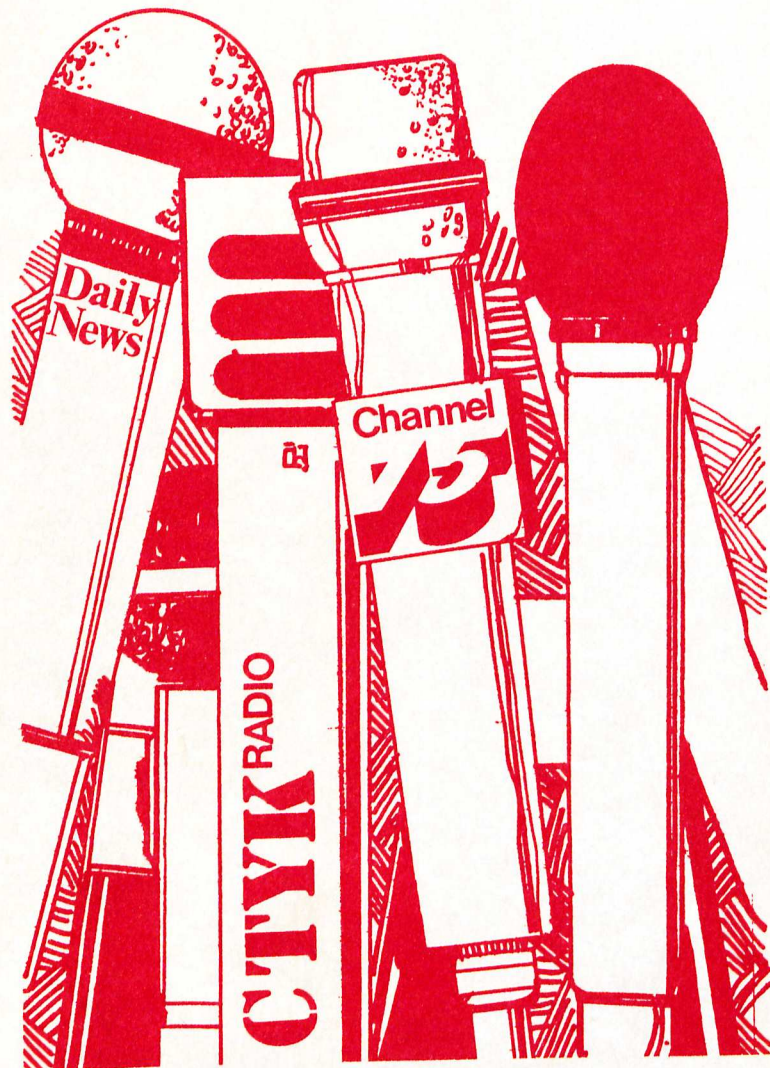


THE NEWS MEDIA AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Bureau of Municipal Research
Spring Conference-1976

May 12th from 5p.m. to 9p.m.
May 13th from 9a.m. to 5p.m.
Four Seasons Sheraton Hotel
Toronto



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PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12TH

5:00 p.m. . . . REGISTRATION AND HOSPITALITY
(Civic Ballroom)

6:00 p.m. . . . DINNER (Civic Ballroom)
Keynote Address: The Honourable Keith Davey, Chairman of the
Special Senate Committee on Mass Media

7:30 p.m. . . . INTRODUCTION: Dr. Anne Golden, Research Coordinator,
Bureau of Municipal Research
"The Media and Local Government: Roles and Responsibilities"

8:00 p.m. to
9:00 p.m. . . . DEBATE: *"Resolved that the news media do a good job of
covering local government in Metro"*
Moderator: Ken Cavanagh, Communications Director for Ombudsman,
Former Host CITY Show

