



James Bailey

# Ambivalent resolutions

With the New Year just about upon us, many Mississaugans are contemplating, with a certain amount of trepidation, the task of preparing a set of resolutions, which, once assembled, will be quickly forgotten. The problem with resolutions is that they generally deal with character flaws which we have developed lovingly and carefully over a good many years, and are not really all that anxious to abandon them.

On the other hand, the act of not compiling a list of resolutions implies a sense of smug self-satisfaction which is inappropriate for anyone not working as a local politician. For me, this dilemma is compounded by the fact that, after years of diligent effort, I have managed to eliminate nearly all those personal defects which are the soil from which meaningful resolutions grow.

As January 1 approaches, I find myself becoming more and more concerned about

what I am going to say when asked for my list of resolutions. For many less sterling personalities, New Year's resolutions can provide a setting for the purging of guilt created by a thousand sins. "I'll stop beating my wife," for example. Or, "I'll confess to my partner that I embezzled \$100,000 last year." Or, (if you're a city councillor) "I promise not to vote on any issue I don't know anything about."

Beside those outrageous acts of stunning immorality, my petty little deficiencies dissolve like Frank Bean's waistline. Oh, I suppose there are a few things I could confess to — in 1967, for instance, I wrote a sentence which included two split infinitives — but they hardly seem worth mentioning when compared to the failings of those around me, I have occasionally been accused of being a mite lazy, but I couldn't get up the energy to bother replying. In fact, such criticism generally puts me to sleep.

One or two people have suggested — in jest, of course — that I have an inordinately high opinion of myself, a point of view with which I heartily disagree. Although I don't often receive much support from my confreres when I make my protestations, I long ago learned that one has to expect to be lonely at the top. Personally, I am as opposed to unjustified arrogance as any of the lesser beings with whom I am associated, but that doesn't mean there's anything wrong with honest self-appreciation. It's that sense of honest self-appreciation which makes astronauts out of mere pilots, presidents out of peanut farmers, and mayors out of Ward 7 councillors.

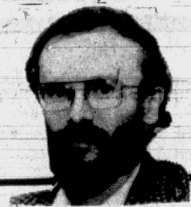
The one criticism I've heard over the past year that really cut me to the quick was the charge that I was a procrastinator. To say that the charge is merely unfounded is not enough; it is untruthful, malicious, and scurrilous.

Someday, when I've got the time, I'll explain in greater detail.

But for the moment, let's get back to the issue at hand: resolutions. Because of the difficulties discussed earlier, I've decided to prepare a list of resolutions which are sufficiently ambivalent that I can handle them comfortably without ever being accused of abandoning my principles. Examples: "I promise always to be there, when it's necessary." "I resolve to always tell the truth unless the telling would hurt any human being, including myself." "I resolve always to do things on time, when circumstances permit." "I resolve never to be unkind to another person, unless he's really got it coming."

After all, one has to live by some standards — and it's much more convenient if they're pleasantly low.

Happy New Year.



John Stewart

# The council's first year

We've come to the end of this council's first year and perhaps it's time to assess what's been done. The animal control bylaw and the proposed, not really proposed curfew garnered the most attention but not everything was so frivolous nor so much fun.

Council spent the first few months waiting to see what form the pledges of leadership from Mayor Ron Searle would take. It soon became evident to some, later evident to all but his closest colleagues that the pledges themselves were the mayor's idea of leadership.

Perhaps he did himself a disservice with his overly melodramatic promises to turn the city around, to restore an instant decorum, and to institute an administration that would foster heavy development, restore faith in government and keep taxes down all at the same time.

To be fair, no one can change the direction of a municipality in a year or in a two-year term. Former Mayor Martin Dobkin thought he was going to snap off a new Official Plan and turn Mississauga around between 1973 and 1976. It didn't work out that way.

