



**Farmers' Market Fun**

Elyssa Vandebelt, four, of Cambridge dropped by the West Elgin Community Health Centre's Farmers' Market Saturday morning where Dotsy painted her face to look like a tiger. Elyssa was visiting her grandparents in West Lorne. The market runs monthly through October with the next event taking place Aug. 13 in the health centre's parking lot. There's room for more vendors offering fresh produce and agricultural products.

SCOTT HILGENDORFF/THE CHRONICLE

**Power outage is planned in West Lorne**

Residents in Eagle may be affected, outage Aug. 12 for system upgrade

KEMPENAAR staff

If the power is out when you wake up this Sunday don't be alarmed; it is a planned outage by Hydro One.

The outage is supposed to last four hours starting at 6:30 a.m. on Aug. 12 in West Lorne.

The outage will be contained to the West Lorne area although residents in Eagle may experience an outage as well.

Crew supervisor Paul Maciejewski says tests on the lines today will be

the final indicator of any possible outage there.

Hydro One plans to switch sources of power to Eagle from West Lorne to Dutton in order to keep the water pumping plant active.

"The pumping plants, Erie Flooring and (Rockland Flooring) Millner-Rigsby Co. Ltd. will keep going," says Maciejewski.

The outage will give crews time to replace four or five

poles that carry hydro lines from the power transformer station on Pioneer Line in West Lorne.

The transformers are part of an old system that is being upgraded now.

Power station crews were commencing the transformer upgrade last week and the project is expected to be complete next week.

Maciejewski says he can draw a straight line where power will be out.

**West Elgin band running out of wind**

JEFF KEMPENAAR

staff

The West Elgin Community Band is running out of wind.

When the band meets in the West Elgin Secondary School music room Monday, Sept. 20 they will be short brass, woodwind and tuba players.

Music selected for this season may not include the bottom end, or bass sounds, that drive the most music pieces, says band member Heather Bell.

The band currently has about 20 members but players that kept up the bottom end have either moved to London or cannot make the band practices every Monday.

"We'll take people with any instrument," says Bell, but the band really needs some key players.

She said it isn't a huge commitment and a

great way to relieve stresses from working all day, raising a family and maintaining a home.

"It's a hoot," she says.

The band plays around two to three concerts in the winter and fall and also participates in the Christmas parades in West Lorne and Rodney.

From marching songs, Christmas carols, Messiah, plus movie and TV theme songs, the band has a lot of fun learning new songs and playing for audiences, says Bell.

While the band is looking for people who can read music and play scales, Bell says, anyone who took music in high school would be able to pick up an instrument and play along.

"It's just like riding a bike," she says.

Saxophone players, trumpeters, trombonists and more percussionists are needed to fill out the sound of some of the band's tunes.

The door is open to young music lovers too, hoping to keep their skills up if they don't get to take music in school this semester.

Practices begin at 7 p.m. for the band. The Junior Band starts at 6 p.m. Snacks and good conversations are available during breaks.

The band is still active but if it does not continue to grow and maintain the right instruments to play fun pieces it would take a lot of energy to start up again.

Call Heather Bell for more information at 768-1284.

**Man assaulted with beer bottle at West Lorne home**

A 20-year-old male was struck in the face with a beer bottle at a house party Saturday night on John Street in West Lorne.

The man was taken to Four Counties Hospital with severe but non-life threatening injuries.

He was attacked by the

accused after arriving at the party with a number of friends.

Elgin County OPP responded to residence and made an arrest after 1 a.m.

Jeff Thyssen, 21-year-old from West Lorne was charged with aggravated assault and held for a bail hearing.

**Noisy summer in West Elgin**

JEFF KEMPENAAR

staff

It was a noisy summer in West Elgin with 22 noise complaints called into the OPP, said Const. Jennifer Wilks at the West Elgin Neighbourhood Watch meeting Sept. 14.

While break and enters were down in West Elgin, there were 16 minor thefts including bicycles and lawn mowers and Wilks stressed neighbours need to keep an eye out for each other's property, not just houses.

The report, covering from July 1 to Sept. 4 was also presented with a warning to citizens to be on the look out for drug activity in cornfields in the area.

Andy Kieraszewicz said he was surprised by a Kent

County OPP drug investigation on his property.

Officers arrived in unmarked cars and dressed in civilian clothing instead of police uniforms, he said at the meeting.

Kieraszewicz's son thought it seemed strange and called the Elgin OPP to see if they knew of the investigation. They did not. Elgin OPP investigated the sting and found it was a drug seizure.

A local aviator found the crop, took pictures and reported it to Kent OPP.

Police operating an under cover drug operation would usually be dressed in green or gray emergency response uniforms, said Wilks, and she would like the OPP to be better

informed of other detachments investigations.

She said any suspicious activity should be reported to the police and warned that some organized group of drug growers or dealers may dress like undercover police to steal another group of grower's marijuana from a field. "One group of druggies may know about one other group of druggies and storm (into a field or home) dressed as police officers," said Wilks.

Six drug occurrences were reported by the OPP this summer in West Elgin.

Wilks also said there were a lot of unnecessary calls to the OPP.

There were 17 false alarms attended to by the police and 21 911 hang-ups.



**HAVING FUN AT A SERIOUS EVENT...**

Helen Kovacs, left, Helen Mooser, and Rosalie Krebsz wore some silly hats as they participated in the Great Ride 'N Stride for Cancer on Sunday in West Lorne. The event raised more than \$4,000 in West Lorne and more than \$7,000 in Dutton.

