

Timeline: 1976-2012

Entering Limbo / V.O.C.A.L. / Land Over Landings

Entering Limbo

1976

- **January** – Because Transport Canada assumes that the shelving of the airport will be temporary, little effort is made to protect or preserve the buildings on the site. Public Works Canada calls for tenders for the sale and removal of 18 homes and 57 other buildings deemed unsafe and unfit for rental. This TC policy leads to decades-long constraints on the farming community and other tenants who remain on the Lands, and to ongoing, relentless neglect and eventual demolitions, punctuated by the department's repeated attempts to revive the airport plan.
- The Pickering Fire Department complains that half the fires in Pickering in the previous year were on the airport and north Pickering sites and blames government neglect.
- **May** – Transport Minister Otto Lang announces that, without Pickering to relieve Malton, air traffic will be diverted to Mirabel, overflying Toronto. Says Malton will not be allowed new air carriers for at least 5 years. Malton accuses MOT (formerly DOT) of stalling improvements to Malton to create a need for Pickering. An MOT sub-group claims that Malton expansion would cost more than building a whole new airport. Minister Lang supports the statement and insists on a new airport.
- **July** – A survey sent out to all Ontario travel agents by the Metropolitan Toronto Airport Review Committee (MTARC, secretly People or Planes) reveals that a very high percentage of agents disagree with Lang's claims about Malton's difficulties and the urgent need to divert traffic to Mirabel.
- Ontario's Ombudsman reports that Pickering area residents were cheated and misled by government land agents.

1977

- Transport Canada (TC, formerly MOT) releases a Contingency Plan, warning that Malton (soon to be renamed Pearson) faces fierce congestion and that urgent action is needed.

1978

- Transport Minister Lang tells the House of Commons that Malton will not be allowed to expand; halts study into 4th runway.

1979

- *Paper Juggernaut: Big Government Gone Mad*, by veteran reporter Walter Stewart, is published by McClelland and Stewart. The book, on how north Pickering became an airport site, is a brutal exposé of political deviousness and lies, blinkered thinking, incompetence, and heartlessness.

“The secret files make it clear that, had the information available to the government at the time been made available to the public, Pickering airport could never have been started.” (p. 15).

- **October** – Ottawa releases the *Southern Ontario Multimodal Passenger Studies* report, which reveals that TC's current claim – to be “landbanking” the Lands for an airport – was not the intention of the government before this year. (The intention had been an airport as soon as possible.) The report states that, with a few airport modifications and more terminal capacity, Malton would meet capacity needs until at least the late 1980s, while recommending that the Pickering Lands and the protective zoning around them “be maintained to protect the long range option for the development of a major airport at Pickering.” The report also cautions that there are “limitations implicit in any long range forecasts of travel demand” and that new forecasts show that passenger volumes “will be lower than previously estimated.” The Pickering airport issue then fades (or is allowed to fade) into silence for years.

1983

- **February** – Transport Canada officials are quoted as saying that new forecasts show no need for a third terminal at Malton until the 1990s.

1985

- **Mar. 31** – The Auditor General's report states that the Ministry of Transport should “develop and disclose a clear plan for the use or disposition of idle land holdings such as those at Pickering, Ontario.” The AG found that the idle land “has an adverse impact on the financial performance of the Air Transportation Program” and that “the rental income is less than the interest cost on the funds that could be realized by selling the land.”
- Ottawa's Central Ontario Area Aviation Master Plan for 1985 calls for a third reliever airport, at Pickering, to handle Malton's general aviation traffic up to 2000, after which the airport would be expanded to become a major international airport by 2020.
- Ottawa's Airport Authority Group, while treating a Pickering airport as a given, recommends selling half the total site acreage. Local MP Scott Fennell (PC) persuades Transport Minister Donald Mazankowski to appoint a committee to study Pickering and to have Guelph University's Ontario Agricultural College inventory the lands. The Minister budgets \$100,000 for the Guelph study of agricultural use, current conditions, potential, and sense of community. Three members of People or Planes are appointed to the Pickering Airport Lands Revitalization Committee (PARC).
- In Ste-Scholastique, meanwhile, where Mirabel has never been completed and is struggling, the federal government deeds or sells back to farmers over 80,000 acres of expropriated land.

1986

- **June** – PARC issues its report. It recommends that the government “maximize the agricultural potential [of the Lands] by establishing in cooperation with the municipalities an agricultural preserve, through private ownership by farming enterprises with the Crown retaining development rights.” The remaining 10% (the Duffins Creek watershed) should become a conservation and ecological reserve.

1987

- June – MP Scott Fennell announces that half the federal land will be sold.
- August – There is an outcry when Public Works offers 9,600 acres to Ontario and area municipalities instead of to former owners or existing tenants, as was recommended by PARC and as was done at Mirabel. Durham Regional Council then weighs in with a majority vote requesting Ottawa to proceed with airport construction. The ensuing uproar carries on for months.

1989

- **Mar. 15** – The new federal MP for the area, Rene Soetens, announces that the surplus land should be available for sale by late 1990. However, nothing happens.

1991

- Transport Canada releases an Environmental Impact Statement, declaring that the best medium-term alternative for dealing with air-traffic increases in Toronto is to add three new runways at Pearson. However, TC immediately follows the Statement with an “Alternatives” document in which Pickering again figures.

1992

- The fine Bentley House in Brougham is granted federal heritage designation.
- **Aug. 28** – TC draws up a “Plan Showing Pickering Lands 1992 Disposal.” A total of 243 units of land on the airport site are to be sold. They include lots all around the periphery, notably, those right across the northern part of the site, including all of Altona, and those along the north side of Hwy 7, including all of Brougham. It is a tacit admission that the 1972 expropriation was far broader than required.

1994

- **Aug. 3** – TC produces a revised “Plan Showing Pickering Lands Disposal.” Now, just 238 lots are to be sold. The disposal plan is never acted on.
- **Oct. 18** – Former Ontario Premier William Davis states in an interview that People or Planes’ influence on his government’s decision to withdraw co-operation on the matter of Pickering airport was “substantial.”
- Transport Canada announces a narrower federal government role in the airport system. Under a new National Airports Policy, the federal government will no longer operate most airports, will lease the major ones, and will transfer ownership of smaller ones to local authorities.
- In Ottawa, the Southern Ontario Area Airports Study (SOAAS) is underway, so it’s possible that the lot-disposal plans [see Aug. 3] were shelved pending the results of this study.

V.O.C.A.L.

