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Commitment to excellence a constant at The News now for three decades

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Staff

In the language of journalists, 30 means the end.

But, for *The Mississauga News*, it's only the beginning.

It all started in 1965 as the *Clarkson Lorne Park News*, run in a Meadow Wood Rd./Dundas St. cottage where the route to the publisher's office was through the washroom. A staff of eight assembled the news and the paper was printed in Bramalea.

The Mississauga News is now Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing's flagship newspaper, published electronically from beginning to end in Mississauga.

There have been the big stories, remembered well by the newsroom's many long-time reporters and editors. There was the train derailment, the Demeter murder case (at which reporter Jim Robinson testified), the wintry plane crash in Frobisher Bay.

Publisher of 17 years, Ron Lenyk, who started as a sports reporter 26 years ago, recalls giving an award at a bowling tournament to Henry Williams, the night before Williams was arrested for murder.

There've been the later famous writers to hail from *The News* like Diane

Francis.

"*The Mississauga News*, when I was there, was the best newspaper in Canada — not because of me, but because of the people who ran it," said Baton Broadcasting Inc.'s president and CEO, Douglas Bassett.

Bassett was general manager, then president of Inland Publishing Co. Ltd. for 16 years. It owned *The Mississauga News*, which competed against rival publisher Metrospan and its *The Mississauga Times* newspaper.

"We beat their brains out," said Bassett, calling *The Mississauga News* Inland's flagship paper.

Inland and Metrospan merged in July, 1981, to become Metroland.

From head offices at Bramalea, Inland, under Bassett's leadership, had built not only the Metroland head office but its neighboring *The Mississauga News* building at 3145 Wolfedale Rd., where both still operate.

Inland had bought the paper from independent publisher Ken Armstrong.

Lenyk said you don't think of the changes over the years, "You just flow with them." He noted the recession and its effect on local advertisers' budgets, coupled with increasing competition for advertisement as a significant challenge. Ad revenue supports the newspaper.

Rising newsprint costs have been another recent challenge.

"The prices have gone through the roof world-wide and we're not unaffected," said Lenyk.

But, there have been the memorable times. Lenyk recalls the municipal election plebiscite vote that named the community Mississauga, not Sheridan.

"Sheridan was on the side of the Americans during the War of 1812. We made sure we publicized that," said former editor Ed Belitsky.

"The city was named after the newspaper," said Lenyk.

Then there was publisher Eric Watt, who had a miniature cannon on his desk and didn't hesitate to fire it when staff weren't working.

Technology has made the greatest impact on the work within *The News*.

It's a leader in the field, but that isn't new. *The News* was one of the first newspapers to use process color on its front page and won the world-wide Kodak com-

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Proud moments milestones of The News' first

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petition for best reproduction of color as long as 20 years ago.

The News publishes three times a week, Wednesday with a circulation of 114,000, Fridays and Sundays with circulations of 104,000.

From a staff of eight as a weekly, *The News* now employs 62 full-time staff, and about 60 part-timers.

Over the years, Lenyk believes the paper has gained respect.

"There was a time that when you said you were from *The Mississauga News*, other members of the media would smirk. That doesn't happen anymore," he said.

Maybe it's a result of proud moments such as the time a reporter and photographer hitched a ride to the Atlantic coast and finally talked a coroner into taking a camera to the scene of a plane crash in Frobisher Bay. *The News* was the only paper with photos.

"That was a proud moment," said Lenyk, who said he still believes community newspapering means bettering the community.

Mississauga's growth has been a major external challenge. Population growth has meant *The News'* community involvement is now done on a broader scale.

This year, *The News* sponsored a first-time home buyers' seminar; a citizen-of-the-year brunch, a community garage sale; a career fair; a camp fair; sports week; Carassauga; an upcoming auto show; a leisure show; the International Home Show and the Rotary Club's Cable 10 TV auction.

30 years

And the Mississauga Board of Trade, one of the largest chambers in the province, held its first meeting at *The News* offices.

The News' biggest project has been merging with the Salvation Army on the Christmas Bureau Fund, which over 27 years has raised \$3.



Staff photo by Fred Loek

The Mississauga News' publisher, Ron Lenyk, acknowledges the paper's 30th anniversary in front of its Wolfedale Rd. office.