

Union says new chief 'real McCoy'

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very grateful, as a professional police officer and a caring citizen," he said. Suggesting morale has been harmed by bad publicity, Fantino said the frontline officers can't be blamed for the failings of the force. "The people in the trenches are distanced from this," he said.

Still, officers will be watching closely as Fantino attempts to reshape a force that has been mired by sloppy investigations, the criminal investigation of its ex-chief and a damning provincial audit that found underfunding and mismanagement.

While the task appears to be daunting, Fantino does have the work of

interim Chief Peter Scott to fall back on.

Scott was a former Metro Toronto deputy police chief.

Since taking on the job in April, 1997, he has quietly worked with the police services board to implement recommendations from the audit.

When Scott was named acting chief, he blamed many of the force's problems on "frugal politicians" who failed to keep pace with the region's growth.

Fantino will be dealing with many of those politicians as he works to improve the force.

But it's doubtful he'll kowtow to politicians on the police services board, including the strong-willed

chairperson Eldred King.

Journalists at the London Free Press said Fantino quickly gained respect among the Forest City politicians for standing up for what he believed in.

"He won't take any bullets from anyone," a police reporter said. "If he thinks the force isn't being treated fairly, he'll have no qualms saying so."

London Mayor Dianne Hackett said Fantino is exactly what York Region needs.

"He had no sympathy for criminals and that attitude was appreciated by the community and responsible for the low levels of crime here," Hackett said.

FACTS ON FANTINO

- Came to Canada in 1953, leaving native Italy at age 11.
- Began policing career as security guard at Yorkdale Mall in North Yorks.
- Joined Metro force in the early 1960s, working his way up to acting staff superintendent before becoming London's chief in 1991.
- Moved to Woodbridge with his family in 1981, where he still resides.
- Became the president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police this week.

- Past chairperson of Criminal Intelligence Services Ontario.
- A leading advocate of changes to the criminal code to protect children from sexual exploitation.
- Has taken a special interest in battling organized crime, especially motorcycle gangs and drug syndicates.
- Recipient of Volunteer of the Year from the London Urban Alliance on Race Relations in 1993.
- Named the "Ordine al Merito" from the national Congress of Italian Canadians in 1994.
- Received the "Award of Excellence" in 1997 from Criminal Intelligence Service Canada.

"Chief Fantino is responsible for the good morale of the London police force and I'm confident he'll be able to deal with the low morale in York Region."

York Region police union president Paul Bailey said Fantino's presence automatically "increased morale by 10 points."

"We told the board that we wanted a Fantino style of leadership ... and

now we have the real McCoy," he said minutes after Fantino's appointment. "This is a watershed for us."

The clouds are being blown away by a breath of fresh air.

Bailey, who has publicly battled with the police services board, said Fantino is "direct and approachable."

Fantino, who will likely be paid an annual salary of about \$140,000, will take on the job Aug. 4.



Newly-appointed York Regional Police Chief Julian Fantino will begin his new post on Aug. 4.

York can't let Toronto solve trash woes: Landon

LISA QUEEN
Staff Reporter

York Region should rethink its strategy of piggybacking on Toronto's plan to send its garbage to Northern Ontario, according to waste management task force chairperson Gord Landon.

Although an environmental assessment hearing decided last Friday that waste can be sent to the abandoned Adams Mine in Kirkland Lake, Landon said there are several more hoops to jump through.

For example, mine owner Notre Developments must still prove sludge from the garbage won't leak into the water table.

In addition, another environmental hearing will have to determine if waste from the Greater Toronto Area can be dumped in the mine.

Those hurdles don't leave officials searching for a waste management strategy much time, Landon stressed.

The Keele Valley landfill in Maple, where Toronto and York's trash is dumped, will close in about 2 1/2 years.

Toronto is spearheading the Kirkland Lake solution. But according to Landon, the issue is in danger of being

derailed because it is bogged down with Toronto's new council.

The 57-member council has had trouble dealing with a number of issues since the new City of Toronto was created in January.

Garbage is no exception.

"They are not appearing to come up with a solution until 2002," Landon said.

He warned York can't afford to let Toronto drive the process. He stressed the region should work quickly to locate an alternative dump somewhere in Ontario for York's waste.

"We're relying on Toronto to come up with the solution. We (need to) look at are there landfills in Ontario we can use?" he said.

"I don't think we can sit down and hope a crisis develops in Toronto to solve York Region's problems."

If the region doesn't find a solution, Landon fears York could find itself with nowhere to put its trash.

"It's a serious problem (in) that we have to come up with another strategy to deal with our waste if we can't see Toronto meeting our needs. It's a big deal," he said.

"We have a lot of tight deadlines on us."

Under a 1983 agreement that has allowed Toronto to dump its garbage within York's boundaries at Keele Valley, the city is responsible for disposing of the region's garbage until 2003.

But Landon warned Toronto will probably give York a cash settlement if it can't handle the region's waste until the agreed upon date.

"They could just say, 'Screw you, we don't have capacity. We can't put it anywhere, here are some dollars.'"

Toronto is hauling some of its waste to the U.S. and would increase the exportation, if needed.

