

June 1, 2006

Public buildings to get fire alarms

Jeff Kempenaar
Staff

West Elgin is putting new fire alarms in its buildings in the wake of the West Lorne Community Complex fire in February.

The Complex had three smoke detectors upstairs and two downstairs.

However, there was no alarm system to trigger an emergency response to the fire.

A witness placed a call to 911.

"The smoke detectors worked perfectly. The firemen heard them while going in," said Jeff Slater, recreation superintendent.

Smoke alarms would add valuable time to emergency response.

Council approved tenders for smoke alarm systems for the Rodney Recreation Centre and the West Elgin Pool.

Neither of these buildings have any kind of smoke or heat detectors.

"It sounds crazy," said Slater. "But when they were built it wasn't needed in the code. There wasn't the occupancy levels. You don't need detectors if no one is around to hear them."

Estimated costs for the fire alarms are \$3,130 for the pool and \$11,979 for the recreation centre.

Costs are high as detectors are needed throughout each building.

The alarm is received by ECM Security who then contact emergency services and start contacting municipal leaders.

"The day of the fire we said we would do this," said Mayor Graham Warwick at the May 25 meeting. "We could have saved the building."

Plans for the Complex include a fire alarm system.

Dutton/Dunwich Community Centre has no smoke detectors either with no immediate plans to purchase a system.

Grace Lutheran Church celebrating 50 years

Sunday June 11 will be a memorable occasion in the church life of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, West Lorne.

It was 50 years ago, June 10, 1956, that the congregation gathered in a brand new building for the official opening and dedication, with three special worship services throughout the day.

We invite former members and friends to our joyous event at 4 p.m. to give thanks to God and celebrate with us: "Fifty years of dwelling in God's house and praising him" (Psalm 84).

Our guest preacher is Rev. Paul Pollex of St. Thomas.

A choir for this day, composed of voices from several choirs is also preparing special music.



SUSAN BRADNAM The London Free Press

GIDDY-UP: West Elgin Mayor Graham Warwick, left, and Jessica McKillen, community development worker with the West Elgin Community Health Centre, catch a ride on the Iona Overland stagecoach at an event to promote the Cowboy Festival in West Lorne July 29.

COWBOYS: In the end, writer decides that he's no cowboy

From Page C1

And if it's cowboys — or cowgirls — you want, you'll see them at the Cactus, Cattle and Cowboys event in downtown West Lorne beginning July 29.

Festivities kick off with a farmers market in the morning, followed by a horse parade at noon and live enter-

tainment from 4 to 8 p.m.

Horse owners can mount their steeds for an afternoon trail ride Saturday, or join another one Sunday.

After failing my lasso lesson, I'm nervous about heading for a horseback ride — until I see the stagecoach behind the towering animals. I wonder if bandits have

ever tried to rob the 19th-century-style wagon.

"I don't see any bullet holes or arrows in it, so I don't think so," says its owner, Ray Spooner.

I climb inside and feel the comfortable leather interior.

It's like other luxury rides I've cruised in before — only slower, with just four horses

for power.

And you do feel the road when the horses go going.

I consider making a heroic dive from the moving coach in a fleeting attempt to leave a dashing impression of myself.

Better not, I decide. I'm no cowboy.

rcureatz@lfpres.com

Grace Anglican gets Wilkinson works

FRANCES GILLARD HARVEY

Grace Anglican Church West Lorne

It is not unusual for a church to have colourful windows, but thanks to a local artist Grace Anglican Church in West Lorne has colourful walls as well.

The church in question is fortunate enough to have had installed five large paintings by Harry Wilkinson, four of which belong to a series called "Perception". The first is entitled "Am I finished or is this just the beginning?" It hangs at the front of the south wall and

depicts the emergence of the human spirit from the confines of the body.

The second, named "Elijah", has been placed on the north wall cater-corner from the first in order to achieve a balance. It portrays a figure being swept upward by a great power, just as Elijah was carried away after he had been separated from Elisha.

"Pentecost Two", the third of the series, hangs at the rear of the south wall and shows a number of individuals seated around a table. The colours are those of light and fire. This powerful painting embodies inspiration of varying levels, depending on the viewer's susceptibility to the spiritual nature of inspiration. It is open-ended, thus inviting the viewer to

placed at the back of the church, where it confronts people as they go out. "The Last Judgement" portrays a dark figure pleading his case before Christ on the cross.

The final painting is done in a completely different style. It is part of the "Purging" series and hangs opposite the first canvas. It is called "The Devil at Five o'clock" and represents the ultimate struggle of positive over negative. It depicts the conflict between the devil and St. Michael, whose foot is firmly planted upon the devil's head.

This series of Wilkinson's work is subjective and metaphoric, and as such, lends itself to interpretation by the viewer. Harry paints and teaches at his studio in Glasgow, where he lives with his

Former resident to play at White House

His Season, with lead singer, former West Lorne resident Laura Dugas (Wood) are playing the final night of the Lighting of the National Christmas Tree at the White House in Washington D.C.

