

Susan Bradnam The London Free Press

ARCHIVE SAVED: Harley Lashbrook, former Reeve and councillor for West Lorne and retired owner of the weekly formerly known as the West Lorne Sun (now the West Lorne Chronicle) stands in front of the West Lorne Community Complex, which houses the town's library and newspaper archive.

Helpers rescue West Lorne newspaper archive after calamitous blaze

Following the disastrous fire at the West Lorne Community Complex and the library last week, I received help from a number of people in rescuing some of the history books. These books contained 50 years of the West Lorne Sun Newspapers bound in hardcover for each year. They contain a wealth of information and have been used as reference by many people.

I would like to thank our local fire-fighters and fire chief, Allen Beer, as well as the fire marshal who brought the books out of the building.

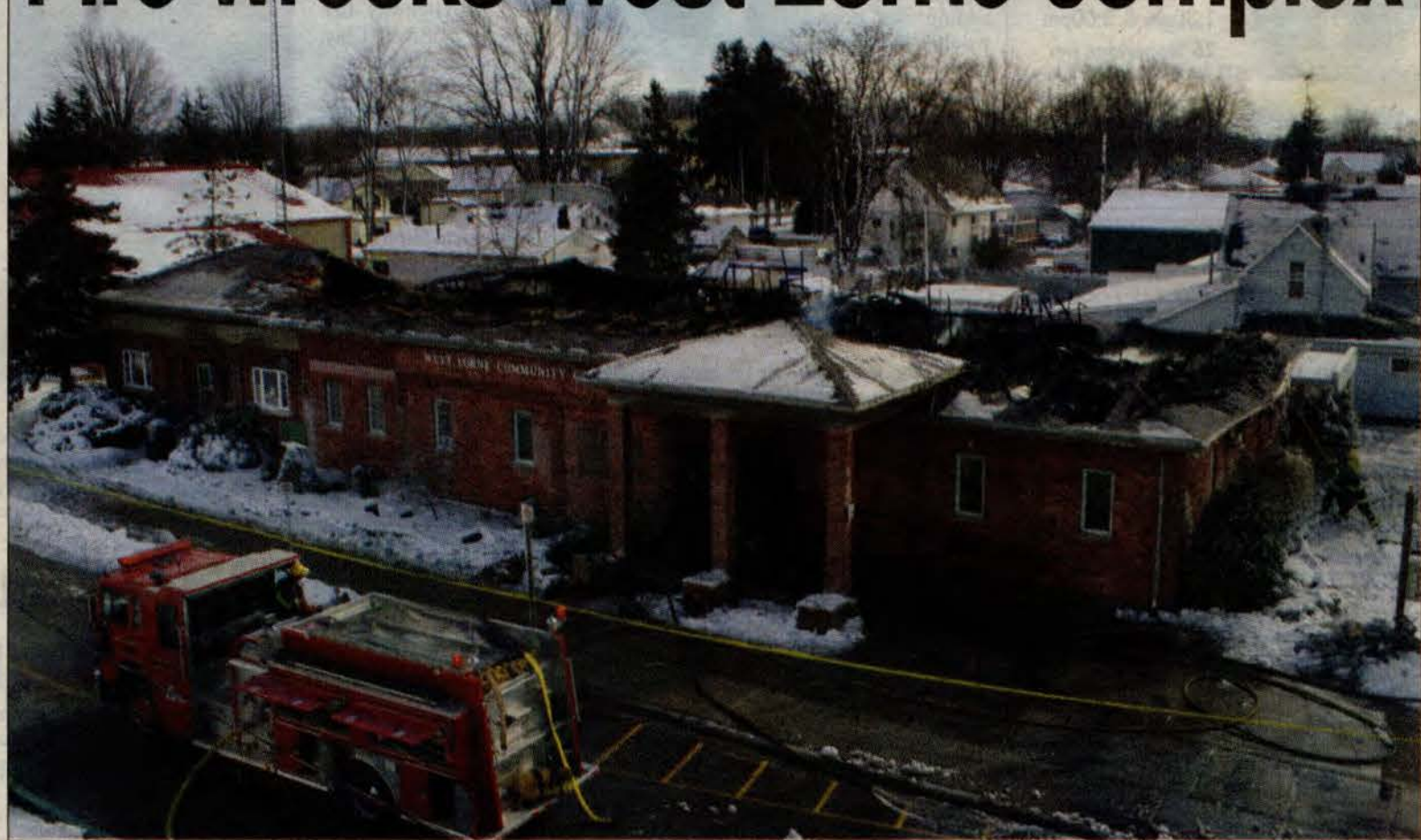
Special assistance was also received from Brian Masschaele, our Elgin County archivist, as well as Iona McCraith, preservation consultant of the Archives Association of Ontario. Both have been in contact with me guiding me as to the method