THE NEWS MEDIA AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

THURSDAY

9:00 a

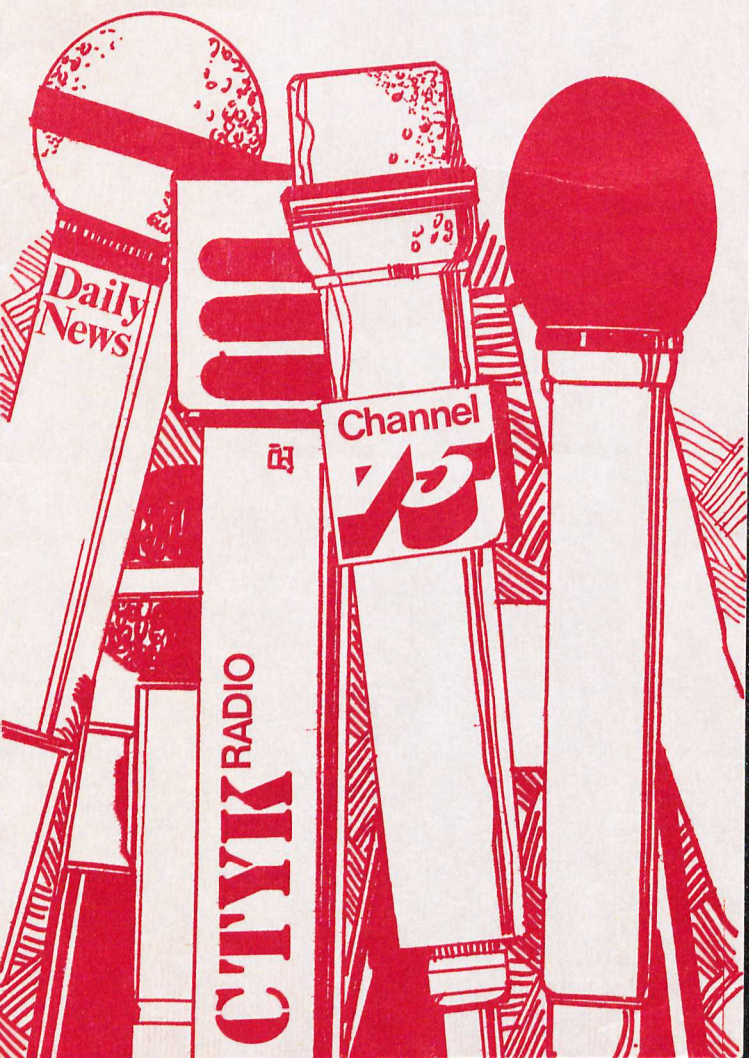
Bureau of Municipal Research
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The news media are customarily regarded as the central nervous system of democracy. When it comes to local government, where there are no formal political parties to help link the people to their government, the media are especially important as the primary source of information and political education. The purpose of this conference is to explore both the nature and influence of the coverage of local politics by Metro Toronto's print and broadcasting press.

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Moderator:
Ken Cavanagh, Communications Director
for Ombudsman, Former Host CITY Show.
Arguing for:
Borden Spears, Senior Editor, "The
Toronto Star"
Arguing against:
David Lewis Stein, writer, former colum-
nist and editorial writer for "The Toronto
Star"

THURSDAY, MAY 13TH (Dominion Ballroom N)

- 9:00 am. . . .SESSION I
*Does the Press Do Its Job in Helping
People to Understand Local Government?*
Moderator
Susan Fish, Policy Advisor to Mayor
Crombie
Speakers:
Graham Fraser, Reporter, 'Globe and Mail'
Barbara Greene, North York Controller
Reactors:
Barrie Zwicker, Editor and Publisher of
"Content" (Canada's National News
Media Magazine)
Thomas Curzon, City Editor, "The Tor-
onto Star"

*This session will deal with the nature and quality of
local news coverage. Topics to be covered include: how
well does the press serve the public as reporter? should
reporters write for the average reader or for the opinion-
maker? should reporters serve as "passive chroniclers"
of events or as "critical adversaries"? are reporters too
"chummy" with politicians? is the press too negative,
too trivial, too sensationalist? what are the implications
of editorial bias for reporting?*

10:30 am. . . .Coffee

- 10:40 am. . . .SESSION II
*The influence of the Media on Decision-
Makers*
Moderator:
John Downing, City Hall columnist for
the "Toronto Sun"
Speakers:
David P. Smith, Alderman, Metro and
City Executive Committees
Dorothy Thomas, City Alderman
Frank Drea, M.P.P., former columnist for
the "Toronto Telegram"
Claire Hoy, political columnist for the
"Toronto Sun", Queen's Park

*This session will examine the impact of the media on
public officials. Topics to be covered include: credibility*

*of the media for politicians; the comparative influence
of the printed press, radio and television; the press as a
daily measure of public opinion; the role of the news
media in creating public opinion and as a communicator
between levels of government.*

- NoonLUNCH (Dominion Ballroom S.)
Luncheon Address:
Mr. Arthur Maloney, Q.C., the Ombuds-
man of Ontario
"The Role of the Media as Ombudsman"

- 2:00 pmSESSION III
Demonstration/Discussion
*"A Critical Look at Media Coverage of
One Recent Local Event"*
Audience will be able to evaluate and
compare actual news reportage and com-
mentary on a major issue.

