

Editorial Page

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Seniors don't fit usual stereotype

The end of June marks the end of Seniors month for 1989.

The number of senior citizens is increasing. It is estimated that by 1996 there will be 3.6 million seniors in Canada. In addition, there will be 7.6 million Canadians over the age of 50.

With the increasing number of seniors, a number of changes are taking place. For example, mandatory retirement is something that is being fought by many. The wealth of knowledge and years of experience seniors possess is a benefit, not a disadvantage, to business.

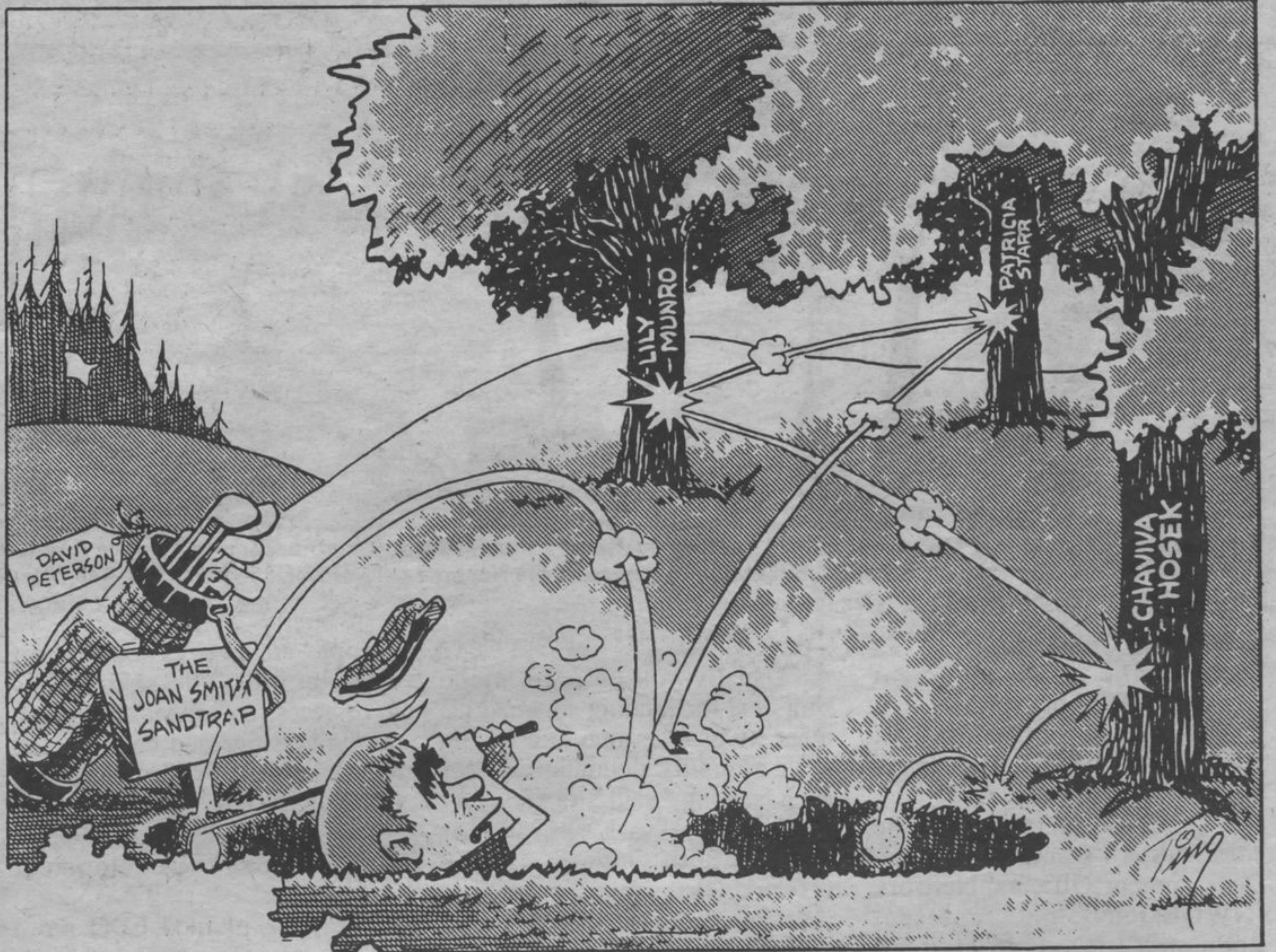
Besides, if seniors are forced into retirement, there will be a limited number of younger people to take their place - never mind the ones being promoted without the necessary experience.

