

Women's Institute logs 104 years working for

Your kids' pyjamas are fire retardant because a heartsick Women's Institute member in Southwestern Ontario didn't want another mother to suffer the tragic loss she did.

The white lines running down the middle of highways; you can thank Women's Institute lobbyists for that safety feature.

Credit them also for making sure your loaf of bread comes to you wrapped, so the germs don't get in.

You drink safe, pasteurized milk because WI founder Adelaide Hunter Hoodless pushed it into law after the death of her infant son.

Today's members are urging the province to offer free live-stock vaccines in areas where rabies is rampant. They're promoting rural literacy and farm safety.

The volunteer helping out at your local hospital's night re-

DEBORA VAN BRENK



COUNTY VOICES

ception desk is apt to be a WI member. So is the group catering that rural funeral.

If community commitment is what you're looking for, these folks have been ahead of the pack for most of their lives.

But this mainstay of rural family life has changed since our grandmothers' day.

Back when they began 104 years ago, Women's Institute meetings were pretty much the only place outside of church where rural women could escape the isolation of farm life and educate each other about family health and current events.

These were all-in-one sup-

port and political forums, steeped in tea and home-baked cookies.

Their emphasis today on women's health and family information is as strong as ever. But there are fewer to hear — and to pass on — the message.

Cars have made physical isolation less of a problem, public information can be found at the click of a computer mouse and mothers racing home from work to ferry the young ones from hockey practice to music lessons aren't likely to attend a mid-week afternoon meeting with friends.

The London area has 70 Women's Institute groups totalling 1,114 members. The numbers were "probably double that" when Fran Hyatt first joined the group 28 years ago.

Hyatt is head of the Mt. Brydges branch and president of the London and Area WI, which includes Middlesex County and a sizable chunk of

the surrounding counties.

Their good works are prodigious — from April 2000 to April 2001, they logged 68,114 hours of volunteer time, up 8,000 from the year before.

"Women needed to be educated to make their homes and families educated and healthier."

Member Marg Eberle

They drive people to appointments, raise money to equip local hospitals and build wells in developing countries, run fitness programs for seniors and deliver meals to shut-ins.

They run day-long health and education sessions for women in their communities.

Women's Institutes thought globally and acted locally before environmental groups appropriated that phrase for

themselves.

"They're a wonderfully dedicated group of women," Hyatt says.

But fewer. And older.

Most members are 60-plus, Hyatt says. "I'm probably the second-youngest member in the branch and I'm no young chicken."

Although the district saw 29 new members join the ranks last year, they lost more than they gained.

So are these groups headed the way of the quilting bee and wringer washer?

"I think only time can tell that," she says.

Marg Eberle, of Highgate in Chatham-Kent, is more optimistic. Her branch gained four new members this year.

"The original goal was that women needed to be educated to make their homes and families educated and healthier and all that good stuff. And that's what we're still doing today," says Eberle, a director

The West Elgin Chronicle

Passages From The Past

By Jilleanne McClory

I have been trying to teach myself the gentle art of knitting. I am genuinely surprised at the relaxing meditation it brings.

Four years ago I learned how to cook. At first I didn't know how turn the stove on. It was a big moment when I learned the vacuum had a bag, who knew?

Caring for the home and hearth is an art that is not predisposed by virtue of birthright. Adelaide Hunter Hoodless learned that even educated, conscientious parents could be unaware of primary domestic wisdom.

Sharing her knowledge with other women like herself became her focus. Mrs. Hoodless' son, John Harold, was 14 months old when he died of an intestinal ailment caused by drinking impure milk in August of 1889.

She had three older children but was shocked by her ignorance that led to her family tragedy. Disappointed that her education had left her wanting, she started a campaign for domestic education.

She wanted women to be trained in the "practical science of running a household according to scientific principles." A cooking school was started in 1894. She started to lecture to promote the idea of forming rural women's groups.

She raised money from tobacco tycoon William Macdonald to fund a school known as the Macdonald Institute, which opened in 1903.

Hoodless was concerned. More attention was being provided for farming techniques than for the farm household. The

provincial government branch of the Department of Agriculture formed the Farmer's Institutes in 1884, which dispensed critical information to farmer's on the care and breeding of their livestock. She believed the farm family was just as important as its livestock and deserved equal attention.

