

THE MISSISSAUGA Times

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Mississauga: together apart

Money.

All the problems we will face in the 1980s and all their solutions depend on an increased flow of money into Mississauga and a decreased flow out of the city.

That is the synopsis one may piece together by reading the articles in today's Times looking ahead to the 1980s.

Mayor Hazel McCallion, who more than any single person has forced the city to think out its tough economic problems, says the financing of services will be the city's biggest problem in the next decade.

City manager Ed Halliday agrees, predicting also that the double-whammy of inflation and energy shortages will force property taxes up and perhaps force city hall to operate on a more energy-efficient work week.

Peel Regional Police Chief Doug Burrows says his department will need more money, more men and more equipment to meet the increasing needs of a growing population. Every department head in the public sector is saying the same thing: more money is crucial to the city's survival.

City Planning Commissioner Russ Edmunds, in a thoughtful article written by Mary Louise Birks, tells Mississauga citizens to prepare themselves for drastic changes in their lifestyles.

He says, however, that Mississauga's future looks rosy, and it does, for while the economic centre of Canada moves westward and Ontario's economy flattens, Mississauga will still keep growing.

It has everything going for it: tough, dedicated leaders, creative minds and a solid core of citizen volunteers picking up the slack; the city is superbly located, at the hub of Southern Ontario's transportation network; there is plenty of land available for commercial and industrial development and we have the best developers in Canada

building here. Our social service network, while badly underfunded, is spending their dollars well.

The major focus for the 1980s appears to be the intersection of Hwy. 10 and Burnhamthorpe Road — at least, several municipal officials and developers say they want a stronger city core, to help build Mississauga's self-sufficiency.

The city needs a civic focus, of course, but we're skeptical of a gung-ho charge to build that centre while the economy is so flat.

Officials say a new city hall should be part of that focus, and we agree. But the day for extravagant symbols of civic leadership are over. Any city hall should be built with one prime aim: economy.

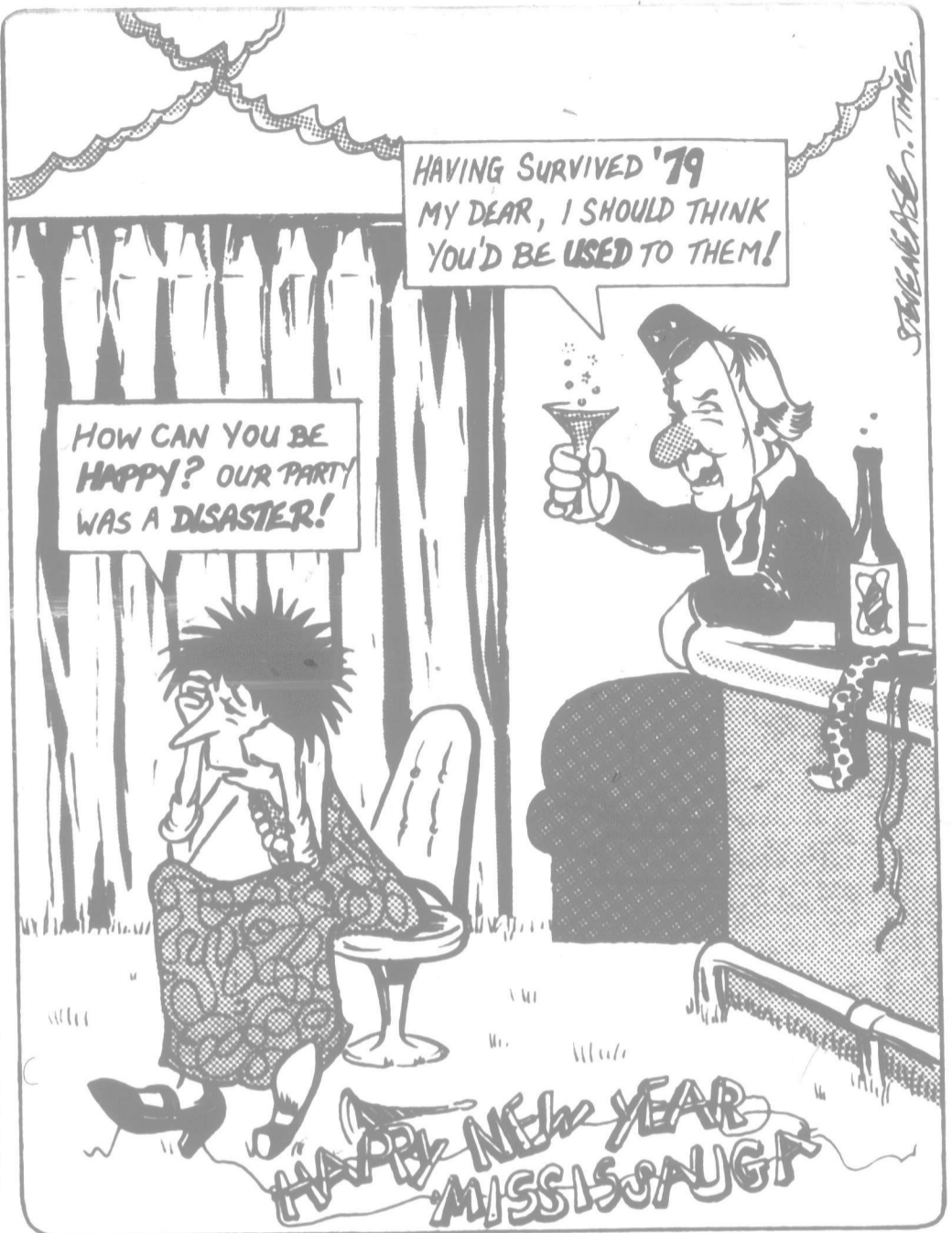
Officials see Square One doubling in size; and that, too can be a welcome addition to the city's economic future — but not to the detriment of Mississauga's other commercial centres.

