



# COMMENT



## THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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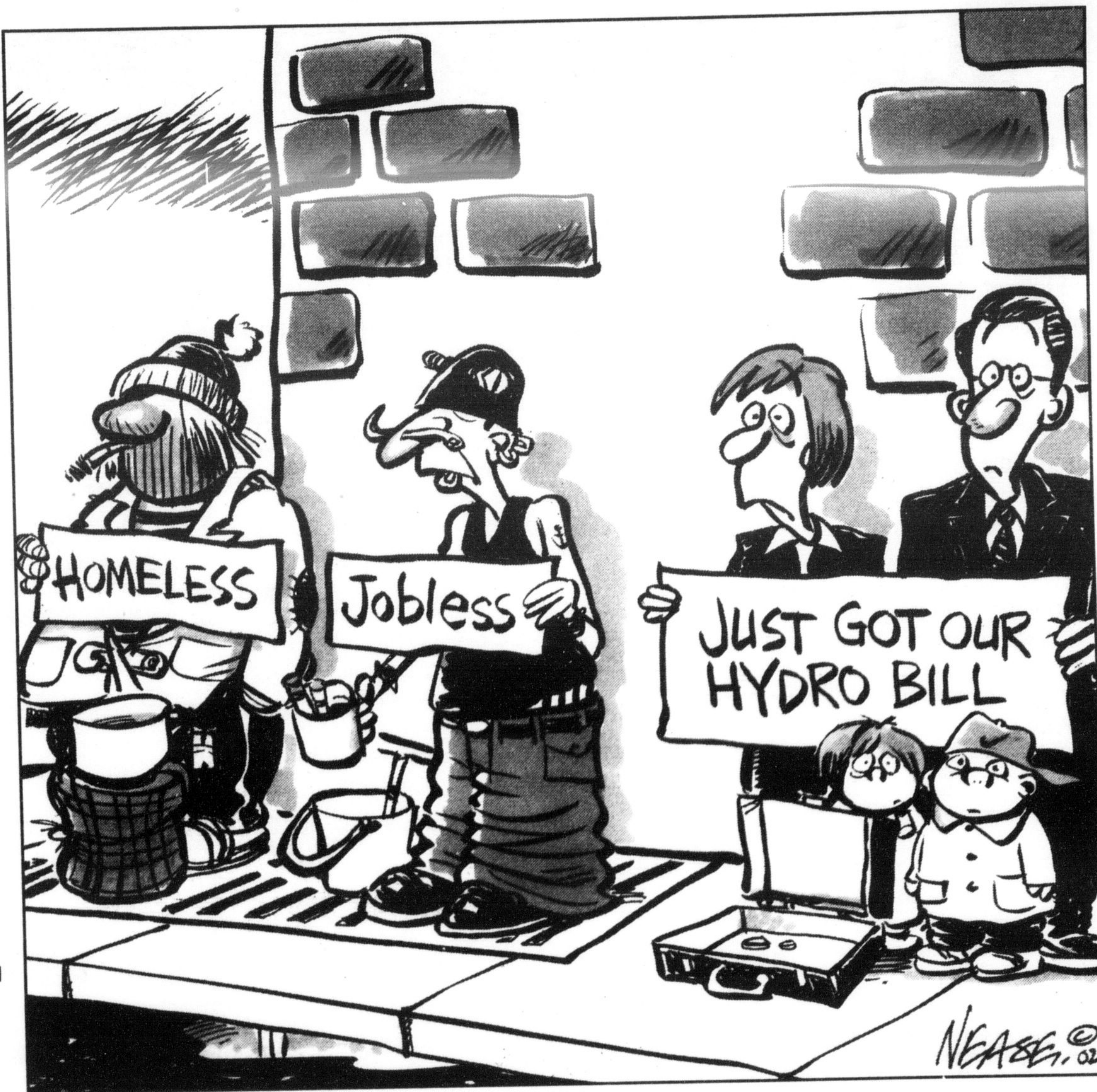
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## Money well spent

We applaud the Halton District School Board's decision last week to spend \$1.5 million on hiring 54 new educational assistants to work with special needs students.

The move will allow 27 special needs high school students, who are currently not attending school or who attend on a limited basis, to return to the classroom full-time.

Earlier this month, the Halton District Catholic School Board approved a \$200,000 expenditure to hire 12 full-time educational assistants.

