


The Tribune
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Editorial

Individual opinions respected

The Tribune, while taking a stand, (unpopular to some), related to the proposed airport project, has, up until now, placed no restrictions on publishing the opinions of others.

This week, however, that 'freedom' ends. For, unfortunately, there are those who would take advantage of the media, and attempt to 'grind their axe' in a very personal manner.

This newspaper will not tolerate conduct of this kind.

In such an issue, so important to so many people, feelings pro and con, are expressed.

And while we personally do not agree with each one, we respect each one, and

expect our readers to do the same.

Vendettas, written and verbal, that have occurred between neighbors, friends and even families, will not be recognized here. The former are discarded; the latter are ignored.

Through the years, the rural residents of Pickering Township have had their problems. And while solutions, if any, were slow, the residents faced these problems together; farmer with farmer, home-owner with home-owner.

On the airport issue, such is not the case. The backyard fence, once a communications' link, is now a barrier - a barrier that must be dissolved, before whole communities are torn apart.

Planning - A top priority

With a two billion dollar airport project proposed for an area bordering Whitchurch - Stouffville, Uxbridge and Markham, the importance of good planning holds top priority.

For undoubtedly, the future of all three municipalities will depend on the tough line policy adopted in connection with related enterprises this venture is sure to bring.

However, in Whitchurch - Stouffville and Markham, signs of enthusiasm have not been evident.

Here, for example, the approach by some has been tinged with pessimism - an attitude of 'what's the use?'

There's been a tendency to look on the government - imposed land 'freeze' as a high-handed, dictatorial move on the part of Queen's Park.

There's been too much looking back, and too little looking ahead.

In Markham, the attitude has been 'hohum'; in fact, at a meeting, March 23, only four out of nine committee members showed up.

Is it any wonder that Queen's Park made its move when it did, and the way it did?

Don't be surprised if they take over the entire 'planning game' and impose their own set of rules from beginning to end.

Editor's Mail

Dear Sir: Wherever airports are built, there is a host of people who, in airport jargon, are called 'The Uncompensated Losers'.

Who are these Uncompensated Losers? They are the people in the community outside the airport site and the people who live along the approach and take-off paths.

The citizens within the airport boundary, although he may not be adequately compensated, does receive cash in his hand. He can re-locate. But the citizen on the outside of the fence, has to suffer a loss not softened by cash:

- his air is polluted.
- his sleep is interrupted.
- his television watching is impaired.
- his municipal services are strained.
- his taxes may pay for many services required by the airport.

During the next few weeks, many thousands of people outside the airport area will discover they have an unsaleable property. Some houses will depreciate by 50 per cent, some less. People will not buy homes near an airport or on a flight path. Without buyers, prices drop.

Because of its massive and unfavorable environmental impact, an airport is no longer considered a blessing to a community.

It is difficult for the average homeowner or farmer to understand why he 'The Uncompensated Loser' should provide a subsidy to a few who can afford frequent air travel.

L. D. Almack,
Claremont.

Dear Jim: I am a dairy farmer, living in the proposed airport site. I do not believe that all farmers are for it. I, personally, am against it.

Thirty-five years before there was a Dominion of Canada, the Gosticks stayed (I will not say lived) at lot 24, conc. 7, Pickering Twp., and are still quite happy to remain here.

I agree with some of the writers (March 23), pointing out the fact that we are unduly taxed beyond our means and that there are many vacant farms. But, if we must move elsewhere, I'm sure the weeds will be just as high as they are here; the grain will be shorter and the taxes be burdensome.

Previous to March 3, 1972, if I was unhappy living in Pickering, I could have sold at my own price and moved to a place of my choice. Under the suggested arrangement, a government official will appraise my property, and later (when it is too late), I may discover I have contributed a large sum for what may, or may not be progress.

Russ Gostick,
R. R. 2, Claremont.

Dear editor: This is a farmer's wife's answer to the now-popular question: "How do you feel about the airport?"