Officials say a central library may be a part of the new civic centre, but is that really necessary in a city so strongly defined by its individual communities?

And officials say a concert hall may be a part of this civic centre; but should that be so when it appears impossible to break Mississauga citizens of the Toronto entertainment habit?

More detached observers of Mississauga's maturing process may reasonably predict this bedroom suburb of Toronto will become stronger, more self-sufficient and more cohesive in the 1980s, but will never grow more as a municipality united than Canada is as a country.

It is a noble cause to build monuments to civic pride. But 1980 is not the time. For at least the first few years of this decade we must try hardest to minimize the damage our weaknesses may cause while flaunting our strengths.



Who are these citizens?

A newspaper wouldn't be any fun at all if the reporters and columnists agreed, so I hereby nominate myself for the role of maverick.

There was, I think, a general tone of 'tut tut' (no, I don't mean the king) when The Times reported Mississauga councillors had eliminated or reduced citizen advisors on civic committees.

The Times' own Mary Lou Birks wrote a column that led me to believe the death of democracy was at hand. The paper later reported that Councillor Larry Taylor moaned that democracy was taking a back seat to efficiency because council axed seven of 17 committees and reduced citizen committee members in a move to streamline municipal government.

Listen, folks, you've got it backwards. What's so democratic about inviting individuals, who represent nobody but themselves, to have a voice in local government? I want my city, my province, my country run by people who have to answer to me.

If Mayor McCallion and her councillors don't do the job, we have the chance to get rid of them in two years and elect somebody else who might do better. But nobody elects citizen



Bettie Bradley
NEWS VIEWS

representatives. They are invited to sit on committees and they represent their own personal biases and their own special interests without having to answer to a single, solitary soul.

It seems to me there are two types of citizen-spokesmen. There are those the elected representatives traditionally stand in awe of — citizens who are very prominent because of social standing or because they are power brokers. These appointees are too important and too dignified to dirty their hands by actually running for office, but their opinions come down from Mount Olympus to grateful serfs who are expected to accept their superior wisdom. This type of appointment smacks of elitism.

Then there are the self-appointed spokesmen — and these people are experts at manipulating the press. If a

member of a minority gets charged by the police, these citizen-spokesmen rush into print, claiming to represent their race and demanding to sit on special investigative committees. This type of appointment smells of blackmail.

Of course, councillors need advice. They get some of it from paid staffers whose job is on the line and who themselves have to answer to council. They get some from lobbyists who represent special groups.

If councillors occasionally need special input to make an informed decision, let's see that it is provided democratically. Why don't senior citizens elect a representative to speak to council on their behalf when the occasion warrants?

If any minority groups feel badly treated, why don't they elect a spokesman?

The arts already are represented through Visual Arts Mississauga and Performing Arts Mississauga.

What we can't lose sight of is that if democracy isn't going to get off the rails, both our elected representatives and the press — especially the press — must pay less attention to self-styled and unelected citizen spokesmen. And let the people we elect get on with the job.

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