

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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20 York Region punkers
rock for good cause

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Simone Joseph

Man of many colours

Integrating communities may curb anti-Semitism

I looked out on to the crowd dotted with yarmulkes and people wrapped in Israeli flags crammed into the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre at a rally to fight anti-Semitism Wednesday night.

I couldn't help thinking back to my upbringing as a Jewish student in a very multicultural public school.

I used to hate it when my teacher made me make presentations about Jewish holidays to my class.

It made me feel different and when you are 10 years old, you just want to blend; don't want to be singled out.

But I was.

By Grade 6, one of my least favourite classmates, a real bully, came up with the unkind label of Pinniechio because my nose was decidedly larger than the button variety around me.

But being surrounded by non-Jews had — and still has — its advantages.

People were curious about the matzo (it looks like a big cracker). I brought to school during

See SEGREGATION, page 4.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Christie McMullen as narrator recounts the tale of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat while Joseph (Matthew Chapman) shows the coat to his brother Benjamin (Matt Cartwright) during a rehearsal for the Stouffville-based York Durham Academy for the Performing Arts show, April 1 to 4 at Vaughan City Playhouse. Call 905-882-7469.

\$91 hike in region taxes

This translates into more services: Fisch

BY ROY GREEN
Staff Writer

With only one dissenting vote, York Region council approved a \$1.7-billion budget Thursday, increasing the regional tax bite on the average \$332,000 home to \$1,640 — a \$91 hike over last year.

Markham Regional Councillor Jack Heath was the lone naysayer, noting the 6.3-per-cent tax hike is three times larger than the inflation rate.

"I have trouble with that and I'm asking for a re-examination," Mr. Heath said before the budget was approved 18-1 in a recorded vote.

But regional chairperson Bill Fisch said the first draft of the budget tabled in January called for an 8-per-cent hike before being reworked by staff and council, representing a savings of \$8.2 million.

"This translates into more services, including new police officers, new transit routes, more long-term care beds and more roads in a budget that ensures savings and enhancements for our residents," Mr. Fisch said.

The increase can be separated into three categories:

- 5-per-cent increase to York Regional Police to hire 110 new officers and 35 civilians for a total staff of 1,095 officers and 335 civilian staff.

- 0.9 per cent to directly controlled regional programs such as transit, roads, waste man-

See BUDGET, page 9.

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