The award winning gospel recording artists, based out of Guelph announced it will be performing at the White House Dec. 23 during the Christmas Pageant of Peace.

"Christmas is such a magical time of year," said Dugas in a release. "The wonderful season, along with the extensive history of this pageant, we are very honoured to be taking part and representing Canada at this event."

Known for their smooth harmonies, tight vocal blend, intricate arrangements, and dynamic solos have been travelling for over three years singing at churches, hockey games, charity events and festivals.

The Lighting of the National Christmas Tree Ceremony begins the three-week Pageant of Peace held each Christmas season at the Presidents Park in Washington, DC. In addition to this ceremony, visitors enjoy nightly musical performances by individuals and groups that have included the likes of Ricky Skaggs, CeCe Winans, Kimberly Locke, Billy Gilman, Lonestar and others.

His Season are currently one of the most actively booked gospel-recording artists in Canada and their first album was nationally nominated for best traditional gospel album by the Shai Awards.

They currently have over 150 concert venues on their books for 2006 and are looking to increase that number for 2007.

Yet, for now they'll put their tour on hold and take a short Christmas trip to Washington to take part in the Historical 83rd Christmas Pageant of Peace.

They will be performing the last night of the event on Dec. 23, starting at 5 p.m.

Researching local soldiers

►Historian supports Soldiers Wall of Fame

Historian Harley Lashbrook is gathering information about local people that served in the First and Second World Wars.

"No one is doing it and it's something I want done," he said.

The former reeve of West Lorne hopes to see biographies of local servicemen hanging in the Soldiers Wall of Fame in Bothwell.

The Wall of Fame has been growing year by year with information about area people that served in the great wars but little information has been found about people from Rodney and West Lorne.

With a list of 150 names supplied by the two local Legions, Lashbrook is compiling information about the soldiers service in the war.

"If I get that before many time is done I'll be satisfied," he said.

Anyone with information about those that served in the world wars from the West Lorne and Rodney area is asked to contact Harley Lashbrook at 519-768-1253.

New face on West Elgin council

New blood is joining West Elgin's municipal government as Jonathan Wolf was elected in Ward 2.

Wolf beat out three challengers to take the Ward 2 seat for his first-term, representing West Lorne and the northeastern half of the municipality.

Voting went: Wolf, 242, Mike Mooser, 167, Theo Van Dyk, 160 and Robert White, 85.

Wolf, 32 years-old was excited after being declared at the municipal office

Monday night in Rodney.

"I'm eager to begin," he said, adding he's confident he knocked on 90 per cent of the doors.

Wolf beat out long-time incumbent Mike Mooser who called to congratulate him.

"The people wanted a change. That's what politics is all about," said Mooser, who after 20 years serving West Elgin and the former village of West Lorne says he leaving politics.

"Life goes on. I'll

pack my golf clubs, grab my fishing pole and go fishing," he said.

Rodney area

In Ward 2, Mary Bodnar fended off businessman Keith Fretter for the second time and new comer Ed Roodzant.

Roodzant took votes from rural polls, as a co-owner of a Pioneer seed outlet.

"It was a good experience," said Roodzant. "I'll stick with farming."

Bodnar, 63, returns for her second term as council-

lor for Ward 1 which is comprised of Rodney, and the north western half of West Elgin.

"I feel relieved," said Bodnar. "I enjoy being involved in the community."

She hopes to restart area Citizens on Patrol, which has declined.

"It feels good to have the challenge for the next four years."

In Ward 2, votes went: Bodnar, 306, Fretter, 208, Roodzant, 119.

Fretter said people voted for change, more people voted against Bodnar.

Turnout was 28 per cent, 1,527.

Acclaimed Mayor Graham Warwick, Deputy Mayor Bernie Wiehle and Ward 3 councillor Trudy Balint.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Great Ride and Stride helped by A-xcavating

Right: Leola Lawrence and Mary Liepman of the West Elgin Daffodil Society accepts a cheque for \$1,200 from Frank VandenBoomen and Jerry VanDyk of A-xcavating to support the Great Ride and Stride for Cancer held in West Lorne and Dutton Sunday. Friends, family and community members walked around the community after raising more than \$8,000 for the event.



JEAN GUY ST JACQUES/THE CHRONICLE

Artist
Artist Jean Hunter from West Lorne, displays her paintings at the West Elgin Recreation Centre in Rodney. She was part of a Sept. 23 Road Rally that began at the Heritage Line Herbs in Richmond and ended at the Rodney Jail.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Oktoberfest Golf Tournament dedicated to Rosalie

Left: Lindsay Sleightholm of St. Thomas putts on the fifth green. Right: Mike Allegretti and Arlene Powell of Dutton warm up with coffee on the course. The second annual Oktoberfest Golf Tournament for the Daffodil Auxiliary was held Saturday at Dutton Meadows Golf Club. This year's tournament was dedicated to Rosalie Krebsz who helped organize the tournament last year and passed away after a courageous battle with cancer Aug. 12. Ninety-six golfers took part in the day and it was hoped \$10,000 was raised for the Daffodil Auxiliary.

