

Calendars back to delight fans, raise charity cash

BY LISA QUEEN
Staff Writer

The calendar that ignited a following hot enough to warrant an arson investigation is adding a new charity to the groups it supports.

Vaughan's health care foundation, which is campaigning for a medical campus, joins York Region's three hospitals and breast cancer research as beneficiaries of the Firefighters of York calendar.

The hot-off-the-press fourth annual edition is being unveiled to adoring fans at a launch party in Woodbridge Friday.

For Mr. August and calendar guys spokesperson Shaun Mitchell is all about fanning the flames of anticipation.

"It's the quality of the images. Our images are so good, we don't have to have big hulking guys standing in front of a burning building," said the Central York firefighter as he leafed through a prototype of the calendar, pointing out the appealing aspects of various poses.

Mr. Mitchell credits the skills of Mark Staff, of Hilton Head, South Carolina, who has taken photographs of some of today's biggest celebrities.

"He really represents what our firefighters are about. It's a great balance of sexy and respecting our image of firefighters," said Mr. Mitchell, who poses with his two-year-old golden retriever, Blaze.

Four years ago, when the calendar idea was first developed, a different photographer proposed

cruder shots.

"In the beginning, we had a guy who wanted the guys' pants around their ankles with their boxers showing. I was like 'No,'" Mr. Mitchell said.

"Especially since Sept. 11, firefighters get a lot of respect."

The calendar has drawn fans from across southern Ontario, Mr. Mitchell said.

And the website is attracting fans from around the globe.

"We have 100 calendar signings a year. It's not an easy fundraiser. It's a part-time job."

"We're getting hits from all around the world. From Asia, Europe, the U.S. and Canada," he said.

While the original Calendar Guys volunteered for the job of posing and getting up on stage to strut their stuff at the launch party, these days the selection process is more formal.

The candidates were interviewed to determine if they have time to promote the calendar.

"This has become a second job. On your days off, the calendar is scheduled to be promoted at different events," said Mr. Mitchell, adding 26 of 35 candidates who applied are featured in this year's calendar.

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The calendar is so successful, other charities are piggybacking on its accomplishments.

While all the proceeds from the sale of the \$20 calendars go to the five charities, other organizations try to time their promotional appearances to coincide with the firefighters.

"Easter Seals has contacted us. And other (disease-related) charities, like muscular dystrophy or prostate cancer," Mr. Mitchell said.

"If the firefighters are there at an event, they can raise money for their charities at the same time. The public are winners and the money is going back into the communities."

Calendars are available at Shoppers Drug Mart and Dominion stores and La Vie En Rose lingerie shops.

The launch party is at the Paramount Conference and Event Venue at 220 Rowntree Dairy Rd. in the Weston Road and Hwy. 407 area.

Tickets are \$20. For \$65, VIP admission features entertainment, food and drinks.