Erland Lee heard Hoodless first speak in 1886 at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph, where she addressed a congregation of men. Having no difficulty expressing herself, she informed the group they were more concerned with the health of "their animals than about the health of their children, and that they fed their pigs and cattle more scientifically than they fed their families."

It is important to understand the nature of these times, in the late 19th century, women were not a vocal group. Certainly women did not lecture men.

But when Lee was planning the South Wentworth Farmers' Institute annual meeting, he suggested Hoodless as the guest speaker for an evening session to be attended by both men and women.

The idea was not greeted with enthusiasm. It was too radical having a woman as the speaker, thought local farmers, but decided Lee should choose a lecturer, but to choose cautiously.

Lee invited Hoodless. In Stoney Creek, Feb. 19, 1897, 101 women and one man, Mr. Lee, were waiting when she arrived. Her speech did not concentrate on the establishment of Women's Institutes, but rather suggested a group for women on domestic

education parallel the existing Farmers' Institutes for men.

She told them "women's work, homecraft and mothercraft, was much more important than mens since it dealt with the home and the care of the loved ones that dwelt therein."

What happened that night changed the course of history. Rural homemakers agreed to create a Department of Domestic Economy, in association with the Farmers' Institutes called, The Women's Department of the Farmer's Institute of South Wentworth.

Sitting in the Squire's Hall in Stoney Creek, women started what would become the largest international women's movement ever established.

Women's Institutes were multi-dimensional. Women were taught nutrition, sewing, how to take care of themselves, they raised money for the Red Cross, sent comfort boxes to men at war, maintained local history books, worked on school reform to ensure proper nutrition for the children by providing and serving hot lunches and donating milk, participated in social reform to improve their communities.

Once women secured the power of their vote they assumed more responsibility and determined strategies for their institutes.

The list of achievements these women accomplished in the name of home and country is endless, and its members, past and present, deserve our gratitude and a dedication to preserve their principles.

community

for the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada and a former president of the provincial body.

"We're still basically an educational organization," she says.

"Part of our job (to entice new members) is to show what we have done and show that we are relevant."

She says it's a struggle to get members just to record their volunteer hours because they just don't want to boast.

"They don't advertise themselves. We're the best-kept secret in the world."

Without a lot of fanfare, these women are making a difference to each other and their communities.

When an organization this crucial to rural life is struggling to find members and support, it's no time for misplaced modesty.

Women's Institutes have more than earned the right to blow their own horns.



London Area Women's Institute held their 88th Annual Convention at the Keystone Complex in Shedden on October 29. Pictured are Mary Veenstra (President Elgin County), Dianne Orr (President Federated Womens Institute) and Helen VanBrenk, (President Wallacetown Women's Institute). NOV/02

WEST ELGIN COUNCIL IS ADAMANT SOMETHING WILL BE DONE

by Keith Peever **DEC/01**
The Chronicle

West Elgin council is promising to get tough on vandalism in its communities.

This issue has come to light after recent vandalism in West Lorne on November 25, which saw half a dozen horticultural Christmas trees be either destroyed or damaged. (Also see Letters to Editor on Page 5).

When contacted by *The Chronicle*, each councillor was in agreement a hard stance would be taken when they meet for their regular council meeting on Thursday, December 13.

West Elgin Mayor Duncan McPhail said he was just disgusted to hear the vandalism occurred and guaranteed discussion will be held on prevention and punishment.

McPhail would not rule out the possibility of a reward being posted by the municipality to entice residents to come forward with the name of the person.

McPhail said they have discussed a reward to deal with vandalism issues in the past, but if passed, this will be the first time it would be implemented.

Deputy Mayor Graham Warwick has also suggested it might be time to invest in a video camera in the downtown area.

Graham is sympathetic with the downtown merchants who benefited by the colourful trees, only to have them damaged.

Councillor Mike Mooser and Brad Bandeen were both adamant it was time to take a hard stance on the vandalism that seems to reappear from time to time.

Councillor Trudi Balint said the vandalism was a disgusting act and was disheartening to hear.

"Those trees were just beautiful." Balint also questions where the police were at the time of the incident.

"Where are the police?" she questioned. Although it is a negative issue, it may have also spurred the community to look into more effective policing within the community.

Balint said it is an issue that will be discussed at the West Elgin Community Policing Meeting in December. Balint also said it might be time to rejuvenate the COPS or Community on Patrol committee and have volunteers regularly patrol and monitor the community for mis-doings.

