



Sid Rodaway

Our Twilight Zone

The official notification that this paper had won first place as best all round community newspaper in Canada gave the old ego a bit of a boost, not so much because we had won the prized top spot over our competition but more because it serves as a reminder of the heights of which community journalism has climbed.

Let's face it, when most people think of a "weekly newspaper" they see a stodgy little publication emphasizing birth notices, feed prices and establishment politics.

The image isn't altogether untrue but the term "weekly" is an all too encompassing term that links operations like The Mississauga Times and Mississauga News with the Parry Sound Star or the Moosegrove Meteor. In truth the only thing in common among such organizations is their frequency of publication.

Here in Mississauga we have two highly competitive multi-million dollar operations with large editorial and advertising sales staffs. They are most definitely not small time and yet they remain weeklies.

It's no brag when I claim the talent employed at these two papers can hold their own against reporters from the big city dailies. The differences that do exist are the result of the size of both their respective coverage areas and their editorial staffs.

There is no wire copy to fill the pages of The Times or News. You won't read about the latest terrorist attack on Israel. Virtually everything you see in print had to be dug out, researched and written by the operation's own reporters. To make it even more difficult every inch of it was of local origin.

Mississauga is a fully-fledged city of some 270,000. If it were located 100 miles from Toronto it would have at least one or two thriving daily newspapers along with four or five radio and two or three television stations. It is, however, located smack up against its big Metro brother.

We are struggling to found a real city here.

to cast off the suburban commuter mentality of non-involvement. Instead of a thriving daily media we have two large 50,000 circulation community newspapers and two smaller Malton and Streetsville area weeklies.

Both The Times and News would consider becoming dailies next week if their managers thought there was sufficient reader interest and advertising revenues to carry on such an expensive operation. Over the past five years both papers have seriously considered such a move but accountants and other business types have each time hauled us back from the starting gates with paper proof it wouldn't work.

So here we remain, a city of 270,000 people with two daily-type operations imprisoned within weekly formats.

As a writer for one paper, it has become a wearisome exercise in trying to explain the unique Mississauga media situation to someone unfamiliar with the city. "Yes, I work as a reporter on a weekly but you have to understand that it's different from what you probably

think. It really is big time journalism." "Oh sure," they think to themselves. "Boy does this guy live in a dream world."

Fortunately for writers' egos, the newspapers themselves don't treat us like second rate "weekly" journalists. City councillors, MPPs and local businessmen realize the importance of good media relations and in Mississauga that means good relations with The Times and News.

It can often be frustrating to work in this media twilight zone, caught between demands for sophisticated material and the built-in limitations of a weekly community format. Keeping it local and keeping it good aren't always synonymous.

The fact that The Times and News have dominated provincial and national level community newspaper competitions throughout the 1970s is recognition of the unique media situation in Mississauga and is one small reward for the effort.



John Stewart

To move or not to move?

In his typically understated way, finance commissioner Donald Ogilvie provided a rather sombre picture of the city's long term financing problems in a report on the city centre this week.

The most interesting thing in the core plan and the one which will undoubtedly draw most of the attention is the question of whether or not Mississauga should move its city hall.

The planners are saying, and have told council consistently in core presentations, that the city needs to move its municipal offices to become part of a civic-cultural complex in the heart of the new core area fronting onto Burnhamthorpe Road. That will act as a catalyst to cause the boom of retail and commercial development everyone wants in the core.

But there are problems. As Ogilvie quietly noted in his report the financing of a new city hall is a "relatively intractable problem." Read "big trouble."

The core plan is going to give us more assessment and a better tax base, allowing the city more debt capacity to service other areas of the municipality. However, most of the funds will have to go to hard services and engineering works such as roads and sewers. And most of those funds, over 80 per cent, are planned to be used up to 1986 for development outside the core.

Ogilvie predicts a shortage of capital requirements for the core of \$16.3 billion by 1986. That just happens to be the cost of a new city hall and a new central library. To finance those, council would have to take away money from projects scheduled in other parts of the municipality.

The problem is a fascinating political and financial exercise. Mayor Ron Searle thought the city should have gone ahead with expansion of its present 10 acres of land for a city centre complex in 1974. He is a big core booster, yet he disagrees with the single recommendation which planners say is the key to making the core work. Interestingly enough, he is also having a rare disagreement with the development industry which has been lobbying hard for the city centre change.

The issue leaves other politicians in funny positions as well. Councillor Mary Helen Spence is the first to denigrate the existing city hall and the deal with developer Bruce McLaughlin which brought the building under the shadow of Square One in the first place.