Chronicle photo





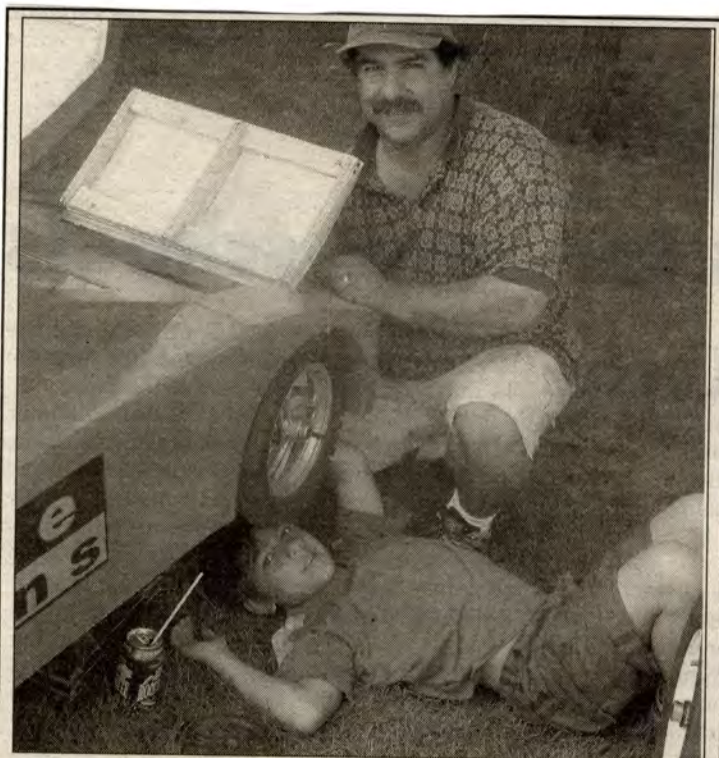
**BIBLE SCHOOL BUILT FOR FUN** JEFF KEMPENAAR/CHRONICLE

Grace Lutheran Church hosted the Construction Inc. Vacation Bible School in the name of Christ last week in West Lorne. Performing a skit called A Special Report, left to right, Jessica Wilson-Evetts, Jessalyn Betsch, Shelby Nielson, Francis Sobieralski, Caitlyn Van Raes, Stephanie Emery, Jaimee Parcels and Rebecca Betsch.



**IN TRAINING** CONTRIBUTED

Jacob Dunn walks Eckoe, a golden retriever being trained to help children with autism like Jacob, with trainer Mavis Bedford. Jacob is one of 25 children in Canada who will receive a service dog.



**FEW COME TO DERBY** SUZANNE MCGREGOR/CHRONICLE

Josh Peltier fixes a wheel with his dad Mark from Windsor at the Downhill Derby in West Lorne last Saturday.



**STAMP OF APPROVAL** CONTRIBUTED

Postmaster Randy Vandendriessche makes a presentation to Karen Carroll of West Lorne who won the postmark design contest held in conjunction with the Rodney Aldborough 150th Fair. More than 20 entries were received in the competition to design a postmark for the fair used to cancel stamps on mail leaving the Rodney Post Office. The postmark had to incorporate the fair theme: "Farming, Family and Fun" and was judged by members of the Rodney Aldborough Agricultural Society. Runners up in the competition including Eric Betsch and Melanie Knapp, both of West Lorne. The Post Office will be at the fair Sept. 17-18 with an exhibit where people can create postcards using commemorative stamps and the anniversary cancellation post mark.

**Life with autism made easier with National Service Dog**

JEFF KEMPENAAR  
staff

Young Jacob Dunn is getting help with his homework; not from his mom or the teacher, but from a golden retriever.

Jacob, who is autistic, is one of only 25 children in Canada who will receive a dog from National Service Dogs, a breeding, training and dog placement charity that provides assistance dogs to the physically and visual challenged under 18.

Four-year-old Jacob can be a handful for his mother Linda and father Scott. The neurological disorder effects Jacob's ability to deal with over stimulation and can lead to dangerous situations.

Dunn said Jacob has run out on Pioneer Line in front of the family's home and can be difficult when she takes Jacob and his two brothers for groceries.

"Safety is the main issue," said Dunn. "Having a trained dog would make life a lot easier."

A service dog can prevent a child from bolting into the street by bracing its feet and slowing the child down. A dog can also have a calming affect on an autistic child.

Mavis Bedford from Glencoe is training Eckoe, a one-year-old golden retriever for National Service Dogs and Jacob has been socializing with Eckoe since May assisting with Bedford's training of the dog to become a caregiver for the child.

The Dunn family doesn't

know for sure if they will get Eckoe yet because she is a little small for Jacob, but the boy and dog have bonded, said Linda.

"We have never seen Jacob make a friend like this before," she said.

The dog is free from the service with one promise: the family must raise money for the next child hoping to get a dog.

The cost to breed, train, feed and place the dog during the first two years of the dog's life is around \$12,000.

Dunn said she is looking at ways to raise money and help support Jacob.

Eckoe started five months of intense training and then will have one week of in-house training with a professional trainer and the family to help the dog and family adjust.

Jacob just finished junior kindergarten and under goes six hours of intensive behavioural intervention a day. Dunn said he continues to improve as he grows and she is hopeful a new companion for Jacob would give him a greater aptitude for learning and reduce stress on the family.

