

## ▶ Board waits for province

For the Chronicle

A list of Thames Valley schools slated for closing remains under wraps today after consultant C.N. Watson was able last night to present only an interim report to the school board.

Education director Bill Bryce said C.N. Watson's study of long-term accommodation needs can't be completed until the provincial government comes up with rules it says it is developing for school closings.

And that means that six accommodation reviews currently under way in the school district including Elgin, remain on hold.

"It is hard to wait and wait," Bryce sympathized with communities whose schools are in limbo.

"But experience has taught us it is better to wait a little while and get it right, than to rush and get it wrong."

Faced with a decline in enrollment, Thames Valley commissioned the \$65,000 study last fall.

C.N. Watson is reported to have identified 60 schools for closing.

But none was named last week. The interim report discusses closings only in broad terms, saying they present "an opportunity to significantly improve programs and facility environments ... through rationalization of this surplus space ..."

C.N. Watson says Thames Valley has 5,500 surplus classroom spaces — about four per cent of the

district's inventory. And responding to London trustee Peter Jaffe, report author Cynthia Clarke said the school board cannot avoid closings.

"Can we just go on the way we are?" Jaffe asked. "Is the status quo an option?"

"I don't believe so," Clarke replied.

Nonetheless, her report lacked the numbers for areas outside of London that Elgin trustee Linda Stevenson said she needs to be able to talk to local school communities.

"I'm disappointed it wasn't separated at this point."

The C.N. Watson report lumps St. Thomas and all of Elgin together in its discussion of elementary school enrollment; and St. Thomas and Elgin, and Middlesex and Oxford counties in its projection of secondary school populations.

Clarke said she would provide a break-out.

School closings aside, the C.N. Watson report calls on the school board to consider reorganizing some high schools into Enhanced Learning Centres, with specialty programs geared to local job markets.

For St. Thomas and Elgin, that could include health sciences and entrepreneurship, as well as agriculture.

And C.N. Watson also suggests the creation of school campuses, where senior elementary and high schools co-exist in some way, linking programs and sharing some facilities.

Please see Report, page 2

The Chronicle

## Student's struggle with disability hits home

JEFF KEMPENAAR

staff

Mandy Wright doesn't want her son Blake to suffer with a learning disability anymore than he has to.

She wants him to get more one-on-one time with a teacher.

She doesn't want him to fall through the cracks.

She doesn't want him to be embarrassed in class when he can't read.

Blake Wright is a below average student in Grade 3 at Aldborough Public School.

His test scores and evaluations show he has a reading level below Grade 1.

A learning disability, including problems with his hearing, has made it tough for Blake to learn to read in a classroom setting with 25 other children.

He receives one hour a day of lessons in a group of two to three students with learning support teacher Scott Dunn.

But Wright says it isn't enough and Blake is continuing to struggle when she doesn't believe he has to.

Blake's mother believes there is enough need at the school to have a full-time class for children with learning disabilities. She is pushing for the school board to create one.

Bill Tucker, superintendent of Special Education with the Thames Valley District School Board says he was in Elgin County last year to gather feedback from parents and develop a plan for special education. He says the board does not per-



JEFF KEMPENAAR/CHRONICLE

Scott Dunn, right, a learning support teacher spends an hour a day with Faith Renaud, left, and Blake Wright, centre practising reading and writing. The children are in Grade 3 and struggling with the alphabet, prompting parents to demand more one-on-one time.

Mandy said Blake has come home crying after being asked to read in class that day.

He has trouble hearing the teacher, although he sits at the front of the class, he can not pay attention to what the teacher says.

Mandy applied for a microphone system that the teacher can speak into and a speaker would be behind or on Blake's ear.

There is a backlog of applications to the province for the systems, said Tucker.

Wright said there are four other children at the school who need the hearing devices but the school board said they no longer have funding to purchase them for Aldborough.

Passionate in her fight, Wright has had meetings with many people involved with special education within the school board.

It is possible there is enough need between the local public schools to have a joint program to help children with learning disabilities, said Park.

Tucker said the classroom teacher programs the vast majority of students with learning disabilities.

He understands parents need to advocate for their children but parents should work within the school to help the student.

Wright isn't satisfied with what she is hearing and has tried several steps to find Blake help.

She has written a letter for Ontario Minister of Education Gerard Kennedy and a speech for the next school council meeting, Nov 30.

ceive a need for intensive support classes and compared to other schools, Blake is receiving exceptional support.

Wright has been offered to send Blake to Mosa Public School where they offer smaller classes for children with behavior disabilities, but Blake doesn't meet the requirements.

Gord Park, principal at Aldborough suggested Mandy send Blake to St. Thomas where there is a greater population of special needs children with a classroom for their own but she doesn't want him to leave his peers and travel 45 minutes a day.

Wright wants her child to receive the schooling he needs where he lives.

She had a special teacher come to the family's home near Clachan once every few weeks, but she left to teach in Kitchener.

Blake is shy, and his mother fears he is becoming shyer and not participating in class because of his disability.

He is in a class of 25 students and



RYAN MCLANDRESS/CHRONICLE

## CREATIVE TOUCH

Rebecca Kalita works on a mural, one of several new projects being completed by senior art students in the West Elgin Secondary School's ongoing wall mural project.

# Newest murals take shape

RYAN MCLANDRESS

for The Chronicle

The latest generation of art students is leaving their marks, literally, on the walls of West Elgin Secondary School.

With the help of a group of senior art students, new murals are being painted around the school.

Ruthann McLagan, the Art Department Head at West Elgin says it gives students a chance to leave their own mark on the school.

"There are no guidelines for what they have to paint. It is up to them to decide what they want their mural to be about."

She says that the painting of murals has been going on for more

than 20 years when students started painting the department names on the hallway walls. Soon after, the students were given permission to start decorating the halls with various murals.