My husband and I have lived on our 50 acre farm for 13 years. We have four children.

During this time, we've completed all necessary repairs to our house with some remodelling underway, but still not finished. Our barn, however, needs major attention.

We've had to borrow money to purchase a truck, buy machinery and increase our stock. Holidays are only a 'dream'.

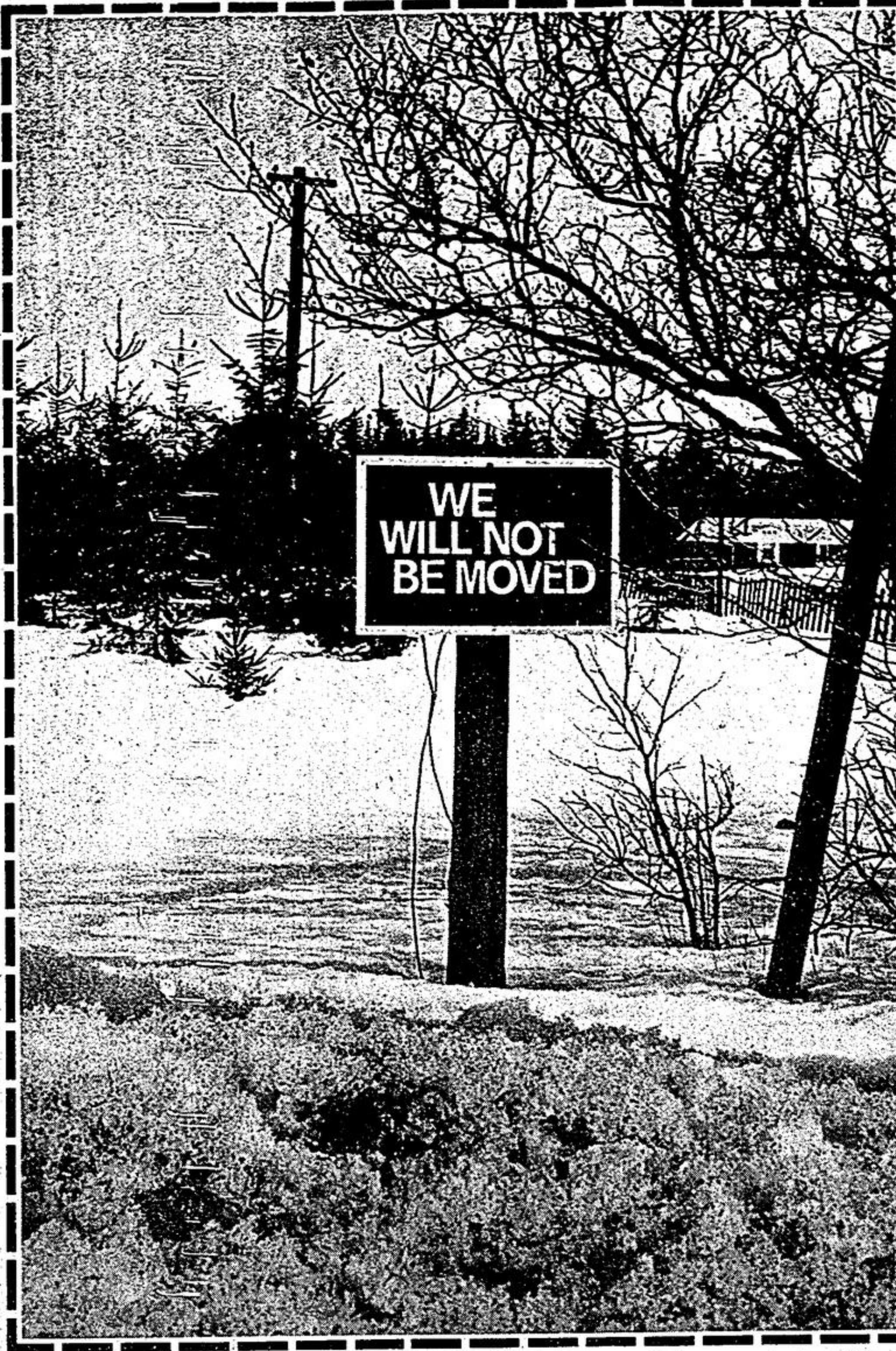
To us, therefore, the proposed airport is a 'God send' - that is, if we are treated fairly.