Yet she has also been the sharpest critic of the core plan, which she feels is "cold." She's publicly wondered about the whole ability of the core and Official Plans to change Mississauga from a suburb to a real city.

Councillor Hazel McCallion, who will challenge Searle for the mayor's seat, has a similar philosophical problem. She also questions whether we should be a big city and harps on our financial problems. How will she vote? Will she accept the fact that Mississauga needs a core and a new city hall to make that core work or will she try to make Mississauga a manageable commodity by removing a key factor which could force limitation on its future growth?

The complexity of the problem and the uncertainty of the politicians were amply demonstrated last Wednesday when they spent several hours debating the problem, then decided they had botched it totally and wiped the slate clean by calling another meeting for today.

Ogilvie's report also mentions another possibility for financing the city centre, called the "windfall capital receipts" approach, otherwise known as winning the big lottery. Should Mississauga somehow get all of the \$21 million in OWRC funds it's wrestling the Region of Peel for, we might actually get a new city hall.

The fact that the "miracle" approach is held out as a consideration does not bolster one's faith in our long term financial picture.



Paul Williams / In earlier times

The shaft of the Arrow

Malton's \$400 million plane was just another pile of junk to Morris Waxman.

After running afoul of the Diefenbaker government in 1959 the Avro Arrow was a pile of junk and Waxman, a Hamilton junkman, was probably the only person in Canada who benefitted from the collapse of the ambitious all-Canadian jet interceptor program in 1959.

At the prime minister's personal insistence, the five prototype Arrows were blower-torched and the scrap metal was disposed of by Crown Assets Disposal Corporation.

Probably the most expensive pile of junk in Canada's history was unloaded in the Hamilton junk yard almost 20 years ago, but Waxman didn't see the incoming shipment as being of any great significance. Scrapped multi-million dollar planes bring the same price on the scrap-metal market as old sewing machines.

But the staggering blow dealt the Canadian aircraft industry had great significance for the future of Canada as a major industrial power. Some say the decline of Canada's industry to its present state started with the cancellation of the Arrow program by the Diefenbaker government.

"Drop Arrow: 1,800 Idle," stated the Globe and Mail's front-page headline on Feb. 20, 1959.

Coming three days before the 50th anniversary

of powered flight in Canada, the government's decision was expected to end 47,000 jobs — most of them in Ontario. In Toronto Township, Streetsville and Port Credit 1,996 residents were thrown out of work. It marked the death knell of the massive engineering, technical and research establishment brought into being for the Arrow.

"The cancellation of the Arrow is a colossal blow to Canadian prestige," said Avro test pilot Jan Zurakowski, who flew the Arrow 30 times. "We will always have to rely on US help, which I think is bad."

The Arrow had better days. In 1953, the Liberal government announced a billion dollar contract to build 200 all-Canadian fighters at Malton. The power plant, flight control, weapons system and fire control systems would all be designed and built in Canada.

By 1958 the contract had been modified to 37 pre-production models and plans for 100 more at a total cost of \$1 billion.

On Oct. 4, 1957, Russia opened the space race by launching Sputnik I and A. V. Roe unveiled the Arrow for public display at Malton.

Production and office workers stampeded to the windows and doors of the Avro facilities as the Arrow lifted off the ground for the first time on March 26, 1958.

With black smoke from the kerosene-blend fuel pluming behind, test pilot Zurakowski took the world's largest jet interceptor into the air for the first time at 9:51 a.m. The 30-ton fighter, the size of a jet airliner, roared to 10,000 feet and reached 345 mph before returning to earth 35 minutes later.

During the brief flight, company officials nervously paced back and forth glancing alternately at the sky and their watches.

Zurakowski, a Battle of Britain veteran, landed the plane without incident and a tremendous cheer went up from men along the flight line as the Arrow was taxied back to its hangar.

They were the last cheers for the fighter. Less than six months later, the Diefenbaker government announced the Arrow would not be ordered into production. Simultaneously the feds announced the purchase of \$264 million worth of Bomarc missiles.

The Diefenbaker government questioned the future of the manned fighter interceptor. The Conservatives felt the age of the missile was dawdling and the Arrow would become the Edsel of the skies. The escalating costs of the program and Avro's inability to line up American buyers were the excuses the government needed.

The Arrow program cost the federal government \$400 million in development costs. With all-Canadian missile, fire control, and

flight control systems the defence department estimated it would cost \$1.25 billion for 100 production models. Without Canadian missiles and fire or flight systems, the jet would still cost \$800 to 900 million for 100 production models.