1995

- **March** – The Southern Ontario Area Airports Study (SOAAS) is completed and released. It makes no specific recommendations but does indicate that, based on current traffic forecasts, Pearson would reach its full six-runway capacity in the 2012–2025 time period. Transport Canada seems to view the report’s conclusions as a green light for building a future airport, and gears up.

1996

- **V.O.C.A.L. (Voters Organized to Cancel the Airport Lands)** is formed, under the leadership of Claremont resident and businessman Stephen Frederick. A new wave of loud public protests begins.
- Responsibility for developing and operating Pearson is transferred from Transport Canada to the newly created Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA), which will be headed by ex-Transport Canada officials for some years.

1998

- Transport Canada initiates regulatory action to protect the option of developing a Pickering airport.

2001

- The Pickering land is classified as an airport site under the Aeronautics Act.
- **Apr. 5** – Transport Canada tasks the GTAA with “undertaking the interim planning work that would enable the federal government to determine” whether a “regional/ reliever” airport is needed on the Pickering lands. As part of this initiative, the GTAA commissions ArupNAPA and Landrum & Brown Inc. to show there is a business case for the new airport, which the GTAA would build and operate.
- Ottawa announces that 7,200 acres on the north and west sides of the airport site have been designated as Green Space in perpetuity – no great concession, as no airport construction was ever planned for those buffer areas. The plan is never formalized by Ottawa.
- Transport Canada issues many orders of “eviction for the purposes of demolition.” For the second time (the first was in 1973), the Barclay family is ordered to leave Tullis Cottage, its ancestral home, built in 1840. Demolition is scheduled. The Barclays fight back with a media campaign and assistance from local politicians and historians, and win. They are allowed to stay as long as they promise not to speak to the media for two years.

2002

- After renovations totalling \$500,000, the GTAA opens a Pickering Airport Site Office in the historic Bentley House in Brougham.
- **September** – ArupNAPA and Landrum & Brown Inc. submit their “Pickering Lands Airport Initiative: Financial Assessment Analysis” to the GTAA. Three scenarios have been studied. The analysts conclude that all three showed that “an airport on the Pickering lands was a feasible project and

could be funded from the usual sources available to the GTAA.” (Lorne Almack and Brian Buckles, of Green Durham Association (GDA), will later call the analysis “cursory” and criticize its failure to consider the potential of Hamilton airport, which distorted the findings to make Pickering appear to be viable.)

2004

- The GTAA submits a detailed *Pickering Airport Draft Plan* to Transport Canada. The plan is for a large 3-runway “regional/reliever” airport on the site. It not only includes 35 runway siting configurations and a shortlist of the preferred six but also lists 53 specific roadworks and other transportation upgrades that will be required to improve airport access.
- Transport Canada, clearly anticipating a go-ahead to build the airport, stops re-renting vacated properties on the site, foregoes revenue, and boards up houses.
- **Sept. 3** – Zoning regulations are passed for an airport at Pickering, even though Pearson has been expanded after all, and can expand again.
- **Oct. 31** – Mirabel: Passenger flights cease. Only cargo flights are left. The airport is dubbed one of the costliest white elephants in Canadian history.
- **Nov. 19** – V.O.C.A.L. has started to get very vocal, with some 50 members demonstrating in front of the GTAA’s site office in Brougham. The GTAA’s vice president, Steve Shaw, has just said: “The forecast clearly shows there will be a demand over the next 20 or so years for a capacity Pearson can’t handle.” The first phase at Pickering (two runways for general aviation and flight schools) is expected to cost \$250 million and to open in 2012. The plan is still subject to an environmental assessment and the federal government’s approval.
- Steve Shaw also says, about the phased-in approach: “The last thing we want to do is build an airport that will sit empty. You build what you need as you need it.” Premier Dalton McGuinty, meanwhile, is saying: “One of the questions I’m asking is: What about the future of Hamilton airport?”

Land Over Landings

2005

- **Jan. 18** – A meeting is organized by Claremont residents Gerd Untermann and Celia Klemenz at Claremont United Church in response to the notices of eviction that many tenants are receiving. Among the two dozen or so attendees are 16 tenants (300 tenants still live on the Lands). Michael Robertson takes on a leadership role and suggests that the group call themselves Land Over Landings, to succeed People or Planes. He launches landoverlandings.com.
- **Jan. 20** – MP Mark Holland (Lib.) holds a meeting at the Pickering Recreation Centre. Says he is opposed to the GTAA plan for a large airport but still supports a small one to replace Buttonville or Oshawa. Land Over Landings sets about changing his mind. Meanwhile, Pickering Council has voted

to seek government funding in order to hire their own experts to sit on an Environmental Assessment panel. Only Mayor Dave Ryan opposes Cllr Pickles' motion.

- **Feb. 8** – A protest group from Brougham, led by Gord McGregor, joins forces with the Claremont group. Michael Robertson is elected president, Mary Delaney vice-president, Gord McGregor secretary, and Erik von Maydell treasurer. Michael suggests that they style themselves **Land Over Landings –The Stewardship Group**.
- **Feb. 16** – A broadcast e-mail goes out from LOL , reporting that Tullis Cottage is to be torn down (no reason was given). This is the third notice of eviction the family has received. The Barclays are told to be out of the house by the end of June. A letter campaign is launched.
- **Feb. 22** – The latest developments are shared at an LOL meeting at Brougham Hall: 12 homes are on the eviction list, bids for demolitions had closed on Feb. 17, and the demolition work is to take place between March 3 and 11.
- **Feb. 24** – A Pickering councillor advises that a recent motion passed by Council requested that the federal and provincial governments cease demolitions. He says he will also speak to the area MP.
- LOL circulates information for tenants: Michael, Mary, and Gord (Head of the Evictions Committee) meet with Lucy Butts (Programme Coordinator, Transport Canada) and Vernon Moore (Properties and Facilities Manager, Public Works). LOL is told that no currently unoccupied houses will ever be tenanted, period. Nor can tenants share the cost of necessary repairs or hire approved contractors to do repairs, even if needed, owing to “alleged or proven” poor maintenance by Public Works over the past 30 years. Meanwhile, houses in good condition will continue to be maintained. LOL urges tenants to bone up on Ontario’s Tenant Protection Act.
- Transport 2000 Ontario issues a paper refuting government and GTAA claims regarding need for a Pickering airport, and argues that the government should be promoting rail instead.
- **Mar. 3** – Demolitions begin but some tenants, such as the Knapps, choose to fight their eviction and refuse to leave. Local councillors object to the demolitions, and MP Mark Holland (Lib.) obtains a temporary halt while the community scrambles to protect heritage structures and family homes.
- **Mar. 10** – The short moratorium ends and demolitions resume. In all, 25 buildings are bulldozed, many in Brougham.
- **Mar. 11** – Murray Stroud Law Office writes to the Transport Minister on behalf of “a number of concerned residents of the City of Pickering ... concerned about the premature demolition of historical homes,” and asks that Public Works be directed to “stop evicting tenants and demolishing homes until your Ministry has established clear policies and informed our clients of them.”
- **Mar. 29** – A logo for Land Over Landings is approved (designers: John Frechette, Celia Klemenz).
- **Mar.** – In his March newsletter, Mark Holland advises residents receiving eviction notices that they may dispute them through the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal, a provincial body.
- **Apr. 22** – Mark Holland holds a town hall meeting in Claremont, attended by more than 200 people all opposed to the GTAA’s airport proposal. He tells the audience that he can no longer support even a smaller regional airport in north Pickering and that he is now committed to doing all he can to work with them to stop any airport from going ahead.