Since then, the walls have been painted and repainted over with various murals by senior art

Continued on Page 2



## ON THE RUN

SCOTT HILGENDORFF/CHRONICLE

Andrew Evans completes the 400 metre 12-year-old boys' race at West Elgin Senior Elementary School on Friday. He placed second in the race.

## Students holding coffee house France trip

History and French students are planning a concert with music, stand-up comedy, poems and more at West Elgin Secondary School's cafeteria tomorrow night Dec. 10 at 7 p.m.

The students want to go to France in March and are raising money with the coffee house to offset costs.

Katie King, organizer of the event, said it will be an intimate show with local talent many people haven't heard before.

She can't wait to go to France either.

She plans on pursuing fashion design after high school and says France is the premiere place for

new fashion trends.

"It's au couture," she says.

For 19 days students will see historical places such as Versailles, the l'Arch Triomphe and significant war places.

Jessica Dupuis is interested in seeing the museums and places she has read about in history class.

She hopes they can raise more money for more excursions.

"It's going to be amazing," she says.

Carman Lasson from West Elgin Dramatic Society will do stand-up and Eva Martin will sing. There will also be student bands performing poetry readings.



# Wait is on for future of schools

By Scott Hilgendorff  
The Chronicle

It's now a waiting game as the Thames Valley District School Board and the local school accommodation committee await word from the province on just how exactly schools will be funded.

While the committee's work is done, recommending to the school board that no schools close and that a proper distribution of funds to provide adequate programming is needed, Tracy Grant, one of two West Elgin Secondary School representatives on the committee said they have not disbanded.

The committee was tasked with looking at school accommodation issues at WESS and high schools in Glencoe, Strathroy and Parkhill with a starting point being the possible closure of Glencoe District Secondary School.

After several attempts to have board administration remove any suggestion Glencoe's high school be closed, the committee was able to present to the board a set of recommendations that supported keeping all four schools open with detailed information gathered to show the board there is no money to be saved by closing any of the

schools.

The recommendations were the culmination of months of work looking at how to fit the network of schools into a complicated, flawed funding formula.

The formula gave funding to schools based on the number of students per square footage and since the accommodation study began, the new provincial government placed a moratorium on any school closures.

It's placed the board in a holding pattern waiting for work.

Meanwhile, the report has been given back to administration for further review, despite having been reworked by administration and the committee at least three times now.

How the board will receive the recommendations will depend on what the Ministry of Education decided.

It was originally expected, Education Minister Gerard Kennedy would make an announcement about school funding changes at the end of March.

Grant said there is no word as to when the province will announce how it intends to handle school funding.

While they wait, she said, the committee intends to try to

**'THERE IS A REAL CONCERN THAT UNLESS THERE IS A REAL CHANGE IN THE RURAL SCHOOLS' FUNDING, WE ARE TARGETED.'**

— Tracy Grant

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Continued on Page 3



Tricia Herbert, seated, top right, of the Elgin Association for Community Living works to recruit some West Elgin Secondary School students at a volunteer fair organized by the school.

Chronicle photo

## More volunteers needed to relieve local burnout

By Scott Hilgendorff  
The Chronicle

Within the organizations themselves and within the community, it's the same small group of men and women who turn out over and over again to volunteer, say local volunteers.

"Everybody seems to be very busy and wearing several hats," said John McIntyre of the Wallacetown Optimist Club.

At least, that was the hat he was wearing Thursday at West Elgin Secondary School's volunteer fair.

The fair was held to give the community an opportunity to promote their organizations to high school students who are required to volunteer 40 hours before they can graduate high school.

It was also held to help the students find volunteer projects and, combined with classroom discussions before the fair, to help them see the importance and need of volunteers in their community.

McIntyre, a retired WESS secondary school

teacher has a long history of volunteering and is currently involved in seven different organizations in western Elgin County.

He said it's a struggle to attract new members to the club and finds that people are too busy with work and families to get involved.

A victim of burnout himself a time or two, McIntyre said it happens because it falls to the same group of people within an organization to help out over and over again.

With many organizations facing declining membership, there becomes fewer and fewer people to do the work.

He said about 50 per cent of the Optimist Club membership are active and that more membership would at least help increase the number of people actively organizing and running their projects.

Robert White says in the West Lorne Legion Branch, it's 15 per cent at best of its active membership that come out to help with events.

AR 104

Continued on Page 2

## High school fates put in Kennedy's hands as board waits for moratorium results

For The Chronicle

The future of small high schools in the Thames Valley District School Board is in the provincial government's hands.

That's the message trustees want delivered to education minister Gerard Kennedy, after they deferred consideration last Tuesday of an accommodation review committee's report on Norwich District High School, and quickly dispatched

findings of another review of four high schools including West Elgin Secondary School, to administration for comment.

"It's their responsibility to provide adequate funding for rural schools," Oxford trustee Graham Hart said.

In both reviews, the community-based committees have recommended rural high schools remain open in spite of small enrolment and the impact that has on the

breadth of program offerings.

But the provincial government has said it is reviewing its education funding formula in recognition of the importance of rural schools, and has asked school boards to hold off on closures.

Elgin trustee Linda Stevenson said, "It's very hard to have a discussion with the unknown factor of what's going on with the moratorium."

## Aldborough students learn about Flat Stanley

The Grade 2 students at Aldborough Public School have been reading the novel Flat Stanley by Jeff Brown.

In this story a boy gets flattened by a bulletin board and travels by mail to visit a friend.

Dale Hubert, a London teacher, has taken this character and created a Web site where schools and other groups are encouraged to send Flat Stanley to different places in the world.

This has become such a popular project that the publishers of the novel include a paper Flat Stanley at the back of each book. Flat Stanley has travelled all over the world with children and different famous actors and actresses, appeared on the Rosie O'Donnell show, and has even flown on a space



Dale Hubert was at Alborough school to talk about the Flat Stanley project.

shuttle. The project has encouraged communication with other cultures and given many children an insight into how others around the world live.

Each child in the Grade 2 classes sent Flat Stanley to someone they knew.

