



**Write on!**

By Frank Touby

There are some cherry trees and raspberries growing in a vacant lot down the street from The Times office.

Blackberries and grapes also grow there without the addition of chemical fertilizers and bug sprays.

The cherries are firm, red-ripe and tart. I started picking some.

"Why don't you try the raspberries?" came a voice from a boy of about 12. "They're a lot sweeter. The cherries are pretty sour for eating, but they're alright for jam."

He and some friends were filling plastic containers with berries.

His name is Mike and he said he's afraid all the trees will be torn out soon so someone can build a franchised greaseburger joint.

"They're ruining all the neat places around here," Mike lamented. "They just keep putting up houses and things and tearing everything good down."

"Yeah," popped in one of his friends. "You oughta see what my street used to look like down at the end before they tore it out and built houses there."

"They tore out our climbing tree and all the apples and pears."

There is something revitalizing about picking fruits and berries in vacant lots near your house; not nearly the same feeling as paying a dollar to pick all you want from some farmer's field.

It's a feeling of well-being and a contentment in knowing that the world can be generous and sweet.

There ought to be a zoning category for vacant lots with climbing trees and berry bushes. They're too precious to a neighbourhood to spoil with houses.

When I was 10 my parents bought a house in Miami adjacent to a magnificent vacant lot complete with mangoes, guavas, bananas, grapefruit, wild grapes, tangerines, papayas, Florida cherries, oranges, voodoo beans, limes, palm trees and a jungle gym banyan tree which covered the area of a house with its maze of huge trunks and limbs.

It abounded with crocs and peacocks and kids and rabbits.

You get a feeling of proprietorship about your vacant lot. We kids "owned" that vacant lot.

It provided our battleground for war games, lunch and refreshment after exhausting play and a refuge to meditate — or sulk after a spanking.

The inexorable bulldozer took it all away from us in two chugging days and replaced it with an ordinary house.

It's hard to reconcile one's sadness at such a loss with the fact that our vacant lot really wasn't ours and the real owner was holding it for development. It's even harder when you're 12.

Miami then was about the size of Oakville. There were other vacant lots — none so nice — in bike range of our neighbourhood.

But they weren't to last for long. We stopped going to vacant lots after a while because it was too heartbreaking to realize that soon they would be depudged of their plants and wildlife to make place for houses or buildings.

It's the same feeling Mike and his friends had as they stood looking through berry bushes and cherry trees at the already cleared patch below at Southdown and South Sheridan Way.

Mike surveyed the flattened area as he stuffed blackberries in his mouth:

"Boy am I really going to be mad if they tear this place up."

Me too, Mike.



Picking cherries at corner of Southdown Road and South Sheridan Way are Betty (left) and Lori Cox.

**Planners shoot down bids to build on green belt land**

In response to a request from the provincial government, Mississauga planning board has requested deferral of two Streetsville building applications — one of which proposed construction on land designated as greenbelt in Streetsville's own boundary study.

The board was asked for its comments on the applications in a letter from the Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs. One of the applications involves land just west of Durie Road and only 250 feet away from the Credit River at its nearest point. It is set aside as open space in the town's boundary study. The study, done about five years ago, has no official status.

The proposal, part of a plan of subdivision, calls for construction of four detached homes and 48 semi-detached. Streetsville planning board recommended refusal of the application in April on the grounds that it was "premature." Town council accepted the recommendation.

Planning board chairman John McLeod said in an interview he could not remember the application by Udney Development Limited. He said, in regard to the town boundary study, that Streetsville was pushed for space on its eastern extremity.

"The town has made applications to expand as you know," he said, "and we're planning on that basis."

Mississauga Mayor Chic Murray reacted with dismay at last week's planning board meeting when he learned an application had been made on the proposed greenbelt zone. He did not

know at the time that the application had been refused.

Mississauga planning commissioner Harry Petcher, in presenting the staff report requesting deferral, said, "Streetsville has done these things in the past and left us to pick up the pieces." The report, based on opinions from town manager Bill Anderson and A.P. Kennedy, manager of the Mississauga Water Commission, said the development "should not be encouraged until appropriate services are available and an acceptable land use pattern and road layout have been decided upon."

The proposed development was in proximity to land zoned agricultural. The land is part of a study this year to determine future agricultural land use throughout the town.

The second development is still being considered by the Streetsville planning board. At a public meeting residents objected to the plan for four detached lots and 98 semi-detached lots on a 31-acre site. The land is west of Mullett Creek and the

CPR tracks, south of Thomas Street.

In requesting deferral on the application the town engineer cited needed road use and land studies, lot depths, the question of storm sewers and the proposed realignment of Thomas Street as major problems.

John Saz, representing the builder, Saz Construction Limited, addressed planning board to oppose efforts to postpone processing of the proposal. He said it was proceeding through Streetsville planning board and council and that no major objections had been raised.

He said his group was providing five acres of parkland in the plan. Petcher replied that the land is flood vulnerable and wouldn't be acceptable as a parkland designation in Mississauga.

Exasperated by his lack of success in changing board members' minds, Saz said he was "caught between the two — Streetsville and Mississauga. I'm not sure what the politics is," he claimed, "but I'm squeezed in the middle."

**Councillors approve spot-zoning**

Continued from page 1

The lawyer for the developer, R.K. Webb, said about one-quarter of the floor space would be for professional offices.

He said there are plans for a medium-size supermarket in the plaza.

The front of the plaza would be glassed in with a common entrance door to a walkway leading to the stores and offices.

Parking for 201 cars would be provided on the 3.5-acre of land to be used for the

shopping plaza. The gas station would be on a half-acre site.

Tom Phelan, president of the Lorne-Crest Community Association, says his members are adamantly opposed to the proposal and that they will probably appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board if council gives its final approval Monday afternoon.

Lawyer Shulman says the town's growth mentality is making it expensive to maintain the status quo.

"What council is doing is

legislating profits for developers and maybe costing the residents a lot of money to fight something they don't want and shouldn't have in their neighbourhood," Shulman said.

"I'm surprised councillors did that. The last time we were in front of council I thought we'd get a better deal than that."

"Look at where you can have R-3 in Mississauga — Erin Mills, Mississauga City Centre, Meadowvale — you can build thousands and

thousands and thousands of R-3's all over the place. Why in that area too?"

"And the town has really been premature with all the commercial development in the town."

"The town lets them in and then in five years — before the first commercial developments have had a chance to make it — they plan ahead for another five years and provide competition that makes it even harder for the little commercial outfits."

"Everybody suffers."

**Nurse bound for Jordan**

Flora McIsaac, of Mississauga, has started a two-year tour of duty as central supply nurse in Amman, Jordan.

Miss McIsaac, a Royal Nurse, has been employed at the Mississauga Hospital for the last two years. She joined the MEDICO program, a service of CARE, July 1.

She has also worked at York County Hospital in Newmarket.

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