

WEST LORNE

WOMEN'S

INSTITUTE



TWEEDSMUIR

HISTORY

VOLUME 6 1999-2000

COMPILED BY LEOLA LAWRENCE

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Santos joins the Chronicle

The West Elgin Chronicle is pleased to welcome Sandra Santos to the staff as part of the West Elgin Secondary School Co-op Program.

The 18-year-old Grade 12 student will be working at the newspaper until the end of the school year.

After her OAC year, Santos plans to attend university to possibly study computer graphics. Welcome Sandra.



Sandra Santos **MAR 1999**



Permanent Withdrawal

Royal Bank assistant manager Barb Willie is making a withdrawal at the Rodney branch - well, as far as employment goes. The 37-year Rodney Branch employee officially left her position April 30 with a send off of employees and well-wishers at the Furnival Road bank. Here, Willie lets customers know that her wicket is officially closed. Congratulations Barb!

Top Producer

Rodney area farmer Paul Mistele has been honoured with the 1998 Pork Producer of the Year from the Elgin County Pork Producers Association. As part of a rally at Queen's Park last December to protest low hog prices, Mistele initiated the 'Donate-A-Hog' program which brought 58,000 pounds of pork to Toronto's food banks. The former president of the Elgin Federation of Agriculture has 120 sows, farrow to finish, along with chickens and cash crop. After Mistele received his award at the Feb. 3 banquet in St. Thomas, he was then named as president of the Elgin County Pork Producers Association.

February 15, 1999 - Page 3



Hall of Famer

Years of hard work and quality farming has seen West Lorne farmer Ed Kalita named to the Elgin Federation of Agriculture (EFA) Hall of Fame. Kalita, a 68-year-old father of 10, came to Elgin County in 1962 as a tobacco farmer which he maintained until 1983. He continues to grow corn and soybeans. Over the years Kalita has had his hands in a number of areas including as director and president for the EFA and director for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), OFA representative to Conservations Council of Ontario, director of Ontario Corn Producers Association, Elgin County 4-H Club leader, separate school trustee in Elgin County and a charter member of the Knights of Columbus Council. Also elected to the EFA Hall of Fame were Stewart "Bud" Brown (cattleman from the Shedden area) and Walter Rogers (fruit and vegetables - Sparta area). Two Youth Achievement Awards were given to Catherine Agar of Iona Station and Rebecca Lunn of Springfield.



Customer Appreciation

It was a day to give back to the customers at Rodney Cycle and Machine as they held their annual Customer Appreciation Day. Here, owner Marcel Champigny, left, shows off a log-splitter to customer Ron Payne. A number of draws were held throughout the day with prizes going to Stan Duncanson, Will Demaiter, Darcy Vanraes, Bill Downie, Jill Soos, Jim Gammages, Rita Jackson, Madeline Duncanson, Sarah Lilley, Tara Smith and David Balint. **MAY '99**

Land Office, Fulmer join forces

Paul Mayne
The Chronicle

Two locally-owned real estate companies have chosen to join forces in an attempt to better meet the needs of potential home buyers.

Land Office Inc., based in Dutton, and Fulmer Realty Ltd., based in West Lorne, will merge together effective March 1. The Land Office name will be retained. Offices will be open in Dutton, West Lorne and Rodney.

Bob Hatch, owner of Land Office, says the larger sales group, approximately 9 to 10 agents, promises even better service to home sellers and buyers.

A recent entry into local real estate, Land Office has quickly made a mark through the introduction of new marketing programs and leading edge technology into the real estate industry.

"We will now have two groups of agents working together," says Hatch, who started Land Office in 1995. "By combining seasoned experience with modern selling concepts and the continuation of free M.L.S. exposure in the city markets, we can give our customers more."

A recent Angus Reid survey shows that one out of every four Canadians plan to buy a home this year or next, so Hatch expects the real estate business in Elgin to

be booming.

