

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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EDITORIAL

Airport may not be fair, but it may be necessary

They have done it before and, if their words are any indication, they are planning to do it again. Hundreds of residents from Durham have started a grassroots movement to halt plans to build an international airport on 18,600 acres of land in Pickering, Uxbridge and Markham.

And they're appealing to residents of Stouffville and Markham to join the crusade to ensure this large parcel of agricultural land isn't developed into a gateway to the Greater Toronto Area.

If nothing else, the movement has history on its side.

Back in 1975, the federal government abandoned plans to build the airport after hundreds of residents vowed to lie in front of the bulldozers needed to clear land for the runways.

It was a monumental victory for the anti-airport forces.

So it comes as no surprise that area residents wasted little time issuing another call to arms after learning Ottawa wanted the lands designated as an airport site.

While their concerns are understandable, the not-in-my-back-yard defence is perhaps outdated.

Few people, if any, would choose to live near a large international airport that handles hundreds of flights each day. The fact this proposed facility could be built after residents have settled in the area gives the residents some clout.

But that doesn't mean the airport should never be built. Sometimes, the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.

Consider Hwy. 407, for instance. While there were strong objections to the toll highway — another fight looms for proposed expansion — it was desperately needed to alleviate east-west traffic congestion across the top of Toronto and southern York Region.

Without the highway, the GTA could have lost some of its appeal as a great place to live and do business.

The same can be said for a new airport. If people and goods have difficulty reaching our community at large, what chance do York and Durham regions have of supporting and attracting new business?

It's worth noting that Hwy. 407 has already given York Region residents and businesses faster access to Pearson International Airport. But this isn't a debate about meeting today's needs.

This is about developing an infrastructure that can handle the needs of a growing metropolis. York's population alone will top one million by 2021, never mind the growth that is currently taking place to the north and east.

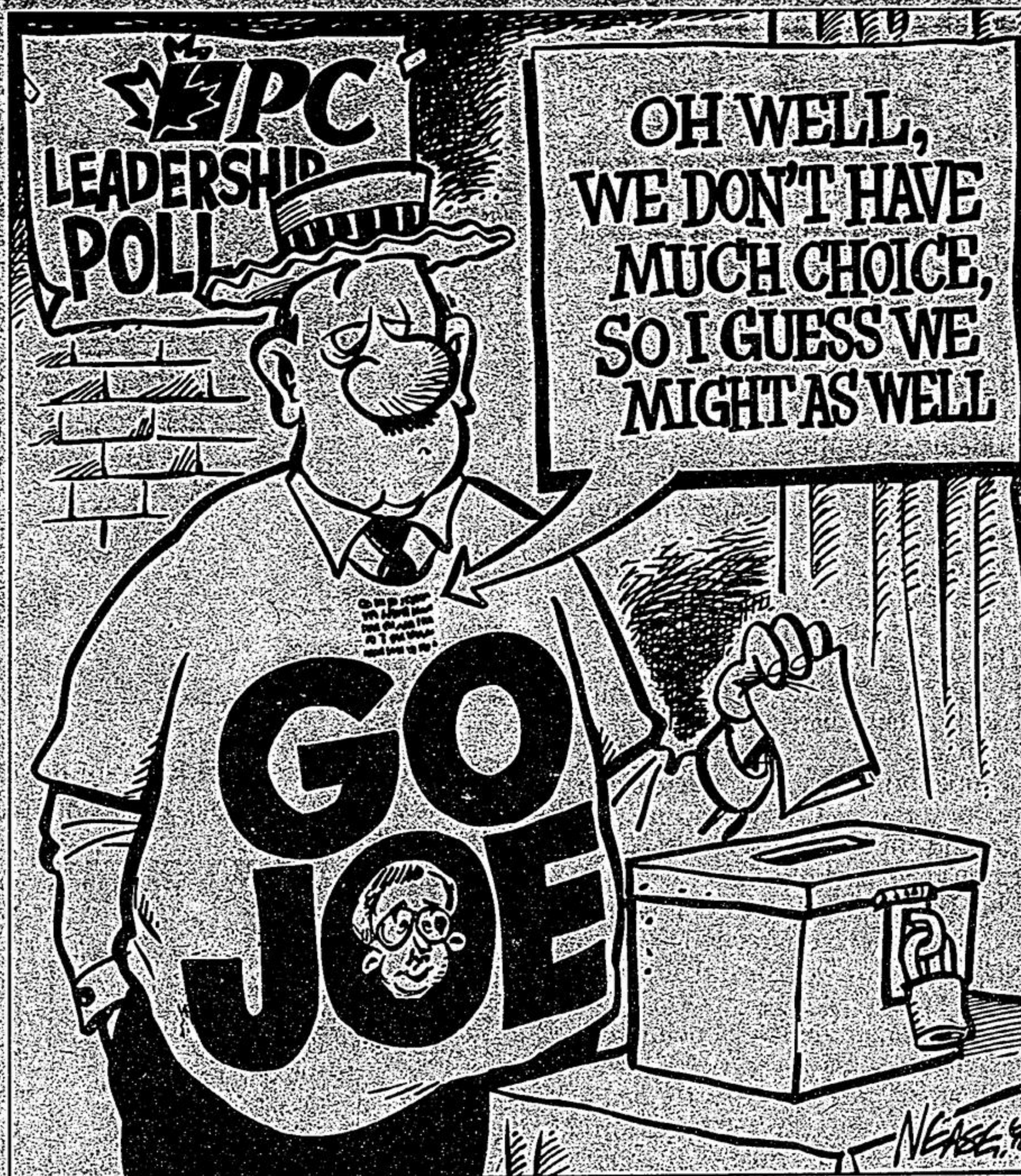
If an expanded Pearson airport can't fulfill our air transportation needs, one must be built somewhere. And if Pickering turns out to be the best location, derailing the project this time out will prove more difficult than in 1975.

