

# The 70's at W.E.S.S.

During the 70's, West Elgin was faced with many changes, both in its physical and academic structures.

With the opening of the new gym and the tech wing by 1971, the school name was changed from WEST ELGIN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL, to its present name. WEST ELGIN SECONDARY SCHOOL. Academically at this time, the student prefect club was introduced. There were many

new clubs appearing in West Elgin's student body, such as the Pollution Probe of 1971, organized to wake the community's environmental conscience. In 1972, Bruce McWilliam, Janet Hux, Jamie McKishnie and Mary Grace were chosen to represent West Elgin in the Reach For The Top program. A new course was opened to the female population of the school in '72. There were no prerequisites for this course.



A young-looking Bruce Edwards pointing out the problem area to Tom Gosnell.

you only needed to be female. West Elgin's first girls' automotive class consisted of one half of the year dedicated to drafting and the other to the automotive component. Not to be forgotten is West Elgin's winning performance in the 1972 Car Rodeo at Parkside, when nine of the chosen team members placed in the top twelve.

During the growth of the student body's enthusiasm for new things, there came the retirement of both the principal, Mr. Lancaster, and the vice-principal, Mr. Johnston, in 1973. Mr. Lancaster left these words for his colleagues "I am immensely proud of West Elgin-its staff and its students". This pride was not solely that of Mr Lancaster, but that of the entire student body.

With the beginning of the '73-'74 school year, Mr. Galloway was introduced as the new principal and Mr. Harrison replaced Mr. Johnston as the



new vice-principal. In the same year, an instrumental music program was introduced. Due to the lack of facilities in this school, the new Elementary School next door was used for classes. Again in 1974, the credit system was introduced, meaning that instead of a grade XIII, students returned for a year five to pick up six honour credits.

Under the direction of Galloway and Harrison, the "House System" was introduced to the academic structure of the

school. Instead of the classes being comprised of just one grade, they would be a mixture of students of all the years in each home room. During this year, it has been said that W.E.S.S. school spirit reached new heights.

September 1, 1976, saw the tragic loss of Mr. Bruce Galloway. By mid-October, Mr. J. Prince had joined West Elgin's staff as the new principal, with Mrs. Georgevich as vice-principal.

One of the more artistic changes in West Elgin's appearance came in 1979 with the painting of murals in the school halls. Overall, the '70's saw West Elgin progress through many phases of growth. Mrs. Georgevich's message in the 1978 yearbook summed up the overall feel of the school when she wrote:

"Every person is the architect of his own fortune, LIVE in the present, LEARN from the past, LOOK FORWARD to the future."

On to the eighties!

# Sports in the Eighties

What a decade! The 1980's was a decade of fantastic finishes and a decade of new and exciting beginnings. Although numerous coaches and students have left throughout the years, West Elgin has still maintained its fierce competitiveness. With the new arrival of young and inspired students and coaches, West Elgin may have a new image, but that same, strong sense of competitiveness is still there.

Volleyball, which is considered West Elgin's most recognized sport, had another successful decade. After a long drought of 11 years, the Senior Boys Volleyball Team finally captured W.O.S.S.A. "A" Gold in 1988. This team went to Sudbury for the O.F.S.A.A. "A" Championships and although not doing very well, they gained excellent experience for later on. This experience helped because just two years later, they were crowned as O.F.S.A.A. "A" Champions in Elliot Lake. This team, which had played together for four years, had an amazing record of 160 wins and only 42 losses the entire year! Thanks to the coaching of Mr. Shulist in their junior years and Mr. McIntyre in their senior years, this team was ranked in the top five out of all the high schools in Ontario. This is quite an accomplishment coming from a school of 500 students! With Mr. Shulist leaving, Mr. Dave Inglis arrived in 1988 and took over the coaching position of the Junior Boys and Senior Girls Volleyball teams. Since his arrival, both the Junior Boys and Senior Girls have combined for a total of 5 W.O.S.S.A. "A"

medals. This hard work from both the coaches and students have paid off and West Elgin is still recognized as the team to beat in Elgin County.

