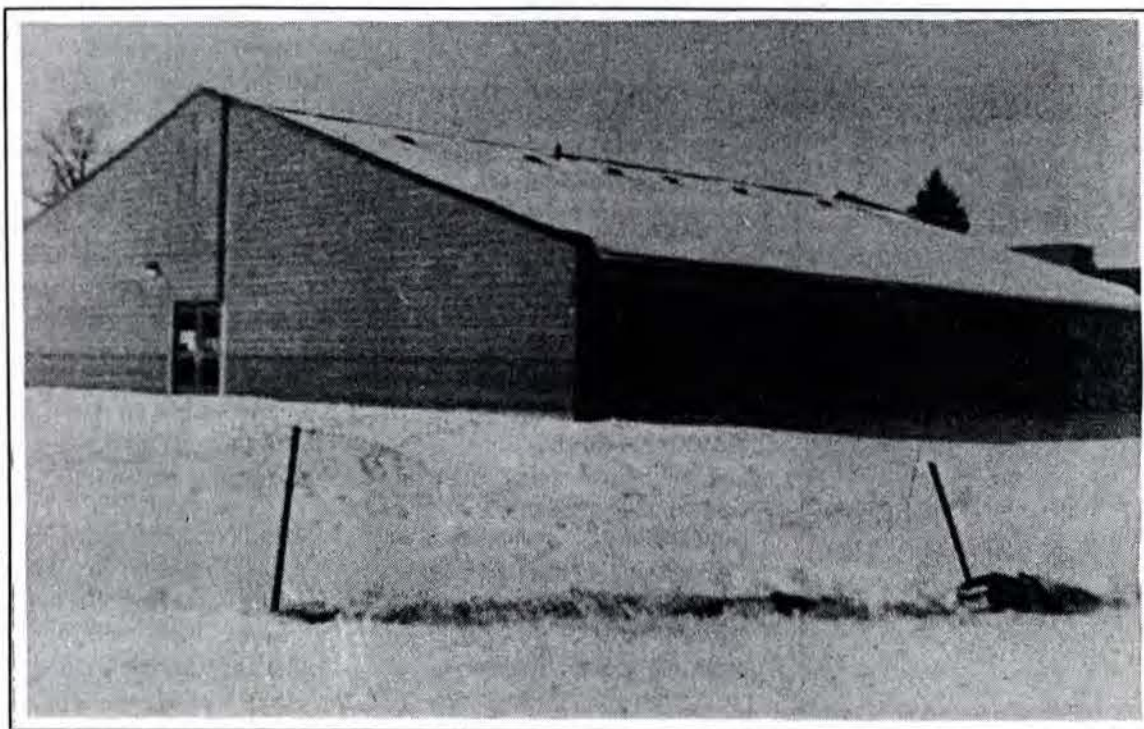


West Elgin Senior Elementary School raised approximately \$1,800 for the Heart & Stroke Foundation with the Hoops for Heart program. Throughout the month of March, students who raised pledges will play three on three basketball. Teacher coordinators Dale Peacock and Mike Stiles were pleased with the school's first effort. Pictured here are student helpers: (back row left to right) Sarah Molner, Stewart Murray, Amy Coates (front) Krista Mooser and Hayley McMillan.

(K. Robinet)

MAR. 96



Pictured is the new \$1,000,000 addition to St. Mary's School in West Lorne which was recently opened to accommodate the students from St. Thomas More in Rodney that was closed in December. Photo by Brian Outhouse

## St. Mary's School in West Lorne opens new addition

by Brian Outhouse

The Separate School Board took a giant step last week when the new addition to St. Mary's School was opened to the delight of both parents and students.

The new addition to the school will now mean that sisters and brothers will be going to the same school from JK to grade eight for their elementary education and parents will no longer have to shuffle between Rodney and West Lorne if they have more than one child attending school.

The new \$1,000,000 addition to the school includes a new principal's office, an expanded teachers work room, complete with storage facilities, photocopiers and a quiet room. A large library and resource center and seven huge brightly lit classrooms. The new wing is equipped with the latest technological innovations including automatic fire doors, a computerized heating and air conditioning system which circulates the air in the classrooms

constantly.

Use of natural light is also implemented with huge skydomes placed in the ceiling.

With the new addition the school has also expanded its playground, and when the new soccer fields are finished behind the school, St. Mary's will have access to them.

The transition from St. Thomas More to St. Mary's for the eighty students seem to have gone smoothly as students enjoy their new surroundings.