Selfish, you say?
Not to us.

If payment for our property is reasonable, we will be able to pay off our loans; find a suitable area in which to relocate and farm again, perhaps a little easier.

Let the airport go ahead.

Mrs. Paul Meyer,
Claremont, R. R. 2.



Dear Jim:

As a farmer, I can understand the sentiments expressed in the published letters of March 23.

A crushing burden of municipal taxes has created problems for Pickering farmers. However, an airport is not the solution. It will only bring higher taxes - nearly \$2 billion to be squeezed from the Canadian people and a greater burden on the farmers left in fringe areas, since there will be fewer producing acres.

The key words in the letters were 'satisfactory price'.

It should be understood that the 'price' is largely fixed by law - the current market price plus an undetermined amount or percentage for potential commercial value.

Also, up to 25 percent of the total sum would be snatched back the following year in federal capital gains tax.

The lowest price quoted on a decent house by a local realtor is about \$40,000 and most good farms available within a 50 mile radius, have already been optioned to realtors who will demand a price equal or greater than that which was considered 'satisfactory' for the old Pickering farm.

Refusal to accept the government's initial offer could result in painful litigation, lasting up to 10 years.

Taking all this into consideration, what may seem like an imminent bonanza, could easily turn out to be a horrendous financial debacle.

I am certain, when all the facts are known, the farmers will shout - Airport, No!

Hugh Miller,
Claremont.

Dear Jim:

One must feel sorry for the city people who bought property on the site of the "definite" new airport, and I'm sure that it is they who are raising all the fuss.

From my personal knowledge of the area, I don't feel that much of it is good for farming. I also sympathize with the older farmers, who have been trying to eke out a living and having their taxes go up and up. Now, with an opportunity to get a good price per acre, they will be able to retire on a better income than is available through the pittance paid by the Old Age Pension.

We are living in the age of the airplane, super highways and automobiles, and I would suggest that any city-dweller who wishes a home in the country, should build themselves a cottage near James Bay.

Reg MacKay,
Stouffville.

Dear Sir:

The Stouffville Players Curtain Campaign to raise funds for the purchase and installation of stage curtains at the new Community Hall is now under way.

These curtains will cost between \$750 and \$1,000 and any funds received in excess of the cost will be used for equipment and other improvements at the hall.

As the "Players" treasurer, I have been asked to seek the support of members of the business and professional community and the service clubs of Whitchurch - Stouffville.

A special "Curtain Fund" account (No. 3754) has been opened at the Bank of Nova Scotia in Stouffville, and donations may be deposited directly into this account.

We believe this campaign is a worthwhile community endeavor and your support as always is deeply appreciated.

John R. Garbutt,
Treasurer.

Dear Sir:

All children, regardless of their station in life have one thing in common. They will inherit this great land of ours. The airport robs them of this inheritance. Our nature trails will become their vapour trails.

M.S. Baggs,
R.R.4, Stouffville.

Dear Sir:

The views of some of my farmer neighbors appeared in your paper (March 23), in support of the proposed new airport. I am not merely trying to be ingratiating when I say that I agree completely with their reasons. I am actively opposed to this project, however; believing that it is the duty of responsible government to solve the problems of my friends and neighbors by other means than the destruction of good farm land.

True, my protest begins with my personal loss. But I am joined in that protest by many who are not similarly affected. Many people believe there is reason to fear that political expediency might have interfered with responsible government, and only by challenging the Governments will these fears be allayed.