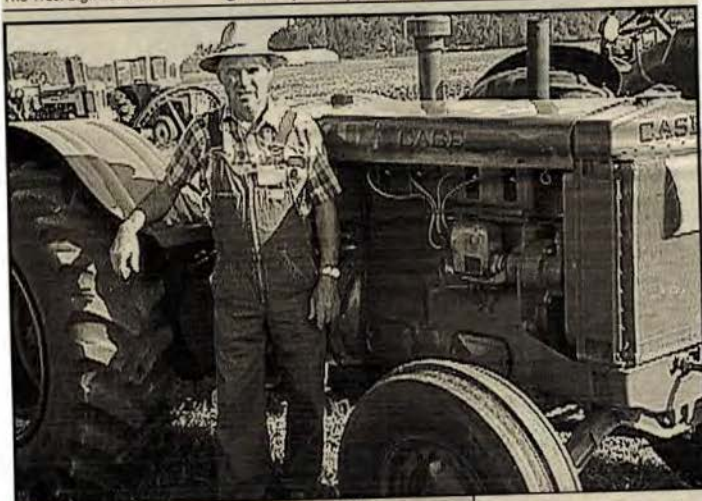
Allan Fulmer built his real estate business by acquiring Johnson Real Estate, becoming incorporated in 1966. For the last 33 years Fulmer Realty has provided exceptional service and experience to West Elgin residents.

Fulmer says he will be diverting some of his energies to new projects but will stay on with the company as associate broker.

"This is a benefit to everyone," he says. "There's tremendous more knowledge now offered to people who are looking to buy houses. FEB. 8, 1999"

The West Elgin Chronicle

SEPT 6, 1999



Antique Show & Threshing

The weather cooperated for the eighth annual Antique Show and Threshing at the farm of Hugh and Joyce McFadden in West Lorne. Residents had the opportunity to check out how farmers did their job back in the days before high tech farm equipment was a mainstay on many farms. The antique plowing demonstrations were a unique way to see the mighty machines work their stuff, and as always, the Parade of Power completed the days activities. Above, organizer Hugh McFadden poses with a Case L 1936 tractor, while West Lorne's Jim Moran uses a corn sheller to prepare a bite to eat.



Golden Needle

Heather Bell, owner of Heather Bell's Sewing Studio in West Lorne, has received her fifth Golden Needle Sales Award from Pfaff Canada Corporation. Here, Bell (left) poses with Pfaff Canada president Bruno Manzioli during a recent company meeting in Toronto. **JULY 9**



New Ownership

Village Trends Aesthetics has re-opened its doors with a new owner. Michelle McLeod, left, has taken over the ownership of the West Lorne business and will be offering the same services as before, minus electrolysis. The shop, located at the corner of Graham and Main St., is open for nails and tanning on Wednesdays (10 a.m. - 3 p.m.) and for all services on Fridays (10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.), Saturdays (10 a.m. - 6 p.m.) and Sundays (10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.). For appointments you can call 673-0969. Here, McLeod works on the nails of customer Kim Duquette.

JULY 9 The West Elgin Chronicle

DEC. 20, 1999

The West Elgin Chronicle

SEPT. 27, 1999



Hog Barn Construction Begins

Work on a 2,400 hog barn, a partnership between Premium Pork and Verbrugge Farms, got underway last week. The barn, located on Marsh Line in West Lorne, is scheduled to be complete by winter.



Fountain of Hope

The employees of the West Lorne Bank of Montreal are proud of the early success of the "Our Fountain of Hope" fund-raiser to help raise money for local charities. Donations and a teddy bear draw raised \$177 for the Daffodil Society. Here, Daffodil representative Helen Mooser checks out the fountain, which will be a year-round fund-raiser, with fund-raising committee co-captain Mary Bodnar. The mittens from the Warm and Wooley Tree will be donated to the Caring Cupboard.

Page 8 - July 12, 1999



Erie Breezes B & B and Charter Sailing Cruises

West Elgin has a new spot for tourists to relax and enjoy the many attractions the area has to offer. Erie Breezes Bed & Breakfast and Charter Sailing Cruises, located on Hwy. 3 midway between New Glasgow and Eagle, has opened for business. Hosts John and Veronika McDougall offer year-round accommodations to guests along

with a great area to relax among their many gardens and ponds. Guests can also take advantage of afternoon or moonlight cruises on Lake Erie. Erie Breezes can be reached at 768-2731 or 1-888-228-2168.



New businesses

Things are revving up at Rogan's Automotive Service Inc. for owner Robert Ganhadeiro. West Lorne's newest business opened its bay doors Jan. 4 and has been steady ever since. Ganhadeiro does everything but body work at his 264 Finney St. shop, which is open 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. weekdays and 8 a.m. until noon on Saturdays. The shop is closed Sundays. You can reach Rogan's Automotive Services Inc. at 768-0311.