Basketball, which has always been in the shadows of volleyball, started to come out from behind the scenes with the arrival of Mr. James Fraser and former student, Mr. Albert Roos. These two men have emphasized basketball since the day they walked into the gymnasium. Throughout the 80's, the school also contributed to the basketball program by having many improvements made to the gymnasium. With the donation of the electric score-clock by Ross's EMA in 1985 and the addition of glass backboards in 1989-1990, basketball began to rise in popularity among students. This popularity has enabled both boys and girls' teams to strive higher and West Elgin has been represented numerous times in Elgin County Finals and even the Junior Boys made it to the W.O.S.S.A. "A" Finals in 1989-1990, coached by Albert Roos. Basketball is not shadowed by volleyball any longer and W.E.S.S. basketball is starting to make a name for itself.

Along with basketball making the headlines, Girls Field Hockey was the biggest hit of any sport in the 80's. Behind "Coach Prelaz", the 1986 Field Hockey Team placed an astonishing fourth at O.F.S.A.A. Championships in Ottawa! Because of this team's success, West Elgin Field Hockey is now considered the powerhouse of Elgin County.



The WESS choir singing about "Good Vibrations" in 1988.

As all the other sports rose to new heights, a new sport was introduced into West Elgin in 1989. This was, of course, football! After a hard battle (and the games hadn't even started yet) Mr. Paul Baldwin and Mr. Ken Coran finally introduced a football program at West Elgin. Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Coran, and the entire football team raised money through fund-raisers events and saved enough money to suit a team. Though football has just begun, West Elgin football players can be seen tackling each other every day in the fall. All of their fund-raising and extra time has paid off and West Elgin now has a new and exciting sport.

With the Senior Boys winning the O.F.S.A.A. "A" Gold in

November of 1989, West Elgin capped off an excellent decade of athletics. As teams got better, and new teams got started,

West Elgin Wildcats have become the most feared rival in Elgin County and beyond.

by James B. Peacock

# The 90's at W.E.S.S.

Although the 90's have just begun, many changes have already taken place at WESS both inside and out. If you were a student attending WESS today, the first thing you would notice when you arrived would be the new sign in front of the school. It was purchased by the students through the J.J.'s corporation last year to post upcoming events which are happening within the school. It keeps the public informed about what is going on.

As you drive past the front circle of the school you will see several students standing out

front. This location is now the new "smoking area". Previously it was at the back of the school, but now it is off school property due to a ruling by the Board of Education, where everyone can see the smokers. There's hardly any grass left around the big tree where everyone stands. It's a real eye sore to see all these students out there in the morning and it doesn't compliment the school at all.

Once you're past the school and pull into the student parking lot you will notice that it's slightly larger than before, but it's still full of potholes as always.

Now you're inside the school. The first thing you'll probably notice are all the new lockers throughout the school. As you're walking down the front hall towards the office you will be able to see in the distance all the changes made to the front foyer. It has all been repainted and decorated. It now has benches to sit and relax on and plants hanging from the ceiling. After seeing the outside front circle of the school you will be pleasantly surprised when walking through the front doors. The foyer is a very attractive welcoming into the school.

Just before you get to the office you stop at the cafetorium. The most obvious change in here would be the new doors going outside into the courtyard. It is now open for anyone to eat lunch out there or to just hang out and do homework during spares. The second new addition to the cafetorium is the large video screen, which has only been used a couple of times.

Lastly you will see students doing dishes and serving food. This is a job shared by all club members since the students took over the cafetorium by forming J.J.'s.

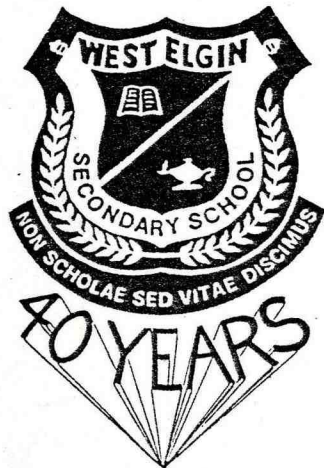
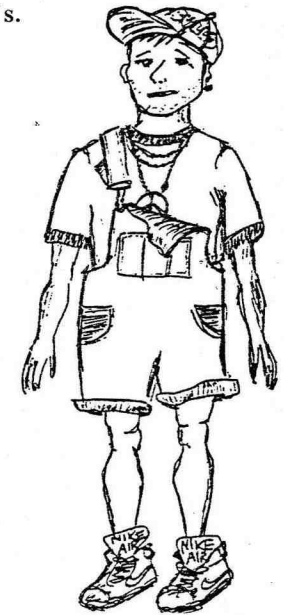
Now we're off to the gym. As we get closer you can hear teams practising to become their best. Sports teams have been very successful so far in the 90's. Surely they will continue to be very competitive in the future.