Flat Stanley has travelled

from Rodney to different Canadian provinces such as British Columbia, Alberta, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, to many towns and cities in Ontario and to such countries as England, India, Makau, Australia, Belgium, and the Netherlands.



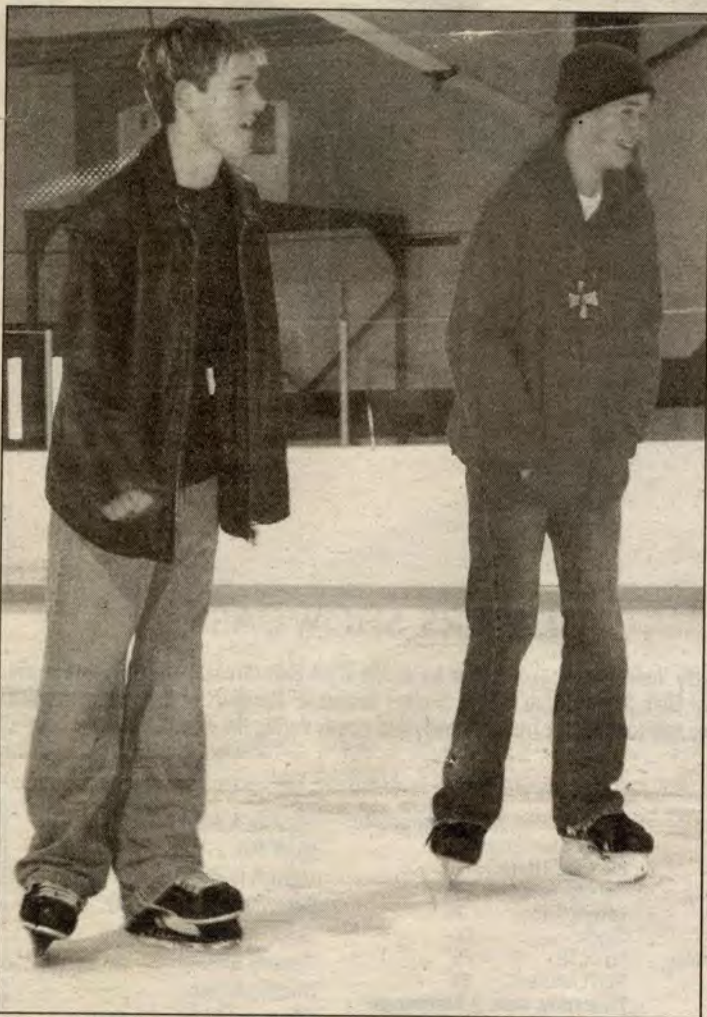
ALL THAT JAZZ

CONTRIBUTED

Mike Bennett, Jen Pinder and Mark Godfrey warm up for their performance Saturday night at the West Elgin Choral Society's 1950s-style concert at West Elgin Secondary School.



# World issues class raises money for Canadian Land Mine Foundation



Phil Fordham and Andrew Okolisan were among the West Elgin Secondary School students who took part in a buy-out that let them leave class to go skating in support of a world issues class fund raising project.

JAN. 15/04 Chronicle photo

By Scott Hilgendorff  
The Chronicle

Challenged to make a difference in the world, about 100 West Elgin Secondary School students turned out for a fund raising skating event Friday at the West Lorne Arena.

"I think it was a big success. There were a lot more kids here than I thought there'd be," said Adam McKillop, whose Grade 12 world issues class organized the event.

Students could pay to leave school an hour-and-a-half early to go skating Friday afternoon with the proceeds going toward the Canadian Land mine Foundation.

The idea stemmed from a unit in the world issues class about quality of life in the world.

"We looked at poverty and how developing nations are affected by it," said Jennifer Nielsen, who teaches the class.

From there, students examined other factors that cause a poor quality of life from war to economic factors.

The issues seemed overwhelming and far away to the students but she said to them, "It's not like we can't do something about it."

"WE HAD SOME FUN, MADE SOME MONEY FOR A GOOD CAUSE AND IT WASN'T THAT DIFFICULT,"

— Jan Kool, Grade 12 world issues student

She challenged the students earlier in the year to come up with a project that could help make a difference on a world-wide scale.

"The whole purpose was to gain awareness of world issues and have the whole class do something about it, rather than just accept that (bad things) happen," said Nielsen.

Jan Kool, another student in the class suggested

the skating idea.

They had heard from a guest speaker from Toronto, representing the Canadian Land mine Foundation that helps find and dispose of land mines littering countryside after conflicts and wars.

The class decided to donate the money raised to this project.

Kool said it was surprising to realize just how easy it was to do something that could help people in another country.

"We had some fun, made some money for a good cause and it wasn't that difficult," he said, adding it only took about a half-hour to put the project together.

Together, they raised \$400 following \$100 in expenses.

# Half pints bring big message

By Suzanne McGregor  
The Chronicle

No matter what obstacles you must overcome, your dreams and goals are all achievable.

This was the message delivered to the students, staff and parents at St. Mary's School in West Lorne on Friday by "The Canadian Half Pints".

Averaging about four-feet tall, the Canadian Half Pints travel across Canada, visiting three schools a day, 200 days of the year, all in fun.

But part of that fun is helping kids gain a new appreciation for the value of not letting appearance or differences stand in the way of friendship, fair play and fulfilling your dreams.

The team is owned by Phil "Whipper" Watson, a champion wrestler, and son of wrestling champion "Whipper" Billy Watson, whose fans of his generation knew him not only for his ability in the ring, but his fund raising and crusading for children with physical disabilities.

The spokesperson for the team visiting St. Mary's on Friday was Stewart "Speedy" Downs who grew up in Ridgetown.

Stewart's father was a midget wrestler, Murray "Little Bruiser" Downs, and this is how "Speedy" met Phil "Whipper" Watson.

When he was 16, Speedy went on the road with the team, finishing his education on tour.