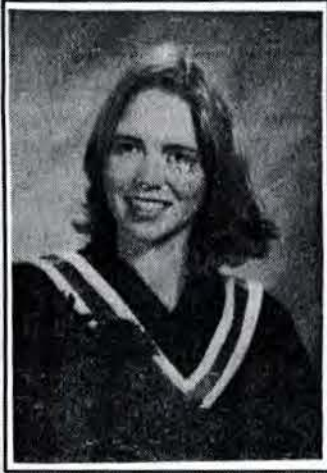
The Communities of West Elgin would like to welcome June Harkness to WESES. June will be the new principal at the school and she comes to the area with a wealth of experience behind her. Aug '96



St. Mary's rodeo winners- Pictured are the high score winners for their division in the annual St. Mary's bike rodeo, along with the winner of the new bike that was donated by the Optimist Club. From left to right they are: Jeremy Conway, Lisa Silva, Danny Diaz bike winner Bruno Ferreira and Past President of the West Lorne (Optimist Club Dorothy Staddon who made the presentations to the students. JUNE 96 (Photo by Brian Outhouse).

**Congratulations W.E.S.S. 1996 Ontario Scholars**

The Principal has recommended to the Minister of Education that the following students be recognized as Ontario Scholars.



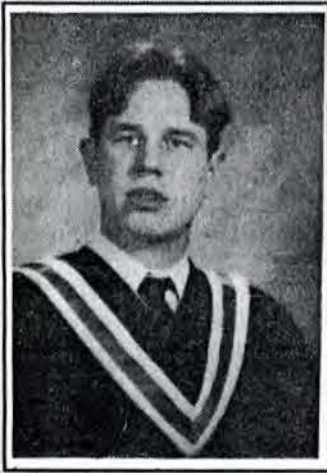
**Kristine Bitterman, Rodney**  
Daughter of Roland & Louise Bitterman.  
University of Guelph -  
Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology.



**David Cassel, Rodney**  
Son of Paul & Diane Cassel.  
University of Western Ontario - Visual Arts.



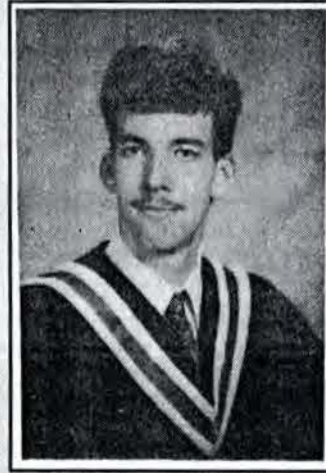
**Anita Cunningham, West Lorne.** Daughter of Wayne & Marg Cunningham.  
University of Toronto - Social Sciences in Journalism.



**Marc deWit, Wardsville**  
Son of Marcel & Attie de Wit.  
University of Guelph -  
Bachelor of Science in Agriculture.



**Jeanette Heyblom, Dutton**  
Daughter of Adrian & Bonnie Heyblom.  
University of Western Ontario - Social Sciences.



**Dan Schipper, Wallacetown**  
Son of Ben & Joanna Schipper.  
University of Waterloo - Engineering.



PHOTOS/LISA VERGEER/OUR COMMUNITY PRESS

Top winners at West Elgin's commencement ceremony included, top left: valedictorian Simone Ferreira, top male student David Cassel and top female Anita Cunningham. Bottom left: Also honored were Sarah Jarvis, Melissa Kennedy and Maxine Hounsell.



**Ferreira says grads will create future**

WEST LORNE — West Elgin Secondary School (WESS) valedictorian Simone Ferreira told fellow grads that the future was theirs to create at commencement here Saturday.

Ferreira, a student at King's College where she is studying general arts, is the daughter of Arlindo and Maria of West Lorne.

While reviewing the ups and downs of high school, she also thanked teachers for encouragement, support and friendship and "in guiding us in the right direction."

She encouraged grads to believe in themselves and their capabilities. "You can't live up to anyone's expectations but your own."

The Gov.-General's academic medal was won by Ontario scholar Anita Cunningham, the daughter of Wayne and Marg of West Lorne, who was also awarded the honor of top female student. She is studying humanities at the University of Toronto