FEB. 1999



Lovely Lace Work

Things are very prim and proper in West Lorne now thanks to the arrival of The Lace Curtain Shoppe, at the corner of Main and Graham Streets. The business, formerly known as The Margaret Rose Collection when it was located in Dutton, opened its doors to West Elgin residents Jan. 4. The move gives the business a more centralized location to better serve its wide range of customers throughout most of southwestern Ontario. And its more than just lace curtains you'll find at the new store. You can browse through everything from tablecloths, doilies and runners to placemats and table toppings. Here, owner Margaret Donaldson, left, and associate Marion Sletjes go through some of the many lace samples. The sisters have been in the business for 2½ years and present their store in very "home-like" fashion. You can check out the store yourself Tuesdays to Thursdays from 1 until 5 p.m., Fridays from 1 until 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. The store is closed Sundays and Mondays. In-home appointments can also be set up by calling 768-0555.



'Prim' and Proper Farewell

A West Lorne landmark for 31 years, Prim Fashions closed its doors for the final time last week. Owner Louise Bégin, who has been the leader in offering the latest women's fashions for West Elgin and area residents, has chosen to retire. Here, Bégin, left, locks the door for the last time Nov. 17, along with long time employee Denise Van Dyk, who has taken a position at Krebsz Jewellery & Gifts. Louise and her husband have planned a trip to Kenya in the future and have chosen to remain in Rodney for their retirement. Louise would also like to extend her utmost thanks to all the customers, friends and family that have stopped by Prim Fashions over all these years. Nov/99

Page 14 - May 15, 2000



Bigger and Better

Jonathan and Kate Kolav are venturing into new frontiers - Information Frontiers, that is. The former home-based business has now moved into downtown West Lorne location (225B Graham Rd.) to better serve their growing customer base. As computer solution providers, they cover everything from a simple mouse to working on complete networks. Information Frontiers is open weekdays 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For information, you can call them at 768-3590.

An auto repair business converts Grand Prix into GTX Ram Air performance model

Pontiac adds some muscle in West

By Burt Dowsett
The London Free Press

That hot-looking Pontiac Grand Prix GTX with the ram air scoops idling next to you at the spotlight doesn't get all its muscle from Detroit.

Some of it has likely come from West Lorne.

West Lorne? Kal Jabara, who runs an auto repair business in West Lorne, laughs when you ask how his shop became one of two facilities in Canada to land the job of installing ram air kits on muscle cars built by General Motors, North America's largest auto maker.

"I used to (drag) race with one of the guys who works for Street Legal Performance (SLP) Automotive Group," Jabara says of the Troy, Mich., aftermarket firm that manufactures the ram air kits. "He asked if I'd be interested."

Jabara didn't have to be asked twice. The deal works like this. If a customer wants the GTX conversion made to a new Grand Prix when it's purchased, the dealer has the car shipped to West Lorne from the assembly plant by GM. Jabara does the conversion work, then sends the car on to the GM dealer for delivery to the buyer.

The special hood, with the ram-air ducts, is manufactured at SLP's Canadian headquarters in LaSalle, Que., where the firm also prepares Camaro SS and Trans Am Ram Air models for GM. That shop also handles GTX conversions.

The GTX hoods arrive at Jabara's shop from SLP already painted red, black or white. If the customer's car is a different colour, Jabara repaints it to match. The hood is installed on the car and Jabara replaces the air box with one that mates to the air duct in the new hood.

The ram-air package, including hood, ram air box, decals and key fobs, sells for \$3,199 at participating Pontiac dealerships.

Jabara has been doing the conver-



The GTX Ram Air performance package, with its distinctive hood, chromed wheels and larger tires, gives this 1999 Pontiac Grand Prix a more aggressive look.

sions for about a year and is currently working on his ninth GTX.

"The air goes through the scoops and into the air box to give it a ram-air effect," Jabara says. "Between the hood and the air box, it gives it an additional 10 horsepower."

If that's not enough muscle, Jabara also installs a special exhaust system from SLP. It features dual low-restriction mufflers, a pair of dual chrome tips and adds 10 horsepower to the Grand Prix's performance on models equipped with non-supercharged V6 engines or the supercharged 3800 version. He also sells a lower-cost exhaust system (\$399 versus \$1,099 for the bigger SLP system) for Grand Prix SE models equipped with the 3100 V6 engine.

The other alteration Jabara does for SLP is the installation of a tire package, which includes 17-inch custom rims and tires, replacing the original 16-inch tires and wheels.

