

OPINION

Write us
or FAX us
Numbers at right

Sell-off of airport lands doesn't fly

Pickering Airport lands lie fallow, but the three provincial ministries have infused some fertilizer with strength to yield a healthy harvest for future generations.

Once again, it's Steve Marshall and Save the Rouge Valley System and Green Door Alliance who laid the groundwork and helped mobilize the provincial machines.

These environmental activists work towards the vision of protecting large tracts of rural/agricultural and natural lands for posterity. They've come to the aid of a handful of long buffeted families who've built a community on lands expropriated for the Pickering Airport.

The federal government says it wants to sell 5,100 acres to



Viewpoint

Jo Ann Stevenson

put towards the deficit, but selling land at the current deflated prices makes little sense. This week the ministers of Municipal Affairs, Agriculture and Foods and Natural Resources blasted the move as short-sighted and environmentally insensitive.

Ed Philip Minister of Municipal Affairs said he's prepared to use his powers under provincial law to prevent urban sprawl and further threats to

farming and greenspace in this region.

As the NDP Markham Stouffville candidate retorted at a recent all candidates meeting, 'the contribution to the deficit on the sale of those acres is about one quarter of one helicopter'.

The federal government should reverse its decision on this land. At the very least, it should put the sale on hold until all of these forward thinking greenspace initiatives can be examined and a comprehensive plan put in place for the area.

The lands for sale impact the Rouge Valley Park, the community of Seaton, a provincial agricultural preserve and the Oak Ridges Moraine area.

Prime agricultural land is

scarce world wide. David Suzuki estimates only one per cent remains in the world. The opportunity to keep some so close to one of Canada's largest cities is unique. And some of the ideas tossed about by the environmentalists are exciting - co-operative farms, organic experimental farms and farms for hands-on teaching to name a few.

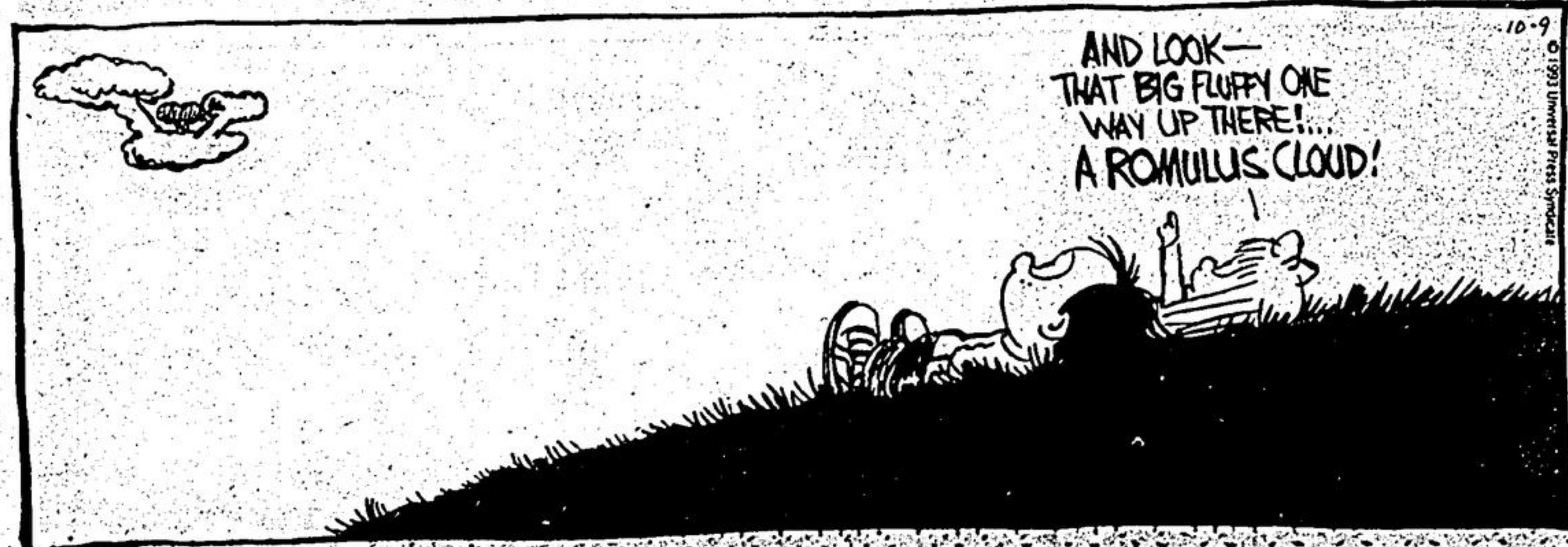
Future land use planning needs to take place before these lands are sold - and citizens need to have a say in the decision process.