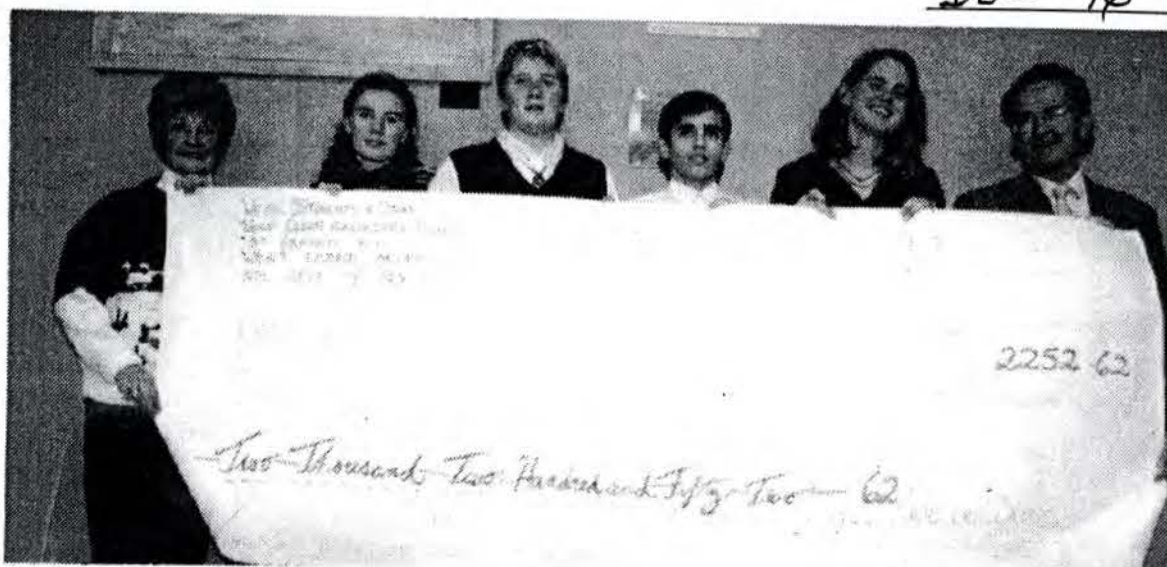
and hopes to become a journalist.

Top male student was Ontario scholar David Cassel, the son of Paul and Diane of Rodney. He is attending the University of Western Ontario in the visual arts program with a minor in computer science. He hopes to become a computer designer.

Other significant award winners:

- Kristine Bittermann, Melanie Brown, John Campbell, Aaron Coates, Anna Czajkowski, Ontario scholar Marc deWit, Joanna Ford, Ontario scholar Jeanette Heyblom, Maxine Hounsell, Sarah Jarvis, Laura Lackey, Tara Lamb, David Long, Mark Long, Cindy Machado, Denise Manchester, Jennifer McColl, Megan McIntyre, Rick Moore, Kathy Mullin, Joseph Orosz, Tim Pedersen, Lionel Pellerin, Myles Rawluk, Ontario scholar Dan Schipper, Shawn Szusz, Kelly Towersk, George Van Ceedar and Jason Weed.

DEC 96



**WESS students help the needy-** The students of West Elgin Secondary School held a fundraiser recently to help the areas needy. Seen presenting a cheque for \$2,252.62 to Lois Carroll of the Daffodil Society are from left to right: Lois Carroll from the Daffodil Society, Jody McLachlan, Sarah Padfield, Helder Neves, Loes deWitt, and Jim Reath. (Photo by B. Skeldoch)

# Some new faces at APS this year



Larry Anderson- Larry is the new Principal at APS. This is Larry's first appointment as Principal. Last year he was the VP at the Early Childhood Education Centre in St. Thomas. Larry is excited about the new curriculum, and the mixture of old and new staff that the school has to offer its students. He is also happy about the amount of musically inclined staff that are at the school and he hopes the music program can be an integral part of the school year's activities.

He is also pleased with the positive responses from both staff, parents, and the parents association for their help and suggestions for the upcoming year.

Larry also stated that his door is always open for parents who want to talk to him about their child.



Kellie Geffros- Kelly will be teaching the Grade 3 class at APS. This is Kellie's first teaching assignment as she has just graduated from Althouse College in London. She will be involved in coaching basketball and intramural soccer at the school this year. She also teaches French to the Grade 2&3 classes.



Keith Tuohy- Keith will teach the Grade 4 classes at APS this year. He is also going to lead the Junior Choir in a special Remembrance Day Service and hopes to have other musical highlights throughout the school year.



Kristen Egèner Black- Kristen will be teaching the Grade 4 classes at APS. This is her first teaching position and she is looking forward to meeting the parents of the area.



**WESES Valedictorian-** Andy McGuire delivered the Valedictorian address to his fellow students at the recent graduation ceremonies at the school. Andy also received the school's McKillop Award, the County English & Math Award which is presented to the top academic student in West Elgin. He also received the school's Citizenship Award.

## The 'Brightest and the Best' saluted at WESES graduation ceremonies



West Elgin teachers walk the picket lines at WESS in West Lorne.

## Week One: Teachers digging in

BY: WENDY TUNKS

Teachers who teach at the four local schools say it's not about money. They say Bill 160 is a disastrous piece of legislation that will dismantle education and divide the system into two separate levels - private and public - and that it will allow non-certified people into classrooms to teach children.

On the first week of their political protest, teachers feel their hands are tied because of the government's refusal to recognize what this bill will do to education.

