

Students launch anti-smoking crusade

BY LISA QUEEN
Staff Writer

Simon says "Don't smoke." Simon Strelchik, 17, and his fledgling group of York students called Youth Fighting Tobacco are gearing up to convince councillors to adopt a region-wide smoking ban.

They're hoping prohibiting lighting up in all public places will help convince a new generation not to adopt the unhealthy habit.

"It (smoking) is a social status. The whole school sees these rebellious teens smoking," said Strelchik, also a youth member of York's no-smoking task force and co-chairperson of the youth sub-committee.

"I don't have anything against teens rebelling, but hurting your body and spending money for the rest of your life and dying early, because half of smokers die early, I felt compassion for these people. I felt it's their right to live a healthy life."

After being criticized for discussing the proposed ban behind closed doors for several months

the region's no-smoking task force is now organizing public forums so residents and business owners can express their feelings.

The meetings will be held Feb. 15 in the Newmarket council chambers, Feb. 17 at the Elgin Barrow Arena in Richmond Hill, Feb. 22 in the Whitchurch-Stouffville council chambers and March 9 in the Georgina council chambers.

The meetings run from 7 to 9 p.m.

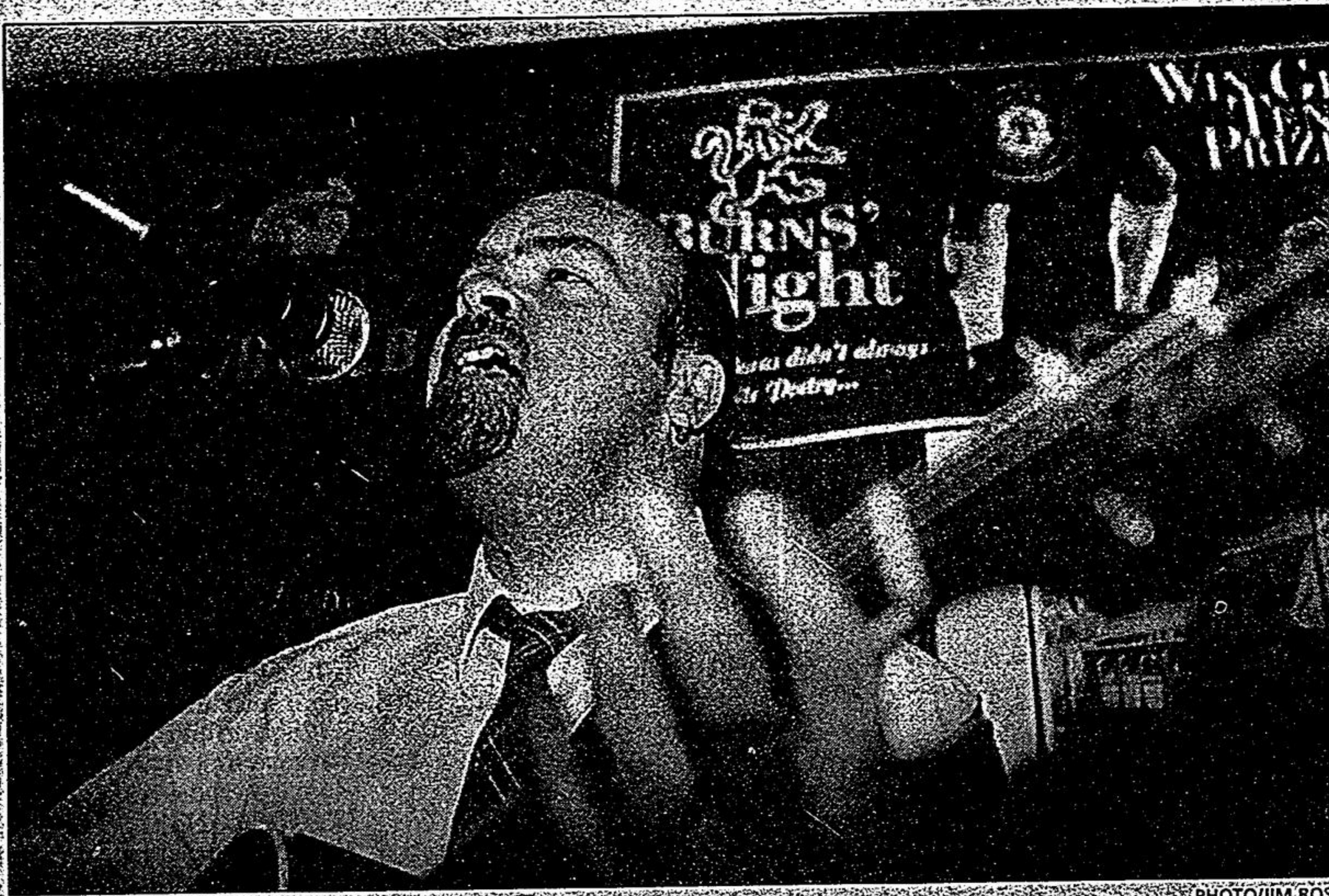
Youth Fighting Tobacco is hoping to turn the Richmond Hill meeting into a rally for young people who support the ban.