In both cases, the boards don't have the money for these expenditures.

And unless they come up with some unexpected savings, both boards will likely wind up with deficits at the end of the 2002-03 budget year.

But rather than calling them irresponsible with taxpayers' money, we prefer to congratulate them on their courage in standing up to the Ministry of Education.

Years ago, the provincial government mandated that special needs students couldn't be denied access to publicly-funded schools.

Yet, while the ministry has provided funding for these students, it hasn't kept pace with the demand for services.

As a result, many students who require extra help in the classroom haven't been served.

Hopefully, the extra educational assistants will alleviate this problem.

## OUR READERS WRITE

### Reader says he and wife witnessed smoking at local bar, despite town bylaw prohibiting it

Dear Editor:

On Friday, Oct. 11, my wife and I went to The Dickens restaurant in Milton for dinner. We are regulars and usually eat there three or four times a month. We like the English pub atmosphere and the food and staff are excellent.

One drawback when visiting this establishment prior to the non-smoking by-law was the second-hand smoke that you had to endure, plus the smell of smoke that entered your clothes.

We were pleased when the by-law was passed, as it made visiting this restaurant much more enjoyable.

You can imagine our surprise

when we entered The Dickens October 11 and smelled cigarette smoke and realized that there were at least four patrons smoking in the main bar area.

It appeared other restaurants in the area were doing the same thing and there was a concern that business would be lost if they didn't do the same thing.

We live in Moffat, which is almost central between The Dickens and The Shakespeare restaurant on the south side of Guelph. The Shakespeare is also an English pub style restaurant with a similar atmosphere to The Dickens.

The one advantage that The

Shakespeare now has is that it's a truly non-smoking establishment and obeys the bylaw that's in effect there.

We now have a choice to make. We can go to The Dickens and put up with second-hand smoke and all the issues associated with it or we can go to The Shakespeare and enjoy a cleaner environment.

Our politicians also have a choice. They can stand up and enforce the bylaw that they passed or do nothing and make the whole process and reasons for passing the bylaw a joke.

Michael Birks  
Milton

## What's the purpose of bylaw without enforcement?

Milton's smoking bylaw is finally being enforced — though not with much enthusiasm.

This week saw the first tickets handed out to a bar. The Dickens received two tickets Monday for allegedly permitting smoking and having visible ashtrays.

Each fine is \$190.

As of press time yesterday, The Dickens was the only establishment in town to be ticketed.

It has taken longer than four months of this new bylaw being in place before any substantial action was taken. Previously, the closest thing to enforcement was a sturdy warning.

This is unacceptable. What's the purpose of having a bylaw if enforcement is virtually non-existent?

There was a hitch holding back enforcement. The Town needed approval of its fine structure from the Chief Judge of Ontario — an approval

that came late last week.

However, seeing as this approval was necessary for enforcement, it should have been sought at the time the bylaw was set into motion, not in late July, as was the case.

So now the bylaw enforcement officers (of which the Town has two) and health department officials can ticket smokers and bars.

The problem is, anyone caught smoking isn't legally obligated to disclose their name to a bylaw enforcement officer or health department official.

If this bylaw is to be enforced to the extent the public was lead to believe by council, we need the police involved to collect names and be a real deterrent.

At this point, the only ones threatened by the bylaw are the bars and restaurants themselves — although the fines can add up. An individual or a



From my  
perspective

with RICHARD VIVIAN

business could, in theory, be ticketed repeated times a day, every day.

In a recent investigation by The Champion, numerous establishments were permitting smoking, several of which had been doing so for quite some time.

How about spreading the tickets around with a little more zeal? I'm sure there's no shortage of

information coming from the public on where there's smoking. Fourteen complaints were registered with the Town in August alone and 50 since the bylaw came into effect.

All that aside, bar owners are scheduled to appeal to town council Monday in an effort to overturn or modify the smoking bylaw. There is no report from Town staff or recommendations scheduled for council's consideration at that time.

Despite the problems with enforcement, it would be to the detriment of town council to pull an about-face on this issue now and I urge them not to do so.

It was strong public support which put the bylaw in place and that support, I believe, hasn't dwindled — only thrown its hands in the air out of frustration for the lack of enforcement.

Keep the smoking ban, enforce it and let everyone get on with their lives.