Now he is the team's leading three-

Continued on Page 3

The Chronicle

# Enrollment up at WESS, grand reopening soon

By Larry Schneider  
West Elgin Secondary School Principal

West Elgin Secondary School is back in session for the 2004-2005 school year, and is indeed a very active place. Our enrollment is up even more, to 552 students, with many new families having moved into the area.

This is the highest enrollment we have had for quite a few years, and the place has a happy, full feeling to it.

The school is busy all day long, from early morning practices and band rehearsals starting at 7:30 a.m. to after-school practices and tryouts for football, volleyball, basketball, field hockey, cross-country and golf.

Students are busy with their studies, seeking extra help at noon from the mathematics teachers and others, and taking part in various extra-curricular activities. We are very proud of the students who recently brought back the United Way truck pull school championship from St. Thomas, the students and staff who entered teams into the Rodney-Aldbrough Fair's Farm Olympics, and to the many students whose art work will now be seen by the public, as WESS and the murals in it halls have now been included in the "Wet Paint! Murals in Elgin County" brochure put out by

the Tourist Association.

Our first early report for Grade 9 students will be sent home with students on September 28, followed by a Grade 9 Parent Interview Night on October 6. The first report for all students will be issued on October 26, with a Parents' Night being held on October 27.

We welcome back to WESS Mr. Mel Moniz, as our new Vice-Principal. Mr. Moniz was previously a tech teacher and the Head of Technology here. We also welcome Mr. David Machado here to teach Mathematics for this year, and Mrs. Mary Ann Charron, who is returning to us from A.B. Lucas SS.

Grade 9 welcoming day will be held on Friday, September 24, as will our first dance of the year. Our Commencement exercises will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, October 30.

We are very happy and excited to have two brand new science labs, rooms 19 and 20, which have been totally refurbished by the Thames Valley District School Board, as well as new air cleaning and conditioning systems in all four of our science labs.

Stay tuned for word of



Larry Schneider

the official grand opening of this revitalized area of the school. Several classrooms got new floors, blinds, bulletin boards and paint over the last few months, and we have new appliances in the family studies room, the science office and the gym.

We have new mats for high jump and for the Gym floor, and have had repairs done to the basketball nets, lifts in the auto shop, and electrical services throughout the building.

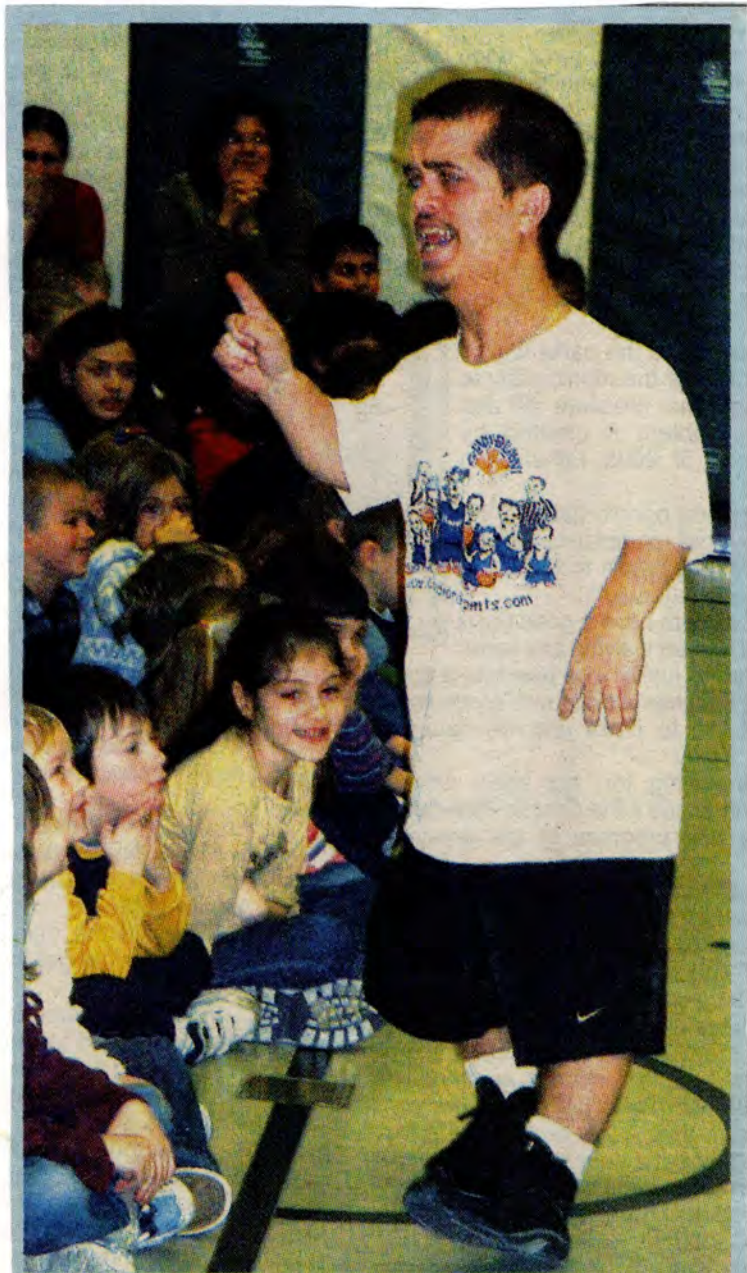
Grade 10 students and those who have been previously unsuccessful in writing it will write the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test on the mornings of October 27 and 28.

Students should be preparing for this test using the booklet given to them in the spring, plus by increasing the amount and varying the types of reading and writing that they do.

Last year 81% of our students passed the test on the first attempt, and we will again this year be having a Literacy Test Preparation Week from October 18-21.

Your local secondary school needs your support. In my next column I will write about current financial needs of the school, including the need for a new scoreboard for the gym.

Reach me at: 768-1350



## SPEEDY'S MESSAGE

Stewart "Speedy" Downs of The Canadian Half Pints shares an inspiring message with students at St. Mary's School in West Lorne Friday.