of restoring the books as much as possible.

Without the assistance of these caring people, much of the town's history would have been lost. I truly appreciate their efforts. Thank you.

Harley Lashbrook
West Lorne

Fire wrecks West Lorne complex



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Rebuild in question

Damage to the West Lorne Library's collection is still being assessed a week after fire gutted the West Lorne Community Complex Feb. 8. Fire investigators haven't found a cause to the fire yet but evidence has been taken to a forensic lab in Toronto. A number of social agencies and community groups, along with the library used the complex and continue to get back up and running again. See page 6 for more.

West Lorne history burns

Fifty years of newspaper accounts are feared lost in a fire that badly damaged the civic centre.



BY JOHN HERBERT
Free Press Crime Reporter

WEST LORNE — Fifty years of newspapers recording the community's history and up to 15,000 books were feared lost yesterday in an early morning fire that badly damaged West Lorne Community Complex.

The municipally owned building on Graham Road was home to the town's library. The building was also used for meetings by community groups and a program providing child care before and after school.

The roof collapsed during the fire that broke out at about 6:15 a.m. in the community about 50 kilometres southwest of London.

West Lorne fire Chief Al Beer said last night the blaze

remains under investigation and the cause hadn't been determined. Beer said the building had been secured and the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office is involved in the probe.

Ontario Provincial Police said they are not investigating.

Beer estimated the fire damage to be in excess of \$1 million, not counting books lost.

Harley Lashbrook, a local historian, former reeve, council member and retired publisher of the weekly West Lorne Sun (now known as The Chronicle), was among saddened citizens and community officials at the fire scene.

"We've got 50 years of newspapers in there," Lashbrook said.

See FIRE Page A4



Photos by SUSAN BRADNAM The London Free Press

CLEANING UP: West Lorne volunteer firefighter Shawn McMurphy carries debris from the West Lorne Community Complex, which houses the community's library, after fire ripped through the building yesterday, gutting the centre and caving in the roof.

FIRE: Newspapers saved on microfilm

From Page A1

"There's history in there you wouldn't believe. I'm going to try and get in there as soon as possible and save what I can — if there's anything to save," Lashbrook said.

"We can't replace them. The history can't be replaced."



PALMER:
10,000 to
15,000 books.

Lashbrook said losing the hard copies of the newspaper wouldn't be a complete disaster because he has them saved on microfilm.

Deputy Mayor Bernie Wiehle said he expects the municipality would rebuild and estimated it would cost \$1 million or more to replace the structure, built in the mid 1990s at a cost of \$700,000.

Wiehle said community groups, including the Kiwanis Club, often use a meeting room in the building.

Shelley Fleming, supervisor of the West Lorne and Rodney libraries, was able to



NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE: Harley Lashbrook, retired owner of the weekly formerly known as the West Lorne Sun and now the West Lorne Chronicle, stands in front of the West Lorne Community Complex, which housed the library and newspaper archive.

enter the building to recover a cash drawer, but not to check on damage.

"We had a very good collection," she lamented.

Dianne Palmer, manager of library services for Elgin County, said most of the West Lorne patrons would probably go to the nearby Rodney library or another in Dutton.

She said 10,000 to 15,000 books and five computers could have been lost in the

fire, but she did not know the extent of damage or cause.

Palmer said until she could enter the building, she would not know what could be saved.