"It improves the handling and makes it more aggressive looking, too," Jabara says of the package, which costs \$2,699.

The standard Grand Prix GTP is

costly enough — \$30,805 is the base price — and the conversion packages add a big chunk to the total. But Jabara says clients ordering the GTX package aren't deterred by the bottom line. "It (the Grand Prix) is already a good-looking car and this package sets them off even more."

Clients who have ordered the GTX package include "the whole range" of enthusiasts, from ones in their early 20s to those in their 50s.

Jabara hopes to ride a wave in what he sees as an increasing demand in new cars for "anything with performance."

The advent of the computer-controlled engine, while a bonus for the commuter seeking fuel economy, has been a bit of an obstacle to fans of performance cars. But not any more, says Jabara.

"You can now buy an aftermarket computer that has that stuff (performance-enhancing capabilities) built into it. It's an aftermarket computer."

"A lot of cars don't have distributors now. All the (aftermarket) computer does is advance the timing and tell it to give it more fuel — or more

air."

Jabara says new aftermarket performance computers can sense a variety of things in the engine, such as throttle position. "If it tells it there's a wide-open throttle, the computer knows what to do."

Jabara, whose repair business involves foreign and domestic cars as well as high-performance engines, says he's dabbled with work involving aftermarket computers with SLP on the Camaro SS model.

"We took it to the track; the motor wanted more but the computer couldn't give it to it," he laughs.

While Jabara is concentrating on the GTX package, there are also similar packages available from SLP for the Ultra Z Camaro and Impala SS.

"Hopefully in the future, we'll work with other companies too, like Ford and Chrysler," he says.

With performance — and the look of muscle — in vogue again, Jabara sees a great future for this segment of the automotive market.

"People are always fascinated by performance."

Burt Dowsett is a Free Press senior copy editor.

els

Lorne

GTX Ram Air performance package

Basic package (\$3,199): Consists of a composite hood with functional twin air scoops, forced-air induction system, special exterior badges and two key fobs. Adds 10 horsepower when combined with the 3800 V6 engine.

Optional packages:

Performance exhaust system (\$1,099): Features dual mufflers, each with dual tips. Adds 10 horsepower when combined with the supercharged or non-supercharged 3800 V6 engine. A lower cost system (\$399) is available for SE models equipped with the 3100 V6 engine. This system also adds 10 horsepower.

Performance wheels and tires (\$2,699): Includes 17-inch Michelin Pilot Series tires (P235/55/R17) specially tuned to enhance the handling characteristics of the GTX plus 17x7-inch six-spoke chromed aluminum wheels. This package improves the handling and accentuates the wide stance of the GTX, giving it a more aggressive appearance.

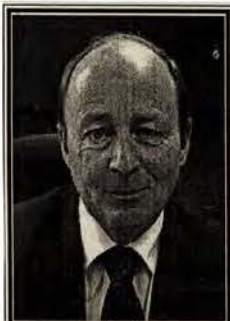
Other options:


- A spoiler-style sunroof with sliding shade.
- Custom car cover with locking cable and silk-screened GTX Ram Air logo.
- Home Link universal transmitter, integrated into the driver's-side sunvisor, for garage door openers, home lighting and security systems.
- Custom premium floor mats, with embroidered GTX logo on the front mats

Warranty: The GTX base package and all options are backed by SLP Automotive Group's three-year, 58,000-kilometre limited warranty.

Availability: The GTX package is available through participating Pontiac dealers and can be ordered for Grand Prix SE, GT and GTP models. It can be ordered from SLP Automotive Group for sedan and coupe versions of all 1997-99 Grand Prix SE, GT and GTP models.

For more information: Call K. Jabara Auto Repair at 519-768-2986 or visit SLP Automotive Group's Web site at www.slpeng.com



Robert (Bob) J. Saunders
Gordon Cumming, Commercial Area Manager, Bank of Montreal, is pleased to announce the appointment of Bob Saunders to the position of Relationship Manager, serving the Agricultural and Commercial Enterprises in the West Elgin-Dutton/Dunwich and Glencoe marketplace. Bob brings with him 29 years of banking experience. Please join us in welcoming Bob to the area by attending an open house at West Lorne Branch Bank of Montreal, Friday March 31st from 9:30am to 4pm. 