Chronicle photo





**ANGELIC CAUSE...**

Snow Angels Spreading Hope was the name of the event that took place across the Catholic School board Monday. In West Lorne, 221 students and staff joined schools across the board in making snow angels at 2 p.m. The goal was to set a Guinness World Record while also prayerfully giving support to the board's Supervisor of Recreation Programs and Resources, Hans Janssen. The 26-year employee is battling cancer.

*Chronicle photo*



The Chronicle



**CHATEAU LA ROACH...**

Members of West Elgin Secondary School's Wildcat Theatre presented the dramatic comedy, "Chateau La Roach". A dinner was offered to the public before the Friday night performance. The production was also run during week for students to enjoy.

*Chronicle photo*

The Chronicle

JAN 29/04

**SPORTS**



Rishi Sharma, above, and Stefan Agaba, right, both of Aldborough Public School were at St. Mary's School in West Lorne Friday for the Knights of Columbus Free Throw Competition. Students move on to district, regional and national competitions.

*Chronicle photo*



**Public unites keeping rural schools alive**

FOR THE CHRONICLE

Wearing a paper yellow heart for her threatened high school pinned to her pullover, Glencoe District High School student Sarah Doub on Monday summed up the rural schools issue for her audience of about 80 people.

"They need to stop looking at calculators and start looking at us."

She wasn't alone in her criticism of a provincial education funding formula which is based on numbers of students and places next to no value on schools which are the cornerstones on their small communities.

"Everything right now is coming down to dollars and cents," said Doub, a Grade 12 graduate who returned this

month to Glencoe for extra credits.

But she also was one of a number of people who proposed a variety of solutions at a public meeting Monday at the Dutton Community Centre on the future of rural schools, organized as a provincial moratorium on school closings comes to an end.

To preserve Ontario's rural schools is to promote a viable alternative in rural communities for the province's future, said Pat Smith of Burgessville, the chair of the Ontario Rural Council, an advocate for rural communities.

"We are part of the solution - not part of a problem," she said.

The 2-1/2 hour session featured prominent public education supporter Annie Kidder, a

*Continued on Page 2*

**Free throw competition unfolds**

The 6495 West Elgin chapter of the Knights of Columbus hosted a free throw competition Friday at St. Mary's School.

Local winners include:

- Emily Varga - 10 yr girl - Aldborough School
- Kyle Oliveira - 10 yr boy - St. Mary's School
- Rebekah Brayton - 11 yr girl - St. Mary's School
- Rishi Sharma - 11 yr boy - Aldborough School
- Brodi Jewell - 12 yr girl - WESES
- Allan Percival - 12 yr boy - WESES
- Alanah Sutton - 13 yr girl - WESES
- Nadia Kelman (runner up) St. Mary's.

Justin Hwang - 13 yr boy - St. Mary's School

Kim Kriker - 14 yr girl - WESES  
Robert Nute - 14 yr boy - WESES  
Kelman will move on to St. Anne's in Blenheim Blenheim District Jan. 31 in Sutton's place who cannot attend. The rest of the winners also advance to the district round.





## Congratulations

### West Elgin Secondary School

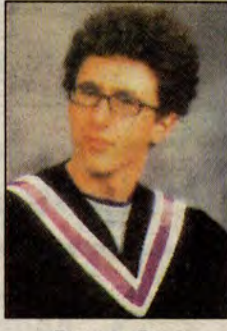


## Ontario Scholars

Page 8 ~ November 4, 2004



**Daniyel Bint**  
From: Dutton  
Parents: Eugene & Sandra  
Attending: Mohawk  
College in Hamilton, Ont.  
Enrolled in: Tourism and  
Travel



**Donavon Boyd**  
From: Dutton  
Parents: Tab & Cindy  
Attending: Royal Military  
College  
Enrolled in: Civil  
Engineering, Officer Cadet



JEFF KEMPENAAR/CHRONICLE  
Cameron McWilliam speaks to fellow graduates as  
2003-2004 Valedictorian at the WESS commencement  
Oct. 30 in the gymnasium.



**Kelly Charron**  
From: West Lorne  
Parents: Ray & Barb  
Attending: Brock  
University  
Enrolled in: Child and  
Youth Studies



**Chhavi Dhankar**  
From: West Lorne  
Parents: Bir & Kuntal  
Attending: University of  
Waterloo  
Enrolled in: Mechatronic  
Engineering



**Jenn Dupuis**  
From: Rodney  
Parents: David & Wendie  
Attending: Brescia College  
at UWO  
Enrolled in: Visual Arts



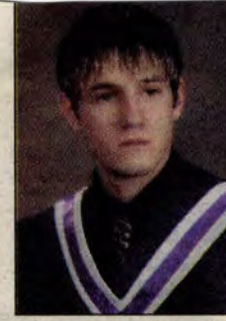
**Jake Fischer**  
From: Rodney  
Parents: Dennis & Sandra  
Attending: University of  
Guelph  
Enrolled in: Political  
Sciences



**Ashlee Fleming**  
From: Rodney  
Parents: Ian & Kim  
Attending: University of  
Western Ontario  
Enrolled in: Mathematics  
(Science)



**Jonathan Fleming**  
From: Rodney  
Parents: Frank & Shelley  
Attending: University of  
Guelph  
Enrolled in: Turf  
Management



**Phil Fordham**  
From: Rodney  
Parents: Ron & Andrea  
Working at: E.L. Fordham  
Motors in parts department  
Plans to go to: Georgian  
College



**Andrew Coates**  
From: Rodney  
Parents: Nick & Jane  
Attending: University of  
Waterloo  
Enrolled in: Computer  
Sciences



**Michelle Cotie**  
From: Dutton  
Parents: Paul & Elaine  
Attending: University of  
Western Ontario  
Enrolled in: Health  
Sciences.



