

LIVING

Getting a job is hard work

To some young people, getting a job is just a matter of working for it

BY JENNIFER BROWN
STAFF WRITER

Despite a double-digit youth unemployment rate, the future looks bright for Mark Hubbard and his friend Mark Wretham.

At 21, Wretham, a college graduate of a resort and tourism program, has already secured a good job with a Richmond Hill golf and country club.

Hubbard will finish the same program next year and the Newmarket resident is confident he will find something in the wholesale tour industry.

But that positive outlook didn't stop the two from attending a special jobs conference last week aimed at helping young people 18 to 24 learn more about employment prospects for the next century.

Organized by York Mckenzie MPP Frank Klees, the Next Millennium Jobs Conference brought youth from across the region to Magna's world headquarters in Aurora.

The world does not owe you a living, but you owe it your unique and distinct contribution.

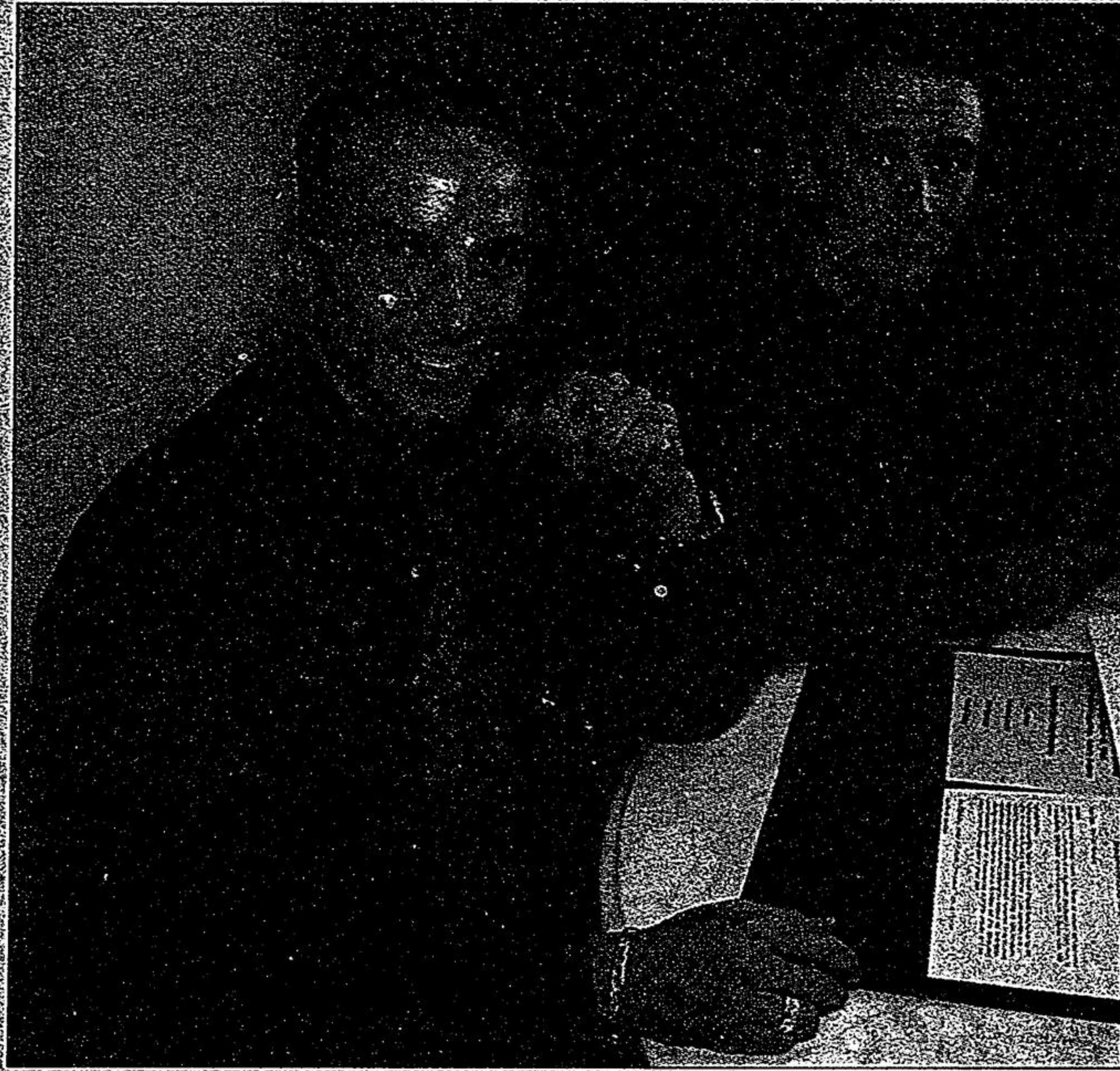
Half a dozen representatives from the automotive, sales, corporate and communications industries spoke to the students about the potential for jobs within their companies — companies students like Hubbard and Wretham hope will provide future employment.

