

# Jesse's Journey sets new goal with students help

John Davidson came to West Elgin Secondary with the latest goal for Jesse's Journey - but it can only succeed with the help of WESS students.

In 1989 John pushed his son Jesse, more than 3,300 kilometres across Ontario and raised \$1.5 million as a result of their campaign to raise money for their organization - Foundation for Gene and Cell Therapy.

Later that year they went on a 286 day, 8300 kilometre trek across Canada to raise national awareness. This time they raised \$2 million for gene research.

Jesse, who is almost 22 years old suffers from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. He continues to be an inspiration by participating and taking on large tasks in life.

"He is still going at it. He is still taking part and making things happen," John Davidson confirmed for WESS students last week.

Jesse will be graduating this year from Fanshawe College with a diploma in Hotel Management.

Davidson came to WESS to set the new goal for the Foundation for Gene and Cell Therapy is setting a challenge for 320 schools and 500,000 across Ontario to spend one day having fun and raising money for a cause.

Funding Friday's are a day when the sky is the limit for setting goals and raising money or Jesse's Journey and the Foundation.

WESS has set this Friday, April 5 as it's Funding Friday.

OAC students Tiffany White, Heather Duplessi and Julie Marrow have a class project to see how media can be utilized to help out such an event. White also announced the school will be hosting home room challenges from Tuesday April 2 to Friday April 5. Mason jars will also be placed in businesses throughout West Elgin.

According to Davidson, the sky is truly the limit for the WESS students to come up with a fundraiser on Friday. He expects the students will come up with something very unique.

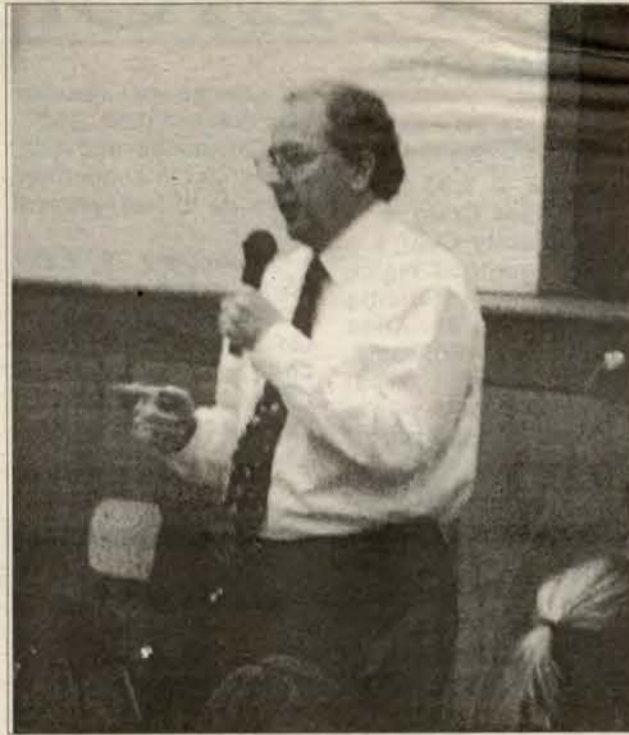
"When you let people run with an idea, they get very innovative," said Davidson.

Davidson told the WESS students they need to set goals in life but also make personal evaluations.

"You need to do an inventory of your life. You need to look at yourself in the mirror and ask yourself: 'What really matters in life,'" said Davidson.

He also pointed out that if you locate what is truly important, other things don't seem to matter or have the same worth.

"Sometimes we get our priorities mixed up," said Davidson when pointing out that sports athletes are making millions while true heroes who



John Davidson speaking to WESS students.

work diligently with volunteer time, work and dedication, are not always seen in the same light.

After his talk Davidson told The Chronicle that in Canada focus shifted with one important young man.

"Terry Fox set the standard," Davidson admitted. Since Fox, Davidson said Canada has been capable of seeing heroes as people who make a difference.

Davidson said south of the border, in the United States, people have tried similar campaigns like Terry Fox's campaign or Jesse's

Journey, but have failed because the US fails to focus on the issue at hand.

"In Canada we are good at separating the wheat from the chaff," remarked Davidson.

He said Canadians have an easier time understanding the issue rather than someone's personal challenge.

Monday April 22, 2002



West Elgin Senior Elementary School recently held a Drug/Alcohol Poster Contest sponsored by the West Elgin Community Health Centre. The winners are from left to right: Front Row: Brittany Hein, 1st Place; Jeff Kosciak and Kourtney Arvai, runners up. Back Row: Cynthia Roodzant of West Elgin Community Health Centre.



