

'Weedless Wednesday' may change

The Halton Youth Action Alliance (HYAA) is working to get the title of the annual quit smoking day — Weedless Wednesday — changed for 2008.

The group believes the title is misinterpreted by youth and is drawing attention to marijuana.

In early January, the HYAA surveyed 56 youth aged 13 to 18 in Halton to explore their understanding and awareness of the term Weedless Wednesday. The results of the survey indicated that:

- 95 per cent hadn't heard of Weedless Wednesday.
- 88 per cent didn't think the title Weedless Wednesday represented the ideas behind the day.
- 81 per cent thought the day had to do with marijuana.

The group sent a letter to the

Canadian Council for Tobacco Control (CCTC) that identified their concerns on the issue and included results of the survey and some suggestions for alternative titles such as QUIT (Quit Using It Today), TGIF (Tobacco Goes Invisible Friday) and Wheezeless Wednesday.

The youth alliance will follow up with the CCTC to discuss the recommendations. The group suggested in its letter that a contest be held in high schools across the country to come up with an alternative title for Weedless Wednesday.

The HYAA is comprised of 21 high school youth employed by Halton Region to support youth tobacco prevention efforts in the community.

"It is of great value that we have the peer leaders on staff to

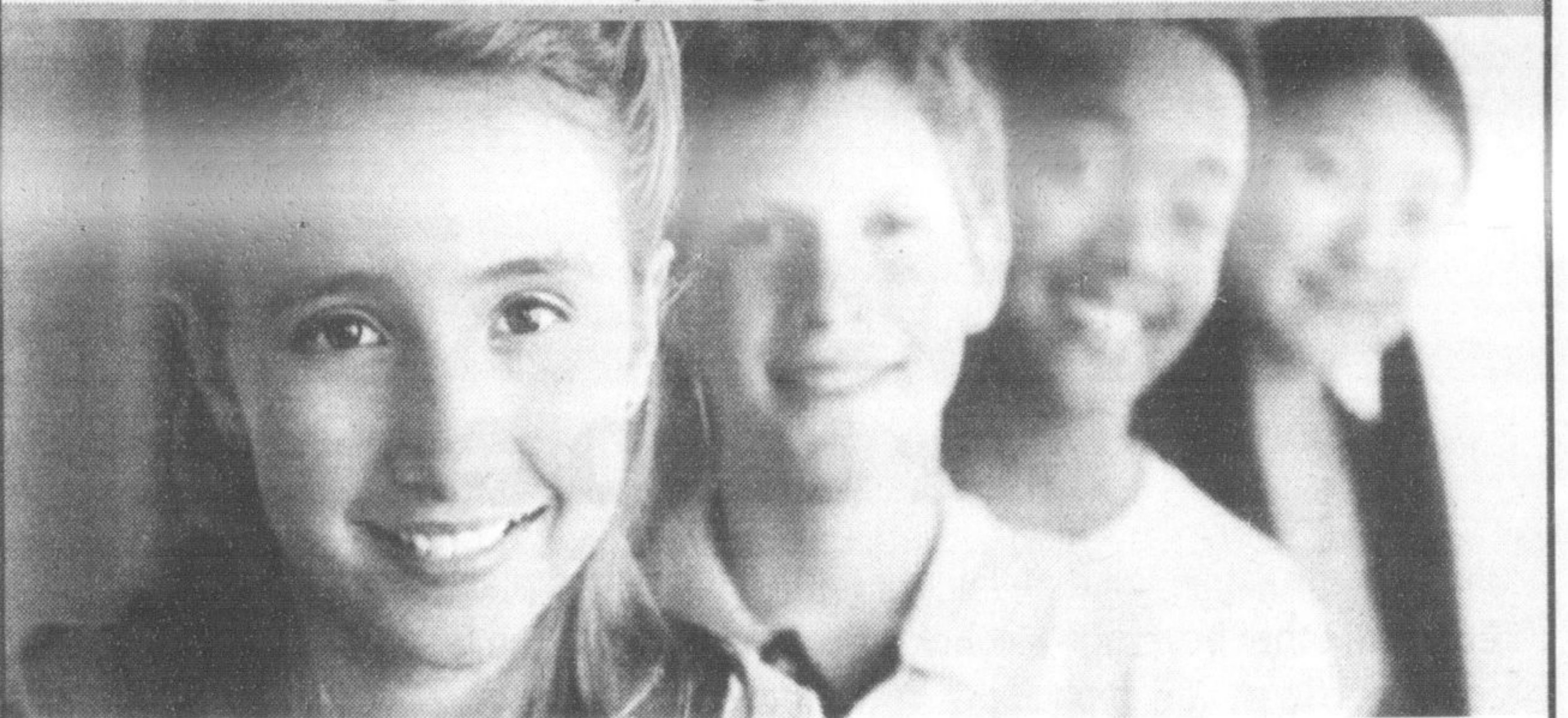
assist us in making sure the health messages we are promoting are clear to all Halton residents including youth," said Halton Medical Officer of Health Dr. Bob Nosal.

