

Health

New legislation designed to keep youth smoke-free

By **ROGER BELGRAVE**
Staff Reporter

Medical experts attribute thousands of deaths each year to the daily habit shared by several million Canadians.

In Ontario alone, there are an estimated 1.8 million adults who continue to light up in the face of mounting social pressure and discouraging medical evidence. As tolerance levels of the majority non-smokers falls and health costs rise, politicians are beginning to use their powers to influence this particular lifestyle choice.

Both the federal and provincial governments have decided the best way to deter young people from smoking is through legislation.

Ontario has passed what it believes is North America's toughest smoking legislation. Markham and other municipalities across Ontario should begin to notice the impact this fall.

Bill 119, the Tobacco Control Act, is intended to complement the federal government's Tobacco Sales to Young Persons Act passed just last February.

Parts of Ontario's anti-tobacco legislation bear stricter regulations than its federal counterpart.

Ontario adds a year to federal age limits and will prohibit selling and supplying tobacco to anyone younger than 19.

Retailers will bear legal burden for ensuring tobacco purchasers are of age. Retailers who violate new regulations face stiff fines and could lose their right to sell tobacco.

At year's end, the legislation will prohibit tobacco sales in pharmacies and other health facilities. At the same time,

cigarette machines in Ontario will be confined to bars and taverns.

The legislation is supposed to restrict or ban smoking in a wide range of public places, while making it more difficult for teenagers to buy cigarettes.

"The whole key here is trying to keep our young people from starting," said Larry O'Connor. The Durham-York MPP is parliamentary assistant to health minister Ruth Grier and played a significant role in designing the anti-tobacco legislation.

The act was developed as part of the Ontario Tobacco Strategy aimed at getting smokers and would-be smokers to butt out.

Smoking has been labeled Ontario's number one preventable cause of death. Researchers believe tobacco claims 13,000 lives each year in Ontario. According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, tobacco use annually kills over 38,000 nationwide.

The bill could be considered one of those rare phenomenon in politics.

It was legislation that garnered substantial support from all parties.

With health costs associated to tobacco use burning a hole in taxpayers' pockets, intervention by elected officials was inevitable.

Government officials estimate millions are spent each year to treat tobacco related illnesses.

Despite the good intentions, there is fear legislative strategy in this particular area comes close to attacking freedom of choice.

O'Connor believes people need to understand there are costs associated with their choices.

But he insisted government's motivations are as much about sense as it is about dollars.

The focus is health, he explained.

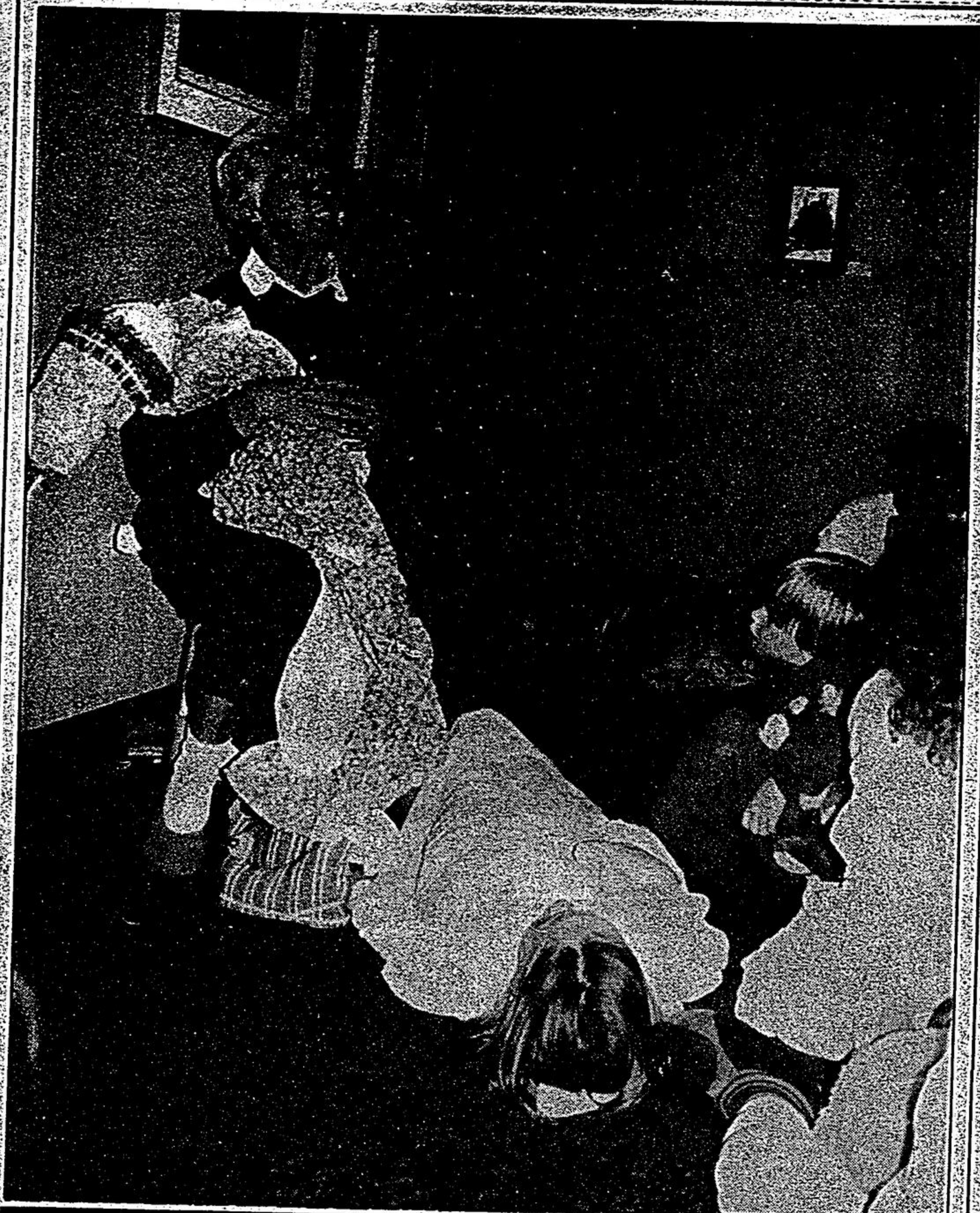
"We're not trying to dictate what they (people) can or can't do," he added. "What we're trying to do is make sure they're aware of what they're getting in to."