WESS received a \$10,950 cheque from the Breakfast for Learning, Canadian Living Foundation last week for the school's Breakfast Program. Pictured left to right are WESS principal Larry Schneider, John Lavereau, Adam McKillop, Morgan McWilliam (student leader), Becky Kalita, Nikki Ross, Megan Regnier, Gillian Hanson (Elgin County Nutrition Club who is handing over the cheque) and Cynthia Roodzant of the West Elgin Community Health Centre



## Is it growing yet?

West Elgin Senior Elementary School Junior Kindergarten student Melissa Parcels is shown how to plant flowers from seeds by Frances McCallum. McCallum and other members of the West Lorne Horticultural Society taught the children how to plant 'sprouted marigolds' which will eventually grow two to three feet tall. The children will be taking care of the plants while they are in a can and keeping them in window sills with lots of sunlight. Eventually the flowers will be going home with the students.



The Elgin International Club is the latest organization to donate to WESS's music instrument renewal program. The Club has donated \$500. L-r Elgin International Club President Ron Collins, WESS Music Conductor Spiro Grima hands a cheque to EIC Vice President Sebastian Pelcz with WESS principal Larry Schneider. Schneider holds a brand new plaque that has been made to commemorate donators to the instrument renewal program. All donators will be listed on the plaque. So far, \$15,000 of the \$25,000 goal has been raised. Keep those donations coming!



**Conducting the band!**

Some local elementary students of West Lorne were given the chance to conduct Orchestra London last week. Seen here, a student grabs the attention of the band while conductor Dave Cunningham (at right), a former WESS Music Department head, watches the audience's response. Orchestra London has been touring schools with the message that music programs should be cherished and there needs to be more public support for the program which helps to build local musicians careers.

MAY 2002



Dutton Highland Games committee has donated \$1,000 towards the West Elgin Secondary School Music Department and pledged an additional \$1,000 this September. Graciously accepting the money at left is Music Department head Spiro Grima and music student Jake Fisher from Highland Games Chieftain Norman McWilliam and Cameron McWilliam.

# The Challenge is on! To save WESS Musical Department



Picture above are the majority of the musical students at WESS as they accepted their first cheque in the challenge to save the Musical Dept.



Rodney Lions is the first service club to come forth in the challenge to raise money to save the West Elgin Secondary School Musical Department. Here Ray Martin 1st Vice and Corrie Monaghan secretary of Rodney's Lions hand over a \$2500 cheque to music students Erin Smith and Sarah Smith, who were responsible for sending letters out to the area service clubs. The Lions are challenging other clubs to raise money or match the Lions donation.

**Monday June 3, 2002**

## Elgin schools threatened by closure formula

### PRINCIPAL SCHNEIDER PUTTING OUT FIRES

West Elgin Secondary School principal Larry Schneider was busy last week answering phone calls from irate parents thinking the school is slated for closure.

Schneider said a media report earlier in the week caused unnecessary furore. He pointed out a story in the St. Thomas paper that alluded to both Arthur Voaden and West Elgin facing an uncertain future.

The schools do not qualify for the minimum of 909 full-time-

equivalent students the Ministry of Education has set for Thames Valley District School Board secondary schools.

The information came from a May 27 Thames Valley District School Board special information meeting with 300 school administrators and parent representatives. The meeting came about because the school board faced criticism for making budget decisions without proper consultation.

Schneider attended the meeting and was critical about the fact that WESS was not mentioned in the entire meeting

and called the furore unnecessary and premature.

Elgin trustee Linda Stevenson, who shares the former Elgin board territory with David Steward, said all Elgin schools will be looked at with an accommodation study in 2003, except for one - East Elgin Secondary School. Stevenson said this fact alone lets the public know they should be concerned about school closures.

Stevenson does not like the fact that the province is looking at a "one size fits all formula," which affects the majority of rural schools. She said if the board

were to listen to the province, schools like WESS and all other Elgin schools except EESS would be closed, because they do not have enough students.

Although she understood the feelings of Schneider, Stevenson feels it is no time to be complacent.

"Is it time to panic? I think they should be and should have been panicking for a while before this," said Stevenson.

The Elgin trustee said it is also due time to review the TVDSB itself and questioned its efficiency.

"They were some benefits with See CLOSURES, page 2.