They said even criminals have an appeal process but with Bill 160, they are stripped of their rights to question any decision the government makes. They feel the chaos the education minister has created is a result of changing curriculum without teacher and parent input and allowing charter schools to pop up all over Ontario.

Principal of WESES, June Harkness, said the government is headed toward a system of elitism that is found in Britain, where those families with money attend private schools and the rest attend public schools. She feels it will create a "have and have not" situation thus ending the universality of education.

Many teachers demonstrating pointed to the fact in 1991 and 1992, Ontario scholars were globally recognized at the top of the academic field. The next year, the provincial government started chopping from the education budget. Children now have to share text books, librarians were let go, and shop and family studies were cut from the curriculum due to a lack of funding.

They feel comparative test results from China and Japan are skewed. In those countries, there is one language and one way of life. In Canada, many children of different cultures and languages are enrolled in the schools and teachers are given few resources to educate these children. Most English as a Second Language (ESL) programs have been dropped from schools in Ontario.

Also included in Ontario test results are students in resource programs. These children have their learning adapted to their special needs. In other countries, after Grade 6, special needs children are not included in test score results.

The teachers in this community said they want to be part of the consulting process when it comes to decisions affecting the children. Most of the teachers have never been from their desk as a result of a work action but felt it was necessary to inform the parents, students and the community on how Bill 160 will affect the classrooms in Ontario.

COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES ~OCTOBER 25TH

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS BY MATT MCINTYRE

Good evening parents, teachers and welcome back graduates. It is with pleasure that I am up here speaking on behalf of the entire graduating class. It seems that so much has changed since the first day of grade nine. We all can remember walking into this massive building with our eyes as big as saucers, not knowing what to expect. We all wanted to experience it all, happiness, sadness, love. But more importantly we all wanted to acquire knowledge. With each year we all became a little more confident. This new confidence allowed new friendships to blossom while some old friendships were discarded. We all discover what we excel in and began to understand what we were not good in. Here at West Elgin we all grew, became individuals, and became prepared for each little detour that might come along in the long road of life.

The memories contained

within these walls are too numerous to count. Two examples of these memories are the double OFSAA victories. If you were unaware, both our senior girls and senior boys volleyball team captured the gold at their respective tournaments. Other accomplishments include countless hardware at music festivals from all over won by our senior concert bands, countless awards from various math contests, the senior girls soccer team winning WOSSA, and for some of us the many breakfasts at the Town and Country.

All of these accomplishments are due in part to the wonderful teachers and coaches that helped us along the way. One of the major difference between secondary and post-sec-

ondary education, and an aspect I miss the most, in the closeness we all had with the teachers. It is certainly scary



to think of what would have happened to us if we didn't have the support or encouragement of every teacher in this institution. I would like to take the time to

thank the teachers on behalf of the entire graduating class.

Unfortunately, our time at West Elgin was not always a wonderful ride. There were certainly bumps along the way. Each of us experienced disappointment in our own way whether it is losing a semi-final game in volleyball or soccer or even, heaven forbid,

failing a finite test. Personally, I am glad to stay the good times out weighted the bad by a wide margin.

As with and Valedictorian speech, I believe that this is the part were I use a metaphor to describe the graduating class. I have thought long and hard about this and came up with a crack. The graduating class poses many characteristics which are closely related to that of a crack. For instance, we all started out small and timid. In this stage we were only the start of a crack. As the years went by we grew physically, mentally and spiritually and in turn the crack grew also. We see at the bottom of the crack a separation line like branches stemming off a tree. This stage symbolizes our final year at West Elgin. We all became a little more independent. We all became young adults. Finally the last stage is the leaving stage. After the crack spread it

seems to have stopped. This is when we said our good-byes and turned to walk away; however, if we were to look back even though the crack has stopped it is evident that the class of 96-97 has certainly made their mark.

Well friends we did it. In this day and age where education seems to have lost all respect, where we were never sure if mom or dad were going to be working tomorrow we persevered and came out on top. Everyone believe me when I tell you will never if your life meet a nicer bunch of "kids". I am proud to say I know you. The great poet Allen Ginsberg once stated in his poem "How I", that he saw the 'greatest minds' of his 'generation destroyed by madness'. I however am happy to say I saw the greatest minds of my generation rise above the madness.

Ladies and gentleman, I am proud to give you the Graduation of Class of 1997.

March 10, 1997



West Elgin Wildcats senior girls' volleyball team brought home the OFSAA gold last week as they defeated Rockway Mennonite. Members of the team are: (back row left to right) Allison Padfield, Monica Murray, Colleen Bobier, Heather Lamont, coach Dave Inglis, Marlene Lunn, assistant Ben Peco, captain Sarah Padfield (front) Teresa Small, Heather McPhail, Jody McLachlan, Judy Van Oorspronk, Krista Seed and Sarah Leitch. (K. Robinet)

MARCH 24, 1997



Over 200 WESS students took to the streets last Thursday to protest Bill 104.

