

Corn just as thrilling as a helicopter ride

Clutching six or seven pages of notes taken down in my finest chicken scratch scrawl, I was about to thank local helicopter pilot Wilfred MacDonald for his time and hit the road when he popped the question: I'd been praying he'd ask ever since I arrived.



FROM WHERE I LIVE
Bruce Stapley

passenger compartment of a helicopter!

Neither the water nor the numerous sand traps look nearly as imposing from above as they do when you're trying to blast a ball over, or around them.

Circling over Stouffville, I caught a bird's eye view of all the brown roofed new developments. I thought it was interesting that there are more swimming pools per capita in all the other developments than there are in Westfield Estates, the three quarter acre lots that would seem to lend themselves to that sort of thing.

I pointed out my centry home on Main Street East. "I could put her down in your backyard," smiled Wilfred, ever proud of the amazing versatility of his pride and joy.

He told me he could even drop his chopper on top of the water tower in a pinch, despite the new radar apparatus or whatever it is that's stuck up there.

We zoomed in on clumps of bushes on Wilfred's farm on the way back, and he showed me how you could go in whatever direction you choose in a chopper. I was more than impressed; in fact, I was really amazed.

Then it was back down to earth, as Wilfred landed the Robinson right in the middle of the landing circle.

I thanked Wilfred for a truly unique experience. Ever the gentleman, he walked over to his nearby cornfield and filled a bag full of sweet corn for me to take home.

And as I sampled a few cobs upon my arrival home, I reflected upon the technology that allows us to dart to and fro in a machine with huge blades spinning on top.

But after finishing the corn, I decided that I'd gladly trade all those fancy mechanical advancements for a taste of that homegrown white vegetable.

Any day. After all, we all have our priorities.

"Would you like to go up for a ride?"

Just when I thought the highest I was going to get off the ground this summer would be my climb to the top of the Clock Tower a few months back.

I'd been beaten out of my balloon ride at the Strawberry Festival by winds and the change of mind of the balloon's owner who had said he might take a few of us up anyway.

My annual flight over Stouffville with that barnstorming, three bounce landing specialist, Martyn Hartley hadn't materialized this year, probably because my daughter was airsick during last year's outing.

So here, just when I was beginning to feel sorry for myself, was this helicopter enthusiast offering me the chance to experience the same thrill Tom Selleck gets

when old TC heads that chopper skyward in Magnum PI.

And in a Robinson R22 HP to boot, the same little baby used by so many police departments in the United States.

Wilfred's pint-sized helicopter is just big enough for two people and a camera to fit inside. He says he never gets tired of flying her around.

In fact, he told me there's only one other thing he enjoys as much, and that's operating his back hoe on the farm. I declined the offer to go for a spin in it, however.

We headed up and away, heading over from Wilfred's Sixth Line home heliport towards town. What an amazing view of Spring Lakes Golf Course we had from the glassed-in



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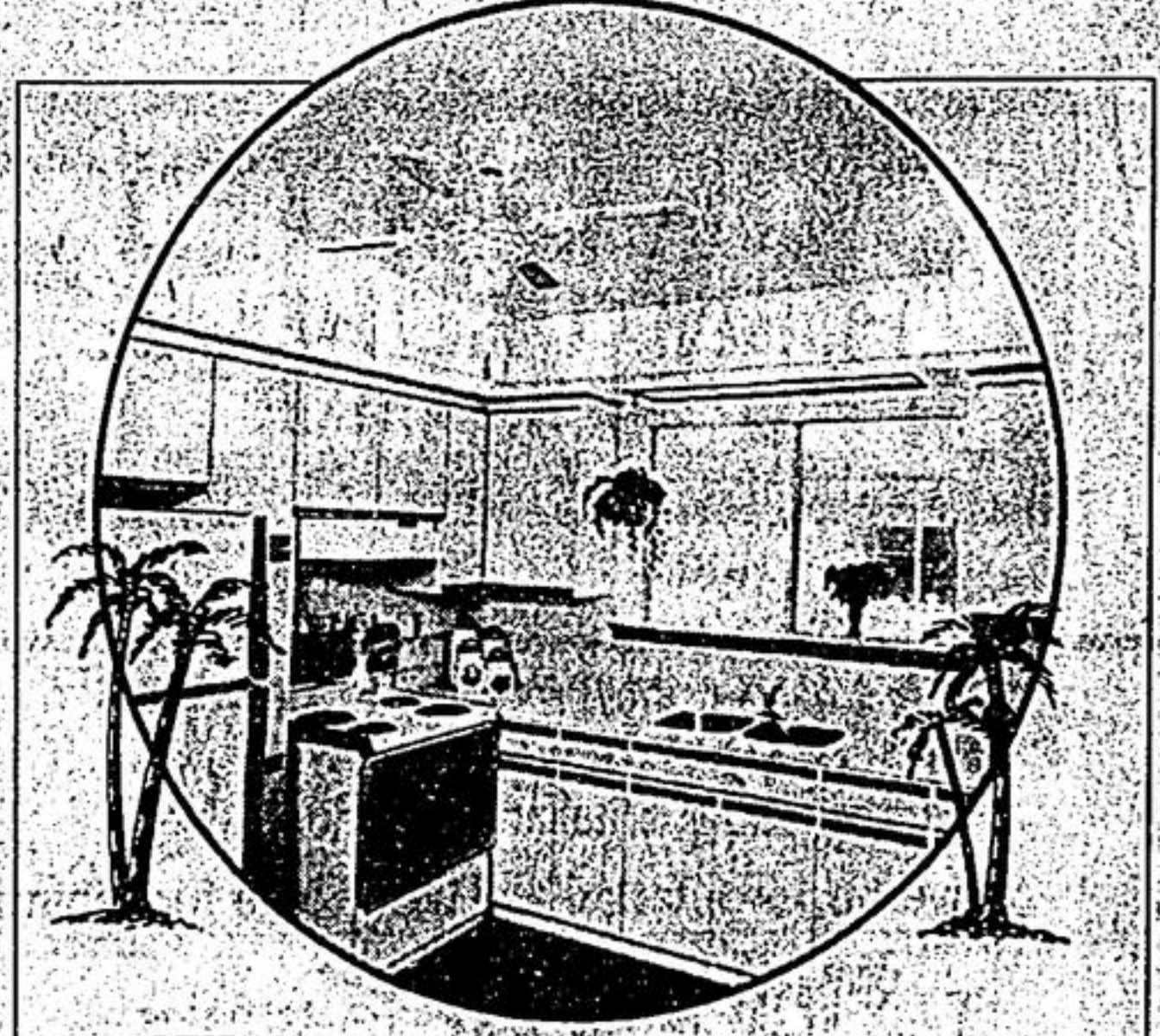
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