# WEST ELGIN WILDCATS

## KRISTYN WATTERWORTH

Age: 17

Grade: 12

**Year in review:** Guard on senior girls' basketball team; badminton, TVRAA Tri-County semifinalist in girls' singles; midfielder on girls' soccer team; tennis, girls' singles.

**Her view on sports:** "They're a way to compete with other people and have fun that way. You gain in competitiveness but as with anything you've got to be respectful in the way you play on the field or on the court."

**Most memorable moment:** The junior soccer team in Grade 10. "By the end of the year we all worked really, really well together."

**Future plans:** Returning for OAC year, then studying fine arts in university and trying out for varsity soccer.

## ANDREW BARBER

Age: 18

Grade: OAC

**Year in review:** Power hitter and MVP on senior boys' volleyball team, TVRAA A semifinalist, TVRAA all-star; forward on senior boys' basketball team, TVRAA A semifinalist; defender on boys' soccer team.

**His view on sports:** "They've given me something to do after school — last year was pretty boring. And I've grown physically a lot the last few years, so I've gained a lot of confidence. Plus you get to know everybody in the community a little better when you're on a team."

**Most memorable moment:** This year's basketball team. "Before this year we hadn't won much at all in basketball, but we actually came out and won three straight games at one point. And no matter what, we were still better than the football team."

**Future plans:** Studying recreation and leisure at Waterloo and trying out for the volleyball Warriors.



photo by MORRIS LAMONT The London Free Press

KRISTYN IS THE GRANDAUGHTER OF W.I. MEMBER MARY BELLE WATTERWORTH

# WESS alumni appreciate blasts from past

"It was a blast!" That was the sentiment and an appropriate statement last Monday after three days of fun and nostalgia were celebrated August 9 to 11 for West Elgin Secondary School's 50th anniversary.

There were many 'blasts from the past' and even some old flames re-introduced when the weekend was kicked off Friday night with a fantastic opening

ceremonies. The biggest applause on the night came after former high school cheerleaders hit the stage. "It was a lot of fun. I think everyone had fun," said Pam Page who danced on the stage twice, the first with her husband David for a segment on 50-60's music.

After a day of different sports, alumni gathered Saturday evening at three different

locations in Dutton/Dunwich and West Elgin. The grads of 1952 to 1962 had a dinner and dance at the Rodney Legion, 1962 to 73 were at the Elgin International Club and 74 to the present were found at the Dutton Community Centre.

A lot of memories flushed back for many of the grads, some of whom have not been to any of the previous reunions. 1963 grads Ed Webster and Dave McDougall

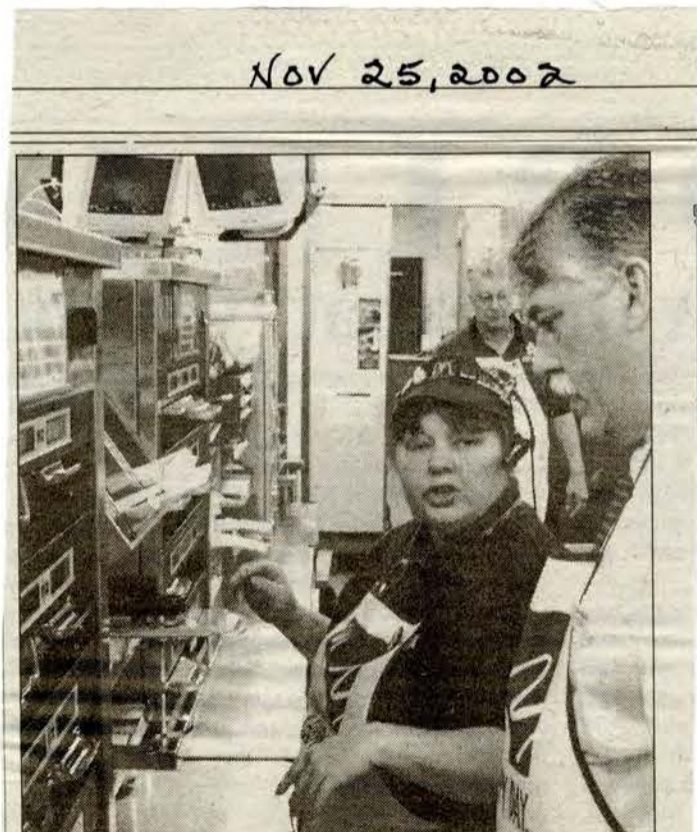
both said they were grateful to come back, having missed the 40th anniversary in 1992. Some of the friendships have stayed strong over many years. Welcoming committee member Rosalie Krebsz was proud to announce that she and Ellen Robson have been great friends since the second grade and it continued into high school and post secondary.