"It's amazing. They can answer the phone, turn off lights, and open doors," she said.

If Eckoe can be given to Jacob he will leashed to the boy, and be at his side day and night. He will also sit next to Jacob's desk in school this fall.

"It would be great if she can help him with his homework too," said Dunn.



Jan 04

The Chronicle

## Open winter leads to rare sightings in annual Christmas Bird Count

By Scott Hilgendorff  
The Chronicle

A warm, snow-free start to the winter saw some unusual finds in the annual Canadian Christmas Bird Count, Dec. 27. Seventy-five volunteers helping the West Elgin Nature Club, counted 16,098 birds including several species that should have been further south by now.

Two included a house wren and a hoary redpoll.

A record high count of redbill hawks was also counted. One hundred and eighty-seven of those were found.

"They keep moving with the food supply. This has been an open winter. It holds our seasonal birds here a lot longer," said Ken Reinke, an organizer of this year's count.

For the hawks and other birds, an "open winter" means more food available and less reason to move further south. At the same time, there are other birds, such as tree sparrows, that migrate further north that haven't arrived in this area yet.

"Leaving here or getting here, it's all thrown off by an open

winter," said Reinke.

A brown thrasher and a northern mockingbird, which should be south by now, were also found while only a few snow buntings, normally common this time of the year, were seen.

Normally 1,000 to 3,000 snow buntings are tallied in the count but only a few were found this year.

The numbers vary slightly each year and Reinke said similar counts are done across North America, helping with research from migratory patterns to species in danger or making a comeback, like the wild turkey - 87 of those were found.

Reinke said a few generations ago, people used to have to travel to the Jack Miner's Bird Sanctuary to see Canada geese, but now, the birds are common.

Volunteers counted birds in a circular area surrounding Rodney, West Lorne and Dutton, extending north to the Thames River and south to the Lake Erie Shore.

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## Beginner band taking shape

By Sharon Little

Study after study shows that playing a musical instrument makes you smarter. Talk to the members of the West Elgin Community Band and you find that a two-hour rehearsal on Monday evening relieves stress, is something they look forward to at the end of a long day and is more fun than washing dishes and watching TV.

Don't miss this chance to learn a new skill. If your child is learning or going to be learning an instrument in school, learn along with them. It's a great way to do something with your son or daughter where both of you are starting from scratch.

All would be band musicians from Grade 6 and up are encouraged to sign up for the West Elgin Community Beginner Band which starts Monday Feb. 2 and runs until June. An information session will be held January 19 at 6:30 in the WESS music room. The Beginner Band is for beginners and teaches you how to read music and play a woodwind, brass or percussion instrument.

No background experience is necessary. We also welcome rusty players who would like to start playing again, but need some help getting back into playing. Information on instrument rental and purchase will be available.

If you already play an instrument or played in High School, the West Elgin Community Band, in its 12th year, welcomes new members.

WESS High School students who would like another place to play or who aren't taking music are welcome. If you played an instrument in high school, it's like riding a bike. It will come back to you! The West Elgin Community Band is a safe and supportive environment in which to make your musical comeback.

For more information or encouragement, call Sharon Little 785-0797 or Heather Bell 768-1284

The Chronicle

JAN 8, 2004



Keith Kelly checks the thermometer at his weather station in New Glasgow.

Chronicle photo

## Kelly predicting warm winter

For The Chronicle

For almost 50 years, Keith Kelly has been making that 20-second morning walk out his back door to record temperature statistics for Environment Canada, all for a calendar.

A detailed weather calendar that the public would pay about \$8 for off a newsstand is Kelly's sole reward for his work as a weather watcher.

Across Elgin county, he's known as the last word on reliable weather forecasts and, unofficially, the guardian of near half a century of weather records.

Can't remember what it was like on June 8, 1973? Kelly can tell you what the temperature was and give a general description of the conditions.

His records, which may seem to have trivial value to some, have been used as evidence in legal cases.

Kelly recalls a pair of lawyers coming to his farm home just west of New Glasgow one day and asking him to check his records for a certain day. Those lawyers were embroiled in a case involving a crop damage claim and the records verified general conditions on that day.

"They paid me \$35 for my information," he said. In another case, his records confirmed it was wet outside on a day when footprints formed part of the evidence in a criminal case.

Kelly, 78, started his practice of weather watching in 1957, providing information for the Elgin Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association.

"They wanted to know when there was frost at blossom time," he said. At that time, Kelly was farming on the family homestead where a house built in 1905 by his father and local tradesmen is still standing. That simple, two-storey brick home was framed with logs cut on the farm, Kelly notes proudly.

His great grandfather, who came to Canada in the 1870s, was a horticulturalist and a weather watcher.

Kelly makes his morning observations at

8 a.m. and then returns at 5 p.m. for the end-of-the-day figures.

A simple white box, that looks like an oversized bird house, sits on a pole in the yard, open to the wind, so buildings can't deflect temperatures from reaching it. It holds a thermometer and not far away is a simply cup-like device, mounted on a pipe with a gauge inside used to measure precipitation.

Kelly's records are handwritten in a wide, ledger style book, and mailed monthly to Environment Canada.

"It (the weather station) has only been rebuilt once in all that time," he said. "The thermometer breaks from time to time. On one occasion, I shook the thermometer and broke it when it hit the dog in the head."

Where does the weather watcher get his daily forecast?

He said he either listens to the radio or checks the Weather

Network on TV.