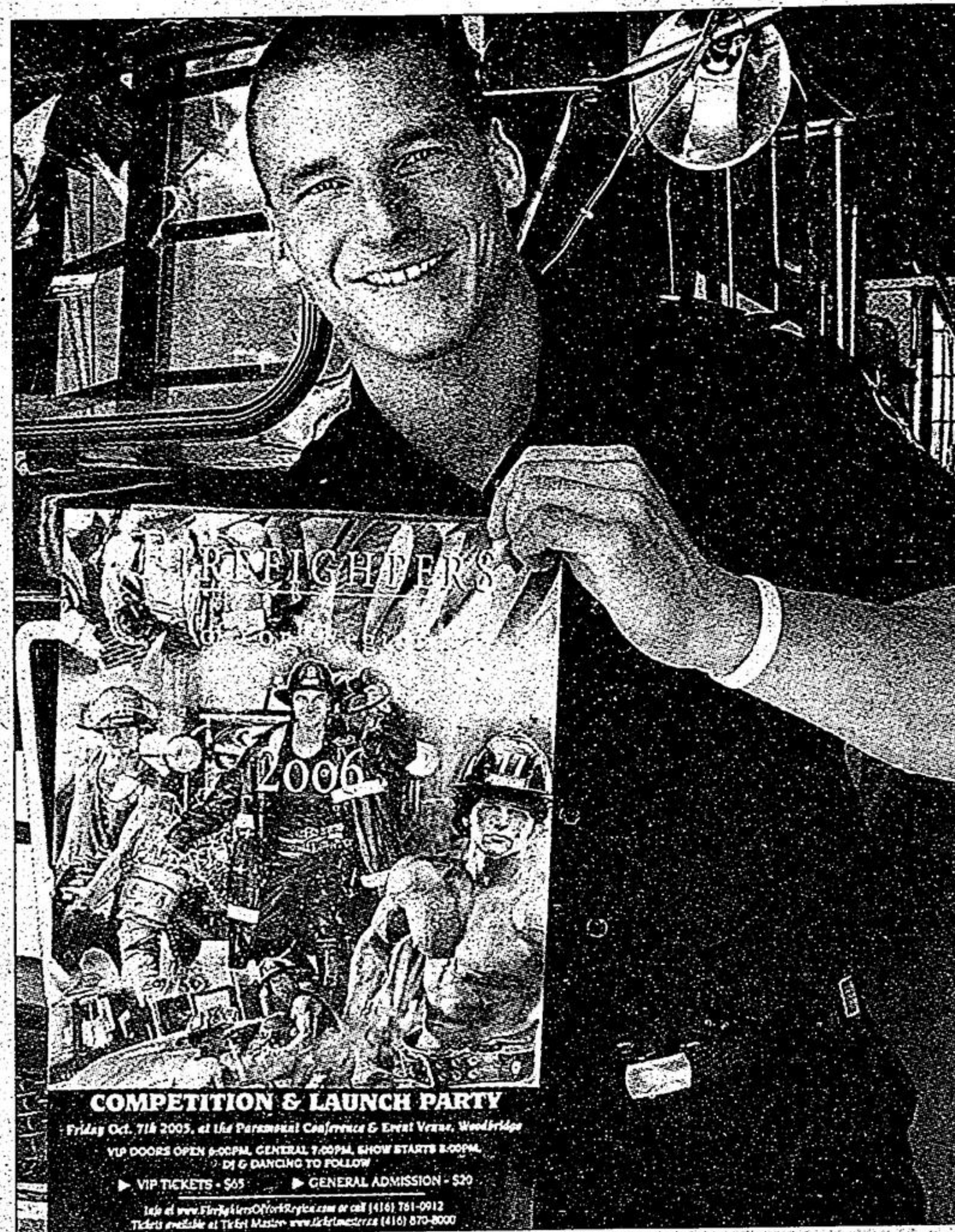
VIP doors open at 6 p.m., with general admission starting at 7 p.m.

The show begins at 8 p.m. with disc jockey and dancing to follow.

Guests must be legal drinking age. Identification is required.

Tickets are available at www.ticketmaster.ca or by calling 416-870-8000.

More information about the calendar is available at www.firefightersofyorkregion.com or call 416-761-0912.



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

York Central Fire Service firefighter Steve Johnson and the rest of the boys of 2006 want to remind everyone of the official launch party for the next Firefighters of York Region calendar Friday in Vaughan.

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Our offices will be closed on
Thanksgiving Day,
Monday, October 10, 2005.

As a result, the Classified deadlines for the
long weekend are as follows:

Saturday, October 8th Issue

Word Ads: Thursday, Oct. 6th at 2 p.m.

Help Wanted Ads: Thursday, Oct. 6th at 12 Noon

Tuesday, October 11th Issue

Word Ads: Friday, Oct. 7th at 2 p.m.

Help Wanted Ads: Friday, Oct. 7th at 12 Noon

Business & Professional Directories: Please note that these
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Classified phone lines
will re-open Tuesday,
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