## High school students protest Bill 104

BY: KAREN ROBINET

Concerned about the potential impact of Bill 104 on their education, about half the student population of West Elgin Secondary School took to the streets last Thursday morning. Bill 104 is the legislation which will see the reduction of school boards across Ontario as of January.

Waving signs that read 'Kill the Bill,' '104 out the door,' and 'Save our Schools,' the students marched downtown where they staged an orderly protest, watched by police in a nearby O.P.P. cruiser.

The protest was organized by grade 12 student Sarah Simpson, who said it's the first time she's ever been so involved in something for her school.

She said the main reason for the protest was, "to prove a point to the community and the government. Just because we're not adults, it doesn't mean they don't have to consider our thoughts." Simpson said she's not opposed to the number of cutbacks to school boards. What she is upset about is the potential loss of programming at WESS as the school is swallowed up by the vast Elgin-London-Middlesex-Oxford (ELMO) School District.

Simpson said she's concerned that ultimately, programs such as art and music, as well as sports could become a thing of the past at WESS; victims of budget cuts. As a rural school on the outer fringe, Simpson doesn't feel there's any hope WESS will receive the same kind of advantages students in larger schools enjoy.

Many of the students participating in the walkout agreed.

Susan Dieleman said she's worried about the loss of extra-curricular activities, and said, "we're already a small school that gets lost in the shuffle."

"It's our future at stake," said Margery Schostak, adding that the new school district boundaries don't bode well for WESS.

Dave Joyce said, "Bill 104 and other cutbacks could take away our secretaries, librarians, sports, drama... it just sucks."

Bill Dodge is concerned that the new school district will be, "uncontrollable." He said that, "the resources already don't make it here from St. Thomas," and that situation could only get worse once WESS comes under the umbrella of the ELMO school district.

Principal Martha Foster said she couldn't officially condone what the students did, but says personally she feels proud that they took a stand for something they believe in.

"Part of the education process involves teaching students to make informed decisions," she said. Copies of Bill 104, as well as a four-page précis were available to students who wanted to examine the Bill themselves.

Foster said students were reminded to, "know what you're doing and why." She said that anyone walking out just to walk out would make a farce of the protest.

Generally speaking, she said the majority of students taking part in the protest were well-informed about the Bill and were legitimately concerned about its potential impact on the school.

Following the first period protest, most students went back to their classes.



## Tutor Time

Youth Tutors Elgin (YTE) are once again taking the fear out of learning and replacing it with fun with one-on-one tutoring, after school clubs and other programs. YTE is a Youth Service Canada project funded by Human Resources Development Canada and administered by the YWCA of St. Thomas-Elgin. The program is made up of 12 individuals who are out of school, out of work and between the ages of 18-24. They are hired full-time for a 30 week period. Three centres of operation - East, West and Central Elgin - have been established in order to meet literacy needs. The tutors for the West Elgin area are, from left, Tim Nelhams, Angela Larson, Suzie McKnight and Melissa Skirtschak. Along with visiting local schools, the four also work out of the West Elgin Health Centre. The program will be seeking volunteers to continue the program once the 30 week period ends in July. For more information or to volunteer your time with YTE, contact any of the local tutors at 768-1715.



Mr. Lawrence's grade eight students from W.E.S.E.S., pictured here with Helen Mooser and Terry Heeney, collected the largest amount of nonperishables of all the different classrooms to donate to the Daffodil Society

### WEST ELGIN SENIOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOOD DRIVE

WESES has just completed its annual Christmas food drive in support of the local Daffodil Society.

Teacher organizers, Dale Peacock and Sharon Nielson, congratulate the students and parents for their support. This is by far our most successful campaign, as we received:

- about 2,000 food items
- \$200.00 cash that will help purchase turkeys
- \$143.00 in Canadian Tire money to purchase gifts for children.

Thanks must go to Jake Fischer (Student Council President), Mrs. Fischer and Jonathan Fleming for going to London and purchasing these gifts.

Special thanks go to class 8L, 7B and Junior Kindergarten for their incredible effort.

Well done, WESES.



The students of West Elgin Secondary School have been busy fundraising for the Daffodil Society's Gift to Gobble. The school raised \$1345.99. Here presenting the cheque to Helen Mooser and Terry Heeney is Carrie Slaats. Other students present were Stephanie Smith, Tiffany White and Shannon Lundy. Total funds raised over the past four years is \$6500. Mrs. Egge's grade 10 class ranked top fundraisers. The teachers served a meal to students showing thanks for a job well done.