Woman's death shocks family

Jeff Kempenaar
Staff

A 46-year-old West Lorne area woman was found dead last Friday morning after her car was discovered submerged in a deep backyard pond.

Cheryl Dinkel returned home around 2 a.m. from Donut Delite, where she had spent the evening with friends.

She was believed to be dropping minnows into her stocked pond before going into the house.

"Her feet must have been wet and she must have slipped and hit the gas," said her husband Manfred who waited beside the pond all day for a sight of the car.

She was found in her blue 1996 Taurus pulled from the pond late in the afternoon that day.

He called Elgin County OPP around 8 a.m. to report Cheryl missing.

Manfred went around town with an OPP officer looking for her and later, tire trails through the grass to the pond were discovered.

Gerald, the couple's only son together, waded into the pond in an attempt to find Cheryl.

"What could I do?" he said later at the scene after police began attaching caution tape to trees.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Woman's body pulled from pond

Manfred Dinkel waits for West Lorne firefighters to drain the pond where the body of his wife was later found by the OPP Underwater Rescue Unit.

Please see Investigation, page 2

Wetlands studied amid development pressure

Jeff Kempenaar
Staff

Potentially significant wetlands are being studied by the Ministry of Natural Resources around West Lorne amid pressure for development with expanding town boundaries.

The area around the village is considered a priority for the provincial agency where pressure for development is highest.

Erin Sanders, wetland evaluation technician with the Aylmer MNR office has been walking through woodlots between Queens Line and Thomson Line from Graham Road to Dunborough Line.

She's filling out a 30-page score card for each woodlot, with data about species of plants, wildlife and how often the woodlot is logged.

"There is a lot of pressure to develop in the

area," she said.

With wetlands already protected by the province, Sanders is looking at nearby woodlots like the West Lorne Forest to study the potential of more land being protected against development.

She said woodlots will be ranked giving the municipality information on where to direct development.

"There's not many woodlots left. You can drive down entire concessions without wooded areas," she said. "Whatever is left might be worth looking at."

She said the MNR figures 80 per cent of the forests that were found by early settlers in south-western Ontario are gone.

Her work has met roadblocks with landowners refusing her entry onto the property.

She's had to explain that her study does not

impact development or how the land is currently being used.

The data is used by the municipality which would make decisions on development and land use.

Sander is working on a list of 139 areas with wetlands.

West Lorne falls in Priority A, a grouping of lands with high pressure for development which also includes Westminster Ponds in London.

Further down the list are portions of old Aldborough Township in the Priority C group.

Dutton is also on the list and Sanders is working out a work schedule to possibly look at woodlots in the Dutton area in the near future.

Sanders was to look at more woodlots near West Lorne last Friday and more this week.

New pastor at West Lorne Baptist

West Lorne Baptist Church has welcomed its new pastor Adam Hall and his wife Rosalee.

They moved here from Leamington and are now settled into the manse.

We are very excited about their new ideas and we welcome you to come and meet this young couple.

We have several chances coming up to do so, including a pancake supper Feb. 19 at 5 p.m. and we are also planning a Welcome to West Lorne service and potluck supper for them March 4 at 3 p.m.

Everyone is welcome to come and join with us in a wonderful celebration.

If you have not been to this church in awhile, it's a good chance to come and see what's happening.

There is a Cornerstone Youth Drop-In-Centre every other Thursday evening at 6 p.m.

You'll know it's on if the light at the front is on.

Sunday School is held during the worship hour. Coffee and fellowship time is after the



New pastor
Adam Hall has come from Leamington to become pastor at the West Lorne Baptist Church with his wife Rosalee.

morning service.

If you missed seeing hip-hopers Jamie "The Mere Mortal" and Natasha Kinsmen bring the house down at our Christmas party (with about 75 people in attendance), don't worry they will be back.

We have a church with a history that is envisioning the future! The West Lorne Baptist Church is located at 197 Graham Street.

Our service is at 9:45 a.m. Sundays. Starting March 11 we'll be starting at 10 a.m. to give everyone a few more minutes to get there. FEB 15/07 THE CHRONICLE



Making ghosts

Jessica Stacey, Carlie Millman and Morgan Lopes make ceramic ghosts at the West Lorne Library Oct. 21 as part of library week.



Vote Nov. 13

Your candidates for councils in West Elgin:
Acclaimed: Mayor Graham Warwick, Deputy Mayor Bernie Wiehle, Ward 3 (Thomson Road South) Trudy Balint.

Your West Elgin Ward 1 Candidates

Mary Bodnar Rodney Age: 63 Retired

Community Involvement:

Secretary of Rodney and District Horticultural Society, area leader of West Elgin Neighbourhood Watch, community representative on Aldborough School Council, board member on West Elgin Community Health Centre, Friends of Four Counties Hospital. Committees: arena board, recreation centre, chamber of commerce, policing committee, Marketing Partners of



Western Elgin Region.