Twenty years later, it is the Bomarc missile that is obsolete and after billions of dollars spent on American Starfighters, Freedom fighters and Voodoos, the federal government is preparing to spend \$2.34 billion on — you guessed it — 100, 30-ton, 1,500 mph high altitude interceptors.

The only differences between the Arrow and the Armed Forces' next fighter is the higher cost and improvements made after 20 more years in the development of the modern fighter.

The fighter never became obsolete. No small thanks to the remnants of the Arrow design team that moved to the States to work on the same fighters the Canadian government has equipped the air force with.

In 1959 the Globe and Mail pointed out in a front page editorial that the cancellation of the Arrow program was a big blow to the future of the research establishment in Canada.

In 1978 the Canada Science Council tabled a report in the House of Commons urging action to "buy back Canadian technology."

It seems we've come a full circle.



Stewart Page

Airlines and statistics

The recent crash of an Air Canada airliner at Toronto International Airport has caused yet another wave of speculation about the general safety of commercial jets.

Most people do not realize the extent to which these jets are checked for malfunctions. Anybody who checked his automobile that often would have relatively few, if any, problems with it. A former pilot for TWA, Capt. Vernon Lowell (the author of a book entitled Airline Safety Is a Myth), used to make announcements at the end of each of his flights in which he told passengers that, as they were pulling out of the airport in their cars, the most dangerous part of their trip was about to begin.

So, when a former TWA captain claims that airline safety may in fact be a myth, what does he mean? He means that the safety record of commercial jets is something the industry can be rightly proud of, but at the same time, he feels that not everything that might be done in

the name of complete air safety is being done.

A large part of the difficulty in drawing conclusions about the relative safety of different modes of travel lies in the nature of the base used for comparative statistics. The airline spokesmen, for example, base their claims largely on statistics which use the number of passengers carried per mile as the basis of comparison. Naturally, jet aircraft, which, for instance, can make the trip from Toronto to New York City in an hour (a distance of about 600 miles) can greatly surpass other methods of travel in terms of passengers carried per mile. One 747 alone can carry up to 400 passengers, the equal of about a 100 cars or more. The fact that the jets carry more passengers per mile is taken to indicate greater safety, except that there exists one difficulty with such a statistic: It may not be fair because of the far greater speed of the jet. The criticism of the airline industry statistics, then, is that they do not take the time factor into account. In

this view, the number of accidents could be compared, but only by using the same time period for each mode of travel. Lowell gives an interesting example. Suppose one were to examine the relative safety of a driver in the Indianapolis 500 race with that of a motorcycle rider in a rough mountain climbing race. Both are clearly risky endeavors. Although the 500 driver covers a big distance during one hour, is he any safer than the motorcycle rider who covers a much smaller distance during the same period? It may be that he is not as safe as the motorcycle rider at all.

This does not mean that air travel is dangerous in any sense of the word. Every day several thousands of aircraft, of all types, take off and land without incident or problems of any kind. If Lowell's view is valid, however, it means that current figures are usually misleading, and that air travel has its problems, beyond what the general public realizes.

One such "problem" is that while airlines are checked thoroughly and often, the line between complete safety and human tragedy is sometimes rather thin.

It is disconcerting to discover how little needs to go wrong in order to experience great flirtation with danger. The industry is full of tales and explanations of how air disasters of various sorts could have been avoided had only such-and-such been the case, instead of so-and-so. And they are right.

The Air Canada accident at Malton happened on the worst runway at the airport — the one with a ravine at the end. Some experts feel that the ravine should be filled in. Transport Minister Otto Lang stated that his officials have known of it for years, and have not deemed it unsafe. And, as long as aircraft do not attempt to take off from it, or land in it, instead of the adjoining runway, then the situation is deemed "safe."

Jo Ann Stevenson

A matter of time

The time for getting away from it all arrived over the long Canada Day weekend. My family made an instant decision to pack up whatever wasn't in the dirty clothes basket and head for places unknown. To add to the adventure and effect of this expedition, we left behind our watches. It represented the necessary commitment to throwing our cares to the wind, unwinding and leaving time behind.

Once we arrived at our destination, surrounded by trees and twinkling stars, there amidst the croaking or creaking of frogs or logs, how could we possibly miss knowing the time? How could the exact hour or even digital minute be remotely significant in a place so peaceful, so unscheduled? We were to find out.

