

COMMUNITY

United Way has focus for funds

BY MIKE ADLER
STAFF WRITER

York Region's "Way to Help the Most" says it has figured out where that help is most needed.

The local United Way is hearing alarm bells, its executive director Wyn Chivers said recently. Phenomenal growth, relatively low government funding (compared with Toronto), increasing poverty and longer waiting lists all strain the region's social resources.

Chivers said the United Way of York Region, after a two-year study of local needs, has decided a better future can come through helping people share information and form partnerships at the community level.

"The only way for us to do it is to support local community building," she said.

That's why new funding pledged for the charity umbrella — the expected \$300,000 difference between the \$3.6 million collected last year and this year's \$3.9 million campaign goal — will be concentrated in four areas, Chivers said.

The United Way says these "focus areas" will be community development, the prevention and treatment of domestic violence, improving access to services for new immigrants, and programs to support families and children.

"I plan to go out to the community in a year or two and say, 'This is the impact of your contribution,'" said Chivers.

Of course, she added, United Way agencies may still get a modest increase out of the new money.

This week, the organization's fall campaign reached the \$1.5 million mark — around 38 per cent of its goal.

In the coming weeks, we'll be bringing you stories about some of the United Way's various member agencies and how they serve the community.



Barbara Coloroso

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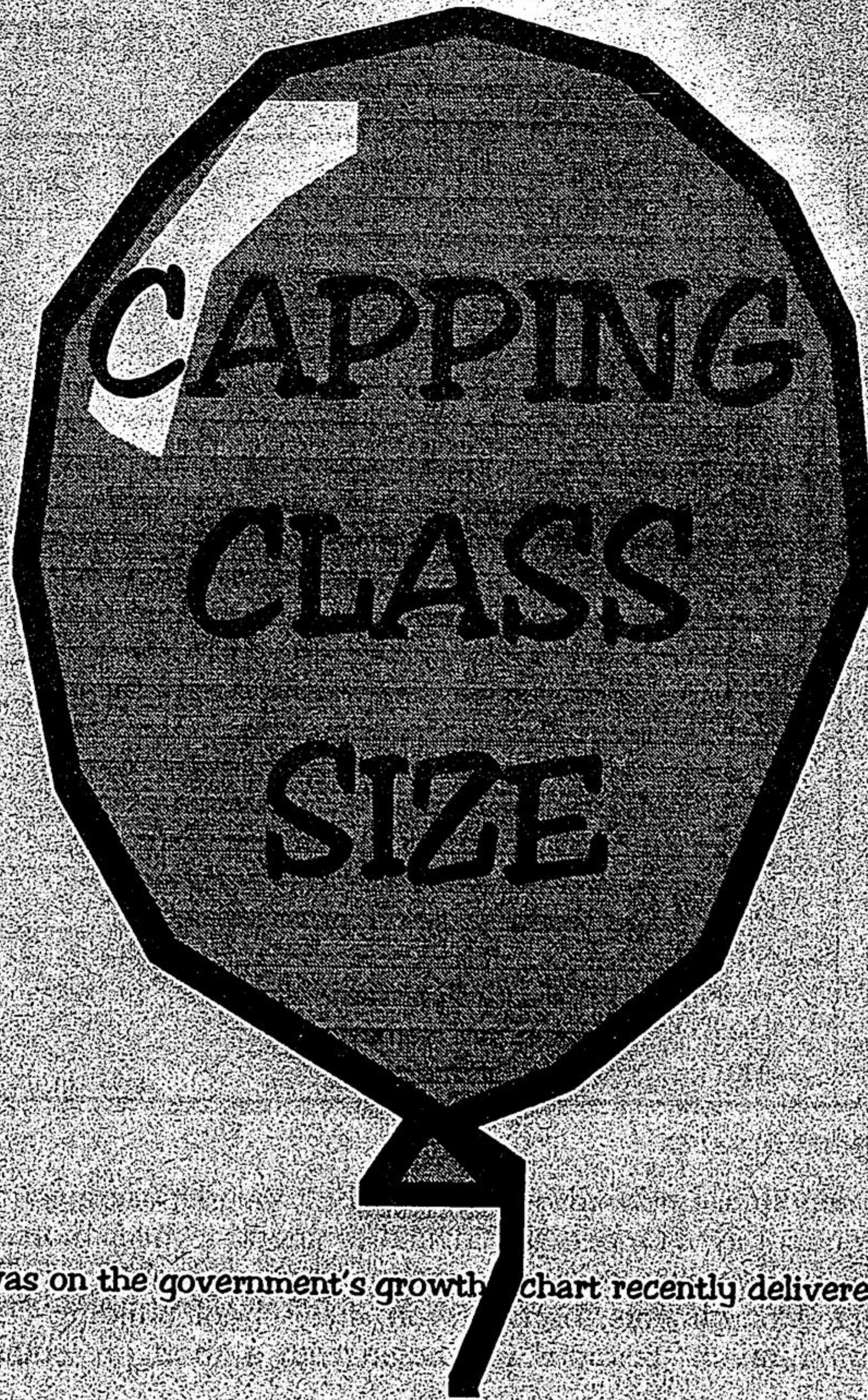
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