Important issues:

As a rural community, we strive to have the same services as urban areas.

Support to keep our schools and hospitals open. Bring tourism, we need to promote our business' at every possible out-of-town opportunities. Neighbourhood Watch and Community Policing Committee's strive for a safe community.

Edward Roodzant West Elgin 40 Farmer

Community Involvement:

Coach Hockey, Neighbourhood watch road captain, Canvas for cancer society.



Important issues:

Getting Furnival Rd. resurfaced with a pedestrian path along the road to the lake. The road is getting on very rough. A side walk to the

Aldborough school from the edge of town. Finding things to keep the kids busy. Working with the businesses to better our community. We live in an excellent area, central to Windsor and Kitchener. Many people are making a living on the road. Why not promote living in Rodney?

Third candidate Keith Fretter did not respond to the questionnaire.

Your West Elgin Ward 2 Candidates

Michael Mooser West Lorne • Age: 66 • Retired from London Hydro

Community Involvement:

Councillor for nine years, member of Tri-County Water Committee since 1991 (chairman since 2002), a member of West Lorne Legion since 1991. Member of West Lorne United Church, volunteer for West Elgin Legion and Kidney Foundation. Served as chairman for West Lorne Public Utilities Commission 1987 to 1997.



Important issues:

The Heritage Home Apartments for seniors is an important project. I also support local accessibility to a high school education; we should never have to consider the loss of West Elgin Secondary School. A safe and regulated water system, a solid infrastructure and a clean environment. Maintaining acceptable tax rates.

Theo Van Dyk West Lorne • Age: 62 • Retired farm industry

Community Involvement:

I have lived in the area since 1956, having moved recently with my wife Margaret from Rodney.



Now retired, I am interested in devoting my time to improving our community. Having spent many hours volunteering at local schools with my six grandchildren and have enjoyed my time to help others.

Looking after seniors and our youth populations. Seniors housing initiatives require attention as the population ages. Support the partners involved. Find ways to keep youth interested and active in our community.

Robert White West Elgin • Age: 57 • Long term disability, industrial safety trainer and fire fighter

Community Involvement:

I am founding member West Elgin Chamber of Commerce and the tourism chair, board member of St. Thomas Elgin Tourist Association, chair of Marketing Partners of Western Elgin Region, member of Canada Day committee and Christmas Parade committee, member in good standing of Branch



221 West Elgin Royal Canadian Legion.

Important issues:

We need a realistic and workable property standard act for our downtown cores. Our long term plan needs to support both growth of industry and maintenance of rural/family ways of life. We need to keep our schools open and funded. Seniors housing is also one of my priorities.

Jonathan Wolf West Lorne • Age: 32 • Inspector/consultant (Building Sciences Industry)

Community Involvement:

As a lifelong resident, I attended local schools and am involved in a family farm. I coach teams and am a member of both the Board of Directors for the West Lorne Minor Soccer Association and the West Elgin Parks and Recreation Committee. I also volunteer with the elderly.



Important issues:

Local issues for a sustainable municipality include maintaining health and social services provided at the West Elgin Community Health Centre and Four Counties Hospital, the expansion and improvement of our Water Treatment Facility, ensuring viability for rural schools, securing affordable housing for seniors and continued accessible garbage disposal.

Brower a top three ambassador

Szanadue Brower competed in the 2006 Canadian National Exhibition's Ambassador of the Fairs Competition Aug. 20 representing Rodney Aldborough Fair.

She finished 2nd runner-up (3rd place).

1st runner-up was Colleen O'Shea from Western Fair.

The 2006 Ambassador of the Fairs was Jocelyn Badder of Dresden Fair.

Brower's accomplishment continues a streak of local ambassadors finishing in the top three at the CNE competition.

Last year, RAAS Ambassador Richa Sharma finished third.

