

# Community will miss top 'go-to guy'

By JOHN STEWART

Staff  
MN Apr. 29, 2009

Ron Lenyk is going to miss the community, but not as much as Mississauga will miss him, say local civic leaders.

"I sometimes wonder what he did at *The Mississauga News*," Mayor Hazel McCallion joked Monday when asked about the mark Lenyk has left on the city.

"He's everywhere," the mayor said of the longtime publisher of the newspaper, who'll leave that job on Friday after 31 years at the helm. Lenyk is being promoted to a new post at Torstar Corporation, *The News'* parent company.

"He's been a major proponent of the Mississauga community," added McCallion.

"He knows everybody. He's well-liked and he gives full-time to the community. I always say that, if he ever runs for mayor, I'm in trouble."

Administrators of several charities in Mississauga told *The News*

that convincing Lenyk of their cause opens up doors that lead to promotion in the newspaper, instant connections to an array of other potential board members and volunteers and opportunities for fundraising that wouldn't be possible otherwise.

Lenyk is the city's top go-to guy when it comes to charities looking for an emcee who's funny, and well-connected enough to fill seats at their annual fundraising galas.

"His networking abilities are just phenomenal," said Keith Tansley, executive director at Community Living Mississauga, where Lenyk has spent the past 25 years on the organizing committee for the annual tribute dinner. "He's been huge for us and I'm sure you'd hear the same thing from every other charity," said Tansley.

Jayme Gaspar, who heads Heritage Mississauga, where Lenyk has assisted with several projects including the restoration of the Port Credit log



Ron Lenyk, publisher of *The Mississauga News*, has been promoted to a new post at Torstar Corporation. He leaves *The News* after 31 years at the helm.

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Ron Lenyk has had many crowning achievements in his tenure at *The News*, including becoming a grandfather to Madison Christie and winning the Suburban Newspapers of America's coveted Dean Leshler Award for outstanding contributions to the industry.

## No stopping for Lenyk

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cabin, was "shocked and dismayed" to read of his departure.

"But I know he'll still be around; it's in his blood," said Gaspar. "He just can't stop working in the Mississauga community. He's been an incredible help for heritage."

Jim Grieve has co-chaired the Success by 6 program with Lenyk for four years.

"Ron has just been the most amazing advocate and business partner," said Grieve, director of education at the Peel District School Board. "He's viewed by all the participating organizations as a pivotal leader," Grieve said.

Lenyk's good friend and partner in numerous charitable pursuits, local car dealer Laurie Williamson, jokes that the publisher pursues charity work like he plays tennis — all out, all the time. "The guy can't walk (because of bad knees), but there he is rushing to the net," said Williamson, whose daughter, Taylor, will marry Lenyk's son, Terry, Oct. 3. "Everything's full speed once the game is on. He was usually the key to getting sponsorship for these groups and, boy, could he sell tickets and raise money."

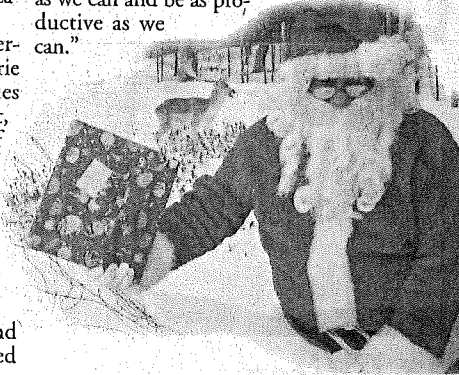
In an interview, Lenyk, 62, said his job and his community work have, basically, blended

into a single entity over the years.

The publisher, who moved to Mississauga at age 16, laughed when asked if he'll miss his dozen-or-so "dates" every week at community events with McCallion. "I wish it was only 12," he said.

When Lenyk told McCallion last year that he hopes to work until age 75, the 88-year-old mayor accused him of being a "quitter."

"She's my mentor. I don't always agree with her, but she's shown me to never give up on your life," said Lenyk. "She's 88 going on 21. She's what being human is all about — let's live as long as we can and be as productive as we can."



Lenyk won Citizen of the Year honours for his numerous efforts in the community, including playing Santa Claus on many occasions.