No, these are not the new uniforms at Aldborough Public School, although these students wouldn't have a problem with it. The Grade 1 students recently completed a unit on

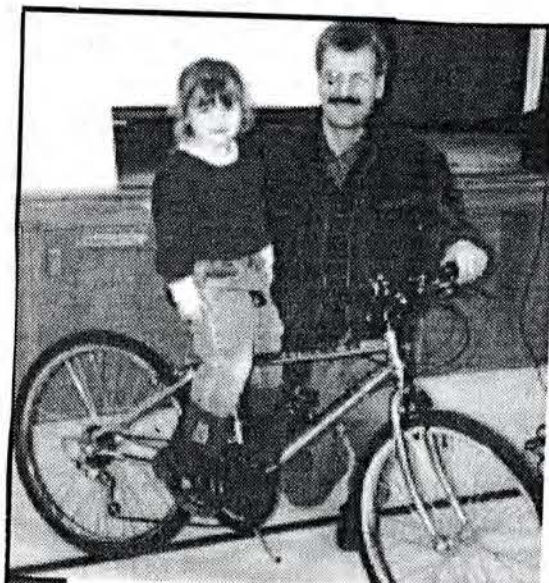
clowns and wrapped up their studies with a little clowning of their own. Here, Brett Fleming, left, Jacob Zoller and Kayla Denomme concentrate on the task at hand - the bean bag toss



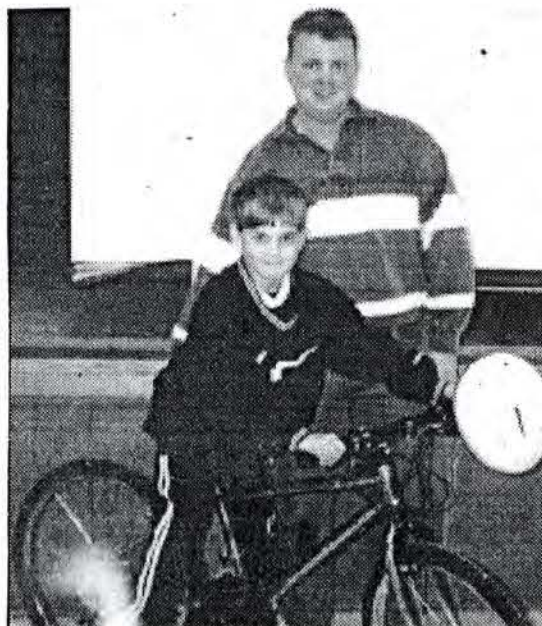
With February being Heart and Stroke Month, students from West Elgin Secondary School are will once again be knocking on doors to collect money for the local campaign. Approximately two dozen student volunteers will be canvassing neighborhoods in West Lorne and Rodney until

the end of February. Here, West Lorne resident Bonnie McGill talks with students Donna McKillop (Gr. 11) and Celia Almeida about the campaign. The students of WESS wish to thank the residents of West Lorne and Rodney in advance for their support of the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

FEB 28, 1998



There were about 120 adults and children on hand for the Fire Safety Awareness Night At Aldborough Public School recently, presented by Rick McFadden of the Rodney Fire Fighters and hosted by West Elgin Mutual Insurance. Two lucky winners



went home with new bikes. Above, Emily Varga receives her bike from Bernie Wiehle of Orford Farmers Co-Operative, while below, David Clements tries out his bike with David Fink from W. G. Thompson & Sons. The two companies generously donated the bicycles for the draws.



Students at WESES were making beautiful music together recently as 59 of them participated in the recent St. Thomas Rotary Music Festival. The students participated in everything from solos, duets and trios to quartets, small ensembles and bands. The alto saxophone quartet were the

school's representatives at this past Friday's Key Notes Concert at the Salvation Army in St. Thomas. Huge thanks goes out to the students for their efforts, the parents for their support and Heather Kosciak for practising with the students and accompanying them to the festival.



The West Lorne Optimist Club held its annual Oratorical Contest recently at St. Mary's School. Contestants competed for top honors in order to move on to the zone finals. Here, Optimist Club representative Jim Coburn poses with participants (in back row) Bradley Tunks (1st), Kyle Van De Vooren (2nd) and Brooke Roest. In front are Richa Sharma (1st), Simone Loeters (2nd), Devon Johnston (3rd) and Becky Kosciak. Tunks and Sharma will move on to the zone finals. From there they can advance to the regionals and then the district finals, where winners receive a \$1,500 scholarship.