For Wretham, who grew up in Listowel in southern Ontario, York Region has provided better job prospects. But, he argues, there is no reason for Canadian young people to be without a job.

"I've had many job opportunities here — in Listowel, it's different," he said. "There are more private clubs around here where you can find employment. If you apply yourself and get out there, you can find a job. I don't think anyone should be unemployed. I realize some people can't work, but there really is opportunity out there."

In fact, Hubbard described York Region young people as "privileged" to live in such a high-growth community where opportunity exists.

Fourth-year business administration student Judith Moses agrees. At 21, the York University student is already employed in a government position, but has her eyes on



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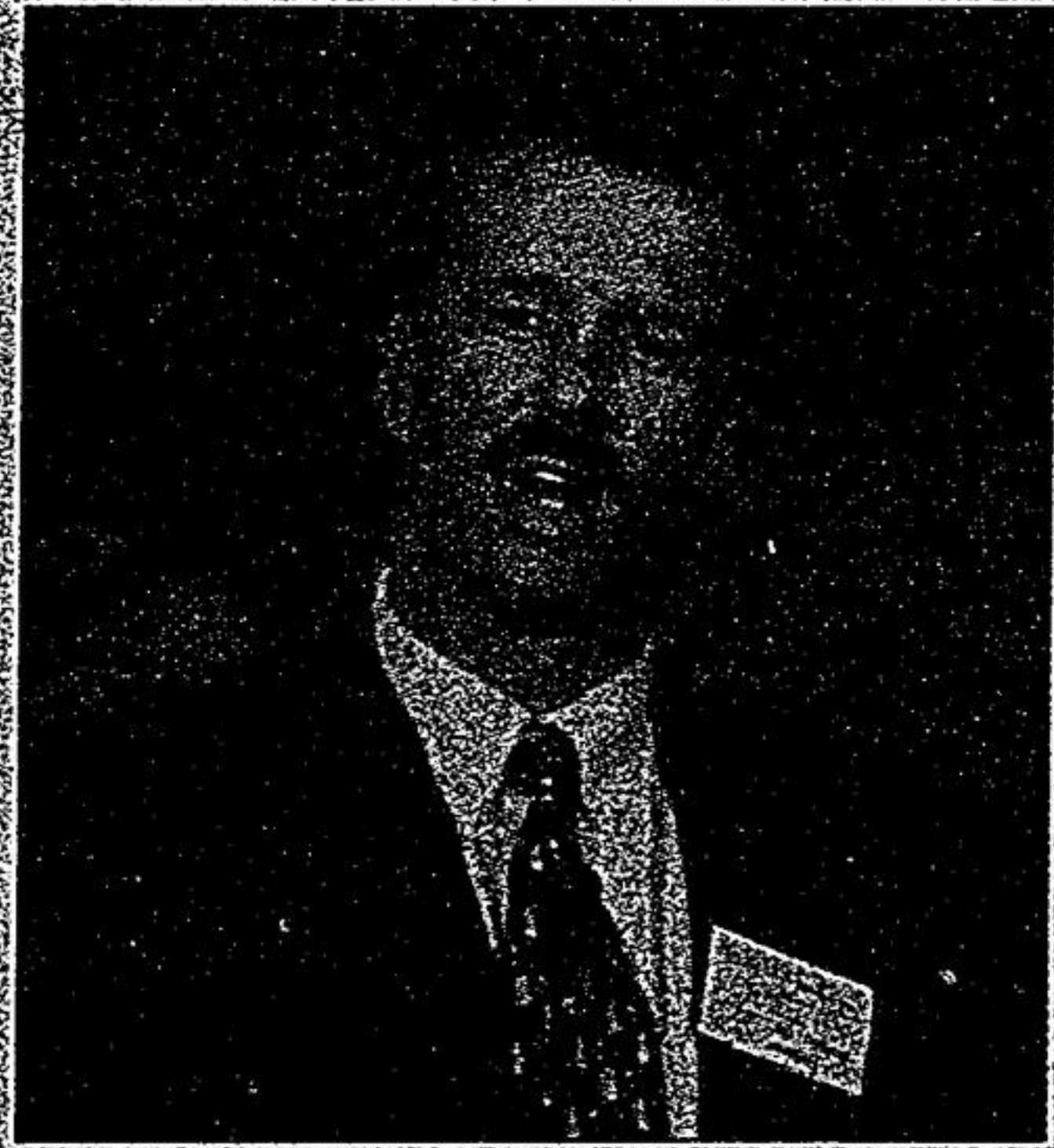
Mark Wretham (above, left) is a graduate of a college resort and tourism program and Mark Hubbard of Newmarket is studying in the same program. Both are optimistic about jobs and about the future. Magna president and CEO Don Walker (right) welcomed the young people and presenters to Magna's international headquarters for the jobs conference. He says the country needs technical workers.