Each councillor was saddened by the fact
(Continued on page 2)

MUNICIPALITY ALSO TO GET TOUGH ON WATER BILLS THAT ARE NOT BEING PAID

by Keith Peever **JUNE 18/01**
The Chronicle

The municipality of West Elgin is growing and it just made major steps last week to prove that things can't be run the way it used to be when there were three different communities.

West Elgin mayor Duncan McPhail said after the meeting it is a sign of the times that the municipality is growing and is on the right course.

At the regular council meeting last Thursday, they announced that the municipalities new by-law officer, Bill Douglas, a retired police officer, has been working for a couple weeks and has already taken 'on a few leads' when it comes to infractions on building and property codes.

Douglas was appointed at a special council meeting on May 24. Since then he has been presented with the municipality's property standards documents and has begun to look into complaints the municipality has received from residents.

Parking by-laws

West Elgin Council has been recently discussing ways to initiate proper enforcement when it comes to parking in the municipality. Council heard information back from the Ontario Provincial Police that the Elgin Detachment is working very quickly to get a system up and running.

Currently the parking tickets have to be approved by the judicial system before they can be used by the Ontario Provincial Police.

Council is also holding back on replacing the no parking signs in the downtown areas until the proper by-law can be initiated and enforced.

In the meantime, in the downtown area of Rodney the streets have been spray painted where no parking is allowed. Currently the public has been complaining to council that the signs are so bleached and worn that the words 'no parking' can no longer be read.

McPhail said the municipality is currently reviewing all the by-laws that the previous municipalities had to see what is relevant and what is not.

Getting tough on water rates

For those people who are constantly behind in their water bills, be prepared to get a warning then if that is not adhered, there could be a turning off of the taps.

West Elgin council wants to get tough

WEST ELGIN 2001

McPhail wants a West Lorne Post Office

WILL NOT TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER

West Elgin Mayor Duncan McPhail is not going to take a no answer from the Canada Post Corporation. Recently Canada Post stated they would not be reopening the office in West Lorne.

"No is not the answer we are looking for," said McPhail.

Earlier this month Elgin-Middlesex-London MP Gar Knutson broke the news that the office would not be reopening. McPhail blasts the company for not asking for local tenders through post-

ing, by mail or through the local newspaper. Instead the postal services were automatically awarded to B&J Varieties on Graham Street.

He is also critical of the fact that Canada Post had promised a long term contract with the building where the boxes are located on Main Street. McPhail also criticizes the fact that different Canada Post representatives tell him and residents differing information.

"Clearly the tail doesn't know what the dog is doing. You could say the tail is wagging the dog," said McPhail last week.

SEPT 2001

on people who are not paying their water bills. Now that the municipality has taken on the customers of the former municipalities, it has proven to be quite expensive when they temporarily foot the bill for late payers, in some cases.

Council voted last Thursday to start sending out warnings to customers stating the bills must be paid on time. If the account goes into serious arrears, the water will be turned off.

Letters to each water customer will be sent out with the new standards and changes which show the municipality is taking a much harder stance on water bills that are in arrears. Mayor McPhail said it's just a sign of the times, and that the municipality must get tougher on these accounts that are in arrears, because the municipality doesn't make money on those.

"It's always been an issue of customer service before. It was always done with a limited work force. Now we have an increased volume of customers, and that customer base is continuing to grow," said McPhail.

Dutton-Dunwich sees same issues
Dutton-Dunwich mayor Rien Van

Brenk said they are looking at some of the same issues that West Elgin is facing.

When it comes to the parking by-law, Van Brenk said they will be working co-operating with West Elgin to create by-laws that work for both communities.

VanBrenk said they want to help the Ontario Provincial Police as much as possible and try to create by-laws that will be adequate for the police in the courtroom.

"We want to pass the same by-law," said Van Brenk who admitted it will help the police to simplify things with paper work.

Dutton-Dunwich's mayor also said the parking issue is a hot one at times in Dutton.

"We've always had some problems. We have lots of people who continue to park in areas that clearly say no parking and there is nothing you can really do about it," said Van Brenk.

When it comes to the rest of the by-laws, Dutton-Dunwich has approved the official plan. Van Brenk said the plan is pretty much the former by-law plan of Dutton.

West Elgin's community co-ordinator... delayed

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WANTS ONE IMMEDIATELY

The heat is on West Elgin council to make a decision on hiring a community co-ordinator, but last week council inclined to want to review finances first.