Fire Safety Awareness

West Elgin residents, both young and old, were on hand at the Rodney Fire Hall last week to take part in a Fire Safety Awareness Seminar. Firefighters gave residents first-hand knowledge as to the do's and don'ts of how to deal with a fire. Films, fire safety demonstrations and hands-on exercises were just part of the educational evening. Here, Rodney firefighter Rick McFadden helps Matt Schweitzer with an oxygen mask. Schweitzer was able to try on the equipment to see what it was like to be a real firefighter. The evening was sponsored by Tim Horton's and Donut Delite, McDonald's, Orford Farmers Co-op Ltd., W.G. Thompson & Sons Ltd., Knight's Home Hardware and West Elgin Mutual Insurance.

MARCH 2000

Photo by Karen Cormier

Factors identified in tragic Co-op accident

The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), HRDC Labour Program, have released its preliminary findings into the tragic industrial accident at the Orford Co-op in Rodney Oct. 27.

The accident killed local residents Wayne Van Breda, James Bourque and Carl Kovacs and sent a fourth, John Mohan, to hospital when a tractor trailer, unloading 34 tonnes of corn, jumped the Hydraulic Truck Dumper blocks rolling backwards off of the elevated hoist.

The preliminary investigation by police and government safety officers has not found any evidence to suggest that the elevating hoist was damaged prior to the occurrence. However, as the hoist sustained substantial damage as a result of the incident, the equipment has since been removed from service.

The preliminary investigation has identified three significant contributing factors that led to this occurrence:

- ✓ The air brakes of the tractor were not set, permitting the unit to roll once the elevating hoist was lifted to its maximum angle and the corn had been unloaded.

NOV 2000

See 'Farmers' Page 2

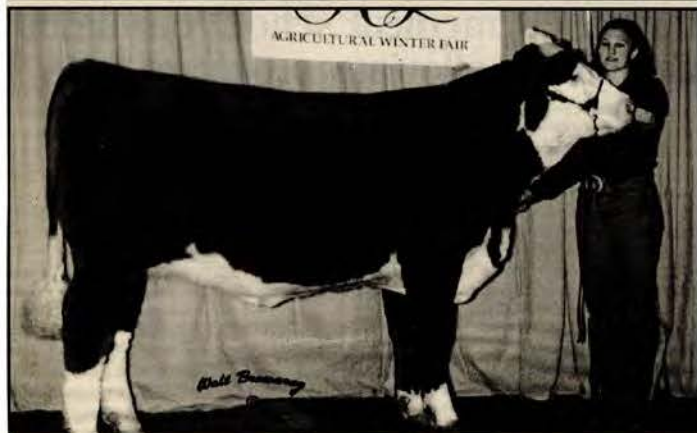


N'ice" Going Dora

She's been a fixture around the West Elgin Arena for eight years, but Dora Fisher has decided to park her zamboni for the last time by announcing her retirement. Fisher was surprised last week with balloons, flowers and a plaque from her fellow employees. APR/00

The West Elgin Chronicle

DEC. 18, 2000



Silver Trophy Winner

Paula Ocolisan and WW Juanita 5J were honoured recently at the 2000 Royal Agricultural Winter Fair with the Silver Trophy. Other accomplishments this past year include Grand and Supreme Champion Ontario Beef-A-Rama, Grand and Supreme Champion Bred & Owned at Canadian National Junior Hereford Bonanza 2000, Reserve Grand Champion Female M.O.E. at Bellville and Bridgen, Supreme Champion 4-H Beef Clubs (All Breeds), Reserve Grand Champion Female National Junior Knob Hill Show and Class Winner Bred & Owned at North American International Livestock Exhibition Junior Show.



Talkin' Politics

It's election time and that means candidates are on the campaign trail. Elgin-Middlesex-London Liberal candidate Gar Knutson was in West Elgin last week talking to constituents, as seen here at the Donut Delite. The federal election is set for Nov. 27. 2000



Slow Movin'

Racers take your mark! The ninth annual Antique Show Threshing Festival on the farm of West Lorne's Hugh McFadden drew a nice crowd to check how farming was done in the good old days. Here, McFadden, left, on an International 300 races George Depuydt on his John Deere "B" during a slow tractor race. SEPT. 2000

The West Elgin Chronicle

APRIL 17/00



Magnificent Remodelling at Padfields

Things are looking a lot different at the "Home on the Hill" in West Lorne. Padfield Funeral Homes Ltd. just recently completed a major renovation and expansion project at its Main Street location. Here, Padfield Funeral Home President Jim Price shows off the finished product. Along with a number of local contractors, Bill Nethercott led the way as project coordinator and master craftsman.