He's confident he's usually right one way or the other.

"If I'm wrong on the weather, I'll be right on the precipitation or vice-versa."

Kelly hasn't missed his daily check very often over the years and when he can't make it, wife Marie, son Bruce or one of the neighbours fills in.

He has some advice for the average homeowner who wants to keep an eye on the weather outside.

Hanging a thermometer on the outside wall of the house won't provide an accurate reading, since it will be fooled by reflected heat. The thermometer should be in an open area.

### FORECAST

A warm, messy winter lies ahead according to predictions from local weather expert Keith Kelly.

"We're going to have a more moderate winter than last year," Kelly said this morning. "But it is going to be fairly messy."

Kelly predicts a fair amount of precipitation, mostly wet snow, and says we can expect the usual January thaw.

"IF I'M WRONG ON THE WEATHER, I'LL BE RIGHT ON THE PRECIPITATION OR VICE-VERSA,"

— Keith Kelly

## Elliott given house arrest after impaired driving causing death conviction

For The Chronicle

A superior court justice ruled Friday that a Wallacetown mother of three "acted entirely out of character" when the vehicle she was driving skidded off Talbot Line, killing two people following a night of drinking in Talbotville.

Justice Chester Misener said the case "has unusual features" which did not warrant a penitentiary sentence for 31-year-old Kim Elliott, but instead house arrest for two years less a day and a 10-year ban on driving.

Two months ago, a jury found Elliott guilty on two counts of impaired driving causing death and a third count of impaired driving causing bodily harm in the April 28, 2001, accident which claimed the lives of Harry Darcy Beech, 46, of Fingal and

Deborah J. Ferguson, 28, of St. Thomas.

Two charges of dangerous driving causing death and another of dangerous driving causing bodily harm were stayed.

Assistant Crown attorney Doug Walker had called for a sentence of three to four years plus a 10-year driving prohibition to "send a clear message that the courts intend to get tough."

However Misener noted, "if judges think they have really deterred this (impaired driving) over the past 18 years, I would be less than honest if I didn't say we have utterly failed. And I don't get any joy out of that."

Defense counsel William Johnson painted a picture of Elliott as a "hard worker" who has suffered internal head injuries as a result of the accident that cause her to have

post-traumatic memory loss. As a result she has suffered "a more heinous penalty."

Misener concurred and added any "sentence must take into account the circumstances of the offender" who he described as a "compassionate mother."

## MADD frustrated by message sentence sends out

Twice in the past 18 months, a Woodstock, Ont., Superior Court judge has imposed conditional sentences in cases involving impaired driving causing death.

And having made those decisions, Justice Chester Misener acknowledges not

everyone will agree with the rulings.

That includes the president of the St. Thomas Chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) who is dismayed with Misener's statements last week that it is up to groups like MADD to lead

In sentencing Elliott to house arrest, Misener insisted she "does not represent any danger to the community."

Elliott must also perform 200 hours of community service and is governed by a two-year alcohol ban.

the fight against drinking and driving through education programs.

"It's very frustrating," admits Lindsay Hoshal. "For the judge to come and say it's up to MADD to solve this problem, well we can only do so much. 27

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The Chronicle



Nicholas Knapp of West Elgin's Parks and Recreation Department works his way through chunks of frozen slush on the sidewalk on Graham Road. Last week's winter weather left sidewalks a mess and made clean up hard.

Chronicle photo

## Too much snow tough to clean up

By Scott Hilgendorff  
The Chronicle

West Elgin had to take some extra steps this week to try to make downtown sidewalks safer in West Lorne this week after a woman complained of a fall on the west side of Graham Street.

Within two hours of learning someone had fallen, Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jeff Slater had some help from the roads department to get some sand on the sidewalks.

"It's so cold, the stuff we use to melt the ice is not working really well," said Slater.

They don't use salt but a compound that doesn't track as badly into stores but Slater said what does melt refreezes over night because of the cold.

West Lorne resident Jean Fenn fell Wednesday on the slippery sidewalk.

"I went flat on my back," said Fenn who was not badly hurt but upset the sidewalks were still covered in snow.

"You have to walk really slow and be careful," she said of navigating the snow and ice-packed sidewalks.

While some businesses shovel and scrape, Slater said the municipality has looked after the sidewalks in the downtown core.

He said last week, it was impossible for them to cope with the wintry weather.

It's one of the worst winters in the past several years for cold and snowfall and while they try to keep the sidewalks cleared to concrete, Slater said it's been impossible this year.

After last Tuesday's winter storm, the sidewalks had been coated in a slush that froze and is now virtually unmoveable by the sidewalk plow and snowblower.

"Our equipment is having a hard time moving it," Slater said.

"It's like concrete balls out there," he said of the frozen slush that plows had pushed from the road to the sidewalk edges.

## Trailer taxes hit parks hard

### Weeks given to pay thousands in assessments

By Scott Hilgendorff  
The Chronicle

Trailer park and campground owners are still reeling from the impact of being hit with thousands of dollars in extra assessments for trailers now deemed permanent structures.

"The municipality only gave us six weeks to pay it. It was due Dec. 31. As a business owner, we were forced to go out and find financing to pay the tax bill," said Wendy Dupuis who operates Lakewood Trailer Estates at Port Glasgow.