- Mark Holland writes to the Ministry of Transport, citing his meetings with Transport 2000 Ontario and others, all of whom have made similar arguments for why the airport should not be built. He also notes that a new airport seems wrong while Canada is trying to meet its Kyoto commitments and is inappropriate at a time of concerns about greenhouse gases. He also highlights the site's proximity to the "sensitive eco-system of the Oak Ridges Moraine" and the need to "be more concerned about food security and production of food closer to home." [Dispiriting to think that these same arguments are still having to be made in 2024...] He asks the Minister for "an immediate halt to all evictions and demolitions" until a fairer, more transparent process is in place. And he asks that an objective peer review of the GTAA's proposal be made before anything else, including an environmental assessment. Minister Lapierre takes the peer review request to Cabinet.
- **May 19** – Transport Canada will undertake a 6-month "preliminary due diligence review of previous Pickering airport studies to see if more work is required to determine need."
- **May 21** – Jerry Degen, a Toronto flight safety expert, raises the issue of a potential disaster if airplanes experiencing engine problems were flying near Pickering's nuclear plant.
- **Jun. 1** – Minister Lapierre responds to the Murray Stroud letter, giving a rote description of how Transport Canada is committed to managing properties in "a prudent and fiscally responsible manner" and that Public Works "ensures that all occupied properties are fit for habitation"... He does, however, point out, as Mark Holland has done, that tenants have recourse to the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal.
- **Jun. 13** – Mirabel: Developers unveil plans for a giant amusement park – Lac Mirabel – to be built on the airport site. (The plan will die in 2010. Part of the site will be turned into an ICAR motosport racetrack instead.)
- **July 15** – We take Mark Holland on a tour of the Lands and the properties under eviction/demolition notices. Three days later he sends a letter to Minister LaPierre, saying that his tour "was an eye opener, and it has reinforced my view that the present practice of vacating and demolishing these homes is unacceptable." More eviction notices go out, including one for Tullis Cottage again.
- **July 22** – Five families present their cases before the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal, describing their experiences at the hands of Public Works.
- **Aug. 30** – A new Land Over Landings (LOL) executive is formed: Chair Gord McGregor, Vice-Chairs Mary Delaney and Gerd Untermann, Treasurer Erik von Maydell, and Secretary Gabrielle Untermann. Formal meeting minutes are kept from this point on. Multiple copies of *Paper Juggernaut* are collected by Gerd for distribution. Plans are set in motion to have information booths at every possible local event.
- **Sept. 13** – At the Tribunal, the Beelbys hear Transport Canada state that "only" 40 houses have been slated for demolition.
- **Sept. 17, 21** – V.O.C.A.L. holds meetings on the evictions situation.
- **Sept. 27** – The Knapps' eviction is upheld by the Tribunal.
- **Sept. 28** – Transport Canada announces that the Pickering Airport Site Zoning Regulations have gone into effect.
- The name "Land Over Landings" is registered as a business.

- Through an Access to Information request, the Beelbys find Public Works work orders that were paid for repairs that were never done on their house. They also find a Public Works estimate of \$104,000 for “necessary repairs,” later reduced to \$76,000. (The home inspection company had estimated \$19,500.) This is but one of many such stories and examples of what was happening on the Lands. Mark Holland had requested this documentation in order to present it to Transport Minister Jean Lapierre with a request for an investigation and moratorium on evictions and demolitions.
- **October** – The Federal Liberal caucus supports an immediate moratorium on further evictions and demolitions until the entire process can be reviewed.
- **Oct. 6** – Mark Holland declares at a town hall meeting that “management of the Lands should be transferred from Public Works.”
- LOL writes to the Transport Minister about having “documentary and photographic evidence that there have been irregularities in the federal government’s administration and maintenance of the buildings” on the Lands, and supports Mark Holland’s request that Public Works “should no longer manage these lands and homes” and that “they should be removed immediately from this position of responsibility and held accountable for their actions in an open, public investigation.”
- **Oct. 11** – *National Post* article: “Last tenant moves out, new roof goes on: Ottawa spends millions upkeeping vacant homes.” The article reveals that remaining tenants have many stories to tell of waste and malfeasance by Public Works, including examples of houses being nicely refurbished and then left vacant and unlocked, or new wells dug for tenants but never hooked up. Mark Holland: “Houses that are beautiful and in excellent shape are empty. I don’t know what is going on. The way the Lands have been managed – ‘questionable’ is a kind term.” He wants Transport Canada to turn over management of the Lands to a professional firm.
- **Oct. 18** – The Knapps appeal the Tribunal’s decision.
- **Oct. 26** – At a meeting with Mark Holland, Transport Minister LaPierre says that he “will not interfere with current evictions.”
- **November** – Mark Holland, in his newsletter, advises that he will be holding a town hall meeting on Dec. 16 in Claremont and will be seeking comments regarding this “current ‘due diligence’ review of the need for an airport.” He is pleased the review will be happening before any decision is made on whether to proceed with an environmental assessment. He continues to seek a moratorium on evictions and demolitions and fairer treatment of tenants.
- **Nov. 7** – Pickering Council unanimously passes a motion “to preserve the Tullis Cottage, Brougham Hall, Tremorest Hall, Altona Inn and Brougham Schoolhouse ... and develop a plan to preserve other areas of key importance to Pickering’s heritage....” Council asks Transport Canada to rescind the eviction/demolition order on Tullis Cottage.
- **Nov. 14** – A year after the GTAA makes public its draft plan for a regional/reliever airport at Pickering, Land Over Landings stages the Brougham Uprising to prove “we’re not dead yet!” Actors and residents, many in period costume “resurrect the spirit of rebels from long ago to reclaim their community and strike a blow against their modern oppressors, Transport Canada and the GTAA, now housed in the historic Bentley House.” On a mock scaffold, Brougham is saved but the GTAA is hanged in effigy.