But York is reluctant to follow suit, arguing it could be left without a place to dispose of its garbage if there was a problem, such as a labor or border dispute.

A new dump is needed to take about 35 to 40 per cent of York's waste.

Meanwhile, the region is launching an international search for a company to compost the region's wet garbage, mostly kitchen waste, which makes up between 60 to 65 per cent of the region's waste.

Taxpayers will pay about \$75 to \$100 a tonne to compost the wet garbage into fertilizer. The region now pays \$26 a tonne to dump trash at Keele Valley.

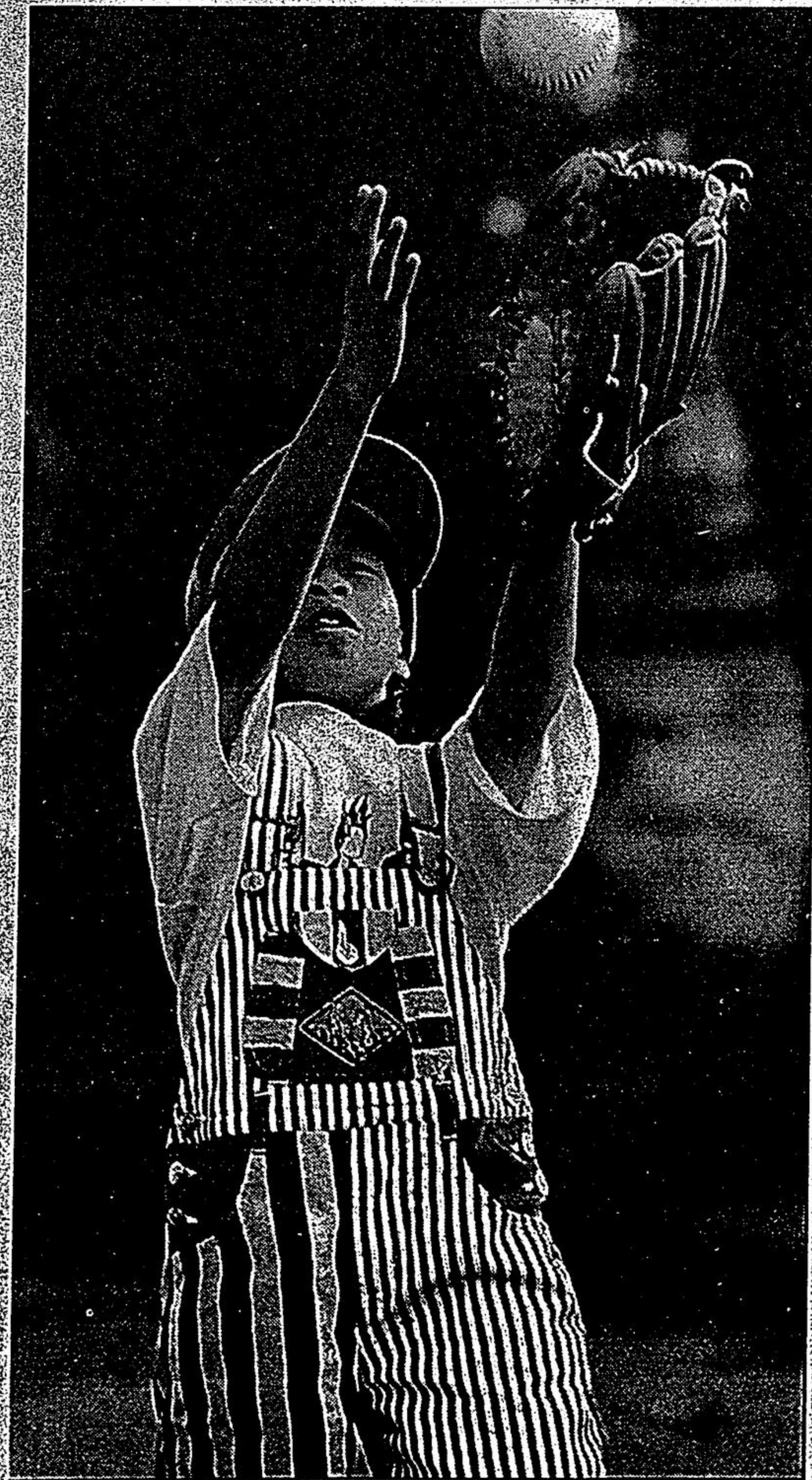
Don't miss festival parade

There is nothing like a parade to put people in a party mood.

This year's Strawberry Festival presents a colourful cavalcade of characters to set the stage for Saturday's many events. Winding its way downtown from the corner of

Main and Orchard Park to Park Drive, the lineup will include those irrepressible Shriners on their crazy carts, red knights on motor-bikes, pipers, bands, clowns, high-land dancers, cloggers and a glorious collection of classic cars.

Mayor Wayne Emmerson and MPP Julia Munro will travel in grand style in a horse drawn carriage, courtesy of Lionel's Pony Farm. The parade gets under way at 9:30 a.m., so bring your family, wave your flag and join the fun.



POP FLY: Samantha Suffiad, 7 1/2, of Unionville enjoys a game of baseball at the Stouffville ball diamond this week.

Photo by STEVE SOMERVILLE