Searle is surprisingly poorly organized and has hurt his own cause deeply by putting far more emphasis on the ceremonial aspects of his job than on the hard-grind day-to-day flow of business. He has not had his homework done on many occasions and it has been obvious. The work schedule gets shuffled around cocktail parties and ribbon cuttings for new developments. Searle, it's said, has the most active scissors outside of Mark Spitz.

In general policy there is drift, and leadership from the mayor's office is highly disappointing — virtually non-existent because he has no time for municipal matters since he is too busy trying to salvage his personal political reputation.

Those were Searle's words about Martin Dobkin on September 27 of last year when the present mayor officially launched his campaign. Unfortunately, they also stand as a pretty fair commentary on his own first year in office.

It is true that he would probably be a far better mayor without the ranking presence of Hazel McCallion — the cackling Wicked Witch of the North, as he calls her, who dotes on his every mistake. She is running hard for his job already and he knows it, like everyone else.

To be dealt with shortly are the city core plan, the decision to move city hall, the draft Official Plan, the question of severe shortfalls in financing present and future services, and the Big Three lot levies, not to mention little things like this year's current and capital budgets which are affected by all these issues.

No matter what happens, 1978 will be a pivotal year. The election next November will exaggerate every matter as councillors battle for headlines and catchy pamphlet fillers.

The looseness of this administration has its advantages as well. It has allowed individual councillors a wide scope for self-fulfillment and some have taken the opportunity seriously.

Of the newly elected representatives, Frank Bean, Larry Taylor and Terry Butt have emerged as strong members. Bean and Butt have been loosely grouped with the so-called Conservative "caucus" but they have clearly demonstrated that they are their own men. "The mayor hates me, everybody hates me," Butt said this week in the middle of a rowdy debate when he failed to do what was "expected" of him.

It's interesting to note that the one really positive action that was taken quickly by the new council, to establish the administration task force has not resulted in much change. There hasn't been a meeting for several months and action has yet to be taken on several recommendations made by the task force last summer.

1978 — it's going to be a good one. Happy New Year Mississauga!

# Rev. M. J. Barry On being involved

"For unto us a child is born." If God, through a baby born in Bethlehem, has somehow put himself right into our world, and if He has subjected Himself through Jesus to the forms and restraints of life on this planet, then this is stupendous news. Think of it! God, Himself, the Creator of the stars, the Mind that fashioned the universe, entered physically into time and history. And because he did, we know that though he may be disappointed with us, he does not despise us, or reject us, or even scorn us and this world in which we live. Quite the contrary, he gets right into the world, becomes part of it.

So often you and I imagine that the religious quest should call us away from involvement in the messy earthly problems of our daily life. But the Christmas story drives us in the opposite direction. Bethlehem is where God entered upon human life himself, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, and clearly demonstrates that we cannot shut out the world. As Christians we dare not isolate ourselves too righteously from the world; we might indeed find ourselves looking down hypocritically upon God himself.

There is a charming little parable of all this in a Christmas story for children. The Littlest Angel is the haloed urchin who brings his gifts to the manger, after the gifts of the wise and wealthy have been received. And no other gifts please God as do those of this little boy. For the urchin has brought his dearest treasures; a butterfly with golden wings, caught high in the hills in summer's brightness; a sky-blue egg from a nest in the olive tree by the kitchen door at home; two smooth white stones that seemed beautiful to a little boy playing on a river bank; a chewed-up collar of a certain mongrel dog someone thought was special. A sentimental tale? Of course. But still a parable of the regard in which God holds the world and all things in the world — a world which he loved so much that he came to save it.

This, then, is the central news of the Christmas gospel: that we are to be worldly people as God made himself a worldly person.

The ethics of Christmas are the ethics of involvement! It is the platform for politics and education and homemaking and painting and acting and exploring and every other activity which makes room in the world for its Lord.

When he came to Bethlehem, God was not looking for room in the realms of the spirit. He had been there before — whenever a poet sang, whenever a prophet spoke. But now he wanted to be involved in the world. And today he beckons us to follow, to seize opportunities in this world, to be where he already is, to join him in his work of making all things whole.

