

Question of the Week

Do you have an opinion on any of the questions listed below? If so, we want to hear from you.

A letter to the editor is not necessary. Simply **CALL DAN** at **519-776-4268, ext. 13** to leave your response. You must provide your name and phone number.

You can also drop us an email at **essexfreepress@on.aibn.com** or **FAX** us at **519-776-4014**.

Please be brief – 25 to 40 words. Deadline for responses: Monday at 9 a.m.

Question 1: What features would you like to see included in the new arena design?

Question 2: What are some of the pressing issues facing local municipalities in the upcoming election?

Question 3: A decline in Bingo revenues has been reported by local non-profit organizations. What can be done to replace Bingo revenues?

The answers received will be edited for length, clarity, libel, taste or style and will appear in this column over the next few weeks.

Be heard on issues that affect you!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re: Businesses benefit from tax changes

In the August 30th article about how our Ward 1 businesses will benefit from tax changes, it says that Essex Town Council reduced the levy for Iler Lodge and our industrial business owners. The amount for the nursing home went from \$13,000 down to \$8,000 a year. Well, excuse me, the larger Harwood complex in the other ward gets a membership to the Chamber of Commerce at a yearly rate of \$125 per year (nothing for the BIA). Then Atlas Tube also is allowed to pay \$125 per year (also no BIA).

So you ask, why did I run for council in Ward 1? Well this is one of my issues. No past Ward 1 council member would try and change this. They just backed this \$80,000 a year budget. The only ward that's assessed this inflated tax is Ward 1.

The way I'd try and get changed if I get in council, is I'd ask the non-Ward 1 council members to regulate the BIA tax to the same amount as they take from their merchants, industrial park, which is -\$75 a year for any

business with less than 10 employees and \$125 for 10 and more. Or if they believe the way the BIA operates (filling empty stores) and gets its money is so honest and fair, then take the same percentage from their ward's nursing home and industrial and commercial businesses. After all, they preach amalgamation is equal and supposed to be one, big family. Well the kids in Ward 1 have empty pockets and are tired of them being picked.

Bill Arps
Essex

The cost of public knowledge

What do your elected officials and department heads spend on public credit cards? In the Town of Essex, for \$749.95 paid up front, your tax paid administration will let you know.

For this money, an accounting clerk plus the town treasurer will photocopy a total of 124 statements. This information should be at their fingertips if filed properly. An organized accounting system in my opinion would only have to utilize the talents of a file clerk to perform this request.

I also question 15 hours dedicated to copying this

information. It appears the hourly amount charged by these public employees is extremely excessive. It appears keeping the cost high enough will deter people from asking. I presume for these 15 hours our municipality will not be paying their wages because we will be paying the complete cost of these hours. That will be a savings for the taxpayers.

Well, on August 28, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. we threw down our \$749.95. The cost of public knowledge.

Betty Balvert
John Balvert
Harrow

Lakeshore election

Earlier in the year, I identified my disgust at the takeover that has occurred at Lakeshore town hall since the new CAO came onboard and the fact that the current Council appears to be turning a blind-eye and not doing the job they were elected to do. Since that time, there has been significant negative press identifying, amongst other matters, the lack of policies (although mandated by the province), withholding of public information from ratepayers, and questionable credit card activity.

Given that this is an elec-

tion year, I hope the constituents have been paying close attention and that they will carefully consider the candidates and make an informed choice.

Lakeshore has several career politicians whose inefficiencies, parochial way of thinking, lack of vision, and dead-wood contributions have become apparent. I await in hopeful anticipation of their retirement announcements.

R.T. Moore
Lakeshore

Re: Whelan's commentary

I was quite disgusted to read Susan Whelan's recent criticism of the current government as pertaining to the farming situation (Essex Free Press, Aug. 30, 2006). Talk about the pot calling the kettle black! Indeed, Ms. Whelan had a significant number of years within which to rescue the farming community from its current state. The fact of the matter is she failed to perform and was removed from office. The electorate has had more than enough of her campaign rhetoric. It's time for Ms. Whelan to give it a rest and move on.

Joe Friedman
Essex



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