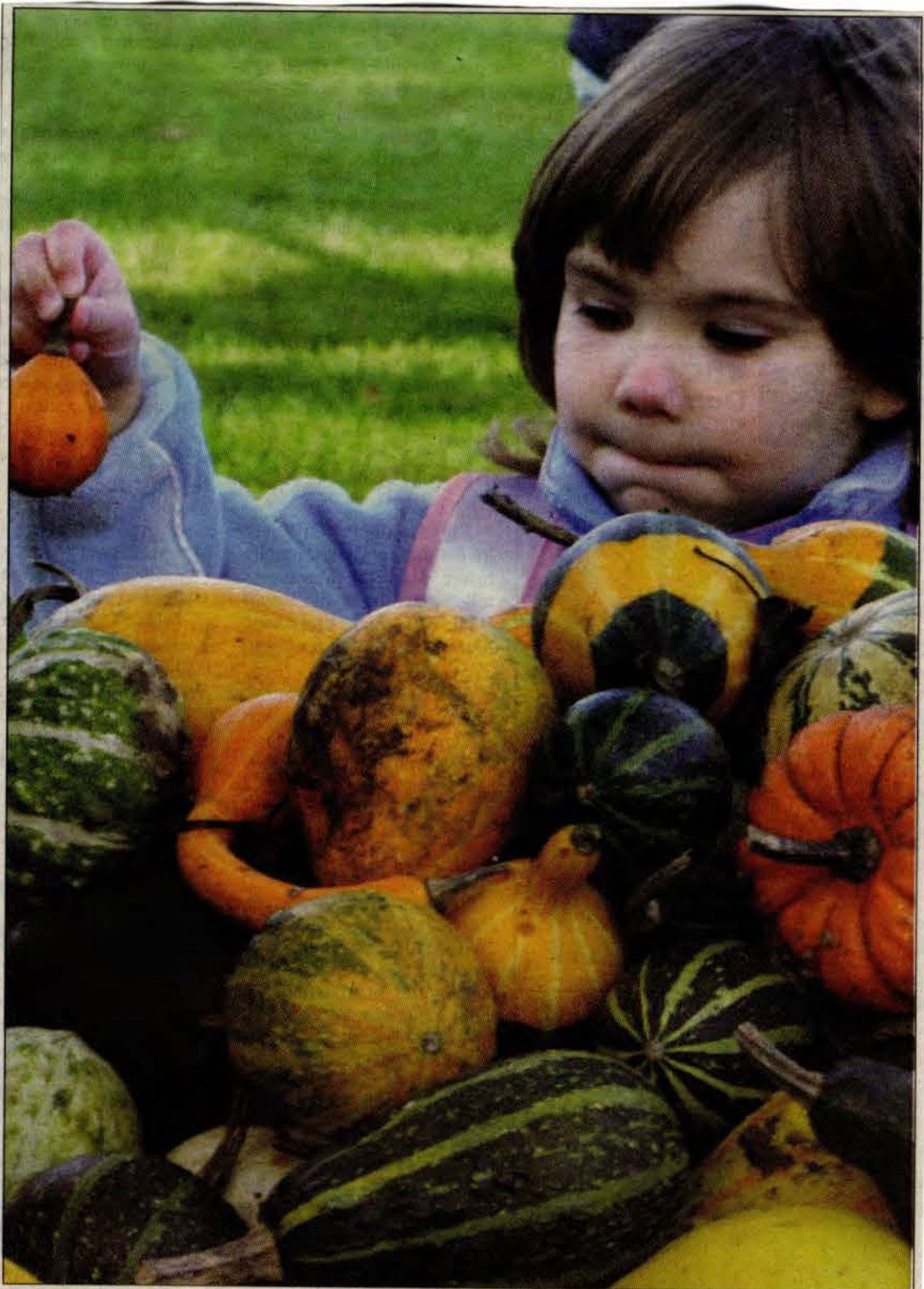
The year before that, Chris Enns, the Wallacetown Fair Ambassador won the competition.



Third in Ontario

Szanadue Brower finished third in the CNE Ambassador of the Fairs competition.

CONTRIBUTED



Gorgeous gourds

Kristen Lupsor, three, from Rodney finds a 'mini-pumpkin' amongst a pile of gourds at Jamieson's Pumpkin Patch October 5 on a visit with the Tiny Tots Nursery School.

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE



SUBMITTED

Watterworth returns for show

Kristyn Watterworth, shown here with one of her oil paintings at her studio in Bayfield, is coming home this weekend for a showing.

Her collection will be on display at the Watterworth Farm on Graham Road Nov. 4 and 5 starting a 11 a.m.

West Lorne Complex plan moves forward

West Elgin Council moved forward with plans to build an addition onto the library at the West Lorne Community Complex.

Council approved the Spriet and Associates engineer drawings at the meeting June 15.

West Elgin Mayor Graham Warwick wouldn't say how much reconstruction of the project would cost but said \$200,000 is budgeted.

The plan will now be opened for tendering.

Warwick held an open house in West Lorne at the West Elgin Community Health Centre June 13.

Warwick said it's easier to build the addition while the entire complex is being rebuilt and in disarray.

Representatives from the library gave their support to the plan at the open house then again at the council meeting.

"More space will give us a chance to provide more services," said Janet Given from the Rodney, West Lorne library.

Warwick said the addition

would be paid for through the rental agreement with Elgin County Library which pays \$12 a square foot.

While how the library would use the extra space is still being discussed, representatives with the library said it could be used for a children's area for programming.

Given boasted the boys reading club has 17 members and the extra space would help organize bigger activities.

The addition would be built on to the back of the old McKillop portion of the library.

Engineers will continue to look at the building to see how much of the old back wall can come down for the addition.

The plan for the complex also includes a lift next to the stairway to make the basement accessible for the disabled.

Council approved the plans to finish the basement which will include a 16' by 22' boardroom for community groups, an open area possibly for the YWCA and storage rooms.



Romancing the Stone

Sara Petemel of West Lorne tries on a strapless, chiffon, dress with a cathedral veil, a very romantic, destination style dress. She will model at Romancing the Stone Wedding Show, Sunday, Feb 25. Admission by donation to Teen Challenge Farm.