- **Nov. 29** – The Tribunal overturns the Barclays’ eviction. Transport Canada rescinds the demolition order on Tullis Cottage and will pay for its repairs.
- **Dec. 6** – The McKays’ eviction is overturned by the Tribunal.
- **Dec. 7** – The federal government has called a snap election, and Mark Holland has no doubt that the airport will be an election issue. It’s understood that the decision on whether to proceed will be made in 2009 and, if the airport is found to be needed, it could be operational by 2012.
- **Dec. 13-17** – It is reported that 17 new tenders have been issued for wells to be dug on the Lands; 9 other wells are to be decommissioned.
- **Dec. 19** – The Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal has found, with regard to one federal property, that “the Landlord (Public Works and Government Services Canada) is responsible for the poor condition of the rental unit by failing to devote the resources necessary to adequately maintain the rental unit.” Also, that “the condition of the rental unit is due to normal wear and tear and usage by the tenants over the past 25 years and the Landlord’s failure to perform regular and routine maintenance over that period of time.” Therefore, the landlord is found to be “in serious breach of its responsibilities under the Act.” In other words, the landlord has a responsibility to ensure that the property doesn’t fall into disrepair and cannot then use that fact as grounds for eviction.

2006

- **Jan. 11** – Land Over Landings and V.O.C.A.L. join forces to host an all-candidates meeting prior to the upcoming federal election.
- **Jan. 21** – LOL holds a fundraiser, “Cabaret of the Gilded Cage,” at Brougham Hall. In the years (decades!) to come, there will be many more LOL fundraisers and LOL tables, booths, and displays at countless events and venues, all to inform the public of the airport issue and to increase the supporter base.
- **Jan. 23** – The Conservatives win the election; Stephen Harper becomes Prime Minister.
- **Jan. 24** – Transport Canada lodges an appeal against the Tribunal’s decisions despite having made public assurances that they would abide by the decisions. The Pierces’ house is condemned.
- **Jan. 26** – MP Mark Holland calls on the new government to honour Liberal commitments re the proposed airport and tenant issues: namely, to continue the due diligence review, continue the informal moratorium on evictions and demolitions, preserve significant heritage buildings, and remove Public Works from its role on the Lands.
- **Feb. 7** – Tim Dobson, former Pickering-Scarborough Conservative candidate (having lost to Liberal Dan McTeague), advises that “Harper has asked a team of area MPs, candidates and riding association members to form a policy for the Lands.” Evictees are advised that “all cases will be amalgamated to contest appeals after all Tribunal decisions are made.”
- **Feb. 13** – LOL receives a form letter from the Finance Minister’s correspondence unit in response to LOL’s invitation to attend an information meeting at Brougham Hall. The Minister (Jim Flaherty) does not respond to the invitation.

- **Feb. 14** – McGrath/Ramsey lose their case at the Tribunal. Demolition begins on the gas station in Brougham, on Hwy #7. Shortly after the front awning comes down, work stops. The building will sit derelict for years before demolition is completed – in November 2011.
- **Feb. 28** – LOL sends congratulatory letters to new federal ministers. Transport Canada issues tenders for the decommissioning of 30 wells.
- **Mar. 2** – On the 34th anniversary of the airport announcement, “Last Stand,” Peter Shatalow’s documentary film (billed as “the heroic true story of ordinary citizens who found the courage to fight ‘Big Government’”), is premiered in the auditorium of J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate in Ajax, to an audience of close to 500.
- **Mar. 14** – The first 50 airport-protest lawn signs are produced.
- **April** – Transport Canada intends to demolish 86 houses on the Lands. (This information is obtained by Mark Holland months later through an Access to Information request; the memo is partly censored.)
- **Apr. 11** – The Tribunal studying the tenants’ complaints blasts the federal landlords. Public Works loses the right to continue managing the Lands. TC turns over the responsibilities to SNC-Lavalin ProFac, a private land-management agency. Long-overdue property repairs will henceforth be properly carried out.
- **Apr. 11** – The Beelbys and MacKays win at the Tribunal and receive rent rebates.
- **May 3** – Mark Holland writes to Transport Minister Lawrence Cannon to express his disappointment that there will be no public consultation around the “due diligence” review, pointing out the possibility of a skewed outcome if the right questions aren’t asked. He also asks the Minister for his assurance that Transport Canada’s appeal of several of the Tribunal’s rulings is not just a way to avoid “responsibility for past failures.”
- **Jun. 10** – We attend the Durham Conservation Association’s AGM where we are awarded \$2,000 from their Trillium grant.
- **Jul. 1** – LOL attends a meeting at the Toronto Hunt Club featuring Minister of Transport Lawrence Cannon and other Conservative politicians.
- **Sept. 5** – We receive a letter from federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, suggesting a meeting. (It never happens.) Meetings of the Grow the Greenbelt project take place with Jim Robb, the Sierra Club of Canada, the Rouge Duffins Greenspace Coalition...
- **Sept. 7** – Mark Holland writes to say that Minister Cannon has finally responded to his letter of May 3 but not very helpfully. The gist of what he learns: the government is engaging in “long-term planning to ensure the protection of the Pickering Lands for future aviation needs”; the “due diligence” review will be going ahead with no public participation; if an airport need is found, an environmental assessment will be held and the public would be involved then; and Cannon says the current methodology for terminating tenancies for demolition is “fair and transparent.”
- **Sept. 7** – We learn that Transport Canada’s appeal regarding the eviction cases they lost at the Tribunal will be heard by Ontario’s Superior Court of Justice on October 16 and 17. Meanwhile, decisions that had gone in Transport Canada’s favour are also being appealed and will also be heard by the provincial Court at Osgoode Hall.

- **Oct. 16** – We are joined by members of the Sierra Club, Grow the Greenbelt, the Pickering Green Festival, and others as we demonstrate in front of Osgoode Hall while the eviction cases are being heard.
- **Nov. 2** – “Last Stand” is shown at the International Environmental Film and Video Festival at the Royal Ontario Museum.
- **Nov. 6** – Vice-chair Gerd Untermann agrees to pursue a suggestion of Lorne Almack’s: form a committee that will work on proposals for the future use of the Lands, concentrating on getting them preserved as foodland within a Land Trust.
- **Dec. 18** – Mirabel: CBC News reports that “[I]n a move he called ‘correcting a historical injustice,’ Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced [today] the return of 4,450 hectares of farmland expropriated a generation ago to build Mirabel airport. About 125 farmers, who rent their land from Ottawa, will be allowed to buy it back more than 37 years after they were forced to sell to the federal government to make room for the ill-fated Mirabel International Airport, north of Montreal.” In his speech, Harper calls this “correcting a mistake of history.”