**Sean Grant**  
From: Dutton  
Parents: Steve & Tracy  
Attending: University of  
Guelph  
Enrolled in: Honours BSC  
Psychology



**Becky Gray**  
From: West Lorne  
Parents: Bob & Elaine  
Attending: University of  
Western Ontario  
Enrolled in: Visual Arts



**Vanessa Gray**  
From: West Lorne  
Parents: Bob & Elaine  
Attending: University of  
Western Ontario  
Enrolled in: Music



**Meaghan Hay**  
From: West Lorne  
Parents: Curtis & Chris  
Attending: King's  
College at UWO  
Enrolled in: Social  
Sciences



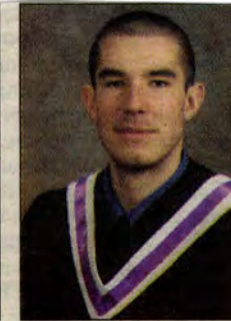
**Melanie Howard**  
From: West Lorne  
Parents: Elaine & Larry  
Attending: Brescia College  
at UWO  
Enrolled in: Social  
Sciences.



**Cheri Hunter**  
From: Iona Station  
Parents: Hugh & Nancy  
Attending: Sir Sanford  
Fleming College  
Enrolled in: Physiotherapy  
Assistant



**Jessie Jones**  
From: Dutton  
Parents: Marion & Stephen  
Attending: University of  
Guelph  
Enrolled in: General Arts  
and Sciences



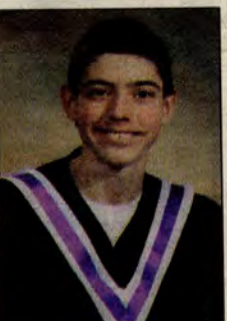
**Kristopher Kieraszewicz**  
From: Rodney  
Parents: Andrew and Laura  
Attending: University of  
Waterloo  
Enrolled in: Life Sciences



**Shannon Kindornay**  
From: Dutton  
Parents: Linda & Lambert  
Dekort and Louis &  
Carolyn Kindornay  
Attending: Sir Wilfrid  
Laurier  
Enrolled in: English and  
Political Sciences



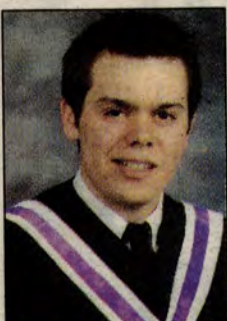
**Rebecca Kosciak**  
From: West Lorne  
Parents: Riche Kosciak and  
Heather St. Jacques  
Attending: University of  
Toronto  
Enrolled in: Arts and Sciences



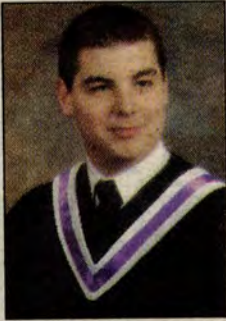
**Matthew LeBlanc**  
From: West Lorne  
Parents: Darlene Stacey  
& Phil LeBlanc  
Working



**Jane McGill**  
From: West Lorne  
Parents: Brian & Nancy  
McGill  
Attending: WESS



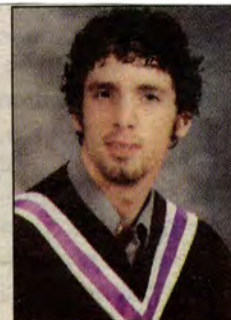
**Morgan McWilliam**  
From: Dutton  
Parents: Cameron & Anne  
Marie  
Attending: UWO  
Enrolled in: Biological &  
Medical Sciences



**Matt Mistele**  
From: Rodney  
Parents: Paul & Carol  
Attending: University of  
Waterloo  
Enrolled in: Software  
Engineering COOP



**Carolyn Tunks**  
From: Rodney  
Parents: John & Wendy  
Attending: Queens  
University  
Enrolled in: Arts and  
Sciences



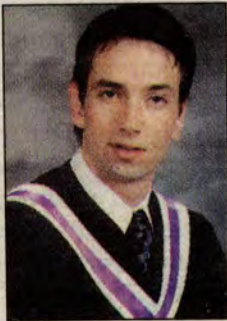
**Adam Weed**  
From: West Lorne  
Parents: Don & Marg  
Attending: University of  
Guelph  
Enrolled in: Wildlife  
Management



**Carla Oliviera**  
From: West Lorne  
Parents: Carlos & Ilda  
Attending: Seneca  
College  
Enrolled in: Law Clerk



**Jennifer Pinder**  
From: Rodney  
Parents: Janet & Bryan  
Attending: Humber  
College  
Enrolled in: Music



**Drew Roberts**  
From: Wallacetown  
Parents: Gary & Edie  
Attending: University of  
Waterloo  
Enrolled in: Computer  
Sciences COOP



**Jeff Sedge**  
From: Iona Station  
Parents: Jack & Debby  
Attending: Fanshawe  
College  
Enrolled in: Industrial  
Maintenance Millwright



**Richa Sharma**  
From: Rodney  
Parents: Anji & Shelly  
Attending: University of  
Western Ontario  
Enrolled in: Medical  
Sciences



**Erin Smith**  
From: Rodney  
Parents: William &  
Deborah  
Attending: University of  
Western Ontario  
Enrolled in: Kinesiology

**Jen Browne**  
From: West Lorne  
Parents: Steve & Brenda  
Attending: University of  
Western Ontario  
Enrolled in: Arts  
Photo Not Available