Ta-Dye-4

Opening its doors last November - and a lot of new stock and very hard work since - Ta-Dye-4 is ready for its official Grand Opening this Saturday (April 22) from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Here, store staff Meghan Bell, front, Tammy Swain, Robin Steltenpool and Tom Jones (standing) show off just some of the items available. There will be sale prices on everything from shirts and jeans to clothing accessories and CDs (definitely something for every member of the family). Along with cake and coffee, the celtic band Three Penny Piece will be performing at the former Prim Fashions store in West Lorne.



Trail & Sale

From pottery and sketches to paintings and quilts, the annual West Elgin Studio Tour showed off the many artistic talent of local residents. Entitled "Trail & Sale 2000," the tour allowed visitors to take a peak into the artist's studios to see where the work is done. Here, George Okolisian, owner of Pine Creek Gallery, shows one of the prints he just framed. Also participating was Stacey's Schoolhouse, In A Jam, Northern Landscapes, Erie Breezes Bed and Breakfast, Rustic Uniques and The Village Pantry Boutique.

Distribution centre to shut doors

Agnew's West Lorne distribution centre included in footwear retailer's major cutbacks; late October closure slated

Paul Mayne
The Chronicle

The Bentley/Agnew Group, Canada's oldest footwear retailer, has hit troubled times and will close 223 stores across Canada, including its West Lorne distribution centre.

At peak capacity, the local business, located at 215 Gilbert St., employed 25 people but is currently operating with just 7 full-time staff. Most of the employees received layoff notices earlier in the summer.

"There is no firm date on the closure because we are still working on inventory

coming in and out of the centre," Bentley/Agnew Group Vice-President Ben Derksen tells the Chronicle, "but I would guess probably the end of October."

As far as severance packages for the local employees are concerned, Derksen adds that because of the company's steep financial woes, estimated at more than \$30 million in unpaid bills, it probably won't happen.

"Because of the CCAA (Companies Creditors Arrangements Act), which is in the courts now, our obligation is to our secured creditors," he says. "And our

employees are listed as unsecured creditors. So far in the restructuring there is no such good news for them [employees]."

Derksen says the company has been looking for a potential buyer of the Bentley/Agnew Group but "no one has come forward" to take over.

The West Lorne centre is currently up for sale and he adds to his knowledge there has been no inquiries.

"Should we find someone to purchase the business we'll do what we can to have our employees given the first chance for employment. SEPT. 2000



Let there be lights!

It took a little while to get here, but the process is finally underway. History was made last week as traffic lights for the intersection of Graham and Main Streets in West Lorne were being installed. The eight sets of traffic lights will replace the long standing flashing lights. The new lights will remain in a flashing mode for a couple weeks before being set. Street signs will also be installed to inform drivers of the new lights.

Local community support helping grieving families

The outpouring of support and love from the local community is helping the families of three residents killed and one seriously injured in an industrial accident at Orford Co-op in Rodney Oct. 27.

Co-op employees Wayne Van Breda, 66, Joseph Bourque, 46, and farmer Carl Kovacs, 58, were killed when they were run over by a transport trailer they were unloading. The truck and trailer were on a hydraulic lift platform and elevated to a 45° angle to dump the corn at the time of the accident.

A fourth individual, John Mohan, 66, was also run over as he waited behind the trailer to unload his corn. He was airlifted to London Health Sciences Centre where he remains in serious condition.

Rev. Kirby Breithaupt, from Calvary United Church, who has assisted in ministering to the families, says the outpouring of support from the community is assisting with the healing process.

"The entire community has been the heart of the healing process," he says. "It's been wall-to-wall caring, from plowing fields to bringing home-made bread. Community is all about pulling together. The families can't do this on their own."

Breithaupt recently visited Mohan in hospital after he came through surgery and says prayers for his recovery, and for the other families, are encouraged.

"I've ministered in probably half a dozen communities and this [West Elgin] is the most deep and caring community as I know. Christ taught us to bring out the best in ourselves and that's what's being shown now."

Rev. Duncan Colquhoun, from the local Presbyterian churches, is also helping the families through this tragedy and echoes Rev. Breithaupt on the importance of "community."

"Allowing the families to know they have the support is important to the healing process," he says. "The love they are receiving shows the sort of relationship their loved ones had with those in the community."

Rev. Colquhoun says a quote that fits this situation is: "A grief that is shared is half; joy that is shared is doubled."