National Non-Smoking Week and Weedless Wednesday are co-ordinated by the CCTC. The public education campaign takes place during the third week of January and has been running since 1977.

Weedless Wednesday is a day set aside during National Non-Smoking Week to encourage people to have a smoke-free day. The idea behind the day is to promote a one-day-at-a-time approach to quitting smoking.

For more information on the HYAA call (905) 825-6000 or visit www.halton.ca.

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Smoking kills 16,000 Ontarians per year

• from **SECOND-HAND** on page A10
air for non-smokers and smokers to breathe.

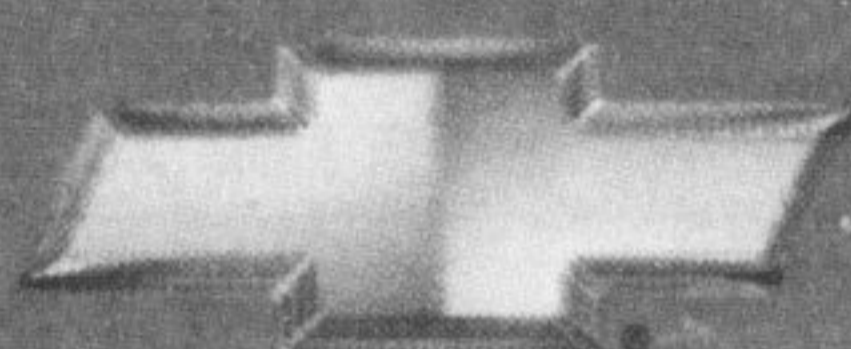
Second-hand smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, many known to cause cancer.

According to the Province, tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable disease and

death in Ontario, killing 16,000 Ontarians annually.

For those who need help quitting smoking but can't attend Halton's Stop Smoking Clinics, the Smokers' Helpline (1-877-513-5333) is available. It averages 11,000 calls per year.

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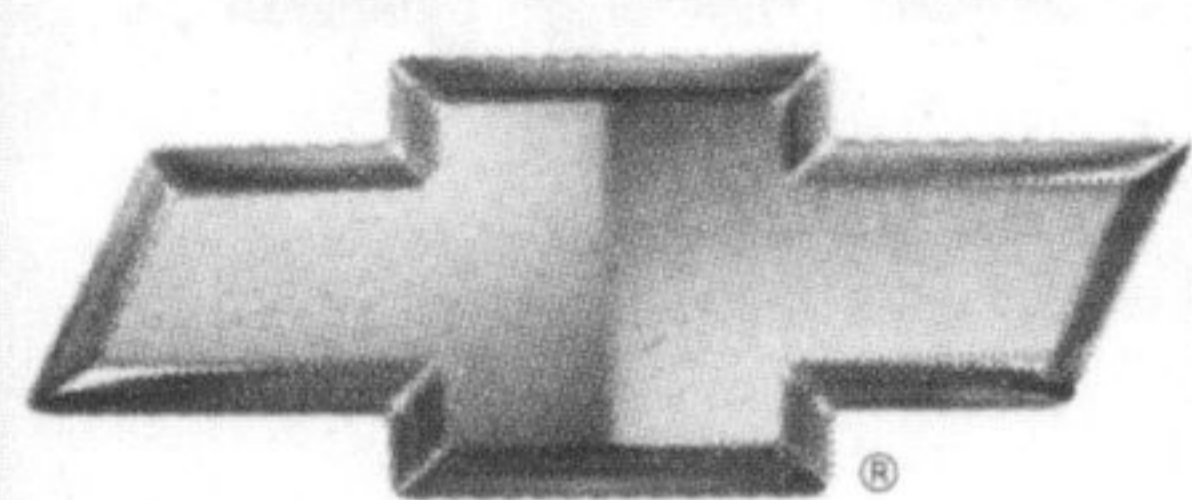
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