BRIAN WILSDON PHOTOGRAPHY

Ash borer quarantine continues

from page 1

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency displayed logs from Essex county infested with the Asian-born beetle and educated people on how to spot an infested tree.

This open house came five months after infested trees happened to be found by a Ministry of Natural Resources official who stopped at the Highway 401 service centre.

"First off we're here to stress that people can't move firewood," said project manager Jerry Dowding, with CFIA.

That includes all firewood from individual properties within the quarantine zone.

Cut logs lose bark which defines the tree. Only a tree expert could tell if firewood is really ash, so no firewood can move from individual properties within the quarantine zone.

Ash brush and waste should be burned on the property it was cut and shouldn't be allowed to sit for too long. Dowding prefers one day.

Ash wood can be moved into the quarantine zone so property owners with property outside the quarantine can move firewood on to their property and highways are exempt from the quarantine so ash wood can be moved through the zone.

As well, ash cut on road easements by road crews can be given to adjacent land owners, but it can't leave that property.

However burning bylaws require permission from the municipality to burn wood waste.

This includes the villages of Dutton and half the villages of West Lorne and Wallacetown.

The municipality is negotiating a centralized location for ash wood waste to be burned if it is not safe to burn on the individual property.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Understanding the quarantine

Emerald ash borer project supervisor Jerry Dowding explains to Theresa Marentette restrictions for moving firewood and ash products within a quarantine set up by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to stop the spread of the Asian-born emerald ash borer.

About 750 land owners were supposed to receive notices of quarantine from CFIA instructing them not to move ash wood from individual properties or face fines.

About 12 notices have been issued restricting any movement of ash wood from properties where infested trees have been found.

Fines are given under the Plant Protection Act.

"It's one of the most powerful acts in Canada," said Dowding. "Police are envious of it. It gives access to any property at a reasonable time of day that is, that could be or

maybe infected."

Land owners wondered if they could move ash wood from one property to another, for firewood.

CFIA wants to know where the wood is moving from and to and exceptions can be made.

People wishing to log their property have been given permission by CFIA but wood must go to a certified mill.

Theresa Marentette, who lives on Celtic Line, the northern boundary of the quarantine in Dutton-Dunwich said her son, who lives

across the road, outside of the quarantine, received a notice of quarantine.

Dowding told her it was a mistake with the satellite images used to define which properties should be included in the quarantine.

Marentette told Dowding she wants to use wood from her son's wood lot to heat her house.

Dowding looked at the map and gave permission for wood to be moved.

Many people at the open house received magnets with the CFIA's phone number to call if they plan to move ash wood from individual properties in the quarantine.

The quarantine stretches from Graham Road to Willey Road, Stalker Line and Celtic Line to Talbot Line.

Dowding said roads were used as boundaries because a complete circle would cut through properties and make it difficult to enforce the quarantine.

The quarantine was established after infested tree locations were captured with GPS technology.

From there, four five-kilometre circles were drawn around the most easterly, westerly, northerly and southerly found infested trees.

The most westerly, northerly and southerly infested trees are on property owned by the Ministry of Transportation Ontario.

The most easterly site is on private property close to Coyne Road and Gaelic Line.

The quarantine lasts until March 31.

By then, scientific data will have been collected by Canadian Forest Service and used to determine the CFIA's next steps.

CFIA estimates the emerald ash borer has destroyed 10 million ash trees in Southwestern Ontario and Michigan.

As well, ash trees are an important factor in the \$880 million hardwood production industry in Canada.

Forestry specialists begin studying infested trees

Jeff Kempenaar
Staff

Canadian Forest Service has begun phase one of the emerald ash borer project, collecting measurements and data about the infested trees and surrounding ecology at the highway 401 service centres and adjacent land.

One tree was cut down by Canadian Forest Service and sent to a laboratory in Sault Saint Marie.

While phase one is mostly preliminary work, phase two includes more tree samples being taken and phase three includes, cutting whole infested trees down for analysis but stage two and three haven't been approved to begin yet.

Dowding said if any trees are cut, whether infested or close to infested trees, it would have to be done by mid-May.

Emerald Ash Borer begins its movements after mid-May and activity peaks by June 23.

Meanwhile, CFIA is trying to determine if the Dutton site is the new front line of the beetles'

natural spread or whether the beetle arrived on a truck.

"It's impossible to definitively say how it got there," said Barry Lyons, Research Scientist with Canadian Forest Services.

Currently, Dowding said the front line of natural spread is just east of the City of Chatham.

Surveying continues from the Dutton site back to Chatham to find a link and determine if the Dutton site was created by humans.

Lyons is looking forward to studying the Dutton site because it is one of the only outlying sites found so far and will give great insight to the natural behavior of the insect.

He wouldn't say how much the project could cost tax payers as most plans are only proposed so far.

Dowding has two proposals currently with the president of CFIA's plant division for approval.

