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Recognizing potential

The next time you're wandering through downtown Essex, sidestep down Centre Street and take a look at the façades of the Essex Free Press and Essex Stained Glass. The flat front on each building is characterized by a simple false façade that you might expect to see somewhere else – perhaps along a dusty, windblown street in the American west.

Uninspired as the architecture might be, it says something about the people who commissioned the buildings and those who built them. By the early 1940s – the era in which these structures were built – visions of grandeur had been

displaced by practical and economical design. A simple cinder block building with a false façade was the most one could afford and the best one could expect. Despite the uncertainties in the world, Essex merchants overcame the days' obstacles and moved forward with construction.

It's the story of all development. There are always hurdles to jump and mountains to move, but people who see the potential of a project often find ways to overcome difficulties and make things happen.

Residential development currently underway in Essex is testament to the patience and fortitude of local developers. Many of them have spent years and years waiting for things like sewage allotment increases and zoning approvals to be put in place. Finally the work proceeds.

Economic development is another story. In Essex, it is altogether unclear who is responsible for economic development. Is it the town, the BIA, the merchants or some combination of the three? While some factions are quick to point fingers, they fail to realize that everyone – even local consumers – share the responsibility for ensuring that our local economy continues to thrive.

If you have some spare time this summer, take a drive down the 401 to St. Jacobs. This small community just outside Kitchener-Waterloo is the envy of many small Ontario towns and it's not hard to see why. With a population of about 1,400, St. Jacobs has managed to turn its downtown into a tourist destination. The town silos have been re-purposed into gift shops, barns and old homes now contain crafters and artisans, and an old caboose has been turned into an ice cream parlour. It doesn't hurt that St. Jacobs is set in Old Order Mennonite country, but it does make you wonder why larger communities like our own haven't discovered St. Jacobs' secret to success.

Could it be that the townspeople saw the unlimited potential that lay all about and decided to seize the opportunity to make things happen?

Just off the coast of Lebanon

NO TIM HORTONS?

WHAT KIND OF CANADIAN RESCUE IS THIS?!



free press

editorial

laurie brett

The Shea Hillenbrand soap opera finally played out last week when the Toronto Blue Jays traded the unhappy slugger to the San Francisco Giants.

The saga likely went something like this.

Used principally as the designated hitter this season, Hillenbrand was furious at Jays manager John Gibbons over what he felt was a lack of playing time. He wrote on the clubhouse blackboard, "This is a sinking ship, play for yourselves."

Catcher Gregg Zaun had apparently worked with Hillenbrand to improve his juvenile attitude. "Put your feelings aside and embrace this situation, and understand we need you out on the field."

Zaun went on: "You can't make 25 guys happy. But our job as players is to put on a smile, work our tails off, and do whatever we can to help the team win." He knows whereof he speaks, as Zaun has had his playing time

reduced this year when the Jays acquired Bengie Molina.

Clearly, Shea Hillenbrand put himself ahead of the ball club. Therein lies the lesson for all of us. No matter what organization you belong to, whether it be your



BILL GAY
OPINION

work, a service club or church board, municipal council, a fraternal organization or whatever, only with team play will you make your endeavours truly successful. That's what the coaches of minor baseball and minor hockey teams teach our kids. And it applies even more to adults.

Team play is a veteran like Gregg Zaun trying to set an

example for younger players.

Team play is the Essex Horticultural Society working countless hours to make our town beautiful.

Team play is our Mayor, dressed as the Easter Bunny for many years, bringing smiles to the faces of both young and old.

Team play is the work of Greg Yantzi, Barry Mannell and group that saved Harrow High School from an unreasoning bureaucracy.

The illustrious group of Essex Citizens of the Year is a large gathering of team players. Each winner of this award represents many more who have also contributed greatly to the community.

Team play is working with dedication and a common focus.

Goodbye and good luck to our boy Shea. Last time I looked his former team was in a hot race for the Eastern Division title and had taken three of four games from the mighty New York Yankees this past weekend.

Share your OPINIONS

LETTERS POLICY – The Essex Free Press welcomes letters to the editor that are of interest to our community. Letters should be typed or neatly written and present the issues as clearly as possible in 300 words or less. All letters must contain the name, address, and daytime phone number of the writer. Anonymous letters will not be published. We reserve the right to edit for length, clarity or reject letters over matters of libel, legality, taste or style.

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