The West Elgin Chamber of Commerce have been showing interest in having the person hired very soon to be able to coordinate 2002 events.

On Thursday, council made it apparent a decision may not be made until the 2002 budget has been reviewed to see if there can be money available, if any.

Chamber member Keith Fretter, and a strong supporter of a co-ordinator said on Friday he is clearly disappointed the process is taking so long and hopes a decision would be made before the budget process, so the coordinator could work on issues and events of this year.

West Elgin Mayor Duncan McPhail said the delay is not an indication that the majority of council thinks the co-ordinator is a bad idea. The delay he said is based on being fiscally responsible.

"There are a lot of other people who are not on the Chamber that we have to be accountable for too," said McPhail.

McPhail said people have to show more patience on the issue and, if in the end, the position is actually approved by council but the co-ordinator does not work until 2003, it is still a major benefit.

"We never had a position up until now. We have to wait and see and hear from the many other people in the municipality," said McPhail.



Don't be afraid to ask for police ID!!
Elgin County OPP Detachment Commander Ryan Cox is seen here showing his police identification to a West Lorne resident. Cox and the rest of the OPP are asking people to not be shy if they are suspicious on whether someone is a real police officer. The concern comes after recent robberies by people dressed as police officers. Thefts were made in Sarnia on December 16, Dutton/Dunwich on December 21 and West Elgin on December 22. For the latest on this story, turn to page 3.

West Elgin council approves new Rec building in West Lorne

West Elgin Council met for a regular meeting on Thursday February 14, with a heavy plate of issues to deal with. Mayor Duncan McPhail was absent due to being on holidays.

Here are some highlights from the meeting.

New Rec building approved

Council approved the construction of a new building to be placed on the east side of the West Elgin Arena in West Lorne. The cost is \$87,624.

Councillor Trudi Balint said she knows the price will make some people uncomfortable, but she said they needed more space for recreation equipment. Balint told council it will also be a chance for West Lorne residents to see the municipality build in the community. Balint said many people in West Lorne have told her they feel municipal buildings have been slowly closed and operations and personnel moved to Rodney.

"West Lorne hasn't had their sidewalks rolled up on them this time," said Balint at the

meeting.

Afterwards she said it will be a strong indication that "we are still in the community. We're still here."

Balint said they did extensive study of available buildings in West Lorne, including the former West Elgin Hydro building. She said, the new owners, Hydro One are asking too much.

In the end, council felt it was much more convenient for Recreation Superintendent Jeff Slater to have the building added onto the West Elgin Arena.

The new building will house one tractor, picnic tables, arena equipment, rescue fire van, and there will also be an area to do maintenance.

Councillor Mike Mooser was against spending the money for the new building and asked for a recorded vote.

In favour- Balint, Bandeen and Warwick.

Against- Mooser.

Ministry of Transportation coming back to West Elgin

Linda Cranston, Clerk/Deputy Treasurer for West Elgin announced that the Ministry of Transportation agrees with council that there should be a Ministry office West Elgin.

She said the Ministry has agreed to locate in either Rodney or West Lorne. Recently the Ministry has already conducted interviews with interested individuals.

The office will not be a stand-alone office, but be part of an existing business.

Councillor Mooser stated it makes best sense to have an office located in Rodney due to the car dealerships there.

OPP Efficiencies approved

Council has passed the motion to support the Elgin OPP's proposed efficiencies program.

The four requests from Elgin OPP are.

1. Hire three part-time officers for court services and prisoner transportation.

2. Hire a fourth stenographer to relieve time officers spend with data entry and keeping

them on the 'beat' longer.

3. A vehicle for the detachment commander so cruisers are not used at public functions and special events that the commander attends.

4. Implement the Elgin OPP Auxiliary Unit. Start a 15 officer group to cover events and special details and to work as temporary replacement of officers when large emergency situations occur.

Council agreed the efficiencies were part of a good program, but did have some reservation on the vehicle for Detachment Commander Ryan Cox. In the end they approved the program on the basis there will be more visible OPP and efficient policing in West Elgin.

Port Glasgow Trailer Park equipment acquisitions

Council has approved the following items for the Port Glasgow Trailer Park (also known as Old Boys Park): \$12,500 for a new lawn mower from Fulline, after trade-in and \$3,000 to refinish the dance

floor at the hall. Kent Floor of Chatham will do the work.

