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## Town to respond to accusations of irresponsible spending

BY SARAH FISHER

Town administrators plan to respond to claims of irresponsible spending and bookkeeping made at the Sept. 18 council meeting.

John Balvert, a Harrow resident, gave the town a D- in fiscal responsibility during a presentation before council. He questioned why employees were allowed to use town credit cards instead of using purchase orders and pointed to receipts listing business lunches as an example of wasteful spending.

Balvert and his wife Betty did not stay at the meeting to hear a response from council. Essex Chief Administrative Officer Wayne Miller said a report would be drafted in response to Balvert's claims and published for councillors and the public at the Oct. 2 council meeting.

"There were mistruths and council probably knows the answers, but we are doing a report in response," Miller said Sept. 21. "He implied we don't use purchase orders. We do. Purchase orders are required for anything over \$1,000, but to use a purchase order every time you buy gas or office supplies, you'd be buried with purchase orders."

Miller said 17 town

employees currently use credit cards. All department managers, three operating managers, including the superintendent of public works and the municipality's program manager, as well as Business Improvement Area Manager Marlene Markham, have a credit card. Included among the 17 employees are Miller and Mayor Ron McDermott.

Balvert does not plan to attend the Oct. 2 council meeting. He said he was not obligated to stay and hear council's response Sept. 18. The two previous presenters to council did not stay, he said.

Balvert is also offended that councillors suggested his statements were politically motivated. He is not the campaign manager for Larry Snively, a mayoral candidate from Harrow, Balvert said.

"I went before council as a taxpayer," he said. "I didn't go there as a politician and I didn't go there with a political motive. I went because I was upset about how this council and administration have handled finances during the last three years. I am being accused of being politically motivated and I call that an outrage."

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Free Press / Kyle Walker

**BACK TO SCHOOL** - Brett Meloche, centre, walks back into Essex District High School after returning from a two-day retreat at the Pearce-Williams Centre in St. Thomas Sept. 21. Grade 9 students participated in team building and leadership activities while on the field trip. They played capture the flag, put puzzles together and ran through a low-ropes course. The objective was for the students to interact with each other and get to know their new teachers, said principal Terry Lyons.

## Last minute nomination papers still coming in

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

With two days to go until the deadline, several candidates have submitted nomination papers for the Nov. 13 municipal election and joined the race this past week.

In Essex, Jamie Shepley, owner of Impressive Flooring and a 20-year-veteran in the business, submitted nomination papers Sept. 18 for councillor in Ward 2.

Shepley grew up in Essex, and is also a wrestling coach with the Wolfpack Junior Club. He said he is interested in creating more residential areas and jobs in Essex.

Shepley will be running against Randy McCloskey, a supply-based technician in the quality systems

department at Windsor's Ford Motor Company. Councillor Richard Meloche is also in the running.

Shepley's brother Robbie has also joined the race, and filed his nomination papers Sept. 18 for Ward 1. He is running against incumbent Morley Bowman, Bill Arps, John Garinger and Nick Spidalieri.

Councillor Randy Voakes said he's planning to file this week. Two councillors will be elected in the ward.

Deputy Mayor Percy Dufour had also not filed nomination papers as of Sept. 25.

In Ward 3, Julie Battagin filed nomination papers Sept. 18 and joined Paul Innes, former mayor and municipal representative in Colchester South, and Daniel Inverarity, a realtor with Deerbrook Realty Inc.

Peter Timmins is the only candidate to file nomination papers for Ward 4.

So far, the mayor's office will belong to either Larry Snively or incumbent Ron McDermott.

In Lakeshore, Deputy Mayor Tom Bain will have to compete against David Tremblay and newcomer Nick Panasiuk for mayor. Panasiuk is the owner of Hideaway Golf Club. He cites the alleviation of traffic on County Road 22 and fiscal responsibility as his priorities if elected.

Bob Sylvester has filed for deputy mayor. There are no other candidates for that position on council.

In Ward 6, Christopher Carpenter has joined Paddy Byrne and incumbent Vic Vogler in the running for councillor.

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