"We have some big surprises planned, let's just leave it at that," said Strelchik, a student at Westmount Collegiate Institute in Thornhill.

"We plan on making this a major vehicle for youth acting against tobacco."

Strelchik boasts that while Youth Fighting Tobacco is just getting off the ground, its membership of 10 is growing. For more information about Youth Fighting Tobacco, call (905) 660-1886.

SINGING THE PRAISES OF ROBBIE BURNS



PHOTO/JIM ROSS

Folk singer David Leaske crooned a few ballads to commemorate the birth of Robbie Burns Tuesday at the Unionville Arms. The festivities included a piper, a Scottish menu and, of course, the haggis.

Stouffville Tribune still just a call away

The Stouffville Tribune offices are moving down the road to a new home.

Starting Monday morning, residents will be calling a new phone number to reach our editorial staff and advertising representatives.

According to Tribune publisher Ian Proudfoot, the move is prompted by a desire to focus our budget on producing the best newspaper possible by merging offices with our sister paper to the south, The Markham Economist & Sun.

The funds saved on overhead expenses will be reinvested into covering the news and community events.

"We are making a commitment to being an active participant in Whitchurch-Stouffville," Proudfoot said.

Loyalty to our readers and advertisers will continue to be the Tribune's highest priority, said general manager Alvin Brouwer.

"The Stouffville Tribune remains dedicated to covering the news and views of the people of Whitchurch-Stouffville," Brouwer said.

And with the funds made available through the amalgamation of our offices, we'll be able to direct more money into covering more local events.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to have more resources to produce a quality newspaper that reflects the people of this community," editor Julie Caspersen said.

You can reach us at 294-2200, and fax us at 294-1538.

E-mail can be sent to newsroom@econsun.com with letters to the editor directed to letters@econsun.com

Our classified phone number remains unchanged at 1-800-743-3353, as does our distribution number, 294-8244.

Our new address is 9 Heritage Rd., Markham, ON, L3P 1M3.

New top cop to fill contract broken by former chief

From page 1.

and presence. He is a person who is strong but fair and he's dedicated."

Middaugh signed a three-year contract, which is what's remaining on the contract of current Chief Julian Fantino, who takes over the Toronto force March 1.

Middaugh has a long history in policing, as well as experience in civil service. In fact, he was in the running to be York Region's chief when Fantino was hired.

He served as chief in Hamilton Wentworth between 1991 and 1998, and was deputy chief in Halton for 11 years before that. He began his police career with 13 years in Peel Region after four years as a firefighter in Brampton.

He is a graduate of Humber College, the University of Western Ontario business program and the FBI National Academy and Law Enforcement Executive Development program.

He's currently the assistant deputy minister of the policing services division in the Ministry of the Solicitor General and is responsible for the Ontario Police College and training across the province, the



ROBERT MIDDAGH: Vows compliance with criminal investigation standards.

Central Intelligence Service Ontario, an organized crime database and developing standards for all Ontario forces and performing audits.

Middaugh and his staff also authored the Police Adequacy Standards manual, due to be released early next month. It sets out guidelines and standards for criminal investigations, training in dealing with victims, responding to the public and other aspects of policing. It requires all Ontario forces to comply by 2001.

"The York force will definitely be compliant by the end of this year,"

Middaugh said.

His boss, Solicitor General and Markham MPP Dave Tsubouchi, said he has mixed feelings about the appointment.

"We're losing him here, but I'm also happy we're getting someone in York Region with his credentials and skills and background," Tsubouchi said.