"We have no idea right now, but I would think by the size, damage will be extensive," she said. "There will also be a lot of water damage."

"I know people will miss library services here," she said.

Library reopening soon

Within the next two weeks, the new temporary site of the West Lorne Library should be open.

The new site is 168 Main Street, in the former health centre, between the Donut Delite and Foodland.

West Lorne Library will have the back portion of the building and entrance will be from the front and side doors.

Staff of the library is excited

with the new location and feel it will meet the needs of their patrons perfectly, said a press release.

Hours of operation will remain the same as staff look forward to serving patrons in West Lorne again.

Library services, Dianne Palmer said this location is temporary and hopes the library will be in the Complex again when it is restored.

Community band a family affair

Jeff Kempenaar
Staff

The West Elgin Community Band has become a family band of sorts with generations playing together.

There's three mother/daughter members, a grandpa and grandson, a mother/son and the Van't Voort family, with five members.

Sitting a row apart are Bob Davis and his grandson Ben McArthur.

Bob has been with the band about 10 years and is also a member of Bob-bob-a-lou, which plays at many events in the area year-round.

Ben is attending Grade 8 in London but comes out to play the alto sax with his grandfather.

"He's a good musician. He's going to be better than me. He is probably better than me now," said Davis.

Still in the brass section, Martha Foster and her daughter Dora each play the trombone.

When Dora picked up the instrument 10 years ago, her mother followed.

Dora just joined the band

this year and it's evident the two have a unique relationship in the band.

At one point during a practice last week, conductor Sharon Little was giving instructions.

Looking lost for a second, Dora whispered across the room, "Mom that's you!"

Martha joined in, then once the piece was done stuck her tongue out at her daughter.

Of course, the biggest family in the band is the Van't Voorts.

Six of them joined the band last year, saving the band from collapse.

Mom, Joanne plays the flute, Michael the euphonium, Christine the french horn, Stephen the trombone, Daniel and Laurie play the trumpet.

Joanne taught the children music at home but being part of the band gives everyone "reason to get better."

"It's a noisy house for an hour a day," said Joanne. "It's a lot of fun."

Recently the band launched its own web site: www.westelgincommunityband.ca.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

All in the family

Bob Davis and his grandson Ben McArthur both play the alto sax in the West Elgin Community Band.

Paul Morgan (alto sax) and David Laidlaw (snare drum), and Michael Van't Voort, from Iona Station, on euphonium.

A recorder ensemble, a family choir and a chance to sing some Christmas carols round

out the programme.

The concert will be held on Dec. 11 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Parish Hall, West Lorne.

Tickets are available from band members and at the door. Reception after the concert.

Secret musician at show Monday

A well-known member of the West Elgin community makes his performing debut with the West Elgin Community Band in their annual It's a Wonderful Time of the Year concert Monday.

While his identity will remain a mystery until concert time, it can be revealed that he will be playing an important part in the St.

Nicholas Suite, one of the band's perennial favourites.

This year's concert will celebrate Mozart's 250th birthday and salute the now 64-year old Beatle with a medley of some of the group's greatest hits. The concert will also feature several members of the band in solo performances, including Londoners Marlene Needham (trumpet),

Parade winners announced

West Lorne Santa Claus Parade

West Lorne Optimist Club

Most outstanding: Dutton Travel Centre, Tim Hortons
Service Club: Wallacetown Fair Board
Family float: Veraart family
Antique car: Bas Veraart
Youth: Tiny Tots Nursery School
Best Illuminated: Melody Fellowship Church.

Best Decorated: Albert's Generator

Special entry: Happy the Home Hardware Hound; Frank Swing and his Honda Goldwing.

Rodney Santa Claus Parade

Floats: 1st Rodney Fair Board, 2nd Baldwin Family Float, 3rd Veraart Family Float

Walking Group: West Elgin Support Services

Single: Jimmy Avery

Commercial Float: All Way Electric

Service Club: West Lorne Kiwanis Club

Antique Car: Mike Hack

Kids Walking Group: West ELgin Gym Club

Decorated Pole Contest: 1st Tiny Tots Nursery School, 2nd Rodney Library, 3rd, Rodney Horticulture Society.

