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## LETTERS POLICY

The Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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# OPINION

Stouffville  
**Sun-Tribune**

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## Editorial

### Greenbelt or foodbelt — end it

You can't dislike something called a foodbelt, or even a greenbelt, can you?

Are you then against food or the greening of our community?

There are councillors who think setting aside 2,000 hectares of Markham land for farming purposes, by municipal government fiat, will assist in environmental sustainability. Carving homes or other real estate into farmland is irreversible, they say.

Sure, an Ontario Greenbelt Alliance-backed survey found 83 per cent of Markham residents in favour of a proposed foodbelt, aiming to push development away and preserve farmland. Statistically, though, the survey sample was insignificant — 500 people out of a quarter-million Markham adults. (Moreover, the survey found 61 per cent of respondents were not initially familiar with the proposal but supported the idea after pollsters explained it to them.)

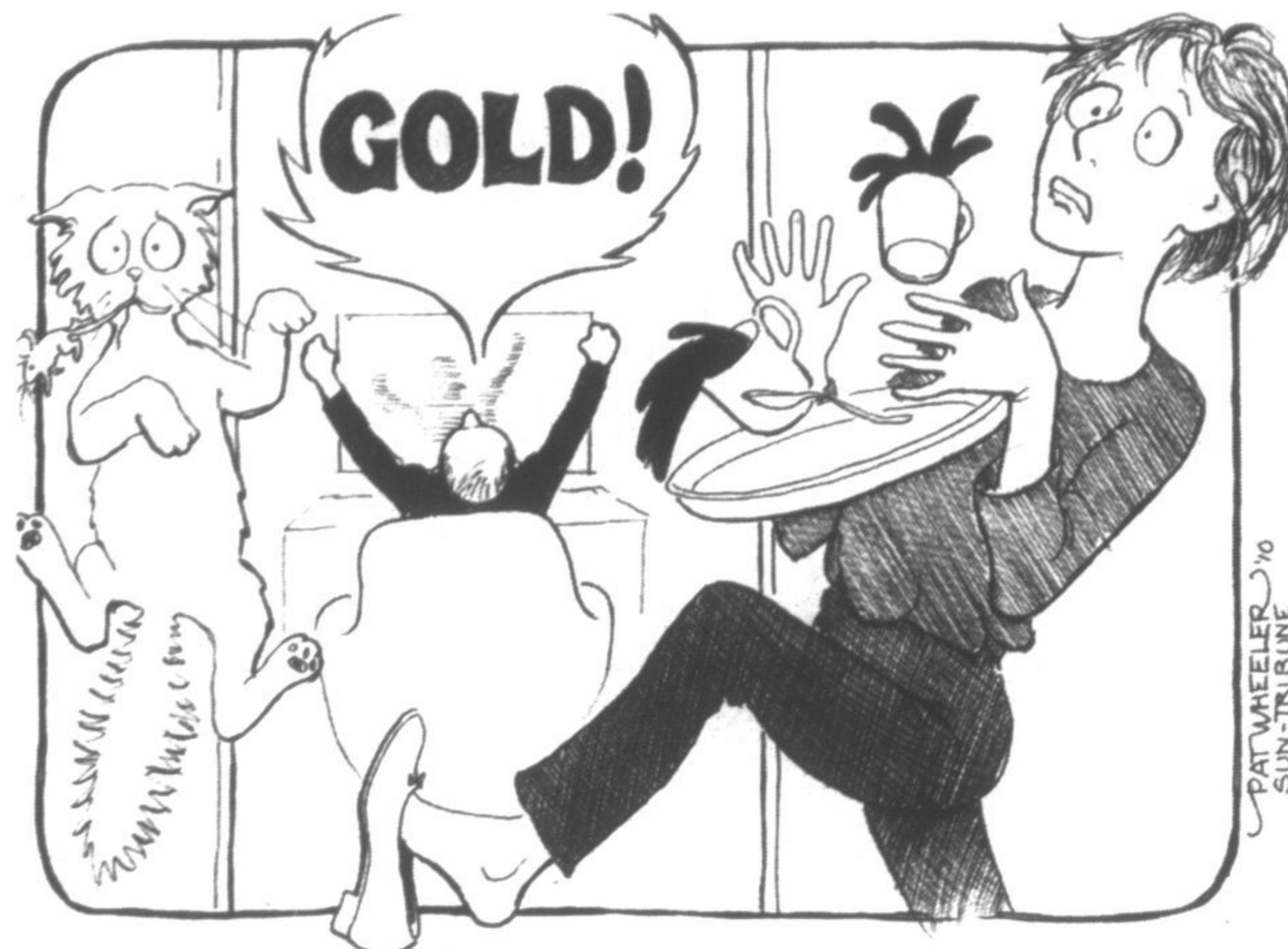
This issue pits the politically vogue greenbelt proponents against farmers and developers. The former are receiving much ink in the press. The latter have been the targets of mockery and contempt, particularly when those farmers or families who own or work the land unfairly acquire a guilty-by-association stigma when allying with developers and those who build on the land.