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Sid Rodaway

# Talking up a storm

"Set 'em up again barkeep," the man slurred. It was 12:55 a.m. and business had been brisk, even for a New Year's Eve.

"Look buddy, you've been a good customer but you've already had three too many," the tattooed bartender replied. "You can always get into the stuff again this afternoon while watching the Super Bowl."

"I don't eat supper on New Year's — can't keep it down anyway. And as for eating it out of a bowl, whadya trying to say, that I'm drunk." The tension was building, but the bartender had been through this a thousand times before. Some guy gets into the sauce and doesn't know when to quit. That's where a good bartender comes in — keep the man coming.

And this loner was a good customer. Ten bloody Marys every Saturday night. It used to be five, but somehow, as the years passed, it became easier to hold down the booze without getting sick. His kidneys must have learned something with practice.

With three minutes to go before last call, a tall, bearded man with a kindly face sat down on the one available stool. It was next to the heavy drinker.

"Say buddy, order two drinks for yourself and I'll pay for both of them," the drunk urged.

He was bound and determined to get a good buzz on even if it cost him double.

"Really desperate, huh?" the bearded man replied. "Although he used the distinctively American 'huh' at the end of his sentence, he was still a Canadian raised to say 'eh.'"

But tonight this was one man who was embarrassed to be a Canadian, especially from Ontario.

"I noticed you said 'huh' there fella. You a Yank or something?" the drunk observed.

"So you noticed, eh," the tall dark stranger responded. "You should be a reporter. You're very observant. But you're still wrong. I'm not Yank, but at a time like this almost wish I was."

Through his alcoholic haze the drunk was impressed with this direct-talking man. He guessed his age at about 30. He decided to probe deeper — if he couldn't get that drink he knew there was nothing like a deep discussion to take a man's mind off his problems.

"What'd ya mean buddy?" This was always his opening line when probing.

"Well actually my comments are a direct result of reading an investigative story in a large Toronto daily newspaper just before Christmas," the stranger replied.

"Thasso, eh? Buy me a drink and you can

tell me about it," the drink said.

"Apparently these investigative reporters had gone to several of Toronto's top bars and ordered bloody Marys without ice," the stranger blurted.

"Some investigation," the drunk smiled. "But a bloody Mary without ice is like drinking warm beer — it stinks."

"No, you don't understand. They weren't there to drink; they wanted to put the bloody Mary without ice in a sealed bottle and have it analyzed by a laboratory to check on the liquor content."

The drunk was puzzled. "I've been drinkin' 'em for years and I know what they taste like. No short-pouring bartender could fool me."

"Oh, but that's where you're wrong," the stranger replied. "A bloody Mary is the perfect drink for such a scam. Lots of tomato juice, lemon, Tabasco sauce and Worcestershire — you couldn't taste vodka in that if the potato peels were still floating on top."

"Well what did these guys find out," the drunk, now noticeably less drunk, asked.

"Apparently some of Toronto's top watering holes serve bloody Marys with as little as half an ounce of the hard stuff in them. And with the prices ranging up to \$3.05 a drink you wind up paying the equivalent of as much as

\$157 a bottle for bar vodka."

The band had stopped playing. It was 1:10 a.m. and the lights had been brought up to encourage revellers to hit the road.

But the tall, dark stranger's words had caught the attention of most people sitting at the bar. All of them drunk just a few minutes ago, they now exhibited a sharp-eyed keenness that ran a tingle down the bartender's spine. He was feeling fear for the first time since the war.

"And was this place on the list of short-pourers?" the former drunk asked with a meaning look.

"I'm afraid so," the stranger reported. "You people would have been better advised to drink beer — it's almost twice as strong as some of the so-called hard drinks served here."

There was a sudden flurry of activity at the opposite end of the bar. Bedlam broke loose as chairs were thrown through expensive stained glass windows and tables overturned.

As the ruckus grew into a near riot, the dark stranger walked smiling from the bar.