Transit Committee appointment

Mayor McPhail was appointed by council to be the municipality representative on the Transit committee.

Keutch retires from Rodney Fire Department

Bill Keutch of the Rodney Fire Department has announced he will be retiring. Keutch has been with the fire department for 42 years and will be commemorated for his years of service by the municipality in the near future.

Sorry about your luck!

A delegation led by Wes Sloan met council to review the Marsh Line waterline. The delegation was upset because back in 1993 when the water line was put in, they each paid \$2000 to just have the water accessible, and they were told the price would go up over time. There was a \$1,000 sharing fee and an additional \$1,000 hook-up fee.

The Marsh Line residents are upset because at the present

time their neighbours only paid a one time \$900 fee to get hooked up, in recent years.

Deputy Mayor Graham Warwick apologized for how the residents have apparently lost out of money, but at the time the water line came in, Warwick said the council truly thought the water hook ups would soar through time.

"We can't go back and change our mistakes," Warwick simply told the delegation.

Bring those chairs back!

Recreation superintendent Jeff Slater reported there are 52 chairs missing from the collection at Rodney Recreation Centre. Because of this the chairs will be chained down with a lock and only individuals with a right to use the chairs and tables will be given a key.

Lengthy discussion was also made on possible penalties for losing chairs and equipment. Possibly fines and deposit fees will be examined in the future if the problem persists.

West Elgin - Get that junker out of the driveway!

MUNICIPALITY TO CRACK DOWN ON CLUNKERS

West Elgin wants you to get that clunker out of the driveway if you have a vehicle or vehicles that are sitting rusting away.

Using the municipality's revised Property Standards Act West Elgin begun cracking down on 'derelict' vehicles that have been sitting in people's yards and driveways, especially in the villages of West Lorne and Rodney.

Councillor Mike Mooser has made it a personal campaign to insure the property standards in West Lorne.

"We're not running a junk yard in West Lorne. People have to get rid of these cars," said Mooser.

Mooser said they want to get rid of majorly rusted out cars without a licence and are not running. Bylaw enforcement officer Bill Douglas will be conducting investigations on vehicles and yards after complaints have been received and filled out at the West Elgin municipal office.

West Elgin Mayor Duncan McPhail said the implementation of the bylaw will only be used "primarily on

a complaint basis."

After the meeting McPhail put the issue into the perspective that North America's love affair with vehicles sometimes goes too far and the romance goes too long.

"Thank God we have made it past the mode of transportation of horses. Today it would mean a bunch of dead horses on people's yards and driveways."

McPhail explained that they will be working with residents and not hounding everyone with a spare car in their driveway.

"We are not on a witch hunt. We're just trying to clean up the towns," said McPhail.

Mooser agreed that there will be some leniency for people who have legitimate uses for the vehicle, like restoration and collection of antique vehicles. But he said they have limits.

"You're not going to have it in your driveway for four or five months. If you are going to restore it you're going to do it right away," said Mooser. "If you let it go too long it just becomes a piece of junk."

continued on page 3

MAR 2002

West Elgin council sees personnel changes

West Elgin council held a regular meeting last Thursday. Here are some highlights of the meeting.

Roads foreman retires from staff

Bill Keutch has retired from the municipality after 23 years.

Keutch was given some commemorative gifts during a special ceremony in council.

Keutch began his municipal career in 1979 as Road Superintendent for the Village of Rodney. In 1993 he became Road Foreman with the newly amalgamated Aldborough Township. In 1998 he continued until last week as Road Foreman with the municipality of West Elgin. Prior to 1979 he worked with Johnston Bros Sand & Gravel.

At his retirement announcement, Keutch said he leaves the roads department in good hands and in good shape. "The road system is coming along very nicely," said Keutch.

He pointed out many of the roads will be a lot better next spring, thanks to better systems and practices in use at West Elgin's Road Department.

"The roads will be a lot better. There won't be the break-ups," said Keutch.

Keutch said he has learned a lot during his years with the municipality and thanked the entire municipal staff for the many memorable times he has picked up in the 23 years.

"It has just been marvellous what he has done over the years for the municipality," said Deputy Mayor Graham Warwick, of Keutch.

The new Road Foreman is Paul Van Vaernbergh. Warwick said three excellent people applied for the position and made the final decision a hard one to make.

Resident receives building code convictions

A West Elgin resident has been convicted of three building violations under the Building Code and fined.

