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**5** Funeral services  
 Friday for former  
 Whitchurch-Stouffville  
 Councillor Catherine Joice.

**COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

**EVENT:** Spaghetti dinner  
**WHEN:** Friday, Jan. 18, 6 to 8:30 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Royal Canadian Legion Br. 459, Stouffville



**16** Orienteering: The  
 ultimate meeting  
 of body and mind, using  
 a compass and map.

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THURSDAY, JAN. 17, 2002

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## TEACHERS REFUSING TO TAKE THEIR TESTS

*Courses don't make  
 teachers better: Union*

BY STEFANIA RIZZI  
 Staff Writer

Some York Region teachers are willing to lose their jobs rather than participate in the province's mandatory teacher testing program.

"If it's pushed that far, I will take courses that I feel are beneficial, but I'm not going to take them because they're required. If I'm put in a position where I can be suspended or fired for not taking them, so be it. I know I'm a good teacher," said a Unionville Public School teacher, who asked not to be named. "I'd rather retire than get suspended and start looking at another career."

"Don't get me wrong. I love teaching. I love children," said the teacher, who is one of 40,000 in Ontario randomly selected to begin taking recertification courses. "It's been fun, but we've taken one too many blows. And I'm not the only one who feels this way."

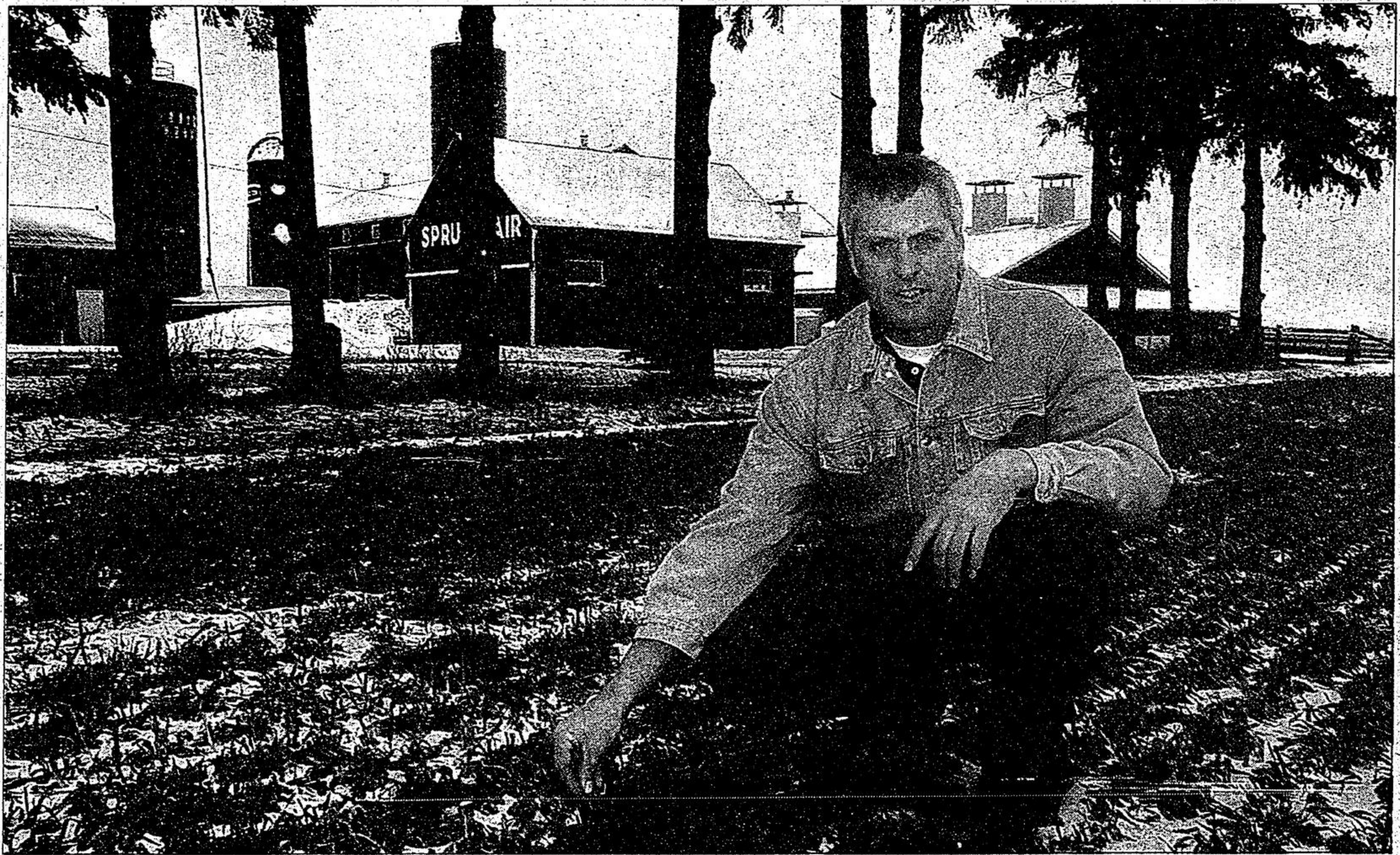
Last June, the province passed legislation requiring all 180,000 certified teachers in Ontario to participate in a five-year professional development program.

Under the program, teachers are expected to complete 14 five-hour recertification courses every five years to retain their teaching certificates.

If teachers fail to comply, they will be suspended for at least six

See **TEACHERS**, page 4.

## PRECIPITATION, PLEASE



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Ken Wells is hoping for more snow for winter insulation on his wheat field at Bloomington and McCowan roads in Whitchurch-Stouffville. The lack of snow could hurt a charity grain-growing operation in York Region this year, Mr. Wells said.

DRY WINTER IS BAD NEWS FOR AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY

# Farmers need snow to grow

BY JOAN RANSBERRY  
 Staff Writer

Whitchurch-Stouffville farmer Ken Wells won't be making hay in the sunshine this summer unless at least a foot of snow covers the ground now.

Mr. Wells joins farmers across York Region in watching the sky for the cumulo-nimbus clouds that signal the onset of a wonderful

Canadian snowstorm.

Bunker hay and wheat crops depend on well-packed snow, Mr. Wells pointed out. In fact, a major storm lasting a day or two would put an ear-to-ear grin on the face of every farmer in the region.

"The weather this winter will be hard on the wheat, and with so little snow, we're going to be short of moisture. Snow is good. We need it

and we need a great deal of it," said Mr. Wells.

In the agricultural community, snow is a blessing on two counts: It acts as an insulator protecting the roots of plants from the cold, and it creates much-needed moisture in early spring.

Wells has a total of 1,500 acres in the Bloomington Road and McCowan Road area. A third-gen-

eration farmer, Mr. Wells runs both a dairy and a cash crop operation. "I took over in 1987. My dad and my grandfather farmed before me," Mr. Wells explained.

With three generations of agricultural knowledge under his belt, Mr. Wells knows who really runs the farm. It's not the farmer, not the government, not the market, free or

See **CHARITY**, page 9.

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