

# OPINION

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## Create a vision for Canada and hold it fast

Canada - what a country - what a challenge. From the ashes of the 126th Canada Day fireworks (Ottawa and Stouffville went wild), we must construct a vision to herald our country into the next century.

We know its great beauty, its diverse peoples, its struggles for communication geographically, politically, personally. We know its strengths and hold them close to our hearts. And there's pride too.

Living in the keystone province of Ontario, the referendum played out unfamiliar scenarios. As never before we focussed on the mechanics of



Viewpoint

Jo Ann Stevenson

how our government works and doesn't work. We saw the open sores in the west, in the aboriginal peoples and Quebec that have yet to be healed. In the words of the late Jeanne Sauve, the referendum was one of the greatest crises in our history.

And with a federal election expected this fall, the party leaders are pointing out their

visions and asking us to be a part.

Kim Campbell blames the long Liberal reign for today's staggering \$458 billion federal debt, higher per capita than the U.S. She believes the steps taken such as GST to put the economic house back in order are working.

Jean Chretien blames free trade for unemployment and would repeal it. His vision is to pull Canada back to independence and self reliance.

Whoever we elect as prime minister, two-way dialogue with the people of Canada will be essential to keep our vision on track.

Take the language issue for

an example. A healthy Canada is the surest path to the survival of the French language and culture in North America.

Likewise, our economic difficulties are better solved together.

The hour is critical so we must forge ahead together, each pursuing his or her own vision for that is truly good government. Together, we do have the power to solve our problems.

**MARKHAM ECONOMIST AND SUN STOFFVILLE TRIBUNE UXBRIDGE TRIBUNE**  
 Weekender edition  
 A Metroland Community Newspaper  
 PATRICIA PAPPAS, PUBLISHER  
 JO ANN STEVENSON, Editor-in-chief  
 PAULA CROWELL, Editor  
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 DEBRA WELLER, Director of Advertising  
 BARRY GOODYEAR, Director of Distribution  
 VIVIAN O'NEIL, Business Manager  
 PAMELA NICHOLS, Operations Manager

Markham 294-2200 (sales 798-7624, classified 294-4331), Stouffville 640-2100, Uxbridge 852-9741  
 294-8244 distribution and administration  
 9 Heritage Rd. Markham L3P 1M2  
 FAX Markham 294-1532, Stouffville 640-5477, Uxbridge 852-4355

The Markham Economist and Sun, Stouffville Tribune and Uxbridge Tribune, published every Wednesday and Saturday is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing group of suburban newspapers which includes: Ajax Pickering News Advertiser, Barrie Advance, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Post, Collingwood Connection, Etobicoke Guardian, The Liberal, Georgetown Independent/Acton Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Milton Canadian Champion, Mississauga News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Orillia Today, Oshawa-Whitby This Week, Peterborough This Week, Scarborough Mirror, The Era Banner.  
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## Must our meltdowns really go Galactic?

We live in perilous times. Nowadays, the simple act of reading your newspaper can be dangerous to your health.

The other day for instance, I read in my newspaper that Japanese boffins are working on a project to put a nuclear power station on the moon.

The same edition of the newspaper informs me that Russian scientists have already managed to launch a mirror into space that can be used to reflect the sun's rays to "turn night into day" here on earth.

I have only one response to these Brave New technological breakthroughs:

Are we nuts?  
Has mankind, long the looniest of earthly critters, finally come completely unhinged?

Chernobyl and Three Mile Island weren't big enough toxic playgrounds? Now we have to go galactic with our meltdowns?

Truth to tell, I'm not really worried about the Japanese plan yet. It's still at the blue sky stage (ironic cliché, that). The Japanese Science and Technology Agency is merely setting up a five year project to study the feasibility of their interplanetary reactor brainwave. A lot of things can happen in five years. Including common sense.

No, it's the Russian mirror-in-space initiative that really gets my goat.

Because they've already done it. One night last month while you and I slept snug in our beds, an unmanned Russian spacecraft winging around the earth deployed a very thin plastic mirror about 65 feet wide. The mirror was angled to pick up the sun's rays and deflect them down to the darkened European continent below.

It worked. That night across Europe, something happened that has never occurred in the history of the planet.

There was sunlight in the middle of the night.

Not a whole lot of it, and not for very long. It was more like a two-mile-wide flashlight beam that skipped across France, Germany, Austria and what used to be Yugoslavia for a grand total of about six minutes.

Still, it was an historical occa-



Basic Black

Arthur Black

sion, and it must have been something to see from the ground. An insomniac in Lyons described the flashing strobe that emanated from the satellite as looking like "luminous diamonds following one another across the sky." And it apparently lit up the earth like a photographer's flash.

Nevertheless, I repeat my earlier question: are we nuts?

The theory behind the space mirror rests on the same guiding principle that drives our approach to all things agricultural - namely, how can we milk a little more juice out of this sucker? We pump our cattle full of steroids to fatten 'em up; we pump our wheat fields full of fertilizer and pesticides to accomplish the same thing.

The space mirror, once perfected, will mean we can put our farmlands on unpaid overtime - extend harvest and planting periods, resulting in bigger, more frequent harvests.

Oh yes, and it would save electricity, too. By turning dawn and dusk into more hours of daylight, billions of dollars in electric lighting would be saved.

So by extending daylight we would save on electric light. Which was created to extend daylight.

Truth is, we don't know what we're meddling with. The earth and all the creatures on it have marched to an unseen biological rhythm since life began. Fool with the cadence of life itself and who knows what Frankensteinian consequences you unleash?

But we will fool with it. We're human and we can conveniently label it 'progress'. That guarantees that we will fool with it.

And some day I imagine we'll have the planet wired up just like a corner convenience store - floodlit, open 24 hours.

Personally, I prefer going out in the ink-black night to look for the Big Dipper.



## PUD