2007

- **Jan. 9** – Transport Minister Cannon announces that demolitions will be resumed, thereby effectively ending the informal moratorium. The *Pickering News Advertiser* carries a notice that seven houses and five barns on the Lands are to be demolished.
- **Jan. 24** – In an advisory, Mark Holland invites the media to accompany him on a tour of the houses slated for demolition. “He believes that there has been a strategy to depopulate the area in order to reduce public resistance to an airport in Pickering.”
- **Jan. 25** – MP Holland tours houses slated for demolition. CBC/Radio-Canada is there.
- **Jan. 26** – Holland conducts a town hall meeting about the situation on the Lands.
- **Feb. 1** – Jim Flaherty hosts an Open House at Westminster United Church in Whitby. Gord and Sharon Powell attend for LOL.
- **Feb. 21** – Pickering’s Mayor Ryan addresses the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade: “We all know that an airport in Pickering would have a tremendous financial benefit. ... It is expected that a Pickering airport would have an annual economic worth in the hundreds of millions.” He does not give sources for his figures.
- **Mid-March** – The provincial courts find against all five evictees. Plans are made to apply to the court of Appeal. Those who’d originally won their case before the Tribunal have the option of going back to the Tribunal.
- **Mar. 20** – 1,000 new buttons and 5,000 brochures are produced for a spring and summer public-information blitz by LOL. Local historian John Sabeau, meanwhile, races against time to catalogue buildings on the Lands before they disappear.
- **Mar. 26** – There are 46 attendees at a special meeting at Brougham Hall to discuss a trust fund – the Pickering Lands Defence Fund – sponsored by Mark Holland for evictees: over \$10,000 is raised. The Fund will be administered *pro bono* by Aird and Berlis. Brougham Recreation undertakes to donate up to \$3,000 per family to cover appeal costs.

- **Mar. 28** – Michael Robertson and Peter Rodrigues make a presentation at Regional Council: the upshot is that the Planning Committee’s motion requesting that Transport Canada hasten its airport decision doesn’t go to a vote and is sent back to the committee.
- **Apr.** – Mark Holland, in his April newsletter, says he has now seen written evidence that Transport Canada’s policy “– as long expected – is not to re-rent any buildings once they become vacant. Instead they are boarded up and allowed to deteriorate ... they see the people as being in the way of their plans.” He also refers to a Transport Canada memo dated February 21, 2006, obtained via an Access to Information request, in which concern was expressed by TC about “possible media attention” over the screening of “Last Stand” in 2006, causing them to send a staff member to the event to try to obtain a copy of the film. Other related Access to Information requests filed by Holland have gone unfulfilled by TC to the point where officials at the Office of the Information Commissioner agree that the government is in violation of the law.
- **Apr. 27-29** – LOL materials are displayed at the Green Living Show at Exhibition Place. The leader of Ontario’s Conservative Party, John Tory, says of the airport plan: “It was a bad idea 30 years ago and it’s still a bad idea.”
- **Apr. 30** – Bernadette Zubrisky, Sierra Club of Canada, sends an impassioned e-mail to Prime Minister Harper, pointing out how much more important these Lands would be to the GTA if retained as greenspace, offering citizens biodiversity, clean water, “forests as carbon sinks, and fields to grow our own food” – in what she calls “a new integrated national/provincial near to urban park.”
- **May 2** – Melissa Morgan receives a reply from Transport Canada to a letter she wrote on March 28 to Transport Minister Cannon: She is assured that “Transport Canada takes its responsibilities as custodian and landlord very seriously” and she is told that “In October 2006, Ontario Divisional Court found that Transport Canada, as Landlord, met the conditions to terminate the tenancies in question, and that the department had, in fact, acted in good faith.”
- **May 9** – Members of LOL present a letter at the AGM of the Great Toronto Airports Authority, suggesting that the GTAA enter into partnerships with existing area airports to handle present and future air traffic, thereby preserving “grade A farmland and environmentally sensitive green spaces such as the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural preserve.”
- **May 10** – Transport Canada has found from its due diligence efforts that further study is required on the airport matter. From Mark Holland’s May newsletter: “The Conservative government has let the fox into the chicken coop by awarding a contract to the Greater Toronto Airports Authority to assess the need for an airport in Pickering ... the findings will become part of Transport Canada’s so-called ‘due diligence’ review.” Holland points out that “In September 2005, the Liberal Transport Minister promised a thorough and impartial due diligence review that would look at transportation needs throughout southern Ontario, and consider other alternatives such as Hamilton. This completely reverses that commitment [because] the GTAA is not partial. It is an interested stakeholder. Of course they’re going to recommend in favour of an airport, and that’s what this government wants.” According to Minister Cannon, the GTAA’s work will be conducted over a six-month period.
- **May 15** – Transport Canada’s lawyers refuse to negotiate the re-renting of houses. The Knapps and Mike Puterbough seek leave to appeal.
- At the Regional Planning Committee meeting, Isobel and Tom Thompson, Brian Buckles, Stephen Fredericks, and Melissa Morgan speak of their concerns regarding the low-key GTAA announcement

by Cannon. A few councillors feel that the GTAA appointment is inappropriate. Regional Chair Roger Anderson and Pickering Mayor Dave Ryan disagree, as expected.