3:30 pmCoffee

- 3:40 pmSESSION IV
*Improving Media Coverage of Local
Government*
Moderator:
Charles K. Bens, Executive Director,
Bureau of Municipal Research
Speakers:
Maggie Siggins, story editor specializing
in urban affairs for CBC "24 Hours",
former City Hall reporter
Jay-Dell Mah, Municipal Affairs Re-
porter, CBC
Ron Haggart, former City Hall colum-
nist and Senior Producer for the CBC
current affairs show, "The Fifth Estate".

*This session asks: how can we improve the way local
political news is reported so that the level of political
information, understanding, concern and activity on the
part of the public are increased? what specific inno-
vations should be tried?*

- 4:45 pmCONCLUDING REMARKS:
Charles K. Bens, Executive Director, Bur-
eau of Municipal Research



BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

Founded in 1914 as a non-profit research agency staffed by well qualified personnel, the Bureau of Municipal Research maintains continuous study of the problems facing municipalities and their residents.

Long an advocate of responsive and responsible government, the Bureau has gained wide recognition for the high calibre of its quarterly *Civic Affairs*, its monthly *BMR Comment*, its information and advisory services, and the participation of its staff in the public discussion of issues.

The Bureau is an independent agency supported by a broad cross-section of business and professional firms, organizations, governments, and individuals.

your inquiries are invited:

BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

2 Toronto Street, #306, Toronto, Canada M5C 2B6

Telephone (Area Code 416) 363-9265

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Arguing for: Borden Spears, Senior Editor, "The Toronto Star"
Arguing against: Jeremy P. Carver, Editor of "Toronto News",
former citizen activist

THURSDAY, MAY 13TH (Dominion Ballroom)

9:00 a.m. . . . SESSION I *Does the Press Do Its Job in Helping People to
Understand Local Government?*

Moderator: Susan Fish, Policy Advisor to Mayor Crombie

Speakers: Graham Fraser, Reporter, "Globe and Mail"
Barbara Greene, North York Controller

Reactors: Barrie Zwicker, Editor and Publisher of "Content"
Ted Moser, Assistant Managing Editor, "Globe and Mail"

10:30 a.m. . . . Coffee

10:40 a.m. . . . SESSION II *The Influence of the Media on Decision-Makers*
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Noon. LUNCH (Dominion Ballroom S.)

Introduction of Speaker: Alderman Anne Johnston
Luncheon Address: Mr. Arthur Maloney, Q.C., the Ombudsman
of Ontario *"The Role of the Media as Ombudsman"*

2:00 p.m. SESSION III Demonstration/Discussion
"A Critical Look at Media Coverage of One Recent Local Event"
Audience will be able to evaluate and compare actual news
reportage and commentary on a major issue
Reactor Panel: Alderman Colin Vaughan
Alderman Fred Beavis
Jeff Simpson, Reporter

3:30 p.m. Coffee

3:40 p.m. SESSION IV *Improving Media Coverage of Local Government*
Moderator: Charles K. Bens, Executive Director
Bureau of Municipal Research
Speakers: Maggie Siggins, story editor specializing in urban
affairs for CBC "24 Hours", former
City Hall reporter
Jay-Dell Mah, Municipal Affairs Reporter, CBC
Ron Haggart, former City Hall columnist and Senior
Producer for the CBC current affairs
show, "The Fifth Estate"

4:45 p.m. CONCLUDING REMARKS: Charles K. Bens, Executive Director,
Bureau of Municipal Research

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GENERAL COMMENTS

This page has been provided for your comments on the conference. We are interested in your opinion of the conference itself -- its content and format -- as well as your views on any of the issues that have arisen during the sessions. Many of you are deeply involved in the media in a professional way or are strongly affected by it in your work. We are therefore anxious to have your views of what the goals of local news coverage should be and how the news media might do a better job in reporting and evaluating local political events.

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