the private sector.

The Richmond Hill resident saw the jobs conference as a way to talk with political representatives, as well as those from the business world.

"My interest was sparked by the coupling of the two, so I'm here to talk with (Markham MPP) Dave Isubouchi and the people from Cara (Foods)," she said. "I think it's important to build contacts and network with people. I'm going into sales and marketing, so I want to talk with them."

But she has little fear finding a job will be



difficult.

"This area is booming in terms of jobs. You hear of the economy lagging in areas like Montreal, but here and in Toronto things are booming."

But the boom has been so great, many employers have had a tough time finding skilled help.

Speaking on behalf of Magna, president and CEO Don Walker told the students there is a lack of technically educated workers, which puts Canada at a disadvantage in the marketplace.

"Our number 1 priority is technical education in this country. In my opinion, we're sadly lacking among the global players. We are fighting global economic warfare every day with a workforce and brain power of people around the world and, if we don't succeed, we will see job losses in Canada," Walker said.

Machinists, tool and die makers and industrial designers are among the top skills a company such as Magna needs, says William Harney, director of product development for the company.

"There is a critical shortage in this part of the world. Germany and Japan have huge legions of people who do this," Harney said.

Speaking for the hospitality industry, Cara Foods director of human resources Esther Lee encouraged students to consider apprenticeship programs in the culinary arts, as opposed to university education.

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"We want young people to recognize this is a professional industry. We believe you do not all have to go through that venue (university). We could use as many young people as would like to join us," Lee said.

A representative from Bell Canada recommended that engineering and commerce skills would be beneficial in the telecommunications field.

"Put those two together and you have a place in Bell," said Lois-Anne Brebner, executive director of government relations for Bell.

She also noted that the company's policy for accepting resumes for technical jobs is by e-mail only.

"Applications must be made online — we won't accept paper for high-tech positions," she said.

Small business was also represented at the conference by Newmarket resident Jack Hurst of Triton Sales and Marketing, which employs seven people.

Hurst encouraged young people to "commit yourself to life-long learning" and to rely on persistence and "plain, old-fashioned hard work."

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