Council expenses released

Jeff Kempenaar
Staff

In 2005 West Elgin councillors were paid a total of \$64,428.91 for attending meetings and conventions.

As per the Municipal Act, the 2005 council remuneration and expenses report was released last month.

For the second year in a row, expenses were under budget, however councillors received a total of \$5,525.58 more than 2004.

For monthly council meetings, tax payers paid \$10,912.

For special meetings, \$42,185 was paid to councillors, \$4,275 more than 2004.

They also received \$7,032.80 for mileage and \$4,299.11 to attend conventions, including registration and accommodations.

Council had budgeted \$73,500, including \$55,000 for regular and special (committee) meetings, \$6,500 for mileage and \$12,000 for conventions.

The budgeted amount was \$4,900 more than 2004.

Council's remuneration and expenses:

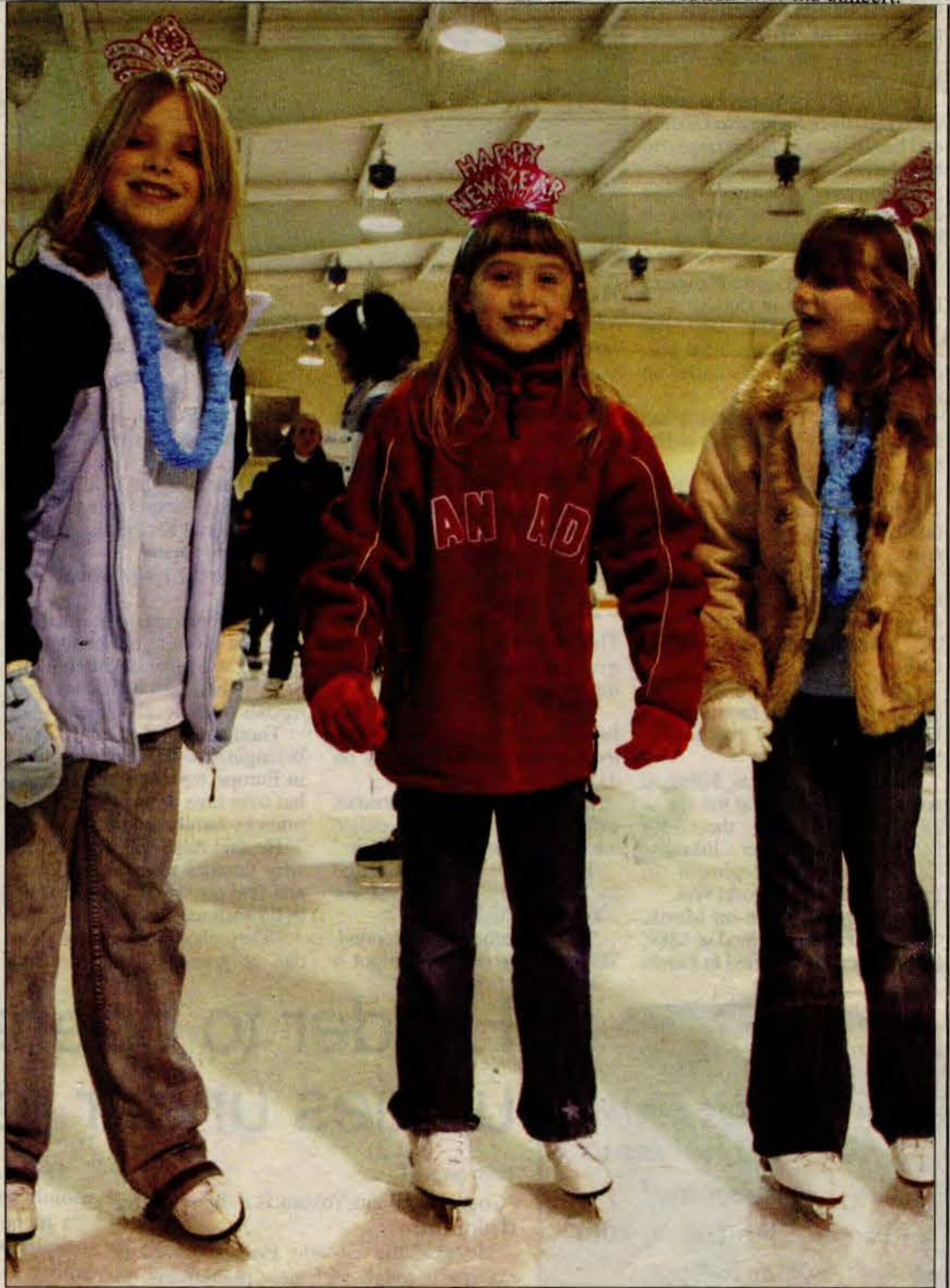
Graham Warwick: \$3,696 regular meetings, \$10,615 special meetings, \$2,376 mileage, \$500 conventions for \$17,187 total.

