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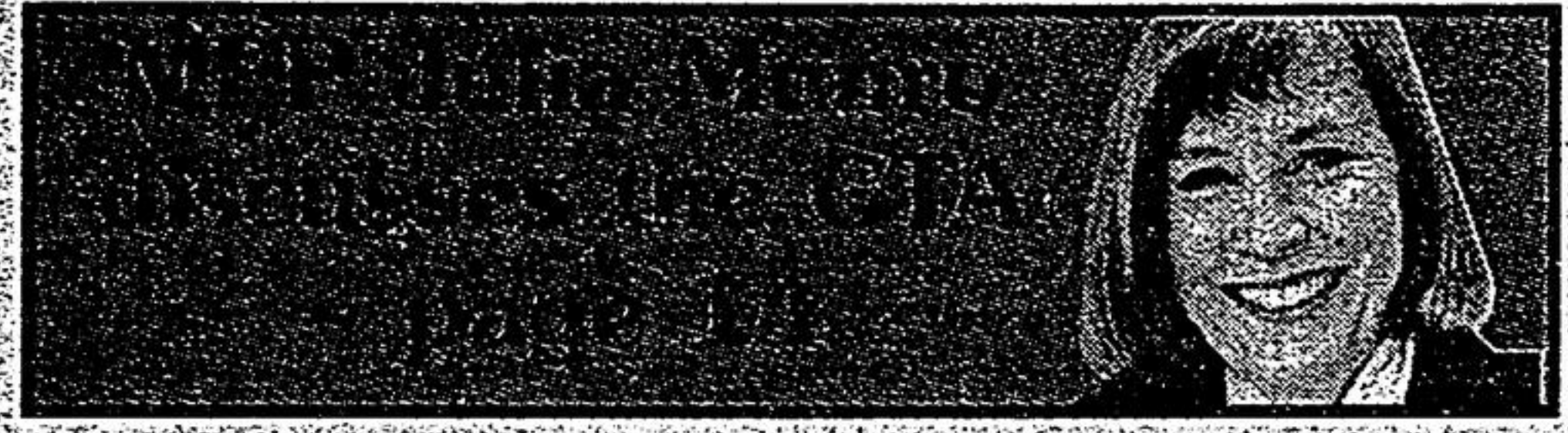
Ken Prentice
Owner/Manager
18 Ringwood Dr.,
Stouffville, 642-9507

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**The cupboard
is bare!**
See page 3

**'Doodles'
on page 6**

School's in - teachers reach deal

MIKE ADLER
Staff Reporter

The shaky, familiar dance of last-minute negotiations between teachers and York Region's public school board reached a settlement this morning.

Failure to reach an agreement by late this morning, after two attempts over the long weekend by provincial mediator Kevin Burkett, would have meant the strike by public high school teachers escalated to one of rallies and picket lines.

Instead, a deal was announced by the board at close to 9 a.m. This

means 29,000 students can return to school Wednesday, only one day later than usual.

The tentative two-year agreement includes no change to teacher salaries, and an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio from 15.62 to 15.9 in this school year.

There was also "an agreement to create a joint committee to consider new departmental structures for secondary schools," the board reported.

"This was a most unique set of negotiations," York Region Board of Education vice-chair Karen Barker said in a release after her

board negotiators met for an overnight session with representatives of District 11 of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

Late on Saturday, Burkett announced he was breaking off talks after two days because of an impasse.

"I have asked the parties to reassess their respective positions in light of the potential impact of this strike if it extends beyond the scheduled commencement of the school year," he said, adding he would arrange a further session yesterday "if there is sufficient flex-

ibility" on both sides.

The teachers had planned to rally today if the strike, which began Aug. 18, was not settled.

Union leader Lynn Johnston had said the teachers would then return to the arena and "break into sub-groups" to plan the pickets that would encircle their schools tomorrow.

The board has promised to update its negotiations hotline at 1-800-546-0709 when there is any news.

After talks collapsed last month, the board had asked the provincial Education Relations Commission to send Burkett, who managed to get an agreement between the board and its two elementary unions hours before a planned strike earlier this year.

Teachers had said the board's last reported offer would cause classes to increase by unacceptable numbers. The union had also been asking for a three-per-cent raise.

Eldred King steps down

LISA QUEEN
Metroland Staff

Stouffville's Eldred King entered politics as a school trustee during a time of change in the education system. After more than 30 years of public service, he's now retiring during a time of restructuring in municipal politics.

King, 70, announced Thursday he won't seek re-election as York Region's chairperson following this November's municipal elections.

"My initial experience in an elected capacity began when changes and reformation was beginning in our provincial education system," King told regional council.

"And I leave when major transformation is upon us at the municipal forum. I regret the uncertainty that still prevails."

King, who publicly announced two weeks ago he was leaving for health reasons, said his days of

public service have been rewarding and exciting.

"To all, I say thank you for the opportunity of serving. It has been an overwhelming, gratifying, educational journey which has been a major part of my life for many years."

Councillors gave King a standing ovation, leaving him mildly choked up.

"It will leave a big hole for a while but I'm sure I will fill it with something," he said.

King's retirement will leave one of the most powerful jobs in the province vacant.

The new chairperson will be one of just four people representing

■ Please see page 3 ■



ELDRED KING



HARVEST TIME: Frank Busato drives his tractor and aerates his field of spinach plants along Tenth Line just north of 19th Avenue. With his brothers Bob and Jim, Busato runs L&M Gardens Ltd. They have farmed in the Stouffville area since 1956. The spinach crop will be ready around the end of September, estimates Busato.

Photos by SJOERD WITTEVEEN



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