The 90's also brought football to the school. For the first two years there was only a junior team, but last year a varsity team was formed. Football could have been a major reason why there was a new weight room built last year. What used to be the old wood shop is now the weight room. It has been completely renovated and furnished with new equipment. It has sparked a lot of new interest and has become a very popular spot.

The last major change which has occurred in the 90's so far, is the building of a new computer

room. It is located where the old Electronics room used to be. It's not yet open, but should be ready with twenty-seven new computers next fall.

This concludes the tour of West Elgin as it appears right now. Considering all the changes which have taken place in the last couple of years, one can only speculate that there will be many more changes yet to come in the remaining years of the 90's.



# A memorable 40th reunion

by Kim Fleming

It was a weekend you didn't want to end!

Everyone seemed the same, except for a few gray hairs and extra poundage here and there, inside you were all 16 again. Mingling with friends, laughing and telling stories of the past.

The West Elgin Secondary School 40th Reunion held on June 26th, 27th and 28th was one many will never forget.

People came from British Columbia, Manitoba, Quebec, the East Coast, California and other U.S. states.

"We had somebody attend from almost every province in Canada," Reunion committee member Marlene Payne said.

Friday night the school was buzzing with excitement. The guest book was signed by all, registration packages picked up and the memorabilia rooms toured. The room, appropriately dated, had pictures, awards, clothes including prom dresses, gym suits and school jackets from that era on display.

J.J. Prince, current principal and honorary chairman of the reunion committee welcomed everyone on behalf of the school.

Rae Axford, former teacher at WESS for 25 years and chairman of the reunion committee introduced the reunion committee. They were: Betty Ross, vice-chairman, Eileen Kozdras, secretary-treasurer, Norma Schneckenberger, John McIntyre, Albert Ross, Norman McWilliam, Ed Bell, Jackie Campigotto, Bev Padfield, Wendy Vergeer, Lois Woolner, Elaine Brown, and Marlene Payne. Special mention goes to Larry Schneider and those students at WESS who worked on the special commemorative newspaper and to Allan Ross, Ron Payne and Bob Padfield and all the other helpers.

Other speakers at the opening ceremony were John Fisher former teacher at WESS for 25 years, Herb Kebbel, the class of '55 and present student council president at WESS, Ericka Szewczyk, welcomed all to the reunion.

One of the original staff, French teacher Miss Steele was introduced and spoke a few words.

Special WESS 40th Anniversary shirts and souvenirs were a hot item!

There were many participants in the volleyball, baseball and golf on

Saturday. One hundred and twenty-eight golfers registered in Wardsville and 40 in Dutton.

One thousand six hundred and eighty nine people were registered for the dinner and dances. A scrumptious meal was served at the West Elgin Arena and Dutton Community Centre by "Marcelles Catering Service" in Chatham, while the International Club provided their own meal.

The dances at the West Elgin Arena, Dutton Community Centre and the Elgin International Club was enjoyed by all. Everywhere you looked circles of friends reminisced.

"It was just wonderful. It was just hopping all night. We had class pictures taken. It was just super!" said Rosalie Krebsz of West Lorne and owner of Krebsz Jewellery Store, adding, "I had a lot of people drop in and see our store. They were happy to be home." Rosalie donated two West Lorne collector's plates to the committee which were given out Friday night.

"I saw a lot of people I haven't seen since high school. There must have been 20 to 25 people there from my class," stated grad Lorin McWilliams of Clachan.

The brunch at the arena on Sunday was attended by 500 people. It was run by the students of WESS and organizer Ann Wrobel. The students were also in charge of refreshments on Friday evening and on Saturday noon at the school and arena.

Approximately 250 attended the ecumenical worship service on Sunday. Bill Sheeler, a former teacher who was born and raised in West Lorne, was the guest speaker, introduced by Mr. Prince. Others assisting in the service were: Rev. Peter Burritt, Rev. Ralph Fluit, Rev. Peg Wheeler, Father Paquette and Rev. Jim Potter.

"I just thought it was fantastic! It was nice to see old friends. I had a great weekend. I think the committee did a great job," graduate of '66, Joan Miller of Rodney said.

