

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

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## Finding the meaning

In an era of mass marketing, flyer inundation and advertiser-influenced journalism, it's not surprising that people are confused about what constitutes the news. Does an advertising flyer with one or two stories constitute a newspaper? Does a newsprint tabloid devoted to advertorial writing qualify as a newspaper? In the last few years, the lines of distinction have become blurred.

At the Essex Free Press we never stray far from our founding principle – that a “free press”, one that is not *free press*

### editorial

*laurie brett*

restricted or controlled by government censorship or advertising pressures, is vital to a democratic society. This principle is as important in a small

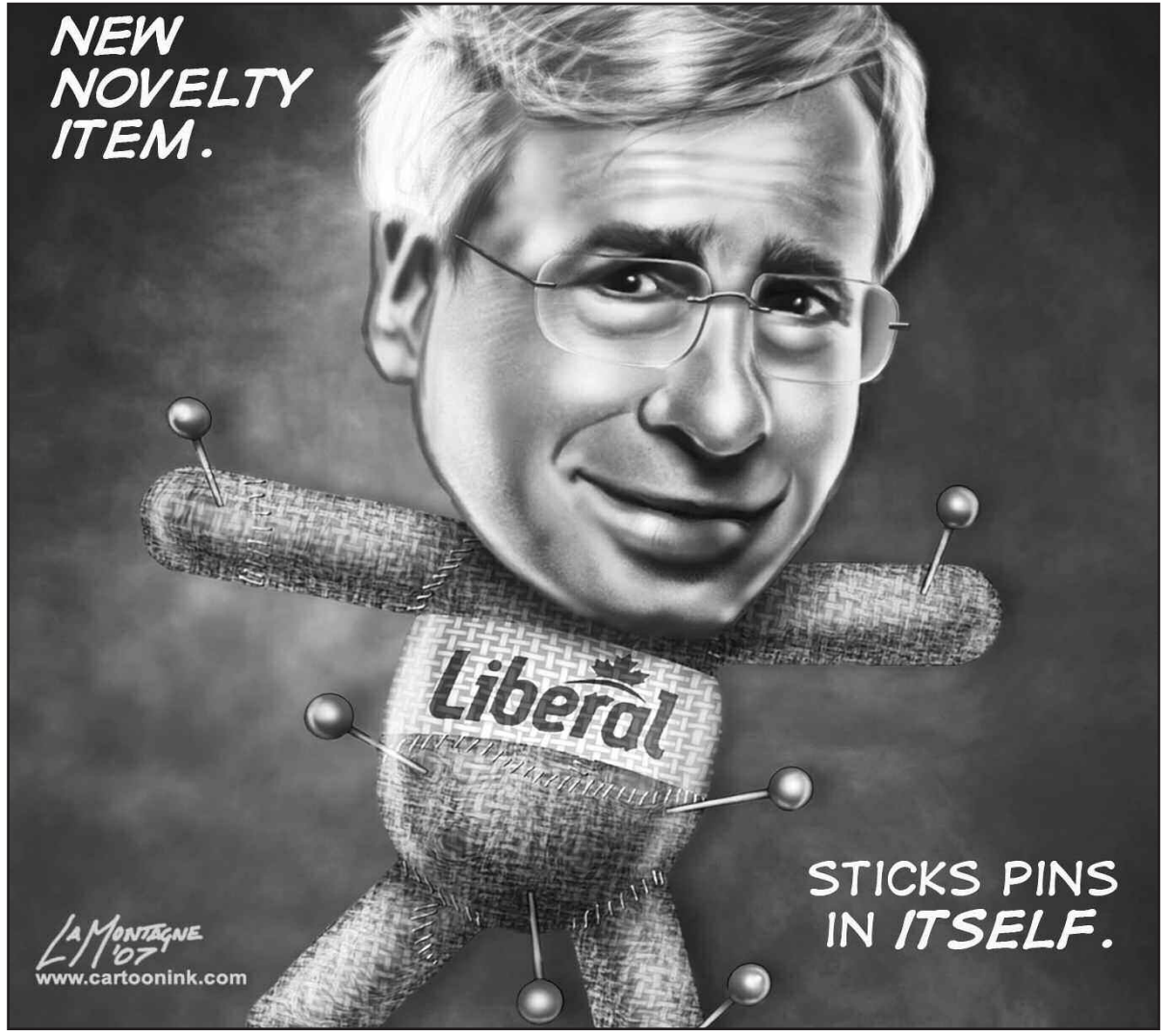
town as it is in the nation's capital. We have a duty to report on community events and local government. More importantly, we have a duty to question what it all means.