**"THEY WANTED US TO HELP PROMOTE PORT GLASGOW AND THEY'VE TAKEN THE MONEY OUT FROM UNDER US,"**

**— Wendy Dupuis, Lakewood Trailer Estates**

She found herself facing a \$31,000 tax bill in November for 2003 assessments on trailers, barely a month after the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) was given legislation from the Ministry of Finance to assess trailers on campgrounds again. There

had been a moratorium on trailer assessments since the 1990s.

The tax bill came after her own taxes were already paid and left the park owners scrambling to find the cash to pay or face further penalties for being late.

"They waited for all the trailer parks to close. All the campers are gone," said Dupuis. With the campers gone, they now have to wait until spring to collect the money from the trailers that were assessed.

Complicating matters, Dupuis said when they were suddenly faced with an assessor at their door, they denied him access to the individual, privately owned trailers, uncertain if they could legally let him in the park.

It resulted in an estimated assessment and has left Dupuis unclear who in her park was assessed or by how much of the \$31,000 tax bill.

Not only does Dupuis have to try to reclaim the money from individual trailer owners, but she will soon be facing a 2004 assessment because of the late timing of the additional

Continued on Page 2

FEB 4 / 04

## Opinion





# High speed Internet arriving

JAN 29 /04

## As Elgin Connects/Amtelecom get ready to launch Bell appears to be ready too

By Scott Hilgendorff  
The Chronicle

Affordable high speed Internet access is just weeks away from Dutton, West Lorne and Rodney.

Calls to Bell Telephone failed to confirm Bell's Internet company was nearly finished installing the equipment necessary to allow high speed Internet communication on its urban lines.

However, Execulink, one of Bell's major Internet competitors in the region, confirmed last week it expects to be offering high speed Internet access to Dutton, West Lorne and Rodney by the end of February.

At the same time, a consortium of Elgin County business and support services are also weeks away from bringing some parts of rural western Elgin County on-line with high speed Internet.

"It's good news," said Peter Fleming, chief administrative officer at Execulink.

Execulink and any other Internet providers can offer the service once Bell has the infrastructure in place and while no calls were returned from Bell, Fleming said

Continued on Page 2

# First year exciting for Elgin archives

For The Chronicle

The first year of operation of the Elgin County Archives was an exciting one.

"It has been beyond expectations," said archivist Brian Masschaele, who has built the archives from scratch. "And it's because of the vision and the resources of county council."

Open since November, 2002, in the basement of the county administration building on Sunset Drive, Masschaele says he has been impressed by the amount of community outreach and is very pleased with the quality of new acquisitions.

One of the newest is a 1934 congratulatory booklet commemorating the election of Mitch Hepburn as premier of Ontario (the only Elgin MPP to become premier) and signed by all the members of his cabinet.

Other significant acquisitions this year include Alma College records (1877-1994) and Elgin Historical Society collections (1850-1959).

And the acquisitions keep coming.

"We represent an unbiased, publicly accessible option that ensures valuable records," Masschaele said. "Records will be properly preserved for future generations."

Since its opening, the archives has had 228 patron visits, including two visitors from Japan who were researching a missionary from the Bayham area.

There have also been 1,200 telephone, letter and email inquiries from close to home and from around the world.

Masschaele says most of the research has been genealogical-based, but such things as dating buildings, zoning/planning research and railway history have also been researched. The archives also does record management for Elgin county.

JAN. 8, 2004

The Chronicle



Elgin County archivist Brian Masschaele stands among the rows of historical documents being preserved at the county archives.

Masschaele says one of the best advancements for the archives has been the creation of a Web site at [www.elgin.ca](http://www.elgin.ca). He says the Web is perfectly suited for genealogical research, which is now a multi-billion dollar business, because it provides the ability to make a connection with historical records without having to travel.

Besides large collection acquisitions, the archives does accept smaller private donations, but the records must have significance to history in Elgin county.

He says one of the toughest parts of being an archivist is deciding which items are significant and which ones aren't.

"What you keep and what you throw away will ultimately shape the future

course of history," he said. "That is a huge responsibility and isn't to be taken lightly."

In the year ahead, Masschaele says the archives' priority will be to enhance its Web site and to continue the process of transferring records from the seven municipalities in the county. He says expansion will eventually be necessary.

For now, Masschaele says, the archives are still in the awareness phase and he is doing what he can in terms of outside presentations and media engagements to bring attention to what the archives has to offer.

The Elgin county archives are open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and by appointment Tuesday evenings from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

# Chronicle read faithfully

JAN 8/04

Dear Editor:

In my youth, in the parochial environs of Iona Station and even Dutton, I did not expect to enjoy and be rewarded by the journalistic and literary contribution of the small western town of West Lorne.

Now it has come about; I am both astonished and delighted to have "The Chronicle" remind me of the daily affairs, concerns

## LETTER

and accomplishments of this favoured part of the world.

I read every issue faithfully for the wide ranging news and comment on clans and community that I remember with both joy and affection. Do not be in doubt: I not only thank you but applaud.

Yours faithfully,  
John Kenneth Galbraith

# Opinion

JAN 8, 2004

The Chronicle



SANTOS/04

# Our Winter 2004



J.SANTOS/04



## Local cadet one of only 16 selected for expedition of a lifetime to Costa Rica

Army cadet Master Warrant Officer Daniel Balint is bound for the adventure of a lifetime.

The 17-year-old West Lorne resident is one of 16 teens from across the country selected for the 2005 Army Cadet League of Canada International Expedition.

