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Restoring faith

If you were stuck on this side of the Canada-U.S. border this past weekend, you might have been a bit envious of our American neighbours and their penchant for Thanksgiving Day celebrations and the start of the holiday shopping season. Canada doesn't have a specific defining moment for the start of the holiday frenzy. We do, however, have the annual Goodfellows campaign and, for many local motorists, the start of the Canadian holiday season doesn't begin until the Goodfellows take to the road.

free press

editorial

laurie brett

Organizers of the second annual Essex-Harrow Goodfellows newspaper campaign set their sights high this year after the overwhelming response to last year's inaugural event. Who would

believe that the communities of Essex, Harrow, McGregor and this year's newest addition, Oldcastle, would dig so deep into their pockets as to raise over \$40,000 during the two-day campaign?

Firefighters from Essex and the Sandwich South station who took time out of their busy lives to hawk newspapers at key locations in and around Essex are to be commended for an excellent job. Even after many long hours of carefully walking the centre line of area roads, these guys were still excited about what they were doing and amazed at what they had accomplished.

Likewise, Woodslee Credit Union deserves credit for assisting the Goodfellows with the publication of this year's *Goodfellows Edition*. They may be in the business of money, but Woodslee Credit Union makes an invaluable contribution to our community by continuing to support projects like the Goodfellows campaign.

A final tally in excess of \$40,000 would not be possible without the people who stopped to offer a donation. Many people stopped two or three or four times – some with twenty and fifty dollar bills! Everyone who contributed should be commended for recognizing the importance of supporting the Goodfellows who, in turn, support our local food banks. Families in need will certainly be thankful this Christmas when the money raised locally is handed back locally in the form of food baskets.

The Goodfellow Code

*Goodfellows follow a simple code,
It's helping the chap who's bearing a load.
It's bringing a smile to a youngster's face,
Restoring his trust in the human race.
It's sharing the warmth of year-end joys,
With thousands of worthy girls and boys.
It's helping the young and old to know,
That someone cares when ill winds blow.
It's smoothing the way when the road is rough,
It's lending a hand when the going's tough.*

*It's understanding a neighbour's plight,
It's caring enough to do what's right.
It's living against the ancient law,
When the Good Samaritan came and saw,
And did not pass on the other side,
But offered his hand, a friend to guide.
This, in The Goodfellow Code, is writ:
The best of life and worth of it
Is not, how much can I get for me,
But what have I done to be neighbourly?*

– Angus Munro
December 1959



The election is over and the inaugural meeting of the new council is just days away. Mayor Ron McDermott was returned handily, despite the fact that his challenger, former Mayor Larry Snively, did carry the vote in the Harrow and Colchester South area. How will McDermott respond to the challenges of a second term, this one for four years?

If Ron McDermott has a fault, it is that he believes that people tell the truth. Unfortunately, in the sometimes-murky world of municipal politics, this is frequently not the case. Since McDermott deals honestly and openly with others, it is ingrained in his personality that he expects others will do the same. Look for him to be less tolerant of fringe opinion than last term. He has learned a lot in three years. Remember, his first term as mayor was also his first term on Essex Council.

Percy Dufour and Bill Caixeiro are no longer on



opinion

bill gay

council. They are replaced by veteran politicians Ron Rogers and Paul Innes. Innes' keen intellect and strong personality made an impact on the previous councils he sat on, so this time around should be no different. Essex has had little input on border crossing issues, despite the obvious effects on the municipality's economy. Paul Innes knows the border file well and may be able to change that situation.

Dependable committee work is key to the overall effectiveness of a councillor. The headlines from Monday night meetings are filled with political

posturing and bravado. But what happens at the committee level – and each councillor is expected to carry a heavy load of committee assignments – is often more important. Councillor Morley Bowman has put in more effective committee work than any councillor on any council I have ever observed. If Essex chose its deputy mayor by ballot, instead of by a few councillors, Bowman would be the overwhelming favourite, much like Rob Schmidt in Leamington. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Essex.

Make no mistake, the upcoming year is a big one for Essex. The decision on arena replacement/renovation alone will affect ratepayers for years to come. Urban and rural, north and south, must come together with one common purpose – the benefit of all our citizens – or Essex will be consigned for years to the school of internal bickering. Can council rise above this? I believe the talent is there to make it happen.

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