Other changes are already underway. No longer are seniors sent to retirement homes or institutionalized upon reaching the age of 65 or suffering medical problems.

Instead, many are now staying at home and taking advantage of services that allow them to live a more independent lifestyle. Homemakers and shopping services and in-home medical care can play a large role in helping seniors stay at home.

One problem that a recent study indicated was that of product packaging. Small print, hard to open containers and products stacked too high or low were some of the more common complaints seniors had when it came to shopping.

A decrease in vision plays a large role in many of these problems. About seven per cent of those 65 to 74 and 15 per cent of those 75 and over are either blind or have serious vision impairments. Cataracts and glaucoma are two of the more common vision problems.



But on the whole, seniors are more healthy and active than ever before. Although often portrayed as senile, complaining and inactive, these are the exception and not the norm. Seniors buy more warm-up suits and track shoes per capita than any other age group.

Bowling, golf, cards, fishing, bingo, travel and family visits are just some of the activities seniors participate in.

Free from the pressures of full-time work, growing children, and mortgages, seniors can and do play a valuable role in society.

After years of work and self-sacrifice they've arrived at a time of life when they deserve to treat themselves well.

The News welcomes your letters to the editor. Feel free to express comments, opinions, appreciation, or debate anything of public interest. Write to:

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In order that we may verify authorship, please sign your letters.

Toronto: You should see it now

Toronto is a foul, loathsome, disgusting capital abounding in filthy lanes and alleys, muddy and unpaved streets and as a whole, presents a dreary and disagreeable aspect, both from its low situation and contemptible appearance of the buildings.

A 19th century Yankee by the name of Donald McLeod penned that sulphurous sketch of Ontario's capital back in 1841.

He should see the place now.

The streets are all paved and the only mud he'd find would be around construction sites of yet another clutch of highrise office towers soon to redefine the Toronto skyline. As for the filthy lanes and alleys, they've been wrought-ironed, cobbled and boutique-d out of all recognition.

For visitors from other parts of Canada there is but one word to describe Toronto and the word is fat.

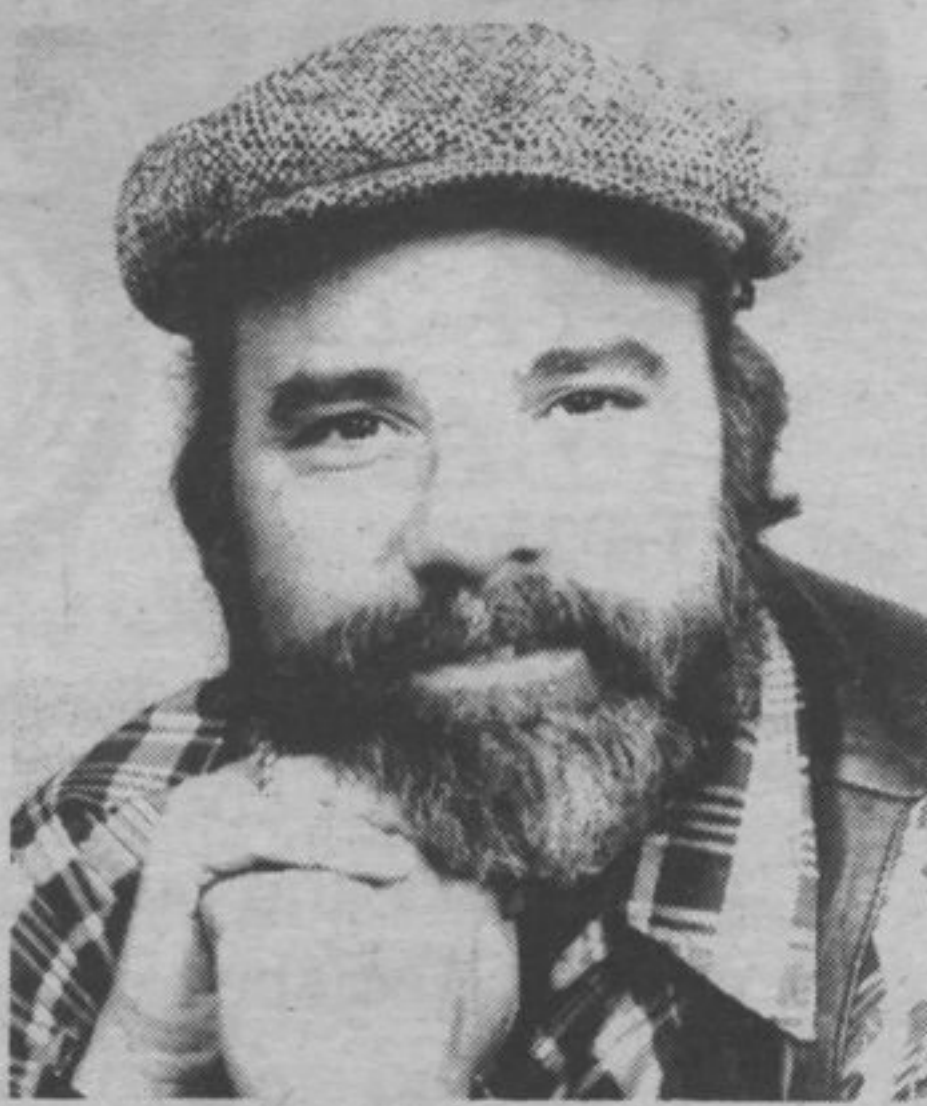
Toronto fairly reeks of money. Go to that temple of

