

The Essex Free Press is an independent weekly newspaper, locally owned and operated by The Essex Free Press Limited

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16 Centre Street, Essex, ON N8M 1N9
Tel.: (519) 776-4268 Fax: (519) 776-4014
Email: essexfreepress@on.aibn.com
Website: http://essexfreepress.reinvented.net
Publisher: Laurie A. Brett



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A little recognition

During the election, we were constantly reminded that there are many people in our community who contribute above and beyond the call of duty. A politician's list of accomplishments is almost always lengthy and generally serves as proof of a person's commitment to their community.

free press

editorial

laurie brett

Young people, on the other hand, can't usually compile long lists of achievements. That doesn't mean, however, that their contributions aren't worthy of

recognition.

Take Natalie Kehl of Harrow, for example. In March 2006, 18-year-old Kehl was recognized as an Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year for developing and distributing sun safety kits to 117 schools. Kehl was selected as one of 12 recipients out of a pool of 130 nominees in the Ontario Community Newspaper Association's annual awards program.

Over the last few weeks, the Free Press has published an advertisement asking for nominations for the 2006 Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year Awards. As your local community newspaper, we are proud to participate in the program, which has been recognizing Ontario's youth since 1981 and allow us to honour the outstanding contributions and achievements of young people in our community.

Please help us by nominating a young person, aged 6-17, who is involved in community service; has performed acts of heroism; is contributing to the community while living with limitations; or is a good kid who shows a commitment to make life better for others, possibly doing things not expected of someone their age.

Coordinated by the Ontario Community Newspapers Association and supported financially by Tembec Inc. and TD Canada Trust, this program will recognize all young people nominated. Each nominee receives a certificate of recognition from their community newspaper. Up to 12 of the nominees and one group are then chosen as the final recipients. The finalists will be recognized during a special ceremony held in March 2007.

Nominations will be accepted until November 30. Forms and further information about the Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year program can be obtained from the Essex Free Press, online at www.ocna.org, or by calling OCNA at 905-639-8720 ext. 235.

Consider nominating a young person today; they deserve to get a little recognition from our community. It's up to us.

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We are taught from youth the importance of voting and that every vote counts. But I'm sure everyone has thought that "How can my vote count effectively among thousands cast?"

The recent municipal election was proof that it does. Two-term councillor Rick Cowan lost his seat on Leamington council by three votes. A recount is imminent. Cowan, son of long-time Mersea councillor Blake Cowan, first decided against a recount, but now asks for one. You can hardly blame him.

Many factors will play over the next few years on a host of issues. How will the presence of the new privately owned Ice Track development on Manning Road, just 10 minutes away, affect plans for new ice surfaces and facilities in Essex? Will Kingsville embark on a new pool project, or perhaps opt to use existing pools at the Essex Aquatics Centre and the Leamington Kinsmen complex? Will pressure on municipal budgets get politicians talking about

countywide policing again? Election day was unkind to many women seeking office. Katherine Gunning was re-elected deputy



opinion

bill gay

mayor and Tamara Stomp councillor in Kingsville, and newcomer Hilda MacDonald won a seat on Leamington council. But there were more women defeated, including two high-profile incumbents in Lakeshore, Karen Fallon and Victoria Beaulieu. Gail Stiffler, who once challenged Peter Timmins in a Harrow mayoralty race, just missed a seat on Kingsville council three years ago and failed again Nov. 13. Essex had no such situation due to

the absence of any women candidates on the ballot to begin with.

Credit should go to all candidates who allowed their names to stand. It gets cold out there going door to door. At the end of the campaign, the closer to election day, the more you feel you have a great chance to win. Everyone is so encouraging. Then comes reality.

To those who ran and lost, especially for the first time, don't give up. There will be another day. Successful candidates have made a commitment to serve their respective municipalities for the next four years. Only a few years ago municipal council terms were two years!

But the biggest story of the Ontario municipal election is the remarkable showing of 85-year-old Hazel McCallion, who was re-elected mayor of Mississauga for her eleventh term. Mayor McCallion won 91.5 per cent of the vote. Dubbed by the press as Hurricane Hazel, the mayor has an ambitious program for her new council to tackle.

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