This year's expedition will take the cadets to Costa Rica for a two-week adventure beginning on Aug. 29. While in Costa Rica, the cadets will raft down the Rio Pacuare and hike through the tropical jungles of Corcovado National Park. They will be rappelling in the Mt. Chirripo area, snorkelling

along the coral reefs off Cano Island, mountain biking near Drake Bay and exploring the Punta Rio Claro Wildlife Refuge.

The Army Cadet League's International Expedition program is the ultimate test of army cadet expedition training, affording cadets the opportunity to increase their positive self-perception, further develop leadership abilities, and increase their interpersonal skills. The trips develop knowledge, interest and respect for different cultures, promote international goodwill and reward outstanding cadets for their performance and excellence. Those who participate will

meet exciting new challenges, enjoy mind-expanding experiences and cement friendships that last a lifetime.

The selection of participating cadets is highly competitive and limited to those 16-18 years of age. They must have attained Master Cadet designation or at least have National Star Certification in the army cadet training program.

They must hold the Army Cadet Fitness test Gold Level and have demonstrated a high level of personal discipline through an exemplary record of cadet service. More than 1000 candidates from across Canada were eligible for the 16 appointments. Four of those selected come from Atlantic Canada and another four from Ontario, three each come from Quebec and the Prairies, and two are from B.C.

The Canadian Forces provides logistical, administrative and operational support for this international expedition program in its ongoing partnership with the Army Cadet League of Canada. Previous expeditions have seen Canadian cadets visiting such diverse destinations as South Korea, Australia, Morocco, Iceland and the Philippines.

## Ambassadors contestants ready for Rodney Fair

The Rodney Agricultural Society's annual Ambassadors contest is set to go Friday night at 7 p.m. in the Recreation Centre.

As part of the opening ceremonies the following three candidates will present speeches on this year's theme, Celebrating Our Roots Everywhere.

With this topic, the contestants can speak about the history of the Rodney Fair, how it helps celebrate our roots and youth or about West Elgin, its roots and family and farming in the area.

One of the contestants will take the crown from Richa Sharma, last year's winner who finished third at this year's Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto last month.



**Szanadue Brower**

Age: 17  
Hometown: Rodney  
Third year student at WESS.  
Daughter of Venus.

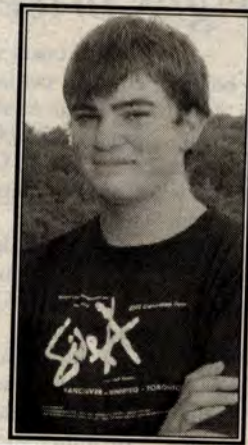
Sponsored by the Rodney Legion



**Ashley Dinga**

Age: 17  
Hometown: Rodney  
Fourth year student at WESS.  
Daughter of Lynne and John  
Works at Fairles Foodmarket

Sponsored by the Rodney Lion's Club.



**Craig Watterworth**

Age: 17  
Hometown: West Lorne  
Fifth year student at WESS.  
Son of Pat and the late Don.

Sponsored by the Coalition for Rural Schools.



### WEDS Kids show off multi-talents at weekly show

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Left: Taylor Cundy performs an emotional monologue from the movie Uptown Girls. Right: Allison Kornaker, Lindsay and Melanie Lang and Kylie Willson finish their performance of Cotton Eye Joe on stage at the WEDS Theatre Aug. 12. The West Elgin Dramatics Society Kids summer program finishes for the year. The program gives youth a chance to learn and have fun with music, theatre and



# Kolar returns home from serving in Afghanistan

When Warrant Officer Jim Kolar arrived in Kabul, the city of four million was in the dark.

Six months later, when the sun fell on the city destroyed by war, lights flickered and beamed through the streets of the Afghanistan capital.

The turn around came with the help of hundreds of Canadian peacekeepers, including Kolar, a reservist from West Lorne.

The 36-year-old West Lorne man returned home to his

family Aug. 13 after taking part in a military rebuilding operation for six months.

He arrived in Afghanistan in February, where he stayed at Camp Julien with 1,000 Canadian soldiers and 400 civilians with a civilian-military cooperation unit (CIMIC).

The unit of six people supervised reconstruction projects in Southern Kabul as part of Operation Athena with the International

Security Assistance Force.

Kolar saw a lot of change in Kabul in his first tour outside of Canada.

"Every day I saw things get rebuilt. They have electricity in some parts for the first time in 30 years. It's mind boggling how much has been done. A tremendous amount of work has been done to modernize the city again," he said. "I wish we could have done more."

During the 1960s the modern city was a cross roads between Russia and Pakistan/India.

Then, in 1979 Russian troops landed at Kabul airport to war with the Mujahideen, a rebel group opposing the Communist government of the time.

After the Russians left 10 years later, the country fell into civil war.

"They destroyed their own city," said

Kolar.

The city fell into the hands of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, an oppressive regime, breeding terrorism.

That terrorism was unleashed around the world including the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York on Sept. 11, 2001.

On Oct. 7, 2001, with the United Nations support, the United States attacked Kabul, causing the Taliban to flee.

Canadian troops arrived in Kabul and set up Camp Julien in early 2003.

Kolar, a reservist with the Canadian military for 17 years, watching the events, wanted to help and applied for the position with CIMIC.

Kolar took a year of absence as a computer engineering teacher at TOIS to help complete 75 different projects

while in Kabul including rebuilding bridges, water wells, roads and schools.

He received a Commanders Coin for his hard work in completing 75 projects.