The first proposal would see 30,000 ash trees cut including known infested trees.

The second proposal is to only

remove the infested trees and trees of interest, which is around 300 trees in total.

At \$100 per tree, to cut, remove and clean up the surrounding property Canadian Forest Service wouldn't do this until before mid-May.

Scientists in Canada and the U.S. have hypothesized the ash borer arrived at the Detroit International Airport in Romulus, MI more than

10 years ago.

Unprocessed wood crates used to ship car parts harboured the beetle, according to CFIA speculation.

It was discovered around the same time in Michigan and Windsor in 2002.

Since then, it has spread to as far east as Dutton in Canada, to Ashtabula County in Ohio and in Indiana in the U.S.

"This is a serious tree killer," said Lyons.

The borer has been found in several Asian countries but is prominent in China, said Lyons.

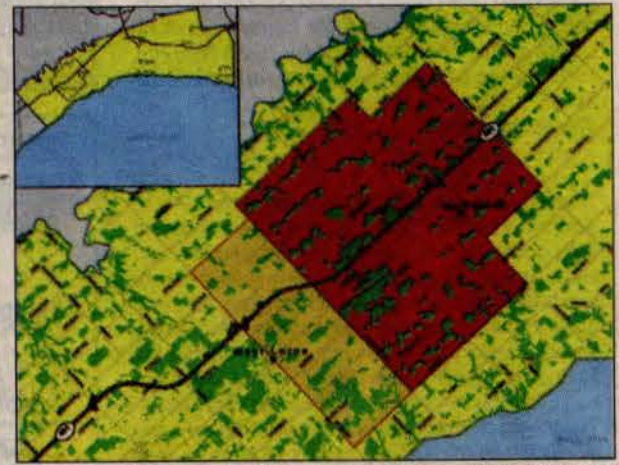
It was paid little interest in China as a native species. Ash trees in China have evolved with the insect and have developed a natural resistance.

For information call CFIA at 1-866-463-6017.



Potential cut zone

From 300 to 30,000 ash trees could be cut around the Highway 401 service centres.



Quarantine cuts through Elgin

A quarantine in western Elgin County prohibits the movement of ash wood from individual properties.

Smoke alarms on every floor law

► Fire departments dealing with enforcing new provincial law

Jeff Kempenaar
Staff

Smoke alarms must be installed on every storey of a home, with a new law beginning March 1.

Dutton-Dunwich Fire Department most recently started a door-to-door inspection of homes. Other departments have said they won't be doing more in the immediate future to enforce the new law, knowing people

who followed past laws will continue to do so and those that do not have a working smoke alarm already won't follow the new law.

However, with the new law in place, those who have failed to allow fire departments into their home, could see the department returning with warrants.

The Ontario Fire Marshall's Office and Province of Ontario enacted the

law Dec. 1, with penalties of a \$235 fine for home owners and \$25,000 or one year jail time for apartment building owners.

Rodney Fire Chief, Andy Kieraszewicz said about 20 per cent of homes in the area do not have properly working smoke alarms, based on past door-to-door inspections.

He said the new law will make it

easier for the fire department to lay fines on property owners that do not have properly working smoke alarms.

"No one will be inviting members of the fire department into their homes anymore," he said.

He said the fines put the fire department in a tough place.

Please see Fining, page 2

Assessing damages and losses

► OFM could find cause in a few months

Jeff Kempenaar
Staff

Cause of Wednesday morning's fire at the West Lorne Community Complex may not be known for a few months.

Fire investigators completed their two-day scene examination of the site Friday where fire gutted the downtown building.

Mariano Perini, fire investigator with the Ontario Fire Marshall's Office in London turned the building over to West Elgin Mayor Graham Warwick Friday afternoon.

He said evidence taken from the scene is being sent to a forensic lab in Toronto.

Perini said the cause of the fire is not related to the furnace as reported in other media.

"It's not the furnace," he said. "That's misinformation."

The information came from a spokesperson with the OFM before Perini reported back to the office.

He would not say where in the building the evidence came from or what the evidence was.

The building housed the West Lorne Branch Library along with West Elgin Support Services which provides many different social programs from employ-

ment counselling to special needs transportation coordination.

Included in West Elgin Support Services and operating out of the building were the YWCA of St. Thomas/Elgin and the Elgin Association for Community Living, Elgin Oxford Legal Clinic, Employment Services Elgin, Quad County Support Services, Violence Against Women Services, Elgin County, West Elgin Transportation Network.

These agencies have found a new temporary home in the West Elgin Community Health Centre and can still be reached at 768-0020.

Organizations using the meeting rooms included: the Kiwanis Club of West Lorne, the Eco-Elgin Environmental Society, the West Lorne Horticultural Society and the West Lorne Women's Institute.

Usually the women's institute uses the building Tuesday nights. The group did not meet the night before the fire.

Built in 1996, the building was also used by the former municipality of West Lorne.

The insurance policy value for the building is \$700,000.