- **June 5** – Global News producer Neil McCartney and a cameraman attend an LOL meeting. Wendy Beelby shares the results of an Access to Information request regarding federal money spent on Fran Day's house after her death. This work was done even though Transport Canada never leased the house again. It was demolished.
- **June 19** – More from Mark Holland re documents obtained under the Access to Information Act: The documents are so heavily censored as to make them difficult to follow but it's clear that Transport Canada has foregone considerable revenue by refusing to re-rent houses, instead leaving them to sit vacant and deteriorate. "This is a department that is so fixated on building an unnecessary airport in Pickering that they have completely bungled the management of the lands." An independent study into the status of the site in 2004 found that about 70 houses were vacant and boarded up, and that this lost revenue stream was compounded by the need for more security on the site, as it became a magnet for all kinds of illicit activity.
- The guest at tonight's LOL meeting is Steve Gilchrist, former MPP and now on the board of the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust; Wendy Beelby reports that Profac have visited her house and will remediate any mould found and will also put on a new roof.
- **Aug. 12** – We give Steve Gilchrist and federal Environment Minister John Baird a tour of the Lands.
- **Sept. 6** – In a *Toronto Star* article, Toby Lennox, VP of corporate affairs at the GTAA, says that Pearson could reach capacity within 20 years, even after building its sixth runway, so where do they go? "We're on record. We got asked a number of years ago by Transport Canada to put together a plan for the development of an airport at Pickering. We did that. The proposal we came up with is not a six-runway ... airport. It's a reliever airport, it's three runways maximum, and all planning was done to build significant buffer areas. ... It's gonna have to get done." Mark Holland is quoted as saying "it blew my mind" that TC had hired the GTAA to study airport capacity issues in southern Ontario, knowing the agency's pro-Pickering position on the matter. Lennox counters that the GTAA won the contract "fair and square." TC's spokesperson Paula Fairfax says the final decision on an airport won't happen until at least 2009.
- **Oct. 16** – The Knapps and Mike Puterbough are refused leave to appeal.
- **Nov. 6** – First serious discussion by LOL of moving away from trying to save houses and, instead, moving toward preserving the land.
- **Nov. 20** – The Knapps and Mike Puterbough are given dates for the termination of their leases – January 31, 2008. Ed Vikari suggests it's time for "the Stewardship Group" to be removed from LOL's logo.
- **December** – Land Over Landings and all concerned citizens in the area nervously await the GTAA report. It is expected to be strongly pro-airport, even though an airport would destroy prime farmland just when an international food crisis is looming and when airlines keep filing for bankruptcy.
- **Dec. 31** – LOL hosts it's first New Year's Eve Dance, at the Brougham Hall, to help bolster community spirits. (It's a huge success.)

2008

- **Jan. 28** – LOL organizes a demonstration outside Mike Puterbough's house to protest his mid-winter eviction from a house that Public Works had refused to maintain. He tells the media: "I'm too tired to fight any more."
- **Feb. to May** – We participate in the Claremont Winter Carnival and the Whitevale Spring Festival. Artist-in-residence Heather Rigby proposes a Dinner Plate Project to spotlight the cause: she will "draw" and mow a huge, decorative place setting on Michael Robertson's hang glider flying field on the Lands. TC gives permission for the Project.
- **May 7** – We once again attend the GTAA's AGM and deliver a letter to the Chairman of the Board, following up on requests in the previous year's letter and making the case again for dropping any plans to put an airport on this prime farmland.
- **June 2** – 50 new No Airport signs are ordered; new rack cards are approved; letters to politicians are prepared for people to sign and send.
- **June 17** – The Beelbys file an appeal at Divisional Court.
- **June through August** – We attend GDA's AGM, have booths at EcoFair, Cedarvale Park, the Glass House (part of the Claremont House Tour), the Cornell picnic...
- **July 1** – The Beelby's are offered a settlement by TC's lawyers.
- **Sept. 2** – The Beelbys move into a house on Orchard Heights in Brougham, where they still live.
- **Sept. 14** – A Land Trust meeting takes place at Lorne Almack's, called by Heather Rigby and attended by Brian Buckles, Gord Willson, Melissa Morgan, Michael, Pat Horne, and Gabrielle. Attendees review an early draft of Lorne's "Management of Public Lands: A Prospectus," (prepared for Green Door Alliance – Durham Conservation).
- **Oct. 8** – We host an all-candidates meeting for the upcoming federal election. John Wager, from Greenwood, moderates.
- **Oct. 14** – The election delivers a Conservative minority government; our Liberal MP, Mark Holland, retains his seat.
- **Oct. 19** – "Last Stand" is screened at the Claremont Community Centre. Mary and Michael R. speak.
- **Nov. 15** – Mary, Gabrielle, and Sharon Powell go to Ottawa to attend Mark Holland's swearing-in ceremony and dinner and to deliver an information package to (now Transport Minister) John Baird's office.
- Lived-in properties on the Lands continue to be maintained by the federal landlord now that Public Works is out of the picture. And for the first time in years, tenants are offered other homes on the Lands if their houses are deemed too costly to repair. But the population is declining. Houses of families that are moving away, or houses of elderly tenants who move out, or who die, are usually boarded up. Few new tenants are allowed to move in, and only then, on commercial leases.
- Deadlines for release of the GTAA's needs assessment report have come and gone; there is no news from Ottawa.
- **Dec. 31** – New Year's Eve Dance at the Brougham Hall.

2009

- **Jan. 28** – Mary, LOL’s vice-chair, is interviewed on “First Local” radio. The following month, she does presentations at local schools.
- **Jan. 28** – Gabrielle and Myrna McGregor paint the 4x8 map of the Lands that will be used as an event display piece for years.
- **Mar. 3** – First mention (by Sharon Powell) of the need to make a business case for the Lands; there is news that the Browns are to be rehoused on Orchard Heights in Brougham, after receiving an eviction notice.
- **Apr. 21** – Mary works with new webmaster Karen Phillips to renew and enhance LOL’s website.
- Tenants receive a letter from TC advising that the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) will be monitoring the Lands. It includes the unprecedented admission that the Lands are a “valuable part of Canada’s natural heritage.”
- **May through September** – We attend a GTAA public meeting, staff booths at the Whitevale Festival, the Archeology Festival (Claremont Conservation Area), and the Greenwood Festival, attend an RDGC meeting, and more.
- **May 22** – We receive a response from the GTAA’s new Chair to last year’s letter to the previous board chairman. She largely repeats the standard mantra: that any decision will be made by the Government of Canada and not by the GTAA, so we should raise our concerns with Transport Canada. (At least she answered...)
- **July 7** – Posted on YouTube is a short video of Mark Holland promoting a Land Trust for the Lands.
- **October** – (exact date unknown) Although the needs assessment report still hasn’t been made public, the GTAA quietly packs its bags and, one night, moves out of the Bentley House. We take this as a pretty clear sign that the study has been unable to make a case for an airport in Pickering.
- **Oct. 4** – Mary presents our case at a Liberal Party Membership Fair.
- **Oct. 20** – Lorne Almack introduces his fully fleshed-out Prospectus on “Management of Federal Lands in Pickering,” in which he argues persuasively for a Conservation Land Trust.
- **Oct. 22** – We attend a meet-and-greet for Chris Alexander.
- **Nov. 6 through Dec. 31** – A busy schedule: a meeting in Stouffville re Markham Airport (this is a public Open House, broadcast on CBC; Sharon P. and Michael R. attend); a York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA) meeting; a booth at Chef’s Challenge, Dunbarton HS; a presentation to geography teachers of Durham District School Board (DDSB); and... the New Year’s Eve Dance.