Trudy Balint: \$1,815 regular meetings, \$9,680 special meetings, \$937.60 mileage, \$1,031.21 conventions for \$13,463.81 total.

Mary Bodnar: \$1,815 regular meetings, \$8,250 special meetings, \$1,103.20 mileage, \$629.33 conventions for \$11,797.53 total.

Mike Mooser: \$1,650 regular meetings, \$7,205 special meetings, \$1,377.20 mileage, \$1,500 conventions for \$11,732.20 total.

Bernie Wiehle: \$1,936 regular meetings, \$6,435 special meetings, \$1,238.80 mileage, \$638.57 conventions for \$10,248.37 total.



Skating into the New Year

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Katie and Kendra Schweitzer along with Lexi Degraw skated New Years Eve at West Elgin Arena. More than 260 people filled the rink for a special two-hour free skate to ring in 2007 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.



WEDS ready to go

Kyle Carew (Frank), Kevin Hull (Baron), Jasmine Dick (Daisy) and Jackie Geisler (Babsy), were busy this week fine tuning the West Elgin Dramatics Society production of the Creature Creeps which begins at WEDS Theatre Friday night.

CONTRIBUTED

West Lorne youth approached by stranger on Main Street

OPP are encouraging parents to talk to their children about talking to strangers after a 10-year-old boy was approached on Main Street in West Lorne March 24.

The boy was riding his bike at around 2 p.m. when a man exited his vehicle and started a conversation.

He said "hi" to the youth and asked if the bicycle worked.

The boy said yes and kept riding. The conversation ended.

The man is described as 30-45 driving a 2004-2006 silver/grey BMW.

Anyone with information is asked to call the OPP at 310-1122 or Crime Stoppers at 1-888-222-TIPS.

Drivers charged with speeding on 401

A 49-year-old Plattsville man was given a 12-hour suspension after being charged for driving 134km/hr on Highway 401 in a 1996 Lexus LS4 March 17.

Two 21-year-old high speeders were also charged in Highway 401 March 18.

The first, a Mississauga man was charged with driving while suspended and travelling 150km/hr.

The second, a Toronto man driving a 2005 Toyota UXS was charged for travelling 180km/hr and driving without a currently validated permit.

HEAT finds three radar detectors on 401

Ontario's new Highway Enforcement Action Team seized three radar detectors and charged three drivers on Highway 401 in Elgin County March 8.

Two drivers from the U.S. and another from Ontario were charged with driving with a speed measuring warning device.



Lutheran youth put on a comedy show

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Jessalyn and Rebecca Betsch, Rob Roos and Dalton Searle perform a comedic skit about married couples on a marriage counselling retreat and the funny quirks couples have to work out for a healthy relationship at the West Lorne Lutheran Church March 24.

Water management reforms still on Tri-County plate

Jeff Kempenaar Staff

Southwest Middlesex submitted a request to reform the Tri County Water Management Committee amidst concerns West Elgin holds too much control.

Mayor Doug Reycraft said the area's water treatment plant and distribution system should be incorporated.

Currently, Tri-County Management Committee makes recommendations to West Elgin Council about the management of the treatment plant.