Farmers believe such a "greenbelt" policy would devalue their agricultural lands and handcuff them if they wanted to ultimately sell the land that belonged to them, and in some cases, their parents and grandparents. This issue resonates in every single one of our communities, where development and growth pressures continually affect farms and the farming way of life.

Would you want your home's property appraisal to tank because elected officials began tinkering with how your land was to be used? Would you think it fair to be told to whom you can and can't sell your property?

If this policy becomes a reality in Markham, some 30,000 new residents hoping to make their homes and businesses in Markham in the next 20 years would have to move into intensified apartments and housing in existing urban areas. By preventing normal growth to the more rural north, the result would be new housing crammed and shoehorned into southern Markham.

There is nothing more precious to people than land — the land they grow on or the land their home's on. When the state seizes property for its own use or tells people what they can and can't do with their property — then what other rights can our politicians decide to move or remove?



## Letters to the Editor

### Forget out-of-town criticism; appreciate great town, arena

Re: Stouffville's new arena no winner: visitor, Feb. 20.

Thank you to Mike Richardson and David Cash of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville for a very enlightening tour of the new Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex.

As a member of the Whitchurch-Stouffville accessibility advisory committee, I was impressed and reassured with the care taken in construction and due diligence afforded to the guidelines outlined in the progressive mandate by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities.

Details were addressed to make it as all inclusive as possible. Mr Richardson's expertise and sensitivity are commendable.

I am sorry to hear some people from outside Stouffville found cause for dissatisfaction.

For the years I have lived in Stouffville, I could compile an enormous volume of faults, misdeeds, unsatisfactions, not this and not that, and etc. and etc. and etc.

Criticism is not what brought us to where we are today.

When I arrived in Stouffville I drove a Model T along the gravel Main Street.

Many, throughout the years, have made generous contributions, be it mayors, councillors, taxpayers, planners and staff and many, many volunteers. Criticisms came and went.

Nevertheless, through grind and groan, through laughter, sweat and tears, we have a delightful town. It didn't "just happen": It takes much positive labour and sacrifice.

As I viewed the new arena on Weldon Road, one thought stood out:

"Thank you, God, for giving me this opportunity to be here at this time to experience this."

MARIE ADAMS  
STOUFFVILLE

### Park on Musselman's Lake would be good for all ages

Re: Long-awaited lake park belongs on beach, council, column by Deborah Waddington, Feb. 20.

Thanks for printing the column on the location for the planned municipal park at Musselman's Lake.

We had no idea about a rumoured location behind the Wagon Wheel Ranch until we read your piece.

We totally agree with Ms Waddington that the Glendale Beach site on the lake's southern tip is the obvious choice for a good park for all ages.

As far as we can see, it is the only site. Why would we build anywhere other than lakeside? We will certainly be disappointed if it is not built at this location.

Ms Waddington mentions many good reasons for this location in her column. And for those of us who are a little older, it will be a pleasure to stroll or sit in the park by the lake and take in sun-up or sunset or anytime in between.

And for all those who walk or run around the lake currently and in the future, it will be a lovely place to stop and a great destination point.

And in the winter time, the Glendale Beach location may work into the annual winter carnival.

The carnival on the north side of the lake two weekends ago was a great event.

DENNIS & GERRI SEELEY  
MUSSELMAN'S LAKE



## Off The Top

with Jim Mason

### Smell of fries, hockey bags score on home ice

I'd be lying — and I'd have to find a new country to call home — if I told you I wasn't watching the Olympic hockey tournament.

Go, Canada and all that red and white, eh? Rah.

The skill level is the highest ever. The TV technology brings you almost as close to the ice at GM Place, er Canada Hockey Place, as those four-figured scalpers' tickets. And in case you missed anything, there is a small army of analysts to break down every line change, power play and pre-game meal.

Still, Canada could score a last-second goal to win gold Sunday and the game will never match what I saw Saturday night at the Stouffville Arena.

After failing to win any of the first three games of their Ontario Minor Hockey Association series, Stouffville's midget Clippers had clawed back to force a winner-take-all Game 6 on home ice.

The game had everything: An early lead for Stouffville. A comeback for Bradford to force what became double overtime. Rubber dinging goal posts and cross bars. Saves the Olympians would have been proud of. And, finally, a series-winning goal on a blast by Clipper Curtis Crago.

You can have your large-screen high-def images of millionaires on ice. I'll watch, but I'd rather be at a local rink where the smells of french fries and equipment bags cut the cold air like an elbow to the chops. You can hear the chirping between players and feel the stress oozing out of parents.

Those players are kids from your neighbourhood playing hard for the Stouffville crest on their jerseys.

Feel it yourself as the OMHA playoffs roll through Stouffville.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.