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Wednesday, December 27, 2006



**TOYS GALORE** – Police officers and firefighters joined forces this year for the fourth annual Santa's Cause for Kids Campaign. It was the first year for the Essex Police Service who joined firefighters in collecting toys for local children in need. The toys were donated to the Salvation Army and St. Vincent de Paul Society for distribution. Pictured from left: Essex Police Chief Greg Pigeon, Constable Jim Chauvin and Constable Joe Meloche, display the toys collected, alongside representatives of Essex Fire and Rescue Services – Sparky (Mark Sweeney), Chris Meloche, Chief Ed Pillon, Ted Kuzniar, Walter Howson, Mike Bosse and Mark Bosse.

## Name change issue resurfaces

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Ward 1 Councillor Randy Voakes asked Essex Town Council Dec. 18 to consider what he called "a stepping stone to the healing process" of the municipality's north-south rivalry – changing the name of the town.

Voakes pointed to November's municipal election results as evidence of the rift, noting that in Ward 1, Essex Mayor Ron McDermott received about 2,000 more votes than challenger Larry Snively. Likewise in Ward 4, Snively beat McDermott by nearly 1,000 votes.

"People voted Harrow versus Essex," Voakes said. "The election proved there is separation within this municipality."

Voakes called the situation "divisional, unproductive and costly," adding that residents in the south end of the municipality feel they are losing their heritage with the Town of Essex name.

"If I came back to my municipality and it said Town of Harrow, I would be disgruntled about how I lost some of my culture and heritage," Voakes said.

Voakes said he visited local wineries and restaurants and spoke with people on the street about what they thought of adopting a neutral name.

Residents in both Essex and Harrow embraced the idea, Voakes said, adding that some thought it should've been done in 1999 when the area was amalgamated.

In a vote held in 1998 on the name of the amalgamated municipality, 2,925 voters selected Essex, with Colchester placing second with 2,344 votes. The names that appeared on the ballot were selected from those submitted by members of the public and also included South Shore, Harrow and New Canaan.

The three councillors representing the south end of the municipality – Paul Innes, Ron Rogers and Peter Timmins – all supported Voakes's recommendation.

Rogers told council it's important to recognize and embrace the municipality's smaller areas, "because they've been there so long."

"The corporate name binds us and brings us together but maybe we should look at a name change," he said.

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## Municipalities revamp emergency medical services

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Six of Essex County's seven municipalities answered a disgruntled Puce resident's request to revamp emergency medical services with a promise to dispatch fire departments as first-responders in life-threatening situations.

Jason Charlton approached county council last month seeking an explanation and confession

of error from Lakeshore's emergency services in the wake of his father's death in July.

Charlton's 62-year-old father died from cardiac arrest after waiting 12 minutes for an ambulance.

Council responded to Charlton's request by agreeing to collect a report from the administrations and fire services of local municipalities.

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## Union Water looks at major issues for '07

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

**KINGSVILLE** – The Union Water Supply System Joint Board of Management outlined its major issues for the new year during a meeting Dec. 20.

After Leamington Deputy Mayor Rob Schmidt was elected as the new chair of the board and Kingsville Deputy Mayor Katherine Gunning was named vice chair, system manager John Kehoe laid out a series of upcoming plans for the group.

Kehoe explained that determining a common

assets policy was at the top of the list, which would distinguish what both the board and each municipality is responsible for.

Resolving the issue has been an ongoing task for the board and Kehoe said he anticipates it will need more time to work out an arrangement.

In July, budget approval for a \$960,000 watermain on Peterson Side Road in Kingsville was delayed because the board couldn't decide whether or not the project fit into the common assets policy.

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