

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## McDermott's leadership needed

We wanted to address the issues that are firing the political struggle occurring in our communities of Harrow, Colchester Village, Colchester South and North, Essex and even McGregor – issues that threaten to split our towns.

We looked at the concerns about road surfacing first and heard that campaign promises are being made - " your road will be done next year! " Why? At no increased taxpayer cost, the present council has already secured the necessary government financing to do all surfacing projects in a planned program. This "promise" has been fulfilled by council's hard work and co-operative effort during the last three years. Many roads have been done with the rest soon to follow.

Then we looked at the contentious sewage plant issue, and the false notions that property taxes pay for these plants. On the contrary, Wards 2 and 3 have zero monetary responsibility. Wards 1 and 4 also pay nothing on their property taxes; these two wards pay water and sewer bills, like every municipality in Ontario. The remainder of the user debt comes from developer costs, grants etc. These plants are critical to the growth of our communities.

And an arena is only in the discussion stage at this time!

However, these flash-points are not the real issues. The real issue is that we have been given a large community that nobody wanted. So instead of trying to morph ourselves into an entity that has no heritage, no history, no family ties, and no communal memories, why can't we maintain the heartfelt identities that come from our roots? Why can't we work together as one body, with all members having equal roles that support a larger community's life? The answer is the individual choice to do so, and....leadership.

Our present council acknowledges the strength of the individual towns, villages and concessions, depends on their diversity and input and makes decisions to support all parts of this larger community.

Politicians can promise anything. Leaders have a higher vision and act for the common good. Mr.

McDermott, with the best interest of all at heart, has worked tirelessly to fulfill his vision of creating " the best community in south-western Ontario." Call it by any name you want, but it is leadership that takes us there.

*Don and Louise Masse  
Colchester North  
Kathy Langlois, Harrow*

## School board trustees excluded from debates

I applaud the Windsor chapter of the Ontario Federation of Home & School Associations for hosting a recent all-candidates meeting for prospective public school board trustees in Wards 1 through 5 in Windsor. As the largest public sector employer in the county of Essex, the Greater Essex County District School Board governs a budget of over \$280 million, so it's important that residents have a forum to listen to what's being planned with their tax dollars.

It's a shame that Kingsville and Essex residents won't hear from candidates. Trustee candidates were told "there wasn't enough time to include them" by organizers in Kingsville at the all-candidates meeting held Oct 12. A service organization in the town of Essex has chosen to hold a quickly scheduled "all but trustee candidates" forum Nov. 2 in McGregor, past the date when most Kingsville ballots will have been completed and mailed back.

What this does is allow candidates to offer into media, particularly print, a platform to state anything, however misguided or incorrect, without a guaranteed or timely chance for rebuttal or clarification. Most of us know that due diligence requires thoughtful research and analysis before entering into informed discussion and certainly before making decisions that affect the public purse.

It's therefore disappointing to read a statement from my opponent that demonstrates a real lack of understanding. He, quite frankly, hasn't done his homework, and has jumped to unfounded conclusions without checking the facts.

Contrary to what he is stating, there has not been a decision to reduce public board meetings. In fact, by changing to an earlier start

time and grouping standing committee meetings together, more of the public, and certainly more of the students and families we serve, will be able to attend and participate in them. We actually have added an additional meeting in January and will be more accessible, not less.

It is also alarming to read that he is against the board having discussions on secondary school reform. We must enter into discussion and debate about all issues affecting the education of our students, even if it's to conclude that the status quo is the correct path. Examination of these matters ensures that we're offering the best programs, the best educators, the best use of resources and deliver the best outcomes.

Additionally, under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, as amended, my opponent may want to rethink his ability to "vote on all matters before the board". The fact that his daughter is an elected trustee on the W-E Catholic District School Board and her husband a teacher with that board, may offer a perception of conflict regarding decisions to dispose of or acquire property from that board, as we are required to do under present law, or with many of the shared contracts and joint projects we deliver.

Finally, while he may not want to take on the issue of the restrictive timetable at KDHS before 2009, I have made it publicly known that I intend to bring a motion forward to ensure the policy to change a school's semester choices be revised as soon as our bylaws permit.

The folks of Kingsville-Essex who support public education with their hard earned dollars deserve a trustee who is well informed and checks the facts.

*Julia Burgess  
Public School Trustee  
Kingsville-Essex*

## Lakeshore incumbent clarifies burning by-law

It troubles me when mudslinging occurs at municipal election time which is most times either innuendo, half-truths, or mistruths. Most importantly is the unfairness to the innocent candidate. In all past elections, my opponents have acted professionally and respectfully and campaigned on their own merits which is the

way it should be.