CHRIS KNIGHT/CONTRIBUTED

Fire crawled up to the attic through walls

Fire investigators have ruled out the furnace as the cause of the fire that gutted much of the West Lorne Complex Feb. 8. The community watched throughout the morning as fire damaged and destroyed historical possessions of local service groups and forced social agencies to find new locations.

"We're going to rebuild," said Mayor Graham Warwick.

Some changes, including a second exit to the basement, which prevented the finished basement's meeting room from ever being used, would be added said Deputy Mayor Bernie Wiehle.

While the reconstruction crew was beginning to remove West Lorne documents, West Elgin Administrator Joanne Groch thinks the building may not need to be demolished.

No signs of any break in were found so Deputy Fire Chief Jamieson said there is no reason for suspicion.

"I was surprised. More looks salvageable than I thought at first," said Jamieson.

The Rodney volunteer fire department also responded to the fire to help with the initial dump of water.

"It took a lot of water at first," said Fire Chief Al Beer.

More salvageable than originally thought, library more likely to replace than restore

While lots of historical records and artifacts are feared lost from local organizations and the former Town of West Lorne, who used the West Lorne Community Complex, one significant record of local history survived.

Firefighters retrieved 50-years of bound books containing the West Lorne Sun, collected by former West Lorne Reeve and Sun part owner Harley Lashbrook.

"I think 99 per cent will be alright. There's a lot of info in there," he said.

Firefighters retrieved the books Thursday, the day after the fire and they were in surprisingly good shape. Lashbrook is drying the books at his home.

The books had water damage and reconstructionists were removing other materials from the building Tuesday.

About eight inches of water remained in the basement of the building where the old municipal documents were kept. Municipal documents have to be kept for seven years.

Leola Lawrence, with the Women's Institute said three closets in an upstairs hallway contained meeting minutes since 1923.

"I'm really concerned about these minute books," she said.

The roof collapsed over the closets, where the group's hard covered Tweedsmuir books, which contain local history were stored.

Lawrence said there are other copies of the



Sun saved JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE
Former West Lorne Sun owner Harley Lashbrook and Ray Jobson watch Captain Craig Elliot carry out bound copies of the old paper which suffered water damage.

Tweedsmuir books around.

If the minutes are lost, "We'll be starting from scratch."

A clock, donated by the group for First World War veterans and an antique piano and dishes were also feared lost.

As well, adjacent closets held materials for

other groups.

The Kiwanis group lost flags which had decades of irreplaceable service patches.

Staff with the library were allowed into the building Tuesday.

While people are encouraged to use the Rodney library in the meantime, they can also go to the Dutton branch.

It's hoped the drop box could be set up again, but books should be returned to either Dutton or Rodney libraries for now.

Library supervisor, Shelley Fleming said anyone with questions can call the Rodney library at 785-2100.

Diane Palmer, Manager of Library Services with Elgin County, said the library's insurance adjusters had also gone through the building but no estimates on damage were available.

She said the collections and materials budget for the branch is around \$300,000.

"With smoke and water damages I can't see it being economically feasible to restore. We'll probably replace," she said of the library collection.

"Some materials (like original prints), we may want to restore," she said. "Considering the amount of water and smoke I don't know how much is salvageable."

Currently, staff with the library are creating a list of significant materials that may need to be restored.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Smoke and fire

Mike Vanderloo fights flames behind the West Lorne Community Complex. The south side of the building had the most damage.

St. Mary's Church reduces mass by one in West Lorne

The 8 a.m. mass at St. Mary's Parish has been eliminated by the Roman Catholic Diocese of London.

While churches in Chatham-Kent are being closed, the West Lorne church is cutting one service that was not at capacity.

The church will continue to hold mass Saturday night and Sunday morning at 11:30 a.m.

St. Helen's in Wallacetown will be unaffected by the changes.

The Diocese has been looking at reorganizing since last May as some churches were unable to pay for maintenance and bills, were driven deeper into debt and weren't contributing to the Diocese.

"We can't oppose the bishop's decision," said Reverend John Konieczny, adding it may be an inconvenience for some people who like to go to church early in the morning or can't get to the Saturday night service.

"Maybe next month we will see if we will change the times," said Konieczny.

He said he could be doing five or six services on a weekend if the 2,400 Catholics in the territory, practiced.

The 400 seat church in West Lorne is almost full for Sunday's second mass but the congregation is small Saturday night and 20 people come for the daily mass.

Melody Fellowship OMB appeal lingers

Jeff Kempenaar
Staff

While the Christ Disciples report Melody Fellowship Church has bought its building, a second Ontario Municipal Board hearing remains scheduled for March 13 regarding the church's Eagle-area property.

The hearing is for an appeal to a West Elgin Council decision rejecting an

application to rezone property along Graham Road toward Eagle for a church made Fall 2003.

Reverend Ric Gordan has not returned calls placed in the last two weeks from the Chronicle regarding the appeal or the recent purchase of the Church of Christ (Disciples) in West Lorne.

Please see Melody, page 2