2010

- **Jan. 19** – The guest at LOL’s regular meeting is Cllr David Pickles, who explains why he doesn’t want an airport question on the ballot in the upcoming municipal elections. We’re against the idea for the same reason – the risk that a majority of voters, including many newcomers to the area, unfamiliar with the history and what is at stake, would believe the need-for-airport-capacity arguments and the job-creation promises, and vote yes.

- We maintain ties with Mark Holland's staff, meet with Rouge Park farmers, and purchase a laptop for presentations. It will be used a lot!
- **Feb. 6** – Mary meets with a supportive professor of Environmental Studies at Trent.
- **Feb. on** – A whirlwind of high school presentations and attendance at, or participation in, meetings and events of Durham Culinary Assoc., Markham Foodbelt, Environmental Stewardship Pickering, Climate Change Forum Ajax, the Whitevale Festival...
- **Feb. 19** – Gerd and Gabrielle are interviewed by Global News on the matter of the ballot question.
- **Mar. 16** – Meeting at Whitevale to discuss proposals for a national park. Among those in attendance: Patricia Short-Galle from TC, Jim Robb of Friends of the Rouge Watershed, representatives of Whitevale, Green Durham Association....
- **Apr. 19** – The airport question is removed from the municipal ballot.
- **May 10** – Ottawa confirms what has been widely suspected: the GTAA's *Needs Assessment Study Report* has been in Transport Canada's hands since March. It will be released, the public is told, only after a "due diligence review" by TC. Pro-airport Regional Chair Roger Anderson, believing he knows the report's conclusions, vows to "market the hell out of it."
- **May 18** – Concerns are raised about the dumping of soil on former Pickering Cllr Rick Johnson's leased property on Brock Road, on the Lands.
- **June 15** – LOL member Peter Rodrigues attends the GTAA's AGM and reports hearing confirmation that TC is reviewing the needs assessment report. Meanwhile, some houses on the Lands are being re-tenanted and leased for commercial uses.
- **July** – Federal Opposition Leader Michael Ignatieff visits Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade (APBOT) and publicly states that the Liberal Party of Canada is opposed to an airport on these agricultural lands. Along with MPs Mark Holland and Dan McTeague, he joins APBOT in calling on the federal government to release the findings of the needs assessment study.
- **August** – What Transport Canada releases instead is a list of 42 vacant structures, many of significant heritage value but now slated for demolition. Before a formal attempt can be mounted to save the houses, two of them burn down in suspicious circumstances.
- **Aug. 20** – Mark Holland writes to new Transport Minister Chuck Strahl querying TC's decision to grant permission to a tenant to truck in unspecified amounts of unmonitored earth to the property he leases on Brock Road. Holland has received hundreds of communications from constituents concerned by the negative impact this unmonitored dumping will have on the environment. He requests documentation on the matter that can be shared with his constituents.
- **Sept. 19** – Resident artist Heather Rigby's Dinner Plate Project is completed and photographed from the air. The image will be much used, on placemats, cards, fliers, and in news articles.
- **Sept. 21** – Mary and Gerd attend a luncheon for Michael Ignatieff, who again makes his position clear: there is "no business case for an airport."
- **Oct. 25** – Peter Rodrigues is elected councillor for Ward 3, which includes the Lands.
- **Oct. 27** – The owner of Buttonville Municipal Airport, a busy general-aviation airport in Markham, announces its closure in five years' time. The news spurs immediate claims in certain quarters that Ottawa will now have to build Pickering to replace Buttonville.

- **November** - LOL members attend an Ontario Farmland Trust workshop, give presentations at more high schools, meet with the Durham Food Policy Council...
- **December** – New Transport Minister Chuck Strahl (PC) responds to a July letter from Ignatieff, Holland, and McTeague, telling them that the government’s intent is to eventually clear the Lands of all buildings.
- **Dec. 31** – New Year’s Eve Dance.

2011

- **January** – The City of Pickering asks Transport Canada not to demolish 7 potential heritage structures and asks that Ottawa fund the cost of heritage research and reinstate the heritage steering committee (involving Pickering, Markham, and Ottawa) that had been abandoned.
- **Jan. 12** – We meet with federal Conservative candidate Chris Alexander (PC) at the McGregors’ house in Brougham.
- **Jan. 17** – Prior to a Pickering Council meeting, LOL holds a rally protesting the demolitions.
- **Jan. 18** – A petition opposing the demolitions is opened on MP Mark Holland’s website.
- **Feb. 10** – Transport Minister Strahl gives the houses a reprieve but refuses to fund research or upkeep, calling this a municipal responsibility – even though Ottawa has been owner and landlord for 39 years. The steering committee is not reconvened. Instead, TC issues a list of 60 more structures to be demolished.
- **February and March** – LOL participates in the Claremont Winter Carnival (winning a \$50 prize for most humorous float?!) and has a booth on Heritage Day at Pickering Town Centre; we also attend a public meeting at Brougham to review Pickering’s Official Plan.
- **May 2** – The federal election brings a change of government. Chris Alexander is our new MP.
- **May 17** – Mark Holland vows to continue fighting on our behalf. Pickering Green Festival is disbanding and reports that the organization’s funds will be donated to Land Over Landings.
- The pride and joy of Brougham, the City, and the Region – Durham Sustain Ability, founded by Jack McGinnis, world-renowned father of Blue Box recycling – is forced to vacate Brougham’s Commercial House after draconian changes to the rental agreement. Brougham’s coffee shop closes. But the City of Pickering leases the showpiece Bentley House as Parks and Recreation offices – welcome news within the much-diminished community.
- **July 11** - Transport Canada finally releases the GTAA’s *Needs Assessment Study: Pickering Lands* report, leading to a flurry of interviews and media coverage. The Report states that the Pickering Lands should be retained for a future new airport, to be needed “most likely” between 2027 and 2037, but maybe as late as 2041 – or later. “If and when required” is the final word. No business case has been made.
- Ottawa’s new mantra for the Lands is now this: a “balanced” solution that must combine “job creation, economic activity and environmental stewardship.” Land Over Landings, Green Durham Association (formerly Green Door Alliance and Durham Conservation), and other groups argue that intensive food production under a Land Trust would meet all those criteria. According to Ottawa, Transport Canada will now “work on a land use and management plan for the 7,530 hectares.”