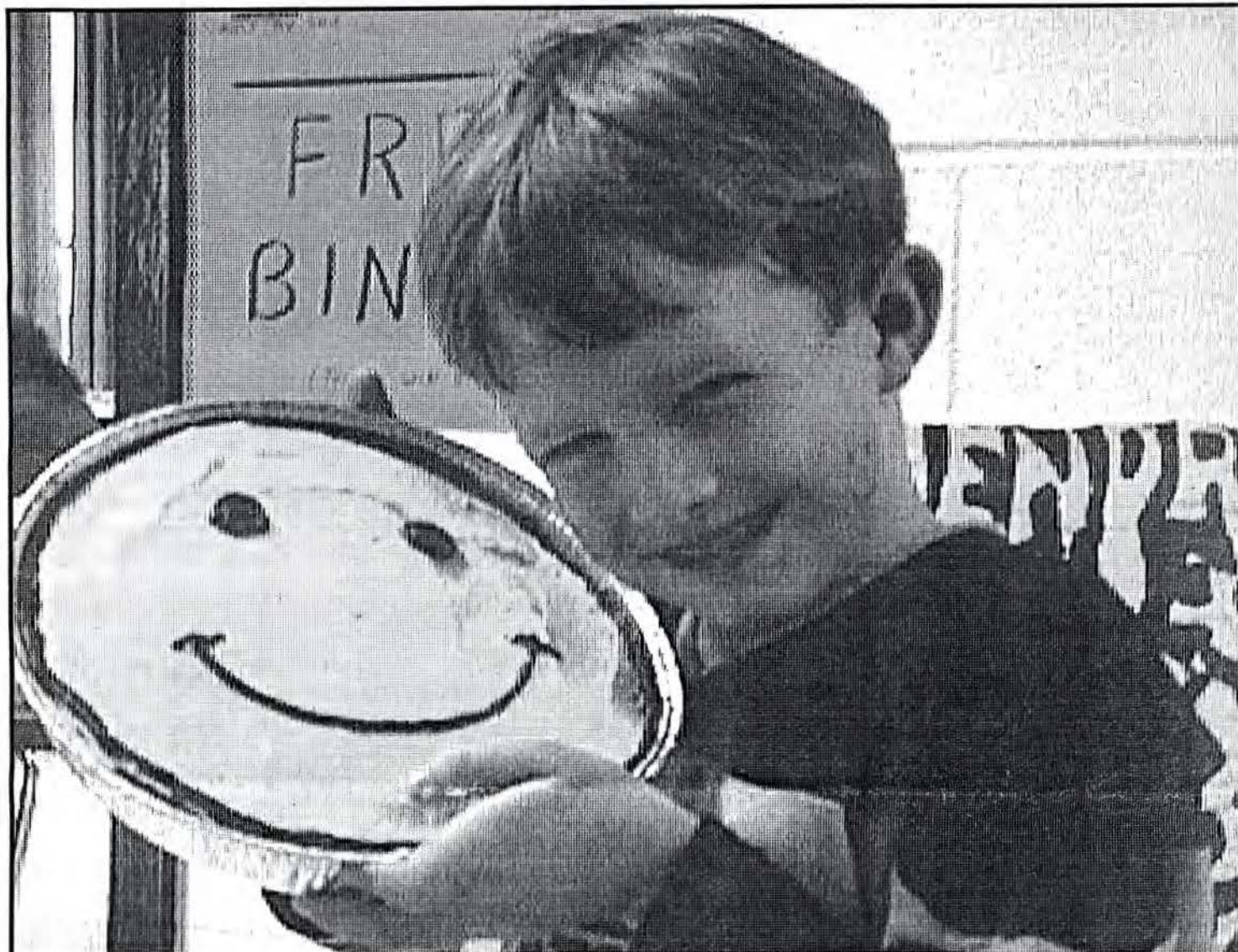
March 18, 1998

## WILD CATS STRIKE AGAIN

Congratulations to W.E.S.S. Senior Girls Volleyball for winning the O.F.F.S.A. championship for the second year in a row!

Thursday, March 12, the West Elgin Wildcats defeated Clarke High School of Newcastle, Ontario with a 15 - 9 and 15 - 3 win. The starting 6 were Krista Seed, Monica Murray, Judy VanOorspronk, Jennifer Arvai, Marlene Lunn and Allison Padfield.





There were definitely smiles around this past week at Aldborough Public School as they held Funfest '98. There were prizes, games, baked goods, crafts, hot dogs and so much more. It definitely kept parents, teachers and students busy

to try and do it all. Here, six-year-old Evan Labadie does an imitation of the cake he just won at the Cake Walk game. The event managed to raise just over \$1,700 for the school's Volunteer Parents Association. See additional photos on Page 3.

# 452 teachers laidoff

13 teachers lose jobs in West Elgin area

Paul Mayne  
The Chronicle

Due to the result of the government's new funding formula, 452 teachers in the newly formed Thames Valley District School Board were given their pink slips last week. The layoffs will take effect at the end of this school year.

