

# Community Profile

## Local man stays connected with community

By CRYSTAL KOTOW

When it comes to being involved in Essex, former town councillor Jim Hatt knows best.

Hatt currently organizes the Essex Fun Fest church service and has been doing so for over 20 years. During his nine years as councillor, he was known best for being the man behind the organization of the Fun Fest. After the Soybean Festival wound up its operation in the 1970s due to a lack of volunteers, Hatt knew the town needed something else, even if it was just for the purpose of "reaching out and publicizing the town."

Even after 20 years, Hatt says there's still a lot of planning that goes into the church service offered to people of all religious denominations.

"Every year you have to get letters out to local churches and make people aware," he said. "It's always over in the Sadlers' pond area and it's a very calming place to have it. Out in nature, right out in God's world."

Hatt recently participated in a 16-day course at the Centre for Christian Studies in Winnipeg. The centre is a United and Anglican Church training centre for diaconal ministers.

Hatt decided to take part in the course because he's been involved with the Essex United Church in many ways. He currently serves on the Worship committee and the Christian Education committee. After a series of interviews, his "discernment committee" decided Hatt should train for the staff associate ministry. The course in Winnipeg gave him the training he needed.



Jim Hatt, 60, sits next to his wife Arleen in their living room June 30. Hatt's involvement in the community has given him the opportunity to meet many people. A former school teacher and principal, Hatt is also one of the founders of the Essex Fun Fest and its annual church service.

"The course was helpful for me as a human being," he said. "It really helped me grow."

During the course he learned about leadership development and theology. He participated in Bible study, worship and said it was an intense workshop.

Hatt's involvement with the Fun Fest and its church service resulted from his three terms on town council. Hatt was elected to council in 1985. He decided to run for election after serving as a volunteer on the Parks and Recreation committee in the 1970s.

"I just thought there were some things that needed to be done around Essex," he said. "I was interested in promotion of our municipality."

Hatt was most interested in the restoration of the Essex train station. He recalls the evening of the

1988 federal Canadian election. He attended a Conservative nomination meeting and ended up speaking with then Minister of Tourism Tom Hawkins. He told Hawkins about the train station and asked him for financial help in the restoration. Soon after, Hatt flew to Ottawa with the town's chief administrative officer, Wayne Miller, at Hawkins' request.

"He wanted to meet with us," he said. "And by the end of it we had gotten the funding for the train station."

In addition to the committees and groups Hatt has been involved with over the years, he retired last February from his position as past president of Heritage Essex. He served as president for seven years and as past president for three.

Over the course of his

involvement, Hatt was most proud to be part of the video documentation of historical Essex. Three videos were produced. He also worked bingos to raise money for the train station, sat in on "public evenings" during which people could come to talk about past events in Essex and was involved in numerous fundraising events for different causes.

"Heritage had always been something that interested me," he said. "The train station was one of the reasons I wanted to get on council so it was only natural that I follow up on it. Essex has such an interesting history."

Just after being elected to council, Hatt retired from his 33-year career as a teacher and principal. He taught at Maidstone Central, was principal at Puce Public, Sandwich West and Gosfield North

## CLARICA PLANTS 10,000 FLAGS



Free Press Photo/Mariah Vizi

For the third year running, local Clarica/Sun Life advisors took to the streets at dusk to plant nearly 10,000 flags on the lawns, in parks and along main streets in Windsor and Essex County.

Dubbed one of Clarica's "random acts of kindness", the activity involved six advisors working between dusk on Fri., June 30 and dawn on Canada Day morning to plant a sea of red and white flags in honour of Canada's birthday.

Participating this year were planners Jim Augerman, Tammy Cooper, Scott Collier, Jonathan Rounq, Alynn Anglin and Jason Trudeau.

"Tammy is certainly the ring leader of the group," said Augerman. "With her son and daughter-in-law serving in the Canadian Forces and my eight years in the Reserves, this day holds a little extra meaning for both of us."

"This year we decided to go big or go home," said Cooper. "We started with 1,000 flags, then 2,500 and this year we will get pretty close to 10,000 in all. It's a lot of fun when the sun comes up and the walkers hit the streets, to see the smiles on their faces."

Local Clarica advisors use the event as a way of saying thank you to their clients, community and country.

grade schools and was vice principal at Jack Miner grade school.

"When I was five years old I knew I wanted to teach," he said. "I don't know why, I just knew from when I was little that it's what I wanted to do. The thing I miss most about my career are the kids."

Hatt recently attended the last graduation ceremony at Puce Public School. Each year he presents a humanitarian award given in his name. He is honoured to say he was the first principal at Puce Public after it became a French immersion school. An award given in his name at each graduation was the gift he was given upon leaving the school.

"The award is given to a student who most lives out the golden rule," he said. "That is 'do unto others as you'd have done unto you.'"

These days Hatt enjoys spending time with his family. He has two children with his wife, Arleen, and four grandchildren.

He also spends three nights a week practising with barbershop singing groups.

"I sing with the Sun Parlour Chorus, the Generation Gap quartet, and with a small group in Essex," he said. "They don't really have a name. We just call ourselves 'a whole bunch of guys who just like to sing.'"

Being as involved as Hatt has been, he said he's met so many people who have influenced his life.

"Over the years you come to know so many faces," he said. "I really love that close-knit feeling of a small town. Everybody cares about you."

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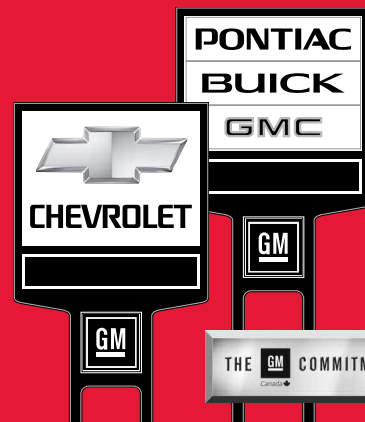
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