# Damage in millions

FROM PAGE 1

"It's quite a mess down there," said board chairperson Bill Crothers, who was at the fire Sunday around midnight when the 46-year-old school was still burning — six hours after firefighters first arrived.

"That school, for all intents and purposes, is gone," he said.

An unconfirmed report suggested the fire started in the boiler room, but Markham fire officials and the Ontario fire marshal are continuing to investigate.

Crothers said the building can't be resurrected from what is left, even though the facade was still standing Monday.

"If you drive along Henderson Avenue and look at the front of the school, other than the fire trucks, water and a few broken windows, it wouldn't look like there is a whole lot wrong because that's brickwork.

"But no part of roof or inside is left," he said.

When the first fire truck arrived at 7 p.m. Sunday, the blaze was going full force and the street began to fill with the onlookers.

At the height of the fire, Markham fire department had six trucks on scene, while both Vaughan and Richmond Hill fire departments were on standby.

The battle against the blaze continued into the night and the next day, eventually causing damage estimated at $3 million to $4 million.

As of Monday morning, the masonry walls and chimney were still standing but the school continued to smolder in places. The southern classroom wing was destroyed and interior walls and roof had collapsed.

Once the fire marshal has completed his report, board superintendent Dave Snelgrove said the board will consider all options for placing students at other schools.

Luckily, school records, library books and other classroom material and furniture had been removed and stored in four large trailers parked away from the school while a contractor was performing some interior work.

The school, in fact, had been undergoing renovations and asbestos was being removed, so most of the classroom equipment had been removed, according to Markham fire department platoon chief Greg Gates. He said the burning asbestos was not a concern, according to the Labour Ministry.

At noon yesterday, fire crews continued to douse the smoldering building.

The collapsed roof made it impossible for investigators to safely enter the building, Gates said, making it necessary to bring in backhoes to knock down partly collapsed areas.

The cause of the fire is under investigation by the Ontario Fire Marshals Office, he added.

STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Courtney MacKinnon was in the Henderson Avenue Public School playground when she noticed smoke billowing out of the roof at the back of the school. She and a friend alerted some men playing baseball nearby, then ran home and called 911.

# August ground-breaking for Ballantrae development

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
STAFF WRITER

Construction start-up for Ballantrae golf course marks the beginning of a $150-million adult community.

Ballantrae has 1,000 residents now. When the last phase of the new community is in place, the hamlet's population will have tripled.

The shovel goes in the ground for the 18-hole champion golf course at Hwy. 48 next month, confirmed Bob Forhan Jr. of Forhan Group, who's representing developer Schickendanz Bros.

"It means the start of project," said Forhan. "It's very exciting."

Construction will begin on the first phase of the housing development next spring. "And the model home will, hopefully, be up by next spring," said Forhan.

Schickedanz Bros. is building the champion golf course, a country club and 900 homes.

Not only is the plan environmentally sound, it'll offer economical advantages for the community, said Forhan.

As well as jobs, construction will mean $116 million in value added to the economy and $66.7 million in wages.

This project will enhance retail spending by about $12.5 million annually, Forhan has reported.

And the town will gain from the development by picking up $3 million in property tax and user fee revenue annually.

The new community will not strain high ticket services such as education because children will not be part of it, he added.

Some area residents have expressed worry that the condominium-style community designed for over 50 empty nesters will end up being a "gate" community, thus not only being part of the hamlet but not being welcoming to the existing residents.

# Stouffville teacher gets full marks

## *York Region educator wins national award for excellence in teaching*

BY FRED SIMPSON
STAFF WRITER

Dr. Penny McLeod believes in making science education a family affair.

"Children are always interested in things related to their own life," said McLeod, the second York Region educator to receive the 1997 Prime Minister's Award for excellence in teaching.

McLeod and her husband make their home in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The head of the science department at Thornhill Secondary School has been teaching for 25 years and has been with the York Region board since 1987.

In that time, she has gone from teacher to department head, science curriculum consultant, chairperson of the York Region Science Heads, to a secondment with the University of Toronto Faculty of Education.

One of her favourite techniques is to involve the students' families in lessons.

"Sometimes I use the parent as a lab assistant when we are performing some experiment," she explained.

> A hands-on approach is McLeod's way of bringing a 'spark to each topic'

McLeod recalled one project that involved Grade 10 students bringing herbs from home and producing chemical dyes from them.

"We wanted to find out how good those common materials in the kitchen were for dyes," she said. "Both the kids and parents enjoyed it."

This hands-on approach is her way of bringing a "spark to each topic, by which you get their interest and hope to maintain it."

"Then you slip in the tougher scientific stuff," she said.

McLeod's list of achievements outside the classroom include developing industrial and university partnerships, writing educational publications and journals and designing provincial curriculum.

She is one of 12 educators who are working with the province to set up science guidelines.

She had also co-written several books about science and its relation to the individual.

Dr. Penny McLeod has teaching down to a science

"The idea is to decide what areas of science we should be working on with the children and what problem-solving skills we can teach them," said McLeod.

She is also an active programs such as the Spotlight on Girls in Science and Technology, the Science Olympiad and Science in Our Future.

"Penny models a variety of strategies and teaching styles in the classroom to prepare her students for future success," said Markham District High School science head Carl Twiddy.

It was Twiddy, a previous recipient of the Prime Minister's Award, who nominated McLeod.

Ira Blevis, Ph.D., who is a research associate for Health Science Centre and a former McLeod student, said she was a great influence on him.

"Her approach to teaching our classes was complete in emphasizing both the comprehension of chemistry and the activity of chemistry," Blevis said.

He was also impressed with McLeod's unique ability to deal with the wide spectrum of student needs and abilities.

Thornhill Secondary School will receive $1,000 as a result of McLeod winning the award.

She will help decide how the funds will be used to improve teaching.

Flyer Inserts For Tuesday, July 21, 1998
Shoppers Drug Mart
The Bay
Northdale Golf & Country Club
RE/MAX John Lau
Dasi Nails
Stouffville DA
Economist & Sun
Stouffville Tribune
WE'RE FIRST DISTRIBUTION

EYE CARE FOR YOU
Dr. Hafiz H. Walji
(Hons. BSc, MSc, OD, FIOS)
Optometrist
(905) 471-EYES (3937)
6633 Highway #7,
Markham