Next morning we made our way to the rental office to get a boat to do some "trail-blazing" and fishing. The rental office was closed. It would only be open at three specific times during the day. So we waited . . . in the sun . . . without our watches. The alternative was to return to the campsite and count slowly to 60, 60 times. Trail-blazing apparently operates under schedules, too.

We finally got our boat, oars and two under-90-pound life jackets, we were off. "Have a nice day," the proprietor crowed as he noticed our bare wrists, "but remember, if you're not back on time, it's gonna cost."

After a full-day of togetherness with our under-90-pound offspring, we craved a little time to ourselves. Hayrides for kiddies were scheduled for 7 p.m. As we paddled homewards (we hoped), we took to mapping the path of the sun and arguing over which direction the sun travelled. We couldn't be more than an hour out. How long does a hayride last even if we do get them there on time? You guessed it. When we got back, the rental office was closed and a group of carefree children waved to us from the haywagon as they passed.

As we returned to our campsite, past the rows of serene-appearing tents and trailers belonging to those fortunate enough to have placed their children on the ride, we couldn't help but notice the gleam of the watches on their arms. At least on the arms of those parents who were still visible.



David Busby

Don't blame us for this

To listen to some of the more fervid exponents of the new conservatism, you might think that Ed Broadbent was the prime minister and the NDP was directly responsible for all the national woes.

In case you thought the Liberals and Tories had been running the government since at least 1854, commentators like Doug Fullerton want us to believe that the socialists were actually pulling the strings. After all, who else believes in economic planning, taxation according to ability to pay, medical care insurance, old age pensions and keeping the poor from misery?

If New Democrats had been in power in Ottawa even for the past 15 years, enough said. Most good NDPers would hang their heads in shame. However, to judge from the newspapers, a fellow called Trudeau took over from a fellow Liberal called Pearson. They have run the country without much interference since 1963. David Lewis never even attended a cabinet meeting.

No one knows this better than Douglas Fullerton, a man who modestly bills himself as a "government economic advisor." He knows

perfectly well that it has been Liberal strategy since the 1940s to grab the vote-getting, socially imaginative elements of the CCF-NDP platform and to use them to win elections. The other part of the Left's remedy — an aggressive economic strategy, planning and a fair-shares tax system — has been spurned.

In Ottawa, it was a blue-ribbon member of the financial establishment, the late Kenneth Carter, who argued that taxation should be based on the philosophy that a "buck is a buck" whether earned by a coupon-clipper or a meat-cutter. It was the Liberal government that decided that a dollar earned in capital gains should be taxed as though it was a mere 50 cents.

On the way, both Liberal and Tory politicians discovered a version of socialism which still mystifies the likes of Ed Broadbent or Tommy Douglas. According to Liberal and Tory socialists, the people should take the risks while the capitalists must be guaranteed the profits. If Karl Marx had ever figured that one out, he would have moved to Canada instead of vegetating in the British Museum.

It was the Liberals — over the objections of

many people including the NDP — who decided to rescue their unemployment insurance fund by dragging in the higher-paid professionals who, of course, would never see a pink slip.

Perhaps the Liberals counted on the good blue Tories of Ontario to run their affairs well enough that Canada could still be saved by its rich central province from all the costly follies the Grits could dream up.

Instead, Ontario has suffered its own socialist affliction in the chubby form of William Davis. It wasn't New Democrats who spread the gospel of egalitarianism across Ontario's once-respected education system. It was, and still is, the Premier and his chosen minions. No New Democrat would have dreamed that massive expansion of universities brought social justice. It merely subsidized the stockbroker's son while the truck driver's daughter, however bright, was still destined to become a waitress. And so it has proved.

Socialism for the rich has always meant free enterprise for the poor. Subsidized mortgage rates under CMHC do nothing for the millions who could not and never will get close

to the dream of home-ownership. Medicare — the only policy for which New Democrat influence can unquestionably claim credit in the 60s, through it was made possible also by a good Tory judge, Emmett Hall — really was a salvation for those members of the middle class who had paid the full shot for medical treatment and been ruined in the process.

The NDP's views on liberty and equality may be idealistic. Their policies may even be misguided — though they certainly work in some of the most successful countries of our age and generation. Yet in Canada, save for limited and by no means unpopular provincial experiments, the NDP remedies have never been tried.

The Liberals and Tories have had a chance to do their best (or their worst.) The NDP has never yet been up to pitch.

At the bottom of the eighth inning, with the bases loaded and the score a disaster, it is a little rough on a rookie to send him to the plate. But what has the team got to lose?

David Busby is president of the Mississauga North NDPs.