See WESS, page 2.



## Bringing back the ol' school spirit

These four former members of the West Elgin High School cheerleading squad raised the roof one more time for the school's 50th Anniversary. Left to right Jean (Jeffery) Swain, class of '61; Pam (McGill) Page, class of '64; Ebba (Pedersen) Schmid, class of '63 and Jane (Attridge) Chute, class of '60 all said they had a wonderful time being back on the stage and their antics were very well received by the audience. On Friday August 9, many people packed into the old gym, (today's cafeteria) to see the kick-off to the weekend of nostalgia and fun times which included the cheerleader revival.



St. Mary's School principal John Lavereau (right) takes instructions from a McDonald's employee during McHappy Day last week. Locally \$4,781.88 was raised for Ronald McDonald Children's Charities.



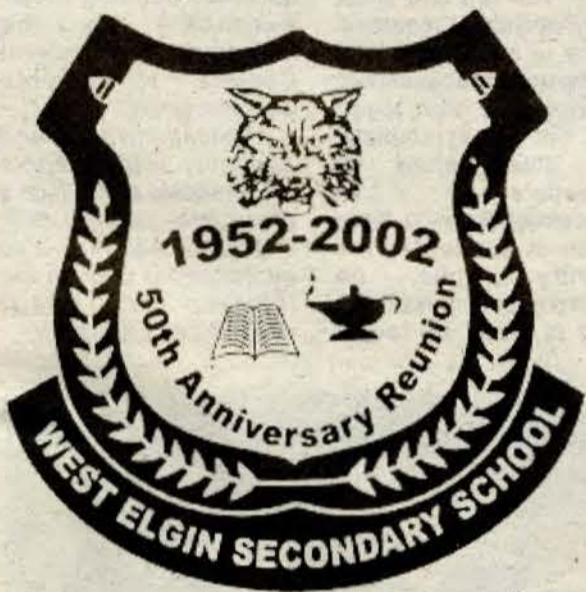
The recent bus trip fundraiser for West Elgin Secondary School was a huge success. Pam Page and Ralph Gardiner are seen in the picture celebrating a successful fundraiser bus trip to Shipshewana Indiana. The bus was donated for the trip compliments of Coach Canada with Ralph Gardiner donating his time and expertise as the driver. Pam Page organized the trip. \$1200 dollars was presented as a donation to West Elgin High School fund last month.

OCT. 2002

# Welcome Back!

You are invited to a fun-filled weekend to celebrate the  
50th Anniversary of W.E.S.S. ~ W.E.D.H.S.

Friday, Saturday, Sunday  
August 9, 10, 11, 2002



1981 initiation victims Blair Payne and Sam Kirschner.



The group of archivists for the 50th Anniversary of West Elgin Secondary School have been busy during recent months bringing information and artifacts together. Around the table are left to right, Ron Payne, Barb Campbell, Marlene Payne and Jean Swain. The committee is in desperate need of team pictures of boys teams. Anyone with old photos is asked to call the Payne's at 768-1288.

The Chronicle

Aug 5 2002

## Community worked hard for WESS's 50th

The West Elgin Secondary School 50th Anniversary Reunion committee has been working very hard this year, preparing for this weekend's bash.

Acting chair and current WESS principal Larry Schneider said late registrations were still trickling in everyday.

Schneider said the success of the event will have been made possible by a very large team of volunteers from many different service clubs and individuals who wanted to

make the 50th celebration something to remember. He said the community came together and the two municipalities of West Elgin and Dutton/Dunwich "bent over backwards for us."

"This wouldn't have been possible if everyone had not come together," said Schneider.

"The whole committee has taken on whatever is needed to be done. They have said 'Okay, lets get it done.'"

Over 700 people have registered for the weekend, and late registrations will

be accepted on Friday night and even Saturday morning.

"We realized there would be people flying in Friday night for the weekend and we wanted to accomodate them," he said.

Three dinners and dances will be held at the three different locations on Saturday night, the Dutton/Dunwich Community Centre; the Elgin International Club and Rodney Legion. By press time, the decades at each location were not finalized yet.



Marlene Payne (Towers) and Caroline Jewell (Tunks) in 1959.