"The Board is disappointed to have to issue these notices, and we regret the obvious impact on staff," said Heather Wice, chairperson of the Thames Valley District School Board. "We are hopeful that, as we continue to analyze the provincial formula, some of these teachers can be recalled."

The notices include 327 secondary teachers and 125 elementary teachers. Some of the individuals receiving their notices work part-time, therefore, the 452 notices equate to 404 full-time equivalent teachers jobs (303 secondary and 101 elementary). This now brings the number of full-time equivalent teaching jobs at the Board to 4,727.

Wice adds, however, that she remains concerned that fewer teachers will be available to provide support for programs and co-curricular activities in the schools while the student population continues to grow.

Of the 13 teachers laidoff in the West Elgin area, the breakdown is as follows:

APR. 6, 1998

The West Elgin Chronicle



Students from Helen Mooser's Grade 2 class at Aldborough Public School created some scary critters recently - prehistoric friends, to be exact. The class visited the Children's Museum in London to check out the dinosaur exhibit and upon return made their own creatures. Showing off their dinosaurs are (in back) Amanda Russell, Jacob Ferguson, Robert Nutel, Justin Lapadat and Aaron Ford. In front are Charlotte Noddin, Kaitlynn Connolley and Jamie Vanceeder.



# Happy Retirement!



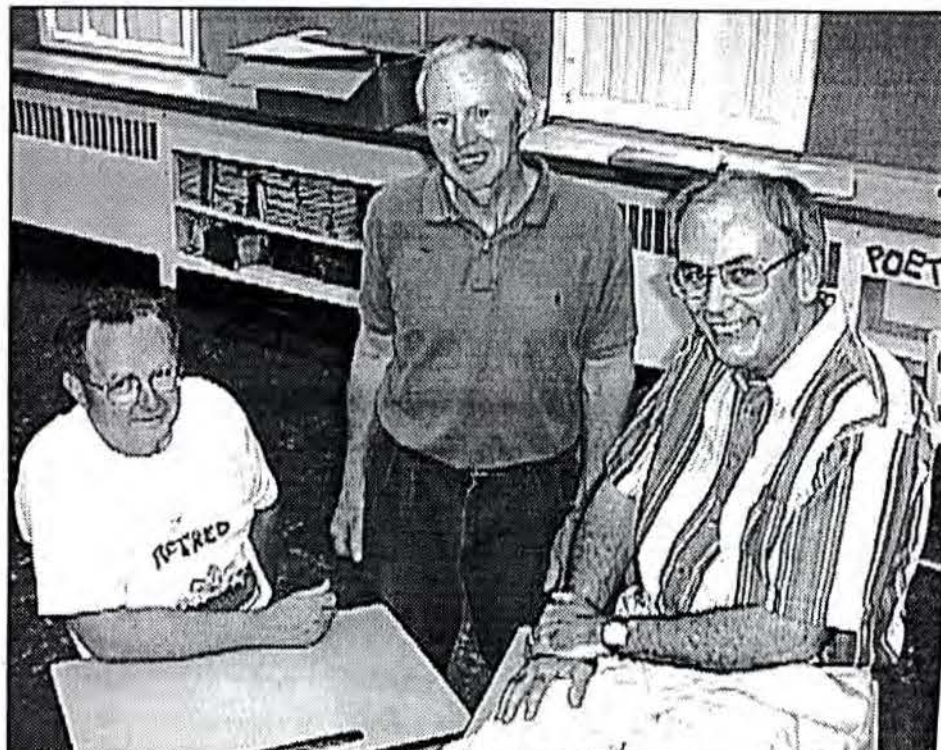
West Elgin Senior Elementary School - Elaine Brown (Junior Kindergarten).



Aldborough Public School - From left to right, Ebba Schmid (Grade 1), Helen Mooser (Grade 2), Lisa Wolf (Learning Support Teacher), Sylvia Fischer (Secretary) and Ron Alderton (Grade 5).



Dunwich-Dutton Public School - Front row from left, Ruth Agar (Secretary), Anne Reeves (Grade 3), back row from left, Karen Sloetjes (Music) and Winnifred White (Grade 5).



West Elgin Secondary School - From left to right, Jim Reath (Head of Math Department), Colin Kittmer (Math & Computers) and Bob Karn (English, Head of French Department). Absent from photo is Vince Rocco (Business).

## A.P.S. BUTTERFLY GARDEN EXPANDS



This week seemed the perfect autumn time for Mrs. Bandeen's Kindergarten class to plant the very own daffodils. The grade 6 students assisted with the planting (roots down) of over 200 bulbs that will be showing their presence come spring. Mrs. Lippold and Mrs. Laurence of West Lorne Horticultural Society were on hand to answer questions. Mrs. Peternal and Mrs. Waterworth and Committee welcome you to enjoy the array of colour over the seasons.