# EDUCATION 2004

| Other graduates of class of 2004 |                     |                 |                | John McWilliam  | Jeremy Ritchie   | Robert Thomson    |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Robert Bedford                   | Andrew Conway       | Jayne Ford      | Scott Houston  | Katie Nute      | David Rivard     | Alexandra Trudell |
| Nathan Beke                      | Trevor Crawford     | Jennifer Ford   | Gregory Howse  | Stacey Oliveira | Nicole Ross      | Jeremy Vandyk     |
| Anthony Berkelmans               | Clayton Deyle       | Kirk Geiser     | Rebecca Kalita | Natasha Parish  | Kelly Ryan       | Matthew VanDyk    |
| Bryan Blanchard                  | Whitney Deyle       | Kendra Goos     | Tiffany Kalita | Stacey Penney   | Eric Sanderson   | Robyn Vanoirschot |
| Carlos Brasil                    | Cody Dinga          | Sean Grant      | Ashley Keane   | Anita Pessoa    | Angela Sanford   | Karon Waite       |
| Jenna Campbell                   | Donald Drummelsmith | Brianne Hein    | Ashton Keith   | Ryan Petz       | Karl Schramowsky | Ashley Welch      |
| Angela Clark                     | Jonathan Dryfhout   | Derek Kersten K |                | Aaron Reed      | Ryan Sinclair    | Johnathan Woolse  |
| Taryn Clements                   | Deniza Fagundes     |                 |                | Megan Regnier   | Megan Slaats     |                   |

## Learning continues on with life after high school comes to an end

### Exert from Valedictorian speech by Morgan McWilliam

From our teachers at West Elgin we have learned a lot of things on a variety of topics. In my opinion there are two important concepts we should take from high school. First of all, we learned to think for ourselves, rather than being told what to think. This idea is best stated by Aristotle, "It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it". Rote memorization is a great talent, but accepting things we are taught without question or

thought isn't learning at all. The second most important idea we learned, more from experience than formal schooling, was that there are many untested morals and values along with our academic knowledge that we learn not for school, but for life after school. This idea is enshrined in our school's motto, "Non scholae sed vitae discimus". Along with this idea goes the idea that education doesn't end with school. Most of us have always known education doesn't end with school. We know this because it never began at school, but at home with our

families. By the time most of us started school in JK or Grade 1, we had learned enough from our parents and families to qualify for a PhD in being a child and human. We had learned how to tie our shoes, eat by ourselves, and, most importantly, we couldn't defy gravity at significant heights by flapping our arms. So, we were educated at school and continued to be educated at home. Up through high school this continued, all the while we received the love, encouragement, and support we had always received from our parents. Anyone who played

sports as a child or young adolescent is certainly familiar with the pre- and post- game chat Dad, or sometimes Mom, administered on the way to and from the games. There was always the usual give 110 per cent, teamwork, have fun, or you need to improve this. We may not have always appreciated this advice and encouragement; but, looking back at sorts and other extracurricular activities in high school, this was the stuff we needed to hear to keep us motivated and desiring improvement, especially after tough losses or setbacks.

### Ontario Scholars Returning to West Elgin Secondary School

Jayne Ford, Joshua Giles, Craig Hogleund, Jan Kool, Hilary Kriter, Katie Lyon, Adam McKillop and Joleen Pernal



# WEST given reprieve

Jeff Kempenaar  
Staff

West Elgin Secondary School scored a partial victory last week shoring up bridge funding for a temporary educational assistant.

At stake, the Wildcats Employment Skills Training program for high risk students that would have otherwise dropped out of school or struggled meeting academic requirements.

Starting on the first day of school, this week one EA will be in the classroom with students.

"This is not the full step where we want to be but it's better than not having an EA at all," said Principal Larry Schneider.

In the spring, the high school was allocated zero EAs, which would have reduced significantly the amount of support students in the WEST program would have received.

Members of the school's council and trustee Linda Stevenson went to bat for the school requesting at least two EAs to support the program.

At the board meeting Aug. 30, a motion was passed to table the special education budget for six weeks and find a stable source to fund EAs at WESS.

Meanwhile, Schneider received bridge funding for that six weeks from his superintendent Don Blair.

During budget deliberations last month the special education department with the Thames Valley District School Board received an extra \$600,000 to offset a budget deficit.

Still that did not solidify funding for the WEST program.

"We hope that when things come off the table, we'll have long-term funding for EAs," said Schneider.

He added this year, WESS has the highest enrollment he's seen in his 22 years with the school.

"If it's not 600 students it's 599," he said.



**Back to school**

Students board the bus at B&J Variety in West Lorne Tuesday morning on their way to Aldborough Public School for their first day back.

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

## Students trying to get to co-op jobs having to find their own transportation

from page 1

"The board policy is for safety reasons. They want to know and be aware of where the students are going," said St. Mary's Principal John Lavereau.

One St. Mary's student was in walking distance to school but went to Dutton Day Care after school.

The child was not allowed to take a bus to Dutton because of the policy.

Pam Parezanovic said the policies have made it tough for St. Mary's parents from Dutton to use the day care's after school programs.

However, students are being dropped off from St. Mary's at Dunwich-Dutton Public School and then walk with a counsellor to the

day care.

Twice this year, parents have appealed to change the policy for their students attending West Elgin Secondary School.

Both incidents were resolved, says Principal Larry Schneider.

High school students often go to a part-time job after school, but not every day.

Luckily, students at the school have found transportation on their own from peers with vehicles, said Schneider.

Schneider said about 24 students have to rely on other modes of transportation to get to part-time jobs. Some of those students drive themselves into school anyway.

Schneider said the bus system in western Elgin County is one of the most effective in

the world and has received attention from around the world.

With 22 routes, 1,200 students are going to four different schools and each bus is full with nearly 55 students said Okolisan.

Any flexibility is hard to accommodate with buses being so full, and it changing stops for students adds pressure to the drivers.

"We can't cheat the system anymore," said Okolisan. "We used to drop kids off anywhere they wanted. It's not so much a liability issue. If a five year old gets off at the wrong stop, their parent is going to be really mad."

He said a stop could easily be created at the library if a little pressure was put on the board.

"There's some red tape you have to go through," said Okolisan.

### Stone soup

Junior kindergarten students, Gracie Carr and Mason Lopes help prepare stone soup at St. Mary's Catholic School last week. The students had read the story Stone Soup by Marcia Brown in class. The story is about a poor man who wandered into town. All he had in the world was a stone. He wanted to make a soup and said it would taste better with other ingredients. So villagers all come together and added more ingredients to complete the soup. The students ate the soup at lunchtime.