That may be unfair. But it's also the cost of living in and working from the GTAs collective wealth and success.

CHEERS, NO JEERS

■ **CHEERS** to the Region of York for staging a series of workshops to give the public a chance to participate in the municipality's development. Now, if the region could only convince residents to give up a few hours of time to offer their input, the process would be a success.

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Had it up to 'oxters' with teacher unions

I feel sure that I am not the only resident in Ontario to react this way, but I have had it right up to my oxters with these ads from the teachers' unions.

These advertisements are directed at the likes of me, and I resent them very much.

The teachers are very lucky to be employed by the school boards and not Maple Leaf Mills in Winnipeg, a company which recently let go 400 workers.

The remaining employees had to take a 40 per cent cut to keep their jobs.

If the teachers or their unions don't like the new rules they should go and obtain a job elsewhere at \$30,000 a year if they can, and maybe the education portion of my taxes will go down as the result.

I. SHAW

Tribune applauded civil disobedience

The Tribune applauds York Region chairperson Bill Fisch for his pressuring of GO Transit to improve local service or the region will pay less toward its operating costs. Re: Cheers and Jeers in the Sept. 22 edition.

Would you applaud the parents of Catholic children withholding tax dollars, since their children didn't see the inside of a classroom for the first three

weeks of school?

Would you applaud a childless couple from paying less education tax, since they receive no direct benefit?

Would you applaud a business owner withholding a portion of their property taxes?

What do all of the above have in common?

Answer: They get a lot less bang for their buck.

Withholding taxes is civil disobedience.

The taxation system is there to benefit all. Some pay more, some pay less, some get more, some get less.

It is irresponsible to advocate withholding of lawful taxes, be it at the level of chairperson or grassroots.

There is nothing to applaud here.

PETER KREWITER

Public spanking would solve Clinton dilemma

All the public sympathy for Hillary Clinton is totally misplaced: nobody made her marry (U.S. President Bill Clinton). (Their daughter) Chelsea is the one who has to deal with sniggering schoolmates.

Nevertheless, I think that resignation, followed by a public spanking by Hillary, would satisfy everyone.

TONY ROUTLEDGE

MARKHAM



Brenda Larson

Have your say in how region develops

When regional chairperson Bill Fisch took the stage last Thursday evening at Vaughan City Playhouse, he gave York Region residents the chance to take an open shot at him and at the municipality.

He invited residents to tell regional officials how they're doing at their jobs, how effectively the region's programs and services are working and whether or not the region's on the right track to the future.

"Do we get an A?" Fisch asked. "Or do we get an F?"

You've heard the discussions around you often enough.

People complaining about the traffic jams in the south end of the region (and stretching up into Georgina and Maple), people complaining about the busy streets in their residential subdivisions, people complaining about overcrowded schools, people complaining about the proliferation of strip plazas, people complaining about trees being bulldozed for more housing.

The report card process will collect those kinds of concerns, collate them and the results will help the region improve the quality of life for residents here.

It's a fantastic idea and, if everyone participates, it will result in some positive planning for the future.

It's not often government opens its official processes to the people this way. We have a democratic role to play, of course, as we select representatives who demonstrate an interest in the same priorities we have. But this process goes a step further.

At last week's launch, for example, participants graded visual images of what the region could be or should be.

The visual preference survey, conducted by Tony Nelessen of A Nelessen Associates, had guests rating the images they saw — the good, the bad and the ugly, as Regional Councillor Frank Scarpitti said.

With a tick of a pencil, you could tell regional council the kind of community where you would like to live — how much green space you like, how the roads should handle traffic, what kind of parking lots you like, where the parks should be.

To get involved, watch our newspaper for upcoming workshops and call regional planner Meg West-Stevens at (905) 895-1231, ext. 1528.

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