was younger, in better shape, and it seemed like fun at the time. There were four of us who needed to do a medical work up. Allan McCallum, my primary care giver, discovered that the pills that were intended to lower my blood pressure were inadequate. He replaced them. I was directed to take and record my blood pressure at home and continue to provide the results on future visits. Blood work was ordered. I learned that I needed to be properly hydrated to make my blood vessels pop enough to be punctured. Getting blood proved to be difficult but, with the help of a butterfly, Jamie eventually acquired enough for tests. I began to feel secure in the care of sensitive professionals.

The clinic offered a Healthy Living course. I decided to take advantage of it. I was immediately impressed with the preparation work the staff had done, the quality of the text book that was provided, and the effortless stress-free seminar. My dormant passion for learning was rekindled. I was encouraged to interact with others taking the course. I felt once again that my skills could be of use if I was willing to make them available to others.

During the six-week course I joined Beach Walk Fitness Club, began a regimen of exercise and healthy eating, and even tried yoga. I am conscious of my responsibility for my quality of life. I had a hearing test and will soon have the hearing aids I have needed for some time. I have begun to consider the requirements of my neighbour and feel useful as I do things for her when she requests help. I Google online and retrieve long inactive information from my own mind.

I have always believed that I can learn from anyone. Interaction with the professionals at the clinic has reinforced this conviction.

I hope that this trend toward initial healthcare in the hands of nurse practitioners will soon become the norm in Ontario. It gives the client a safe place to find their way through the innumerable resources available. Nurse practitioners have the time and training to hear the concerns of their patients and are willing and able to recommend areas for their patients to explore.

I believe Nurse Practitioner-Led clinics are the wave of the future. The clinic in Essex is a model for care that many small towns and even cities can use to supervise the health of their citizens. Having lived through the unfolding of our health-care system from its inception, I conclude that it must continue to evolve if we are to remain the North American leader in this field.

Isabelle Ferguson

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**Letter To The Editor...**

Thoughts on Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics

I had not paid much attention to the changes in our healthcare system for many years. Once I considered it an entitlement, it no longer warranted thought.

My family doctor took care of my aging process and prescribed the necessary drugs to keep me pain free and functioning. I was able to spend my winters in Florida thanks to the supplemental insurance I was able to purchase as a result of my retirement benefits. My out-of-country needs were met by the Canadian Health Care System and purchased insurance. The "nanny state" breeds complacency.

My family doctor died while I was in the USA last winter. I returned to Ontario, my medication depleted, and the pharmacy required new scripts to replenish my supply.

Finding a new GP proved more difficult than I imagined. Fortunately, I was directed to the Nurse Practitioner-Led clinic in Essex Centre where I was accepted as a patient. The drugstore replenished my supply of necessary medications, preventing the onset of a gout attack and I was prepared to slide back into the comfortable cradle of complacency reserved for those in their second childhood.

But, as a new client, the clinic

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**Let's Talk About... by Evelyn Couch**

**Bright storefronts**

Don't you like the new, clean appearance of the buildings in Essex that are the homes of Party Discount, Golden Girls Fashions, DPM Insurance, and Billy's Pub?

Judging by a phone call I received from a local resident, people of the town do notice the appearances of stores and their surroundings. This person was complaining about a building downtown. She found it an eyesore and thought council should order it to be torn down.

When I took a good look at the building after that call, I could see why she felt it was a disgrace to the town.

But, as a new client, the clinic

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I have compared our main street stores to other town's stores and at first glance was surprised to notice how modern most of our store entrances are. Then I realized that is because most of them were blown out and were replaced after our famous explosions. Really, our downtown buildings are an interesting mix of old and new because all the western end of the main block, before the

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