

April (cont'd)

Parents from Sun Parlor Junior School and Maplewood Public School gathered to discuss why the funding plans for a new, merged school had not yet been announced. In June, Essex MPP Bruce Crozier and Education Minister Sandra Pupatello announced that the funding formula had been finalized and that the project could proceed. Parents, students and staff were given a sneak peak into design plans for the new school in November. The school is expected to be open for classes in September 2008.

The family council at Iler Lodge presented MPP Bruce Crozier with a petition asking for additional funding for nursing home staff. The signature campaign was in support of the Ontario Long-Term Care Association's request for \$306.6 million from the province to hire additional staff.

Essex Town Council voted to remove the holding designation on the Woodview development project. The decision allowed development to proceed on 47 single-unit dwellings and 26 townhouse-style units in a new subdivision located off Woodview Drive.

Four local residents were inducted into the Essex County Agricultural Hall of Fame. The Colchester South and Harrow Agricultural Society honoured Audrey Wood, Evelyn Couch Burns, Charles Donald McLean and Charles Clifford Morris.

The Lakeshore Black Heritage Committee was formed and charged with its first task – to conduct research about a cemetery on County Road 42 that is believed to be the resting place of former slaves. Volunteers cleared underbrush from the site later in the month and made a significant historical discovery – the headstones of Lewis Jackson and Mary Jackson, who were identified as slaves.

Volunteer service awards were presented to 237 area people by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, including Eileen Hodges from the Essex Division of the Girl Guides of Canada, and Judi Wijngaarden and Robert Boose from Scouts Canada in Essex.

A dispute between the Town of Essex and the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority over an agreement formalized in 1995 between the former Colchester North Township and the authority on tipping fees went to arbitration. Essex Chief Administration Officer Wayne Miller noticed a discrepancy in the amount paid to the town for landfill services in 2004. In June, the arbitration panel sided with the town and in July the authority voted to pay the town over \$570,000 plus interest from its reserve account.

Essex Town Council was urged at a public meeting not to ban the use of pesticides in the municipality. A by-law adopted in Windsor in April bans the use of pesticides, which some argue drift beyond the boundaries in which they are applied. In May, the town opted to educate its residents on the use of pesticides instead of banning their use.

Andy Fantuz, Chris Cowan and Andrew Brown, all former members of the Essex Ravens Varsity Football team, were key picks in the Canadian Football League draft. Fantuz and Cowan were selected by the Saskatchewan Roughriders, while Brown went to the Edmonton Eskimos.

May

Local genealogists urged people to "check the box" on their census returns to allow public access to census information in the future. An amendment to the Statistics Act allows census participants to decide whether their personal information can be released after 92 years have passed. Genealogists rely on census information to research family and local history. Census Day was May 16.

Essex town council voted to charge the Business Improvement Area an annual fee of \$6,000, plus \$5 per square foot for the office space occupied by the group at the town office. The fees will start as of January 2007.

Support for local festivals was recognized at the first annual Canada South Festival Network Awards dinner held in Essex. Twelve members representing six local festivals were recognized, including Joe Brown and Bill Gay of the Essex Fun Fest committee.

Essex Community Services announced a wine-tasting fundraiser at Colio Estate Winery to help raise awareness and financial support for the organization, which was suffering from a decline in funding from the United Way.

The Harrow Family Health Team received a financial boost when the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced \$300,000 in funding for a new health care centre.

Essex police began a lengthy investigation into the shooting death of 41-year-old Larry Strangway of Harrow. Strangway was found dead at his home by his common-law wife. At the end of the year, the investigation was still ongoing.

While restoring Grace Baptist Church on Talbot Street in Essex, Everet VanDoorn discovered a plaque dating the building back to 1875. Records show that the building was originally a Methodist church located on Medora Avenue. It was subsequently moved to its current location and bricked.

Residents were notified that 10-digit dialing would be required in the area served by the 519 area code after Oct. 14. Increased demand for telephone numbers has resulted in the need to create a new area code 226.

Essex Fire and Rescue Service Capt. Randy Kaufmann was among 36 firefighters acknowledged by the Ontario Fire Marshall's Office for 25 years of service.

The Cottam Rotary Club won the Richard Hedke Award for its community involvement. With only 11 members, the Cottam group beat out over 50 other Rotary clubs to win the district award.

The Rotary Centennial Mural at the corner of Talbot and Centre streets was officially unveiled. Completed by artist Brian Romagnoli the previous fall, the mural depicts Rotary's four avenues of service – international, community, club and vocational.

The fourth annual Purina Walk for Dog Guides raised \$1,200 in Essex. Sponsored by the Essex and District Lions Club, the dog guide program teaches specially bred dogs how to help disabled people in their everyday activities.

June

Local churches scrambled to figure out what new health unit regulations would mean for soup luncheons and pasta dinners. Event cancellations were announced when groups realized that stringent inspection rules could not be met. Criticism escalated when local health inspectors poured bleach onto egg salad sandwiches sold at Art in the Park after learning that the eggs had been cooked off-site. Ontario Health Minister George Smitherman acted quickly to introduce new regulations that would allow local festivals and community groups to serve food.

Union Water won a settlement against MFP Financial Services that would see the water system receive \$9.3 million plus fees.

Teams of volunteers rode a 30-foot-long bike around town to raise money for the Ontario Heart and Stroke Foundation. The Big Bike Ride for Heart and Stroke raised over \$8,000.

It was the 20th anniversary for the Special Olympics Torch Run. Law enforcement officers from across Essex County ran through seven municipalities to raise money for the Special Olympics. A total of \$3,700 was raised.

Over 2,000 area students participated in the Walk2Skate walk-a-thon in a show of support for the arena expansion project. The students managed to raise over \$8,500 for the project.

Increased participation at the Canadian Cancer Society's Relay for Life event at the Canadian Transportation Museum and Historic Village meant more money for the organization. Over \$82,000 was raised, an increase of almost \$8,000 over the previous year.

Past and present students from Puce Public School gathered to say farewell to the institution. In September, students enrolled in the school's French immersion program, along with 350 students from Belle River Public School, entered the halls of the Lakeshore Discovery School, a brand new state-of-the art elementary school.

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