- Land Over Landings research unit sets to work on a detailed response to the Needs Assessment Study. Meanwhile, various local politicians (the usual suspects) claim, without evidence, that the report provides a resolution to the situation.
- **July 19** – The news of the report’s release brings many new faces to LOL’s next meeting. Mary notes that we’ve been “in limbo for 6 years, now we’re ready.” Many attendees sign on to various work groups.
- **Aug. 17** – We take MP Chris Alexander on a “wall-to-wall” tour of the Lands; he is shocked by the state of the area – “like a war zone, as if there had been a war and nothing had been done since” – and stunned by the size and emptiness of the site.
- **Sept. 12** – Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, addressing Ajax-Pickering’s Board of Trade, says: “This is about economic development in Durham Region ... It’s our turn to grow ... To do that we need highways ... we need to improve our airport facilities.”
- **Sept. 16** – Transport Minister Denis Lebel responds to a Pickering’s Council request that the City be allowed to investigate and perhaps implement “a limited program to assist with the private acquisition of heritage structures for [removal] to private lands.” TC is willing to consider this, as long as the lessee is the City and the City negotiates with private parties independently of Transport Canada. He also makes clear that demolitions will still occur with regard to any structures in Brougham that are “vacant, dilapidated,” and he points out (as if Transport Canada had played no role in this) that “vacant structures ... pose a very real threat to the health and safety of the public, including first responders.” Pickering is given until September 30 to decide on any leases.
- **Sept. 26** – Peter Rodrigues and Gabrielle meet with the CEO of Hamilton International Airport, to sound him out on the Pickering airport issue. He has no interest in getting involved but does concede that building Pickering would not help Hamilton.
- **Oct. 20** – Michael and Gord meet with Dan Glass of the UK’s environmentalist protest group, Plane Stupid.
- **Nov. 15** – The City of Pickering says it’s “trying to work with TC to save one or two important heritage homes.”
- **Nov. 20** – MP Chris Alexander hosts a town hall meeting in Claremont. The topic: “Forty Years Later: How Should the Pickering Lands Be Used?” He says he is 100% against an airport. For the first time, we hear a federal government official refer to the situation on the Lands as “a breach of trust.” The large and passionate audience is virtually unanimous in demanding that the site be preserved for agricultural use and as a natural heritage area.
- **Dec. 12** – *Dying for an Airport* is published by Pat Valentine. A condensed history of the expropriated area that also documents, in words and pictures, the deterioration of the Lands and everything on them, will be used as an advocacy tool and a fundraiser for Land Over Landings.
- **Dec. 23** – From the *Toronto Star*: “Plans for the land remain vague, but a footprint for the airport is expected to be completed by next spring, according to Paula Fairfax, a Transport Canada spokesperson.” And the demolitions continue...
- **Dec. 31** – New Year’s Eve Dance.

2012

- **Jan. 17** – 30 copies of *Dying for an Airport* have already been sold. The City of Pickering reports that it will be renting 10 or 11 houses from TC “for 6 months.”
- **Jan. 31** – We formalize LOL’s overall goal: “To secure the preservation, in perpetuity, of the federally owned lands in Pickering, Markham, and Uxbridge, as food-producing farmland and unspoiled natural heritage for the health and long-term economic benefit of the Greater Toronto region.”
- **Feb. 13** – A number of LOL members contribute to a video by Peter Shatalow, each of us, in our own short clip, giving reasons why we think the Pickering Lands should be saved. The result to be posted on YouTube.
- **Mar. 2, 3** – We mark the 40th anniversary of the airport announcement on the first of those days and celebrate the 40th anniversary of POP on the second. Both “Open House” events are held at the Brougham Hall. On the second day, speakers Charles Godfrey, Bill Lishman, Bob Almack, Anne Howes (of “Last Stand” fame), Mike “the Kite” Robertson, Charles Neville, Tommy Thompson, Brett Davies, and others address the crowd from the head table after a raucous demonstration outside the old GTAA site office (the Bentley House). Over 170 attendees sign the “I was here” poster.
- **Mar. 20** – Our response to the Needs Assessment Study Report is presented at today’s LOL executive meeting. Correspondence is ongoing with City staff regarding the status of heritage houses on the Lands. The limited edition run of *Dying for an Airport* has sold out.
- **April** – We post on our website our detailed “Response to the *Needs Assessment Study: Pickering Lands, Final Report*.” Its message in a nutshell: “According to the media and airport proponents, the study had concluded that an airport would be needed in Pickering by 2027. Not so. Our Response quotes from the Report’s conclusion [see entry for July 11, 2011, above] ... In fact, there is no clarity in the Final Report as to when (or even if) the need for a Pickering airport will arise. The findings were questionable, ambiguous, and contradictory....”
- **Apr. 17** – We learn that five buildings on the Lands are to be used by the City of Pickering and four will be removed by private individuals. Lorne Almack updates his Prospectus to include reference to “building a community.”
- **July 20** – Mary is interviewed by Channel 12 News.
- **Oct. 24** – We learn that Ever Green Villa/Melody Farm is slated for demolition. The house had been leased for many years but, in 2000 or so, TC chose to board it up. Three demolition orders had been successfully fought but the depredations of weather, time, and TC’s policies of deliberate neglect have finally prevailed.
- **Oct. 25** – Ten of us cross the “No Trespassing” barriers to have a closer look at the house and photograph/document its condition before it’s pulled down. Ransacked by squatters, weed-infested and rotting, the handsome home that, when first built, people travelled miles to see, is now unsalvageable.
- **Nov. 9** – Ever Green Villa/Melody Manor is demolished. We demonstrate on Brock Road for the better part of the day to raise public awareness as bulldozers tear the house down.
- **Nov. 13** – MP Chris Alexander hosts an informal afternoon public “Conversation” at the Claremont Community Centre. He agrees with our reading of the Needs Assessment Study Report. Says that

Jim Flaherty recently told him he would like to see “an announcement” re the Lands sooner rather than later, but Chris doesn't foresee one before early next year. He understands that the announcement would say that a framework has been set up to invite and consider solid proposals from all interested groups or individuals who have a vision for the Lands, and he advises us to be ready with a vision (and implies that we should have a solid business case and powerful backing). He says that the arguments of those who want to put a small airport on the Lands would not go down well with Transport Canada.

- **Nov. 20** – Pam Veinotte, Superintendent, Rouge National Urban Park, tells us: “There are no plans to extend the Park onto federal Lands.”
- **Dec. 18** – Chris Alexander advises: “Expect an announcement from Jim Flaherty very soon.”
- **Dec. 31** – New Year’s Eve Dance.

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