"I've always said the Mississauga Times could have a far more wide-ranging effect if only we'd talk it up around the community," he muttered to himself. He scratched his beard, did up his hydro parka and stepped out into the cold New Year's night.



Stewart Page

# The chemical 'solutions'

In 1974, there were approximately 202 million prescriptions, for various pains, ailments or moods which were filled, perfectly legally, in the U.S. In Canada, the figure is probably comparable, on a per-capita basis. Physicians, together with understandable — and formidable — help from the pharmaceutical industry, are increasingly spreading and supporting the belief that "taking something for it" is surely the most elegant solution to modern physical and psychiatric problems, and psychological difficulties. This further reinforces the assumption, as well, that such difficulties must be inherently medical in nature, and subject therefore to treatments which equate just about every conceivable type of human problem with the presence of a sickness.

Not only is such an assumption patently false, but some dangers to the public are beginning to surface, in connection with some of the most popular "cures," for example, sleeping preparations.

Most of these are non-prescription preparations and can be found under names such as Somnex, Slep-eze or Compoz. Over-

doses, or abuses, of such preparations, can cause a psychosis-like reaction. In one such case, a 23-year-old married woman, later discovered to have been taking the sleeping pills for several weeks, began listening to cracks in the floor and in sidewalks, as well as staring for long periods into space. Doctors first diagnosed the woman as having a schizophrenic type of reaction, but urine tests revealed the presence of a substance called scopolamine, which is found routinely in many sleeping preparations.

Doctors at several U.S. hospitals have, to date, become familiar with a considerable number of cases in which "schizophrenia" has been diagnosed, but in which sleeping pills have been taken by the patient in large amounts, or taken over extended time periods. In many of these instances, a substance known as physostigmine has relieved the psychotic-like symptoms, according to a Washington psychiatrist, Kenneth Ullman.

According to Ullman, the dangers of sleeping pills, though not generally publicized, are considerable. Like barbiturates, the over-the-counter pills can cause persons to forget things,

often including how many pills they have taken, and, thus, if more pills are taken, an unintentional intoxication can set in. Ullman reports further that many of the cases which have come to his attention have been intentional suicide attempts.

In addition, Ullman says he doesn't really know exactly how severe or how widespread the problem is, and that large quantities of research and further information are needed at this point. No one has yet attempted to collate such information, count up the relevant cases, or whatever.

One remaining issue, of course, is whether commonly available sleeping preparations, and their sale, should be placed under stricter legislation. Ullman believes that they should be since, at present, the only adverse reactions listed by manufacturers are blurring of vision, rapid pulse and dizziness.

Whatever the end result of Ullman's claims and research, the pharmaceutical industry continues to perpetuate all types of human situations and problems as being essentially sicknesses. As such, they then are held to require a pharmaceutical preparation in order to

bring about the appropriate "cure."

In interests of furthering such myths, the industry continues to generate some rather intriguing advertisements for various drugs, which appear in professional, medical and psychiatric publications. One such ad describes a certain substance as being of help in alleviating the "distress" of spending one's first day at college. In another, a substance (Valium) is described as being likely to help greatly the staffs of nursing homes and institutions. To do this, the substance is said to "produce a less demanding and complaining patient." The development of ways of coping and dealing with stress is thus retarded.

But it is this type of thing which causes quite a number of people to speak about the folly of "chemical solutions to human problems." In the retreat to chemical solutions, however, there are a lot of wealthy, middle-class "speed freaks." They use alcohol and tobacco, as well as sleeping pills. But they don't like it when the same things are done by those persons whom they somewhat contemptuously label "hippies."



Desmond Morton

# The NDP 'positive option'

Although the Trudeau regime has given Canada anything but a Happy New Year, political experts still insist that the people who got us into our current mess can look forward to a renewed mandate in 1978.

Elected almost 15 years ago, the Liberal government looks like a range of extinct volcanoes. The Trudeau medicine for reconciling Canadians helped to hatch a separatist government. Despite the Anti-Inflation Board, itself a breach of promise from the 1974 election, inflation continues to bubble faster than in the United States while unemployment rates threaten to break into double figures.