And a great job they did! A year of planning and searching for grads, memorabilia, organizing activities and to have it run so smoothly has to be commended. The communities and graduates say "Thank you" and see you at "The 50th Reunion".

# Concert band rolls to Boston

Music teacher Mark Enns is building bands at West Elgin Secondary School. Since he came to teach at WESS in 1988, Enns has experimented with ensembles of musicians and music styles to try to get that magic combination of players and tunes.

Enns has settled on two main groups: the Concert Band and the Jazz Band. On April 12 Enns brought the Jazz Band to play at the WESS fashion show. The Jazz Band consists in part of three saxophones, trombone, trumpet, drums and keyboard. The electric keyboard supplies the bass tones.

The many hours of rehearsal were evident in the neat, confident sounds coming from the brass band.

## BOSTON TRIP

On May 16, 37 music students of the two bands will take a five-day trip to Boston. The Concert Band will play in the International Music Festival (IMF) May 19. This performance will be a test, as opposed to a competition. Prizes include bronze, silver, and gold medals. The IMF tests are open to all non-professional music groups from all countries.

The Jazz Band will perform outdoors at Marketplace Centre in downtown Boston, May 17. The centre is a shopping mall and food market.

WESS French teacher Bob Karn and three other adults will accompany Enns and the students.

This bus trip was organized by Doug Ellison, an ex-high school music teacher from Exeter. His business, Ellison Tours, arranged the bus, accommodations and band dates. The trip will cost \$14,399.

The music students raised money cooperatively with the guidance of Enns. In October they sold oranges and grapefruit in cases, which they delivered to

homes. In January they assembled mini pizzas from ingredients supplied by a St. Thomas business. They worked for three hours after school making up and packaging 6,000 pizzas, which they then delivered to homes. By these means the students raised \$4,000.

The rest of the expense they paid from their own pockets or from gifts from their parents. Some students who are not even going on the trip contributed their time and energies. "They are super kids," said Enns. He also made special mention of the strong support received from WESS principal Jerry Prince and vice-principal Mr. Baldwin.

Enns, now in his second year as music teacher at WESS is focusing his program on the "festival route". This means his bands compete wherever they can. "It's a tough haul...pretty intense rehearsals, which go over and above the two morning rehearsals before classes begin," he said. There is a lot of pressure for the young musicians to learn their parts.

All the efforts of conductor Enns and his students are paying off. Already the WESS Concert Band has come first in the St. Thomas Rotary Music Festival and placed second in the London Kiwanis Festival. And they had to learn different pieces of music for each festival.

Enns is a clarinet player himself, with a strong background in music. He gained his Bachelor of Music degree from Western in 1983, then his Master's degree in Performance at UBC. He taught music at UBC as well. He played in the Vancouver Symphony and toured with the Vancouver Wind Trio. He gave private lessons and played small music jobs as well,

in Vancouver. But the Vancouver Symphony was experiencing insecurity so Enns decided to

follow the teaching path and let the performing career take second place.

He returned to London and enrolled at Althouse Teacher's College in 1987. In 1988 he graduated with a Bachelor of Education degree and began looking for a job. He applied at 17 Ontario schools before settling in at WESS.

Enns and the young musicians will have a busy itinerary on their Boston trip. On May 17 they will have a guided historical walking tour of "The Freedom Trail" in downtown Boston. At 2 p.m. the Jazz Band will perform at Marketplace Centre. That night they will attend a performance of the musical drama "Les Miserables".

On May 18 they will visit the Plymouth Plantation, then the "Mayflower" ship in the morning. In the afternoon they will visit the Salem Witch Museum, where they will learn about the Salem witch hysteria of 1692. In the evening they will attend a Boston Red Sox vs. Minnesota Twins ballgame.

The next day, Saturday May 19, judging of the Concert Band's performance will begin. After this time of anxious waiting for their results, the students will visit the New England Aquarium. That evening the grande finale will take place. This will be an awards dinner (presented by the IMF), with an awards presentation ceremony, followed by a dance. On May 20 the group will board their bus for their trip home.

Enns is impressed with the talent and progress of his young charges: "There can be some really hot players" to come from WESS, he said.



The WESS Jazz Band entertained at the 1990 WESS Fashion Show April 12. The band played selections such as My Funny Valentine by Richard Rodgers and Minnie Mouse Meets Min-

nie Mouse. Music teacher - conductor Mark Enns will take the Jazz Band to Boston for a gig May 16.