaking to Craig's mother Mary, who made sure to come out to the head shaving event that Friday afternoon with her son, it was obvious from her tone of voice and the look in her eyes she had the utmost respect for the four boys who helped raise money in support of



with FANNIE SUNSHINE

Random thoughts

Craig.

And her son also knew he had a pretty good group of friends.

In fact, the only thing that surprised Craig about the head shaving wasn't the fact his four friends said they would do it; it was the fact he heard several girls were also going to be in on it, but later backed out.

But no hard feelings.

Although Craig has been out of school since January (he's currently home schooled) and has barely been out of the house since beginning chemotherapy treatment, being able to witness the shavings that day was a real treat — and something he wanted to be part of.

As he put it, if the shoe was on the other foot, he would have done the same thing.

It wasn't the amount raised or how long it took to raise the money that mattered. It was the fact these guys wanted to do whatever they could to help out their buddy, and this was the one way they thought they could help.

It's not everyday we hear such stories about individuals going that extra mile to help out a friend in need — even if those individuals saw it as nothing out of the ordinary.