Many questions have to be answered before we can accept that our Governments have assumed the responsibility to examine all possible alternatives. Not alternative airport sites, but alternative solutions to the problems of Toronto-centered citizens; urban and rural, now and in the future.

C. W. Ness,
R.R.2, Claremont.

ROAMING AROUND

Sam's a 'travelling man'

By Jim Thomas

A couple of months ago, I was headed west through the intersection at Ringwood, en route to Unionville.

Half-way between the lights and the Christian Church, a tall, dark figure loomed into view, one arm waving up and down like the signal of a short-circuited semaphore.

While picking up hitch-hikers is a common failing of mine, I reserved no second thoughts about giving this gentleman a lift. For I've known Sam McKuen for years, and so do hundreds of other folks, not only in Markham, where he lives, but across Ontario.

"Don't you think you're taking a chance, stopping for this old codger?" he said, folding his six foot frame into the front seat. I assured him, I felt quite safe, and besides, I enjoyed his company.

He laughed, a loud, yet silent laugh, lowering his head below his knees. "Thomas", he replied (to him, I only have a last name), "if you're out looking for a pretty picture, you sure got the wrong fellow". With that, he launched into another inaudible gale of laughter that lasted from the 7th concession to the laneway entrance to Ratcliff Lumber.

Since no conversation had yet started, it seemed heartless to say goodbye so soon. I continued on to Gormley.

"See that fence over yonder?" he said, pointing a finger in front of my nose. "John Phillips and I built every inch of it, back in 1910 - two carloads - twelve miles in all. Some still standing".

A verbal synopsis of the area's history ended at Don Mills Road. I could still see him waving through the rear-view mirror, as I retraced my route.

Sam McKuen, or just plain 'Sam' to the natives, is indeed an amazing man - a travelling man. He turns up everywhere, at fairs, plowing matches, auction sales, you name it and he's there. Even if you don't see him, you hear him. He's got a voice that carries a country mile.

Sam's travelled in all kinds of rigs, even a snowmobile. On one occasion, near Bond Head, he was picked up in an O.P.P. cruiser and taken to the site of a plowing match near Cookstown. "When we rolled onto the grounds, there were the Tran's, the Dunkeld's and the Wells', all unloading their 'contraptions'. Don't think that didn't make for some talk", he joked.

Another time, he hitch-hiked to Arthur Fair, found the racetrack ankle-deep in mud, so left and made it to Beeton Fair the same morning. On still another occasion, a lady gave him a ride from Locust Hill to a horse show at Lindsay. One of his longest single jaunts was from Markham to Goderich, to Southampton, to Owen Sound, then home again.

Sam's roaming around was supposed to have ended before it started. He suffered a broken ankle when kicked by a horse Sam's done, Dr. Walt Sangster said, he'll never do another day's work. But the physician obviously didn't know his patient too well. "The horse is long gone, but I'm still going", said Sam with a grin. More recently, he fell out of a tree and broke his leg, but that hasn't stopped him either.

Sam's memory of 'the good old days' is remarkable. It is said, that before property changes became so frequent, he knew every farmer from Pickering Village to Newmarket.

He recalls the old Bloomington School as the 'deep freeze' with boards on the inside and outside 'and no stuffing in between'. The teacher in his day was Johnny Hoshel, also the Sunday School Superintendent at Baker Hill Church. John Davis (Shine's father) and Nat Forsyth built the Bloomington Church in 1892 and the Stouffville Presbyterian Church in 1894. Jonas Boyer, Frank Stiver and Dr. Walt Sangster had the first cars around Stouffville. The Boyer 'machine' was chain driven. If the chain broke, it took only a 4 inch nail, riveted at both ends, to piece it together.

Sam has threshed with every kind of power - horse, water, steam, electric and gas.

This month, April 22, Sam and Clara (Miller), will mark their 59th wedding anniversary. He explains it this way: "She said she'd have me, and my Dad said it was okay, as long as we did it before seeding time".

April 22 is also Sam's 90th birthday. Congratulations - in advance.