The plant, south at Eagle, treats water for around 20,000 customers in Dutton/Dunwich, West Elgin, Southwest Middlesex, Newbury and Chatham-Kent (Bothwell).

In past articles, incorrect

information was given about the voting system.

West Elgin has five votes for two members.

Southwest Middlesex has three votes, Dutton/Dunwich has two votes and Newbury and Chatham-Kent have one vote each.

Dutton/Dunwich Council, Cam McWilliam claims West Elgin holds the power over the committee.

Joanne Groch, secretary for the committee said rarely are decisions voted on and West Elgin would always have to have one more member's vote to win a decision.

Six votes are needed but normally a simple majority is used to make decisions, meaning a consensus around the table.

Currently, the committee is awaiting an announcement

about a hoped two-thirds grant to cover an estimated \$15 million new treatment plant.

Reycraft, with the support of Dutton/Dunwich, hopes the new management model will be in place for the new plant.

He said there have been disagreements with West Elgin in the past.

"I'm concerned it's subject to abuse by the owner," he said, adding all five municipalities will be paying for the plant and should be engaged in its management.

The committee met Monday night but wasn't expected to address the issue.

Committee members await reports on management models used by the Elgin System and Lake Huron System.

Former resident returns with first book, lots of stories

Students in Johnathon Douglas's writer's craft class were treated to stories by author and former resident Wayne Russell last week.

Russell started at West Elgin Secondary School the year it opened and March 22 was the first time he has seen it in 38 years.

"So much has changed around here," he said.

But some things stayed the same, as Russell pointed out familiar faces in old class photos he passed around the room.

He read from his new book *The Good Weeds*.

Publishing the book himself in 2002 Russell has been making his way across the country, stopping for signings.

Russell left his Middle Street West Lorne home after high school in search of higher wages for millwright work.

He, his four children and pregnant wife settled in Tatlayoko Lake B.C., an isolated logging village of 4,000 in the coastal mountains.

From there, Russell met a family with 14 kids and hundreds of crazy stories.

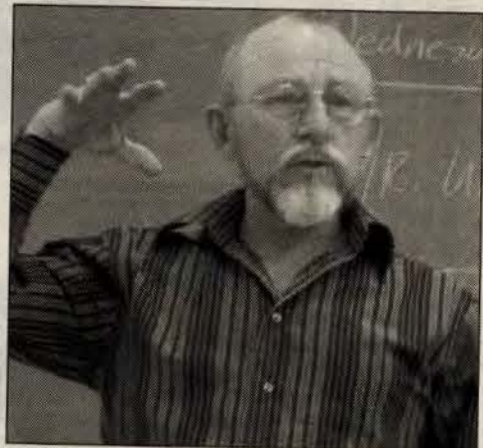
"I would hear these stories and always thought somebody had to write them down," he told the class. "I never thought it would be me."

Russell encouraged the students to jot down sayings, stories and anything striking.

After telling the family's stories over and over to many people, a local computer hack brought Russell his own computer.

It came as a saviour for him.

"I couldn't spell. I couldn't read my hand writing," he said, adding his commercial, typewriting course at WESS in the early 1950s came back to him and he could recall all the keys.



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Storyteller

Wayne Russell, who grew up in West Lorne returned to WESS for the first time in three decades to talk to students about writing.

"Don't let anything deter you from what you want to be. I'm an author and I can't spell," he said.

Asked how he decides what stories make for good reading, Russell said the stories that left people in stitches could be recreated with visual writing.

It took him one year to write the book and one year to edit it.

He implanted himself in the family's stories and added some of his own.

Not PG reading, his stories describe the fun and trouble he and his friends got into driving around and growing up West Lorne.

He kept stopping in mid sentence to say, "And this really happened!"

Learn more by visiting www.wizeoldphart.com.



Tots work out

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

Cindy da Costa leads a group of tots through push ups in a playroom set up during the annual Recreation and Leisure Fair held March 7 at St. Mary's Parish Hall in West Lorne. Working out are: Jack, Craig and Luke Verdel with Jesse Rogers and Matthew Doherty. About 50 recreation and leisure providers displayed at the event and listened to guest speaker Fred Cahill, a Texas Long-horn cattle farmer from Kerwood who discussed leadership and coaching ethics.

