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 - ◆ LET IT RIDE
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- RESTAURANTS**
- GREAT FOOD IN:**
- ROULETTES RESTAURANT & BAR
 - DABBERS SNACK BAR



HEALTH: Tax of 50 cents per carton of cigarettes called for

Tough new tobacco tax bill gains support among senators

BY CATHY MILES
CORRESPONDENT

Vickey Kurtis began smoking last year while living in Ireland.

"I was under pressure because of exams and my friends said smoking would help calm me down," the Richmond Hill teen said, as she took a puff of a cigarette.

She is just one of the young smokers who has spurred on Liberal Senator Colin Kenny in a bid to prevent youth from getting hooked on cigarettes.

"Kids right now aren't getting the message. For every \$100 the federal government collects in tobacco taxes, only a penny goes back into tobacco education," he said. "Tell me that isn't a disgrace."

His private member's bill has passed its third reading in the Senate, gathering support across party lines, and is to come before the House of Commons in the fall.

Kenny is proposing a 50-cent tax be levied on each carton of cigarettes sold in Canada. He estimates that tax will raise \$120 million every year, which he is proposing be spent on education programs to prevent young people from taking up the habit.

As for the children involved, Kenny said he wants to see a valid effort by Canadians to keep children from getting addicted to the drug. "Society must stop throwing their hands in the air as if there is nothing more to do," he emphasized.

York Region public health depart-

ment educator Helen Kearney agrees. "Young people become addicted because we continue to tolerate tobacco," she said.

Kenny's proposal, tagged Bill S-13, would provide funds over a five-year duration to compensate for specific losses as a result of the anti-smoking measures.

The division of the funds would see \$60 million going to community-based efforts, \$50 million going to cultural and sports groups as compensation for sponsorship losses and \$10 million going to tobacco farmers who must switch to new crops.

After five years, those payments will be phased out and the entire fund will be used for prevention programs.

"This bill costs the government nothing and it provides a realistic solution," stated Kenny.

Maple resident Nancy Hall, 20, agrees this bill just might make a difference. "The 50-cent increase won't keep people from smoking," she said, "but the education from the tax increase may be the answer."

In York Region, the school boards have banned smoking on school properties, yet an anti-smoking message isn't part of the curriculum. "We need to change the attitude of the schools through ongoing, continuous effort," said Kearney.

Young people, she said, can learn right from wrong, but teachers, parents, siblings and public mentors must work together to help make the change.

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THE MAYOR'S TASK FORCE ON CHARITIES

Council has now confirmed the membership of the Town of Markham Mayor's Task Force on Charities, which will be examining how to assist the non-profit and charitable sector in our community in meeting their financial needs without the funding provided through gaming.

It is expected that this Task Force will bring forth recommendations that will benefit not only the Town and its non-profit charitable sector, but also the Provincial Government in its formation of public policy.

Members of the community who have been appointed to the Mayor's Task Force on Charities are:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Mr. Robert Adams | Mr. Ron Haynes |
| Mr. David Banfield | Ms. Joanne Meddaoui |
| Mrs. Kathryn Britten | Mr. Brian Murphy |
| Mr. Murray Cresswell | Mrs. Sumi Prabaharan |
| Ms. Jody Greenlaw | Mr. Tony Wong |

Members representing Markham Council are:

- Regional Councillor Tony Wong
- Councillor Alex Chiu
- Councillor George McKevey
- Councillor Joe Virgilio

For information regarding meeting dates, please contact the Town of Markham Clerk's Department at (905) 475-4744.

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