In any other country, a government with this record would be ridden out on a rail. Most Canadians appear glumly convinced that there is no choice. Under poor Joe Clark, the Tories have sold out to their regional power base of provincial premiers. Under the national unity theme, Rene Levesque has replaced John Diefenbaker as Trudeau's most useful political weapon.

Most Canadians should look a little harder. Out on the left, an uncharismatic Ed Broadbent may be talking more hard common sense than anyone else on the federal scene. Experience regularly reminds Canadians that what the NDP puts in its program today has a strange way of making sense tomorrow — sometimes a little too late.

In offering a "positive option," Ed Broadbent and his people say there are some things

they would not change — like our basic federal constitution. People who want a brand new constitution, says Broadbent, should start by spelling out the specific changes that they want. Chances are that a remarkably flexible British North America Act already makes them possible. Other suggestions, would probably prove to be too absurd to stand the light of day. Why abandon a familiar and easily amended constitution before Canadians have made up their minds what they want?

The NDP also argues that making Canada bilingual will not make Quebecers happy whether or not they are separatists. What French-speaking Quebecers really want is an effective guarantee that their language and culture will survive — and that probably means that French will become the working language of Quebec. The rights of a million Anglophones in Quebec will have to be balanced against the rights of a million Francophones outside that province.

This won't please the people who are still fighting on the Plains of Abraham, but it should make sense to anyone else who is fed up with old battles. Only when French-speaking Quebecers believe that they have finally won their two-century campaign for cultural survival can we all start working together for Canada. If we all took on the job of defending the French fact, separatism could be on the skids.

Meanwhile, the NDP insists that the federal government must have the con-

stitutional muscle to manage our economy as well as the energy to do the job well. Since even the Quebec separatists insist that they want to stay plugged into the Canadian economy, Rene Levesque should be winning to co-operate.

So should Ontario. The century-old economic deal that underwrites this province's prosperity is in deep trouble. Almost all the 60,000 manufacturing jobs that disappeared during the past year were in Ontario. According to Broadbent and a rising chorus of voices across the country, it is unemployment and economic stagnation that are pulling Canada apart, not Quebec or constitutions. It was a switch by Quebec workers and their families, disillusioned by Robert Bourassa's "profitable federalism," that gave the P.Q. a victory margin last year.

In its positive-option strategy, the NDP argues that Canada should look at countries like Germany, Sweden, Austria and Japan, which managed to avoid the worst of recent worldwide economic problems — which Canadians took on the chin.

One common feature of all these countries is effective economic planning and the accurate, independent data which make it possible. Many major blunders in recent Canadian policy were the result of our reliance on self-serving reports from corporations. One example was data on oil and gas reserves. Until 1973, we were apparently so flush we could hardly give our petroleum away. Suddenly,

after the Arab oil boycott, our reserves had vanished. Whatever the truth, the oil companies cleaned up and Canadians got taken to the cleaners. The NDP says never again.

Another focus for Broadbent is government giveaways through tax concessions and grants to corporations in return for jobs. Why not use the money to buy equity in corporations. That way, says the NDP leader, we could gain some influence on company policy and some guarantee that the taxpayers would get value for money. That may be socialism but it is also sound business sense.

The NDP's positive option won't suit everyone, even on the left. People who have given up on Canada do not want to be proved wrong. Quebecers who want a blank cheque for separatism through the slogan of "self-determination" are already mad at the NDP. Regional politicians who revel in applause for jeers at Ontario businessmen or factory workers as the source of our problems don't want anyone questioning their act.

However, even people who never want to see Ed Broadbent as our next prime minister know that he is making sense. Voting for the NDP's positive option may not change the world or bounce the Trudeau regime but it would improve the odds on Canada's survival. That's not a bad resolution for 1978.

Desmond Morton lives in Mississauga and is a member of the NDP.