Choral society performing Schubert

West Elgin Choral Society will present their Easter Concert at 3 p.m. March 26, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in West Lorne.

The first half of the concert will tell the Easter story in word and song, with narration. The choir will provide musical illustrations in a variety of moods and styles. Part 2 of the concert is all about celebration, featuring composers from all over the world and many different genres, from Franz Schubert to Gordon Lightfoot.

Featured guests for the occasion will be the Medway Triple Trio, a student led female ensemble from Medway High School. They will present five solos and four additional numbers with the choir.

Five local high school musicians will add trumpet licks, percussion and rhythm where these are called for in the accompaniments.

This concert will be directed by guest conductor Janice Telfer. For more information and tickets call 762-3865 or 762-2882.

Rosalie was a friend to everyone.

A Tribute To Rosalie



"Remembering"



Prize steer Andrew McKillop shows his prize steer at the Royal Winter Fair in November.

Young farmer gives to Daffodils

An Iona Station youth has donated earnings from a prize steer to the local cancer society.

Andrew McKillop, a 15-year-old West Elgin 4-H Beef Club

member gave \$500 to the West Elgin Daffodil Society last week.

The money came from auctioning off Tubs, his class reserve champion steer, at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto early November.

"We would have lost money anyway - might as well donate it," said McKillop.

Sons of Robert and Nancy, Andrew and his brother David talked up Tubs and ended up getting \$1.40 per pound or around \$2,000 for the steer.

"It's really something for a young guy to do this," said Leola Lawrence with the West Elgin Daffodil Society.

He has lost two of his grandfathers to cancer and recently an aunt to breast cancer.

The West Elgin Secondary School student was competing for his fifth year at the Fair, in the Queen's Guineas.

West Elgin Daffodil Society supports local people dealing with cancer and donates money to other cancer initiatives in the region.

Aug 11/07



Parade in West Lorne

JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

West Lorne Kiwanis Club's Bill Graham, Peg Wheeler, Joan Johnston, Mary Leipold and Sylvia Logan are 10th in line, in the West Lorne Optimist Club Santa Claus parade which featured about 40 entries Nov. 30. See more pictures on page 7.

Chairperson: Kathy Johnston



Julie Begin-Newman

Bill Denning

Darlene Ford

Bonnie Janoska

Kate Lougheed

Joan Miller

Pam Page

Denise Van Dyk

Marg Varga

Bonnie Vowel

Heather Walls

Social Hour: 5:00 - 6:30 pm

Music by: Bill Graham

Video Show: Bill Denning

Dinner 6:30 pm

Grace: Rev. Michael Beacom



Menu:

Roast Beef

Fried Chicken






Mashed Potatoes & Gravy

Vegetables, Salad, & Buns

Dessert, Coffee, & Tea



Program

-  OPENING REMARKS: Kathy Johnston
-  MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Bill Denning
-  TRIBUTES:
- Dr. Richard Redinger. Family Memories
- Rhonda Knight. Fair Queen Contestant 2006
- Kate Lougheed. Theatre & Travelling Group
- Dave Page & Ebba Schmid. School Friends
- Lee Hanley-Kerrigan. Golfers
- Julie Newman. Employees
- Bonnie Vowel. Cancer Survivors
- Jim Price. Friends
-  POEM:
- Written by Bonnie McGill & read by Bill Denning
-  CANDLE LIGHTING



Organizations & Clubs Who Donated in Memory of Rosalie Krebsz



- 
- Optimist Club of West Lorne*
- Lions Club of Dutton*
- Wallacetown Optimist Club*
- Wallacetown Agricultural Society & Ladies Division*
- West Elgin Chamber of Commerce*
- Township of West Elgin*
- Rodney Aldborough Agricultural Board*
- West Elgin Dramatic Society*
- Wardsville Golf Club*
- Port Glasgow Yacht Club*

Promise Yourself:

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your piece of mind.

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best and expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press onto greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.



"Love you more."