O'Connor noted there is still work to be done on fine-tuning regulations.

For all impacted by the legislation, there are plans for an education blitz sometime this fall. That is when the bill is expected to receive proclamation.

The government's legislative efforts to curb tobacco use is expected to light a fire under more than a few smokers. It's difficult to ignore the health concerns.

However, tobacco producers, manufacturers and retailers certainly aren't comfortable with political actions that threaten their financial fitness.



Pajama party

Shella McLeod, librarian at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library, puts on her expressive face while reading for the children at the Latcham Gallery's bedtime story reading this week as part of the CANSCAIP collection of Canadian illustration.

Photo/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Thanks from Amnesty chapter

Dear Editor,

The members of Amnesty International, Group 54, wish to say thank you to the Tribune for the coverage in the Stouffville Calendar of its Novelty Car Rally on Sunday, Oct. 16. The rally was a great success supported by beautiful fall weather that we are sure was generated

by the sense of community spirit that exists in Stouffville! Our congratulations go to the winning car ably driven and navigated by the team of Halina Przybyszewska, Bob Allison, and Jody Allison, all of R.R. 2, Stouffville.

Roger Glazin
for Group 54.

"FRAN SAINSBURY WORKS FOR THE PEOPLE OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE"



FRAN SAINSBURY FOR MAYOR

FRAN SAINSBURY HAS THE CREDENTIALS AND THE DESIRE TO SERVE YOU

VOTE SAINSBURY NOVEMBER 14

AUTHORIZED BY C.F.O. FOR CANDIDATE FRAN SAINSBURY

FRAN SAINSBURY

- HAS THE DESIRE TO SERVE THE RESIDENTS OF OUR MUNICIPALITY AS MAYOR
- IS ACTIVE AND WELL INFORMED ABOUT THE NEEDS OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE
- IS A LONG-TIME RESIDENT AND BUSINESS PERSON IN OUR COMMUNITY
- HAS BOTH PROFESSIONAL AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE DEALING WITH ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT.

FRAN SAINSBURY'S PAST & PRESENT INVOLVEMENT:

- TEACHING AT BALLANTRAE PUBLIC SCHOOL
- A "FORMER" CAREER AS A REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON, ALTHOUGH STILL LICENSED LOCALLY
- REGULAR ATTENDANCE AT THE BLOOMINGTON CHURCH
- NINE YEARS AS CHAIRMAN OF PRESERVE OUR WATER RESOURCES
- 1982 "CITIZEN OF THE YEAR"

ELECTED OFFICE

- HAS SERVED ON ALL TOWN BOARDS AND COMMITTEES
- 1982-85 COUNCILLOR WARD 4
- 1985-94 MAYOR & REGIONAL COUNCILLOR
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE TOWN & REGION
- FUND-RAISING FOR YORK-DURHAM HERITAGE RAILWAY AND MANY OTHER WORTHWHILE PROJECTS
- YORK REGION HOUSING AUTHORITY, MANAGEMENT, HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
- YORK REGION FIRE SERVICES REVIEW COMMITTEE