"He has a very strong community liaison as well, which is very important to York Region. He has a good police background, he's been through the ranks and also has had responsibility in terms of the province and legislation."

The York Regional Police Association was caught off-guard by the announcement.

"We didn't expect it this soon, nobody was," said vice-president Keith Aubrey. "We haven't really had a chance to get a feel for what the members think, but we'll work with him."

CORRECTION

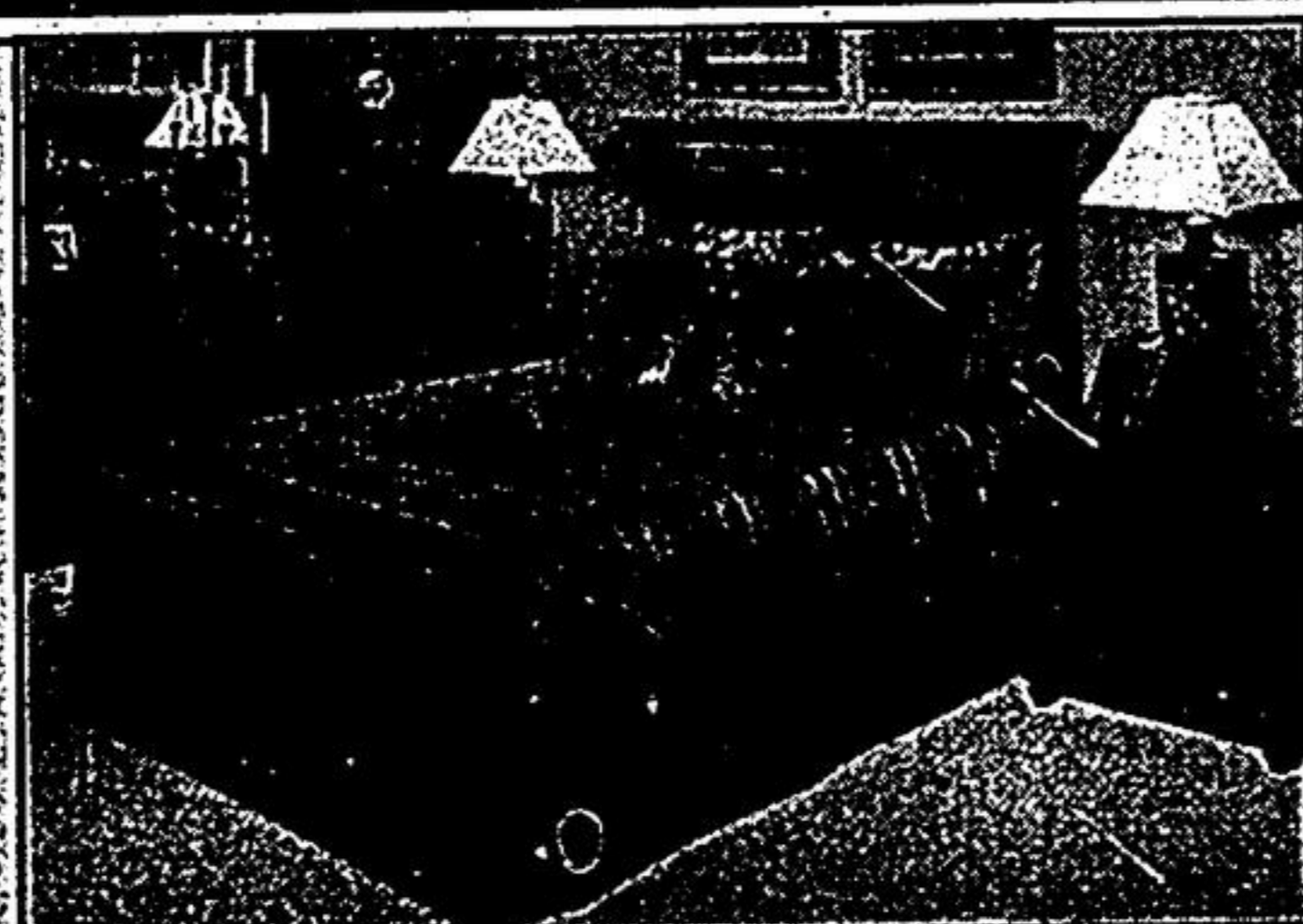
In a cutline on page 1 in Tuesday's edition, we mistakenly referred to Robbie Burns as Irish. We apologize for the error.

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