That's where solid journalism and thought-provoking editorials come into play. Good journalists must be able to ask the difficult but relevant questions and use good judgment in reporting the answers. Good journalists don't tell you what to think; they help shape what you think about. This is what we strive for at the Free Press and we work hard to keep up with what is going on in our community.

In the editorial column – the one that you're reading right now – we also strive to shape what you think about. Our purpose is not to inflame the community or annoy a certain faction. It is to persuade you of a particular point of view using clarity of expression and sound reasoning. The best editorials take a fearless position on an issue and invite readers to submit letters or commentaries containing their own opinions on the issue.

For example, we respect the fact that a number of businesses may be dissatisfied with the BIA or the BIA levy. We understand why the industrial sector and businesses outside the downtown core might think they aren't benefiting from BIA membership. And we would never stand in the way of people who are democratically requesting change. But we also believe that there is an important role for the BIA and that Essex would be poorer without some form of business association, even if it does not include all of the current members. This is the point that a recent editorial made and this is what editorials are supposed to do.

At the Essex Free Press we proudly cling to time-honoured traditions, like brave editorials, creating a public forum in which people can share their opinions, and offering news that matters. At the same time, we believe that the future will take us in new directions that allow us to continue delivering local news in ways that we never thought possible. Be sure to visit our website this week at [essexfreepress.reinvented.net](http://essexfreepress.reinvented.net) to see our latest project – a multi-media slideshow of last Sunday's Yellow Ribbon event in Woodslee produced by Free Press staffers Dan Schwab and Mike Krieger. Sometimes words are not enough.



LA MONTAGNE  
www.cartoonink.com

The fledgling Green Party seemed to be winning the hearts of the media and voters alike until last week.

First the bizarre deal in the Atlantic riding of Central Nova surfaced. Stéphane Dion, the new Liberal leader, surprisingly agreed not to run a candidate in Peter MacKay's Conservative riding but to defer to the candidacy of Green Party leader Elizabeth May who is seeking her party's first federal seat. In return, the Greens said they wouldn't contest Dion in his own riding of Montreal St. Laurent, a riding that Dion won handily in the last election.

Now it also comes out that before the deal was struck, Ms. May tried to broker a similar deal with the NDP using Ed Broadbent and Stephen Lewis as intermediaries. They turned her down flat. And why not? The New Democrats finished second in Central Nova in the last election with 32.9 per cent of the popular

vote. Conservative Peter MacKay won the riding with 40.6 percent of the popular vote. The Greens came in a distant fourth



### opinion

*bill gay*

with two per cent of the popular vote.

The Green Party is turning out to be green in other ways. Kevin Potvin, who has the Green Party nomination to contest the riding of Vancouver Kingsway, has dropped a bomb on his party from the other coast. Publisher of an alternative newspaper, the Republic, Potvin wrote a column in 2002 describing his joy at the horrific attacks of 9/11. “When the second tower

came down...that little voice in me said beautiful!” He justified his statements last week by saying he sees death on TV all the time and has grown accustomed to it. His leader, Elizabeth May, accepts this explanation.

The growing popularity of the Green Party reflects the legitimate concerns of people over environmental issues. Indeed, Elizabeth May finished second in a recent by-election in London. Why not run there again?

In essence, the emergence of the Green Party has served only to divide the left. When people known for their integrity like Broadbent and Lewis say they want no part of any deal with the Green Party and Ms. May, we should all take note.

Those voters attracted by the apparent newness of the Green Party, but who consider not only the environment but also a wide range of social democratic issues as vital to this country, now have to reconsider where to cast their vote.



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