ADAM

Adam®

by Brian Basset



Harley takes a friend for a ride

Here's an interesting little news squib in my daily paper - it says that a chap in the town of Skien, Norway is so infatuated with American motorcycles that he has legally changed his name to - Harley Davidson.

Imagine loving a hunk of machinery so much that you name yourself after it.

I don't think I'll tell my pal Rick about this story. Rick had a wee bout of lovesickness over Harley Davidson motorcycles too, but I think he's over it.

In fact I think the merest mention of the name might send Rick into a relapse involving toilet bowls, dry heaves and some very nasty language.

It all happened last year when Rick had a brainwave.

Those of us who know Rick have learned to head for fallout shelters whenever Rick has a brainwave. This is a guy who took a flyer on Moscow real estate just before the USSR broke up.

This is a guy who bought shares in Canary Wharf just before the Reichman's bailed out.

This is a guy who puts money on the Toronto Argonauts.

"It can't miss," said Rick.

Yeah, well. Still, Rick said his Harley Davidson caper was a natural gold mine. The idea was to buy a vintage U.S. cycle in Canada, ship it across to Europe, tour the continent for a couple of months, then sell the bike at an obscene profit and float back to Canada on a mattress of hundred dollar bills. "It can't miss," said Rick. "Europeans, they're crazy for Harley Davidsons. They'll pay 30, 40 grand for them, no questions asked."

As usual Rick was about half right. He bought a Harley in Canada, shipped it at great expense to Rotterdam and proceeded to ride across the continent.

He didn't get very far. The bike broke down. Again and again and again. It broke down in Holland. It broke down in Belgium. It broke down in Germany and France and Andorra for crynoutloud - which is so small there's barely room to ride a motorcycle, much less



Basic Black

Arthur Black

break down.

But Rick didn't really mind all the breakdowns.

Because it was raining anyway.

And sleeting and misting and fogging and generally being the worst European summer in a quarter of a century. It was so cold and so wet that nothing ever dried out. Especially if you were camping.

Which Rick was. Between motorcycle breakdowns.

It's okay, thought Rick, shivering and cursing and handing over his Mastercard for the umpteenth time. "It's okay because once I get back to Holland I'll unload this two-wheeled albatross for 35 or 40 grand and fly back to Canada first-class on the Concorde."

As with most of Rick's plans, it didn't quite work out that way. Oh, he eventually chugged into the outskirts of Rotterdam on his wheezing, smoking bike. He found a Harley lover willing to pay \$20,000, not \$40,000 for the bike. Rick was all set to shake hands when the Dutchman said, "Of course der will be also tax."

Tax? What tax? Well, it was a Dutch government tax, specifically created to stop foreign would-be entrepreneurial hot-shots like Rick from cleaning up. In the case of Rick's bike the tax would come to 9,000 guilders.

Which meant that Rick would be selling the bike for \$2,000 less than he paid for it.

Rick's back home now. The Harley sits in a crate on a dock in Rotterdam, destination unknown. Rick doesn't think about it much any more.

Rick's more interested in this new scheme involving computerized vineyards. You see, he met this guy at a Harley shop in Marseilles who told him that for an investment of just a few hundred thousand francs....

MARKHAM ECONOMIST AND SUN STOUFFVILLE TRIBUNE UXBRIDGE TRIBUNE
Weekender edition
A Metroland Community Newspaper
PATRICIA PAPPAS, PUBLISHER
JO ANN STEVENSON, Editor-in-Chief
PAULA CROWELL, Editor
ANDREW MAIR, Editor
DEBRA WELER, 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 294-1538, 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.
Contents not to be reproduced without written permission from the publisher.