"This grief is truly being shared by all," he adds.

Elgin OPP continue to work with federal and provincial ministries to determine the exact cause of the accident.

NOV. 6/00

Lawyers to meet on moving traffic lights ahead

Lawyers for both the Municipality of West Elgin and West Lorne property owner Mike Hutchinson will be meeting to discuss West Elgin Council's intent to limit access to the property on the corner of Main and Graham Streets in West Lorne in an attempt to get the traffic lights working.

Council gave notice last week that they intend to limit the access the Donut Delite property, via the Main Street entrance, not only to make it easier when the lights become operational, but for liability reasons as well.

"MTO (Ministry of Transportation) says the access should not be there, something that was overlooked by the former council in West Lorne," says West

Elgin Mayor Duncan McPhail. "It's been targeted as a potential problem and we're faced with the dilemma that we really didn't cause but have to fix."

West Lorne resident Robert Hill spoke to council last week on his disdain for the new lights. He feels something as simple as a large stop sign with a red flashing light on top would be sufficient.

"You get the sign with the light on top and it's business as usual," says Hill. "We don't want to be saddled with something we don't want and don't need. You (council) took an oath to do your job to the 'best of your abilities' and you've let us down."

McPhail says the situation with the access is really more important than the

lights and adds the process is moving forward, however slowly.

"We do have some obstacles to overcome and we realize they've been flashing for a number of months. The best we could do is apologize," he says. "Perhaps we haven't been as diligent in getting it done, but we've been very busy with a number of important items."

Council has also agreed to hire Southwold Diversified to complete the installation of the lights, but they won't be able to begin until October. The cost is \$10,000.

That brings the total cost of the lights to date to approximately \$30,000, which is being split between West Elgin and the county.

AUG. 2000

U. S. company buys Milner-Rigsby

Job stability for the 145 employees FEB 7 2000

By Paul Mayne
The Chronicle

It has been confirmed that West Lorne's Milner-Rigsby Co. Limited has been acquired by the U. S. company Rockland Industrial Products.

And both Milner-Rigsby and the new owners say it means "job stability" for the local plant and is "very positive news" for all employees. There are currently 145 employees at the West Lorne plant.

Milner-Rigsby, one of Canada's major producers of laminated truck flooring joins the Rockland family of companies consisting of Industrial Hardwood Products in Red Wing, Minnesota (150 employees) and Rockland Flooring Company (140 employees) of Rockland, Wisconsin.

The three plants now become one of the largest producers of laminated truck flooring in North America.

Sean Jackson, Human Resources Manager for Milner-Rigsby, says the purchase is great news for the local workforce.

"We had a slow down in mid-October and had to layoff some employees," says Jackson. "And another 30 or so additional layoffs were planned before this deal went through."

Jackson adds even during negotiations, work was sent their way and Milner-Rigsby is currently at an all-time production high.

"They were looking at expanding their company and could have built a new site,

but that would saturate the market and mean training employees," says Jackson. "Milner-Rigsby fits right into their expansion plan."



Marc Chorney, who owns and operates Rockland Industrial Products along with David Nelson and Phil Sykes, says negotiations were ongoing since May of '99 and that near the end of the talks almost 70 per cent of the production for Milner-Rigsby was work they had sent.

"We've invested a lot of money in this plant and we're going to maximize the plant as best we can," says Chorney from his Minnesota office. "We really like the

management and strong workers at Milner-Rigsby. Sales are weak but that's one of our strong points, so it's a good fit."

This isn't the first venture into Canada for Rockland Industrial Products. The current Minnesota plant was originally located in Thunder Bay when the company began eight years ago. Chorney was finding it hard to compete in the States with the exchange rate at that time and moved.

But with the current exchange rate (69.35¢ as of Feb. 3) he says it's beneficial for the company to start producing product in Canada once again.

"This will definitely add stability to the jobs at Milner-Rigsby," says Chorney. "We haven't laid off an employee in the eight years we've been in business and we don't want to start now."

He adds depending how things progress with the business a third shift could possibly be added. However, Chorney admits that may be hard to maintain or a long period of time.

With three companies all having different names it may be a bit confusing, but Jackson says eventually he imagines there will probably be a name change, but says that's not a top priority right now.

"The new owners are still trying to get a feel of what Milner-Rigsby means to the local community," he says.

Chorney says the name Rockland Industrial Products would more than likely be used.