His job was to liaise with local mayors, police chiefs and elders to find needed projects and local contractors to complete the projects.

"Education was one of our major goals. For them to rebuild the country they need to be educated," said Kolar.

Donations would come from all over the world.

Kolar would coordinate projects to bring those donations to the Afghani people.

Temporary tented schools were set up while buildings were repaired.

One damaged school housed 8,000 students.

"It was a bit small-



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## Local man met with local elders while in Kabul

Warrant Officer Jim Kolar, right, of West Lorne met with local Wakils, or elders while serving with a Canadian civil-military unit in Southern Kabul. He often would liaise with elders to decide which projects needed to be started while the city was being rebuilt after war.

er than Aldborough," said Kolar.

While life in Afghanistan has been set back a century, Kolar said the people are honourable, friendly and hard working.

"It's going to take a decade to get back to where they were but they have a good start.

"There's some bad people there. Afghanistan is not a safe place," he said but added Kabul is safe now that the Taliban have left. "There's more Taliban-type people in Toronto."

Camp Julien is closing this

December, moving to Kandahar, being controlled by the U.S in the tumultuous southern part of the country bordering Pakistan where the Taliban and Al Qaeda still operate.

This September is the Afghani election, a milestone for peacekeepers.

Kolar is set to go back to his job in a month but is contemplating going back to help in Afghanistan.

He said he felt

safe there.

"Often the bad people would attack soft targets like the U.N. or Red Cross. They wouldn't shoot at us because they knew we would get out of our trucks and shoot back," he said.

While Kolar's perspective on life has changed, "I get grumpy when I hear people complain here," he's glad to be home.

"It was great to see my family, my wife Kathy and my three girls."



## Plenty of families spend time at Rodney Fair

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

With overcast skies for most of the weekend, people still came and enjoyed the same family, farming and fun as every year at the 151st Rodney Fair. Right photo, Amy and Alicia Oliveira along with Kelsey Vandenburg whirl around on the Scrambler, Saturday afternoon. At the ambassador contest Friday night, Szanadue Brower (centre) wowed the judges with her interview, speech and answer to the impromptu question to win the Ambassador contest over Craig Watterworth and Ashley Dinga.



# Cameras watch our parks

Jeff Kempenaar  
Staff

With little public knowledge four security cameras have been installed around the park in Rodney to try and prevent further vandalism.

Early last month a fire was set on the diving board at the West Elgin Pool, closing the pool for a week while water samples were tested for traces of gasoline.

Earlier this summer a fire was started at the skateboard park.

Fear that these fires were just experiments and that a bigger fire could be started, the recreation department and OPP are taking extra precautions to prevent further crime.

"Think about what else is in the park. We have a big concern this

**CRACKDOWN ON VANDALISM** is going to escalate even more. All kinds of things could happen," said Recreation Superintendent and Deputy Fire Chief Jeff Slater. "We don't want to see anyone get hurt."

What he does want to see is a crime in progress on the video cameras.

"They're there and I hope they work," he said, not saying where

they are located. "This is arson. Something has to be done."

Recent vandalism has pushed the recreation department to take action and stop anymore crime.

Vandalism has pushed residents to take discipline into their own hands.

It has also pushed police to frustrated ends, trying to lay charges.

Please see Cameras, page 2



**Youth getting bad rep**

Alex Millen, 14, Devi Dermo, 14, Bill Neunes, 16, Cassandra McGall, 12 and Jessie Pease, 17 say troublemakers vandalizing the park in Rodney are giving all youth a bad reputation. Cameras have been installed in the park to watch the comings and goings of people after hours to prevent further crime.

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

## Kids say vandalism a cause of boredom

### CRACKDOWN ON VANDALISM

Boredom leads to vandalism, say a handful of youths in Rodney.

"There's nothing to do around here," said Jessie Pease, 17. "Rodney is such a small town. All you can do is walk around."

He and a group of five youths in age from 12 to 17 were playing on the swings in Rodney at 9:30 p.m. Aug. 25 before their curfew.

"We used to play basketball but the rims got busted," he said.

He said the people causing vandalism in town are giving all the youth a bad reputation.

"I've been staying home a lot lately because I don't want to be suspected of causing trouble," he said.

Alex Millen, 14, was wearing a red bandanna as he hopped the

fence beside the Rodney jail with Pease.

He dresses like a gangster, he admits, but the style is given a bad reputation by criminals in gangs south of the border.

"We just feel comfortable and think we look cool," said Devi Dermo, also 14.

She and Millen suggested that the skateboard park needs to be upgraded and made bigger to make it appealing again to youths.

"I'll sell cookies to raise money," joked Millen.

As well, he suggested that teen dances be organized at the recreation centre so the youths have something to do and can see their friends from outside of town.

Please see Youth, page 2

## Daffodil Society sponsoring families

Jeff Kempenaar  
Staff

The Daffodil Society has begun its Christmas family sponsorship campaign.

Organized by the welfare branch of the society, low income residents, strapped trying to provide a Christmas to their families turn to the local group for a little extra help.

Sponsorships include buying food, gifts, clothes and hygiene products for families or individuals in need this time of year.

Gifts for children of low income families are usually valued at \$25-\$35.

"A lot of times these low income families can't provide a lot of gifts for Christmas," said Ken Willson, who has run the campaign for the last few years.

He said the campaign has been around since he came to the community in the 1960s.

It has received support from just about every organization at one point in time either through sponsorships, donations or contributions with the annual food drive that begins next month.