Mammon, the Eaton Centre, and you find not one shoe store but five, six, seven of them, practically side by side. And if you can't find anything you like, let the elevator whisk you to the upper tier. Still not satisfied? Glide down the escalator to the "basement" -- if so plebeian a word can be used to describe the bazaar of glitter and glitz you'll find there.

Just a short limo ride from the Eaton Centre is the newest zircon in Toronto's architectural necklace, the Skydome, a \$450 million playpen which can nest up to 40,000 pleasure seekers at a time. So what if it cost more than ten times as much as predicted? It's only money -- and this is Toronto!

It was recently announced that the average -- average -- price of a new home in one of Toronto's dormitory boroughs had passed the \$800,000 plateau. How does that news fall upon the ears of, say, an out-of-work Nova Scotia fish packer or a wheat farmer in Estevan, Saskatchewan, faced

with another summer of watching his top soil blow away? How will they handle the information that a Toronto entrepreneur by the name of Peter Grunspan is doing turnaway business *leasing wristwatches* to Toronto



Arthur Black

Yuppies? Yep, for a trifling \$500 down, Mister Grunspan will put a \$15,000 Presidential Rolex on your arm. After three years of \$500 a month payments, that baby is all yours.

That's merely the standard

Rolex of course. You may prefer a Cartier or a Patek Phillippe model. Or if you want to go first class, Mister Grunspan will fit you out with a top of the line diamond-studded Rolex that retails for \$65,000.

Did you know it was possible to pay \$65,000 for a wristwatch? Now that you know, do you care?

Thousands do. Mister Grunspan says he receives about 50 calls a day from upwardly mobile Torontonians eager to fool the world into thinking they're richer than they are.

"I could do \$4 or \$5 million in sales in one year without blinking an eye," says Grunspan. And, he might have added, without leaving Toronto.

I don't know why I thought about Toronto when I read about *Video Girlfriend*, but I did.

Video Girlfriend? That's an \$18 videocassette you can buy from a Pennsylvania firm called How to Fantasy Films.

Video Girlfriend runs for 22 minutes. You put the cassette in your VCR, punch the play button and a blonde actress fills the screen. She tells you that her name is Debbie and that she is your date for the evening. As you watch the tape, Debbie giggles appreciatively at your sparkling wit, tells you what a swell dancer you are, offers you a sip of wine from her glass. She even invites you into the bedroom -- at which point the video discreetly fast-forwards to the next morning. And there's Debbie, looking rumpled and...satisfied, saying how much you mean to her. "I'll always be here for you" Debbie murmurs breathily. "All you have to do is put in the tape."

Now I know why I thought of *Video Girlfriend* and Toronto together. It's a natural connection. Any guy with a leased Rolex on his wrist hustling to make the mortgage payments on his \$800,000 bungalow doesn't have time for a *real* girlfriend.