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE



## West Lorne girls go undefeated

Jeff Kempenaar  
Staff

The West Lorne girl's under nine soccer team out ran and out kicked Shedden Aug. 3 to complete an undefeated season.

Thirteen games played, twelve games won and one draw remains on a stunning season.

"These girls are amazing," said head coach Michael Agbaba.

Practicing hard once a week and the fact they never stop running during the game, lifted the team above all the rest in the South Western Elgin Middlesex Soccer Association, said the coach.

"It's easier to coach girls who really want to play," said Agbaba.

In a 7-1 whopping over Shedden, goals came from all over.

Natasha Agbaba popped in two goals in the first half, following her mark as

one of the team's top scorers.

Another top scorer, Khloe Beer also scored in the first half.

Shannon Pyka, Anastasia Machado and another top scorer Taylor Faircloth also scored.

The team let in few goals this year, thanks to excellent goaltending from Tina Lettner, who also scored in the final game.

Lettner played midfield after her team got a large enough lead and Carley Oliviera took over in goal.

Carley's dad Paulo helped as assistant coach this year.

Other players who helped the team accomplish an undefeated record were, Emma DeWit, Alyssa Paiva, Allison Rose and Sierra Poels.

Adding speed to the team were Meghan Azevedo and Meagan Grant.

Now, the team looks forward to a tournament in West Lorne Aug. 13.



**West Lorne Girls out run the league**

Khloe Beer makes her move on Jordan Higgs for Shedden during a Girl's U-9 soccer match Aug. 3 in West Lorne. The home team won 7-1.

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE





### WESS play a knockout knee-slapper

Mr. Maxwell (Mike Gilbert) fights boxer Herman Ninety-Volt (Tyson Smith) when he arrives home to find his house has been turned into a boarding house in the senior drama class of West Elgin Secondary Schools' production of the Boarding House Reach running for three shows this weekend in the cafeteria. See more about the light-hearted comedy on page 10.

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

### St. Mary's students raise money

The student body of St. Mary's school held a penny drive during WildLife Week and raised \$400 to adopt nine endangered animals through the World Wildlife Federation. Here is Jackie Lawley and Matt Westelaken, leaders of the environmental committee at the school with teacher Jean Dupuis on the last day of school.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

### Tourism students show the world

Travel and Tourism students at West Elgin Secondary School presented their research projects in the cafeteria Jan. 25. Chad Cross plays the didgeridoo as part of his presentation on Australia.



SUBMITTED

### APS reach volleyball finals

The Aldborough P.S. Junior Girls volleyball team were finalists in the AA division at the TVDSB volleyball tournament on Dec. 14 in St. Thomas. Team members are (front row - left to right): Alexandria Shaw, Mary Jane Miller, Anna Kelly, Madison Redman, Amanda Bobier, Jennica Slaats (back row - left to right): Gina Toth, Brandee Blanchard, Abbey Fleming, Rebbe West, Natasha Cameron, Taylor Gibson, Alex Goos.



### Don't drink and drive poster competition

SUBMITTED

Jessalyn Betsch, 11 years old won third in MADD Elgin County's annual Don't Drink Poster Competition at Aldborough Public School. She received a certificate from Brenda Webber, a representative from the Elgin-St. Thomas Mothers Against Drunk



THE CHRONICLE

### Wildcats win silver at WOSSAA

West Elgin Wildcats, TVRAA A senior boys volleyball champions and WOSSAA silver medalists, from left, are: laying in front with plaque, Brian Azevedo, Mike Gilbert; first row — Brian Lilley, Kris Oliveira, Aaron Cowell, Dave McWilliam, Mark Godfrey, Shawn Zimmerman; back — coach Kelly Welch, Kyle Mylrea, Jeremy Koscik, Mike Lyons, manager B.J. Schleichauf, Matt Soos, Wes McLandress, Dan Sutton.

## West Elgin Gymnastic Club ready to roll this month

As fall approaches, parents are beginning to consider activities and opportunities that their children can participate in, without making the drive into London. West Elgin proudly hosts a Gymnastics Program that is parent driven, community sponsored and led by topnotch coaches. It runs for 12 week sessions, beginning Sept. 24, on Saturday mornings at the Rodney Recreation Centre. Last year, members came from Bothwell, Newbury, Glencoe, Dutton, Wallacetown and West Elgin.

This is a recreational gymnastics program which helps children between the ages of 4-12 focus on safety and fun. Both boys and girls develop skills

and fitness, using a wide range of activities and equipment. A parent/tot program is also offered for children between the ages of 18 month - 3 years. Kinderym is for four-year-olds. 5-12 year olds are taught in a small group, with advanced skill classes being 1-1/2 hrs long. Equipment ranges from small balls, bean bags, hula hoops, skipping ropes, to large and small mats, mini-trampolines, uneven bars, high and low balance beams and the vault. Parents are able to watch the lessons while enjoying a coffee and social visit with one another.

Our coaches travel from the Forest City Gym Club in London. Their excellent leadership and patience

with our children is what makes the program so enjoyable for all of us.

Along with a Trillium grant, several local businesses and service clubs have assisted in purchasing the equipment over the years.

Parents pay a registration fee, which covers the coaching time.

Each family is expected to assist with either set up or take down of the equipment three times over the session, but otherwise no extra fund-raising is required of the parents. If parents are unable to do the set up/take down, they can send a neighbour, friend or other family member in their place.

The support from the Municipality of West Elgin and the community at large is the key to our success.

This program does fill up, so if parents are interested, it is important to take advantage of the registration times on Aug. 25 and Aug. 26 from 6 to 8 p.m.; and Aug. 27 from 10 to 12.

We will not be able to accept late or phone registrations this year. If you have questions, please contact Michelle Milburn at 785-3007, but you must register for our fall session at one of the dates listed above. We encourage you to take advantage of this excellent community recreational program.

Fitness, fun, and friendship awaits your child.