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## Facing the facts

**O**n the national stage, Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay is taking heat for allegedly implying that his former girlfriend, Liberal MP Belinda Stronach, is a dog. The official record, an audiotape of last Thursday's Question Period in the House of Commons, has provided only partial proof of what transpired, leaving eye witness accounts as the only confirmation. MacKay denies making any demeaning comments.

It's unfortunate that the official record failed to capture the facts. A cloud of uncertainty now hovers over the issue and a hard rain of accusations and innuendo can be expected in the coming days.

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## editorial

*laurie brett*

Closer to home, voters in Essex are fortunate

to have a much more reliable official record. And, as rumours and misinformation continue to make their way around the municipality, many voters are making the effort to inform themselves about the facts.

Here are some of the facts:

The 2004-2006 council was led by Mayor Ron McDermott. The 2001-2003 council was led by his political opponent, Larry Snively. Each council had different challenges and different opportunities.

During the 2004-2006 term of council, property taxes increased by an average of eight percent over three years. The average tax increase during the previous term of council was 20 percent. Post-amalgamation, the 2001-2003 council was still working towards bringing taxes in all four wards in line with each other.

During the 2004-2006 term of council, the town's long-term debt paid by taxes was reduced by \$2 million and no new long-term debt financed by general taxation was incurred. The outstanding debt paid by taxes has been reduced to \$3 million by this council, compared to the previous council's legacy of a \$5 million debt.

Stagnant land development due to limited sewage capacity was a major concern for the 2001-2003 council. In order to move forward with development, that council made the decision to approve the Harrow lagoon project and the Essex sewage treatment plant. Most of the \$19.2 million owing for sanitary sewers and water projects is a direct result of that decision. This debt is paid down through user fees and development charges, not through general property taxes.

Government investment in municipal infrastructure has been good to Essex. During the 2004-2006 term of council, COMRIF funding and federal gas tax payments have permitted over \$5 million in capital road projects to be completed. Another \$4.5 million of roadwork is expected to be completed in the 2007-2010 term. Without that funding, the previous term of council was able to complete only \$2.3 million in roadwork.

It is good news that the Essex and Harrow Kinsmen will hold an all-candidates meeting on Nov. 2 in McGregor. It's time to stop denying the facts and get on with the business of determining who will best represent the municipality and all of its interests for the next four years.

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**Why not !? The Arctic is melting, and the Liberals blabbed on about it and did nothing for the last four years. Now the Conservatives are gonna "consult" and do nothing about it for FORTY years !**

**T**he Detroit Tigers in the World Series! Imagine, just a few short years after being almost the worst team ever in major league baseball!

Many of us have great memories of the World Championship teams of 1968 and 1984. One man ties both years together.

Who can forget Gates Brown, no. 26? What a devil he was with the bat in the '68 season! Brown was a pinch hitter like no other at a time when he was overshadowed by other Detroit greats like Willie Horton, Bill Freehan and Denny McLain.

Opposing managers would keep tiring southpaws in the game, knowing that if they sent a righty in, Tigers' skipper Mayo Smith would counter off the bench with the left-handed bat of Gates Brown. I saw him once win a doubleheader against the Red Sox with last-bat pinch hits at Tiger Stadium. Remember the voice of Tigers broadcasters Ernie Harwell or Paul Carey announcing "Gates Brown is at the bat rack"?

Born in Crestline, Ohio, Gates Brown broke in with Detroit in 1963 and never played for any other team. Tigers General Manager



## opinion

*bill gay*

Jim Campbell looked into a young man's potential and overlooked his less than perfect background.

"I took (in high school) a little English, some science, a few hubcaps and some wheel covers," Gates said.

But Gates went on not only to a distinguished 13-year stint with the Detroiters, but to devote many hours and days with young people who also had a rocky start in life. He finished his career in 1975,

appearing in over a thousand big league games.

An outfielder, he prolonged his career when the designated hitter rule was proclaimed in the early 70s. He played an integral role in the 1984 championship as the Tigers' hitting coach.

My old friend George Hope covered the team for Rogers radio that year and said that when Gates Brown talked hitting everyone paid attention. Retired now and living in Detroit, Gates is an indelible Tiger memory. I can still see him coming out of the Tigers' dugout kind of dragging that big bat of his, making his way to home plate. Often, as soon as he was officially announced into the game, the opposing manager would be on the field in a hurry to bring in a left-handed reliever. Problem was, the "Gater" hit them pretty well too.

Too bad they wouldn't put big screens into Tiger Stadium for all the Series games so more could take advantage of the thrills and excitement that only comes with World Series baseball. Go get 'em Tigers!



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