My opponent, Lakeshore Ward 5 councillor Vicki Beaulieu, has found it necessary to make contentions as to some decisions I have made on Council, however the issues have been presented in such a way that they are vague and convoluted. Rather than bore you here with the details, if any residents have concerns, they should please call me for proper clarification.

There is one allegation, however, that requires public clarification. Lakeshore Fire Department has been attempting to get an open air burning by-law adopted for some time. I have been consistently opposed. The by-law would have residents, including farmers, obtain a permit prior to starting any fire, even a backyard bonfire. Ms. Beaulieu voted in favor of the permit process. Only those individuals and especially farmers who live and breathe our rural way of life would realize the absurdity of that suggestion.

During my 12 years on Council, I have always attempted to bring common sense to the table. At the federal and provincial levels, our rights are constantly being taken away and we are being regulated every which way we turn. As long as I sit at the council table at the municipal level, I will continue to fight against this unnecessary over-regulation.

In recognition of my opponent, Ms. Beaulieu is certainly more well versed than I in matters of heritage, culture, and tourism which is more suited to her residence area of Belle River. I sincerely wish she would equally recognize my everyday working knowledge, residency and experience in the rural community.

*Dan Diemer  
Lakeshore Ward 5*

## Lakeshore council needs integrity

I am not running for council. I have, however, attended many council meetings, some that were worthy of a great deal of attention by concerned Lakeshore residents and media alike. As a ratepayer, I want to know that decisions made by council will benefit me and my community.

Recent flyers for the upcoming municipal election in Lakeshore are filled

# Question of the Week

*What do you think could be done to attract businesses to locate in downtown Essex?*

I would suggest that the Town of Essex, as much as possible, make it easier and more affordable for new homes to be built in the area. An increase in population will result in an increase in demand for local businesses. As a new home owner in Essex I can attest that it took some time for the town to open up any new areas for new home development. It then took some time to be granted a building permit. I would have had no such problems building in neighbouring municipalities. I checked. – *R. Marentette, Essex*

With three stoplights on the Essex town lines of #3 and with the amount of traffic, there needs to be advanced left signals for people wanting to go into Essex, especially for the people going west coming from Windsor. It would help businesses that are trying to survive. Waiting at the lights on busy days, trying to turn with the traffic volume deters people from entering the town. With the fast pace of life, no one can spare the extra time. Inconvenience is destroying a lot of shopping opportunities for the town! – *Randy Wuerch, Cottam*

I have an idea that just might improve Essex civic pride. For the sake of a title, let's call it the "Civic Pride Citizen of the Month". It could come under the auspices of the Essex BIA, an organization that promulgates Essex as the "county shopping centre". Unfortunately, you can spend hard-earned dollars on promotions that say wonderful things but if your town is dirty and unattractive, you can "say it, but nobody will come". Here is how it might work: Residents would be encouraged to pick up and deposit litter, but this daily initiative would have a twist. Once a month, one or more residents would receive a BIA \$50 or some other financial reward. It does not have to be just BIA cash; some months, the award could be sponsored by a local business. The Civic Pride Citizen would receive adulation in local newspapers, along with the business sponsor. Choosing the lucky Civic Pride Citizen would be done once a month, on a random basis, by the BIA, thereby ensuring residents continue to pitch in every day in anticipation of being picked as the Civic Pride Citizen of the Month. The reward presentation would proceed with Essex Free Press coverage! Just an idea. I leave it with the community. – *Robin Blencoe, Essex*

## Next week's question:

In your opinion, what makes Essex a great place to live?

CALL DAN at 519-776-4268 to leave your response. You must provide your name and phone number. You can also drop us an email at [essexfreepress@on.aibn.com](mailto: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.

with claims by certain candidates, regarding our water, our roads (in particular County Road 22) and working with the community. Ask yourself, how did we get into this mess? You may have guessed it. Those who are claiming to fix it are those who allowed it to happen.

When the community of Woodslee was being forced to accept an unwanted subdivision, without proper infrastructure, there were those who understood the long-term implications. Dan Diemer was one of them. David Tremblay, Len Janisse and Vic Vogler also chose the higher ground. Because of the all too familiar 5-4 vote (which did not reflect the issue but rather the long-standing division on council), North Woodslee is faced with a lower standard sewage treatment plant reminiscent of South Woodslee,

with a very high price tag.

What has the claim of valued "experience" given us so far?

Experience only matters if it's working for you. Integrity is far more important. Then you know you can count on the person to do political battle on your behalf. Melinda Strba is one such person. She has been involved in her community and has done more than her part as a committed citizen. She is now running for Deputy Mayor because she understands municipal issues and has the ability to serve Lakeshore.

I am fortunate to have experienced enough of the past to know what I don't want in the future. I hope my involvement can assist others in this difficult decision.

*Denise Poisson  
Woodslee*