"It's the one thing that makes me so proud to live in the community - to support a venture like this - I've never seen an area support their community so much," said Willson.

Churches, service clubs, families and businesses often come together to complete a sponsorship package.

They can call the society and find out suggestions for donations to meet needs identified.

The society tries to get the ages, sizes and sex of children in families and then match them with donations.

Last year, donations came in after Christmas leaving the society with a stockpile already at its Main Street Dutton location, next to the Adult Centre.

Willson isn't sure how many people will need help this year as he is still registering.

Usually the welfare branch helps 10-12 people a month either delivering food to people without vehicles or drop ins.

But at Christmas sometimes up to 70 families come for a little extra help.

The society is financially in good shape said Willson, but if a high number of people come for help, he will turn to the community for money.



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## Cancer walk raises money at Arena

Students from West Elgin Secondary School joined the Ride and Stride for Cancer at the West Elgin Arena on Sunday. More walkers came out this year than past and raised \$4,729 with more still coming.

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**Washroom open for business**

Water Department Superintendent Lloyd Jarvis, left, West Elgin Mayor Graham Warwick and John Spriet of the engineering firm Spriet and Associates tore the toilet paper to symbolize the opening of the new washroom, estimated to have cost around \$200,000 at Port Glasgow before the Annual-Fish Fry July 31.

**West Lorne girl to break language barrier in Poland**

Jeff Kempenaar  
Staff

Kylie Hilliard of West Lorne will have to use a lot of body language at first to communicate with her temporary family in Poland.

She leaves for one-year in Bytom, Poland this Saturday as part of a student exchange program.

The 17-year-old was selected for the trip organized by the Rotary Club in St. Thomas.

Daughter of John and Corey, Kylie has been learning the Polish language and culture since January, preparing for the trip.

"You can't prepare for everything though," she said.

She'll be living with a host family in a town, about the size of London, ON, near the border with the Czech Republic.

In the fall, she'll be going to school, where she'll have to speak Polish all the time.

Only one member of the family she'll be living with speaks English.

"I'll be using a lot of body language," she said. "Luckily I know how to say 'I don't know what you are saying' in Polish."

Cost for the trip includes her nine hour flight and small trips she has planned, as well as souvenirs.

To help break the ice, one of

her four bags is packed with Canadian goods like maple syrup, flags and pins.

Kylie decided she wanted to make the exchange now that she's finished high school at St. Joseph's in St. Thomas.

Her mother, Corey, made a similar trip to Australia as a young woman.

Kylie said she has the same desire to learn a different language and culture

"It's not like being a tourist on a trip. I'll be immersed in their culture for a year. I'll be one of them," she said.

While Poland once was shut off from the world under the Soviet block and was

destroyed under German occupation in the Second World War, Kylie has learned it has been built up in the last 10 years.

She'll have access to the Internet and a computer of her own in her own room.

"I'm really excited," said Kylie.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

**Travelling abroad**

Kylie Hilliard points out Poland where she will arrive Sunday for a one-year stay as part of a student exchange program organized by the Rotary Club in St. Thomas. Kylie's excited about the trip but has been hurrying to learn Polish as her host family speaks little English.

**West Lorne forest part of big picture**

West Lorne Forest has been included in Carolinian Canada's big picture of creating more green space in southern Ontario.

Of 101 different locations, the forest is part of a patchwork of woodland Carolinian Canada hopes to link together.

West Lorne Forest stretches along the Southern Rail Line westward from West Lorne.

Other zones have been identified as part of one big picture including the Eagle wetlands, stretching to Lake Erie, spots along Silver Clay Line and around Port Glasgow.

"West Lorne is really rich with natural history," said Michelle Kanter, executive director of Carolinian Canada.

In 1999, ecologist from various organizations surveyed the Carolinian Zone, which is from Sarnia to Niagara falls and Windsor to Guelph.

From that survey a big picture map was developed highlighting

core natural areas Carolinian Canada believes should be protected and preserved as green space.

The surveyors found many endangered species only found in this region of the world.

"If something came along and wiped out the West Lorne woodlots, you could lose endangered species," said Kanter. "It's a significant woodland."

Kanter said scientists and ecologists recommend all geographic areas should include eight per cent of green space for a healthy landscape.

"Right now we have about three per cent. We don't have enough in Southern Ontario. We are one of the most threatened areas in the country," said Kanter. "If we don't act as a community to put more green space on the map we could lose dozens of the species in the region forever."

While the 101 different sites mapped as core natural areas are not bound to remain green spaces, Kanter

hopes local governments and land owners will work to maintain the land and expand it as green space.

Whether protecting forests along creeks or creating trails from one forest to another the big picture is hoped to create more green space untouched by logging.

One way to expand the green space is to develop corridors to link the forests.

The next nearest core natural area is Clear Creek Forest at the southwest tip of Elgin County and lake front lands south of Duart.

Carolinian Canada's big picture would see lines of potential habitat corridors linking the West Lorne Forest to the Skunk's Misery around Newbury, Clear Creek Forest, woodlands at Plum Point in Dutton/Dunwich and forests around Mt. Brydges.

Currently, Carolinian Canada has begun getting land owners to sign natural heritage stewardship contracts to develop the corridors.



MELANIE KNAPP PHOTO

**Sharma places third at CNE**

Rodney Aldborough Agricultural Society Ambassador Richa Sharma placed third in the Canadian National Exhibitions Ambassador Contest Aug. 19.