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Down memory lane

In this week's "Community Profile" Joanne McMurren is aptly described as a tireless historical researcher. At the Essex Free Press, we know this to be true because no member of the public has poured through the pages of our archived newspapers with as much dedication to the task at hand than she has.

She seems to tackle each research project with as much enthusiasm as the one that came before it, despite the difficulties involved in handling increasingly brittle pages and unwieldy bound volumes of broadsheet issues.

editorial

laurie brett

free press
Much of her research has to be done using microfilmed versions of the newspaper available at the Essex Public Library.

Why does she bother? What could possibly motivate such dedication?

For Joanne, an avid family photographer, it's not only about making memories but also about preserving them. To this end, she has been involved in several heritage projects aimed at remembering small, rural schools, important people from our past, and local history.

The work of the Essex and Community Historical Research Society is aimed at supporting people like Joanne who have amassed large collections of important documents and photographs with nowhere to store or share them. Creating a central local repository for genealogical files, historical photographs and document collections is one of the primary goals of ECHRS.

Sadly, Essex County has no central archive. The preservation of history in the area has been left to individuals like Evelyn Couch-Burns who authored "The Three R's of Essex", or organizations like Heritage Essex, which has been instrumental in collecting photographs and personal accounts through audio recordings and videotapes. Making important research materials available to the public, however, has been a challenge.

ECHRS is hoping to change that. The group recognizes that the history of our area extends beyond the boundaries of what was once known as Essex Centre. It takes in communities like Woodslee, Maidstone and Cottam, and is enriched by the work of organizations such as the United Empire Loyalists Bicentennial Branch and Ken Turner's cemetery preservation group. Whether it's an organization or an individual that has important information to share, ECHRS wants to be a central heritage resource for the community.

ECHRS held its first public meeting last week and will continue to work towards opening a research centre dedicated to local history and genealogical research. To find out more about ECHRS and the progress it is making, contact president Linda Iler at 519-776-8209.



The battle of Good and Evil – it's gone on for as long as mankind has inhabited the earth. Few are in favour of Evil; many are in favour of Good. But the crux of the matter has always been, to whom do we assign responsibility for evil? Sometimes that task can be easy. For instance, we can blame the Nazis for the Holocaust, despite the fact anti-Semitism is alive and well today.

The idea that society is more enlightened, and that we are no longer in the Dark Ages, ended abruptly on 9/11. Visit your video store and rent the movie Flight 93. The heroism of ordinary people in stopping the hijackers from sending the United 737 airliner into the Capitol Building or the White House is unforgettable. Never before, due to cell phone technology, were people about to die given the opportunity to phone home to say good-bye to loved ones. The film's unfettered approach lets the courage

of the crew and passengers of United Flight 93, and their families, stand on its own. It's a clear telling of a horrific event that needs no embellishment.



opinion

bill gay

Now the age-old practice of assigning blame has appeared in our own backyard with the recent lecture by self-styled reformed terrorist Zachariah Anani at Campbell Baptist Church in Windsor. His warnings of the evils of Islam have stirred deeply held feelings. Last week's scheduled lecture was replaced with a sermon by Pastor Donald McKay, defending himself and his

church for giving a public forum to Anani in the first place. But as of this writing, the lectures are scheduled to go on.

Who was the responsible party for the deadly genocide in Rwanda? Could Western nations be partly to blame for their indifference?

Closer to home, who is responsible for child poverty in Canada? How about the blame for the way those in positions of great authority have repeatedly treated our aboriginal citizens?

Canadian lives are on the line in far away Afghanistan, the third-world country that spawned the Taliban terrorists. The pain we feel for our killed and maimed touches many communities. In this epic battle between Good and Evil, let us support those on the front lines overseas as well as those here at home who espouse the cause of freedom and equality for all.



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