The resident was found guilty of not holding a building permit and using materials and methods not up to the building code.

New clerk works first council meeting

Norma Bryant is the new Clerk/Deputy Treasurer for West Elgin. She replaces Linda Cranston who resigned in July.

Liability insurance needed for leased trailer lots

Council has decided to enforce a rule that all full-time seasonal campers who lease lots, must have \$1 million coverage in liability insurance. This does not include transient campers.

This will be effective 2003 and letters will be sent out to the current campers who are leasing lots to explain this situation.

Haasz Trust Fund goes to daffodil auxiliary

The Haasz Trust Fund has been granted to the West Elgin Daffodil Auxiliary. The trust fund stated the money (approximately \$7,800) must be used for medical issues in West Lorne. Council decided the Daffodil Auxiliary was the best organization to use the money.

The fund will be used for transportation for medical purposes and medical aids for residents of West Lorne.

New rec building approved... finally

At the previous council meeting of July 25, council decided to build the municipality's new recreation department storage building on their original site.

The building will be erected on Chestnut at an estimated cost of approximately \$83,000. It will hold the equipment of the recreation department.

Discussion had been made over the past few months about cheaper buildings, where to build it (Rodney or West Lorne) and it was finally decided West Lorne is the best site. Council initially met sticker shock with the \$83,000 price tag, but after reviewing tenders realized - that is how much new buildings cost.

Queen Street to get paving extension

Queen Street East will be receiving its high float (also known as tar and chip) paving very soon. Currently the contractor is resurfacing the townline (Dunborough Road) and will do Queen when they are finished. Queen Street East will be extended and fully connected onto Dunborough.

High Float pavement is a very popular system of paving municipal roads and it is one of the cheaper forms of pavement with durability.

Roads departments have received lifetime estimates of approximately 10 years under normal driving wear and tear.

Dutton/Dunwich is resurfacing Dunborough

Road with a base of recycled asphalt from local roads like the 401.

West Elgin is resurfacing Queen Street using a gravel base.

West Elgin still requests election for FCHS directors

The municipality is still asking the Ministry of

Health and Long Term Care to call an election for the Board of Directors of Four Counties Health Services. (see story page 3).

The Ministry has just appointed a supervisor for the hospital, Geoff Davies, former Chair of London Health Services Centre.



West Elgin's new Clerk/Deputy Treasurer Norma Bryant, who comes from Huntsville, Ontario.



West Elgin Road Foreman Bill Keutch (right) retired last Thursday and was commemorated in a ceremony. Deputy Mayor Graham Warwick presents Keutch with gifts of plaque-bookends and a watch, from the municipality.

McPhail announces retirement next November

Last week West Elgin Mayor Duncan McPhail was joking he is ready to buy a Harley Davidson and drive off into the sunset. But he was serious too.

McPhail says he is ready to retire from politics and move on with different aspects of life and on Wednesday he shocked many by announcing he will not be putting his name on the ballot next November.

After 14 years of municipal politics, which has included terms of councillor, Reeve, Mayor, Warden and Chair of Western Wardens Association the Mayor says he feels he has accomplished all he can in the political ring. He says he has no desire to look at provincial and federal politics.

"I'm like the good boyscout. I have all the badges," he says.

McPhail says it was only fair to make the announcement early so those who may be interested in feeling his post, will have time to prepare.

"That's only fair to the municipality, to Graham (deputy Mayor Graham Warwick) or anybody who may be interested in running," he says.

McPhail says there is a

full year ahead of him and lots of issues presenting council that he will be at the helm for.

The political environment has changed a lot according to McPhail and he notes that most recently there have been battles that were never fought before, including hospitals, post offices, schools and MTO offices.

He says there is also no comparison to when his political career began in 1988 and the early years.

"Sometimes when I really think back, we used to have the big debate on whether we needed a fax machine or not."

Most recently McPhail met a huge personal challenge after losing the person he considered to be his "debriefing team" - his wife Liz, who passed away in 2001.

The Mayor says he thinks he will be leaving the helm at a point where West Elgin has a strong future.

"I think we are in very good shape and have made very many achievements," he says.

Although he is leaving local politics he doesn't want people to get the impression he is leaving West Elgin.

"I'm riding into the sunset, not off the edge of the world,"



Duncan McPhail

he says confidently.

As for the Harley, McPhail says he is quite serious, and has been looking at some bikes most recently.

In other council news:

• West Elgin council has approved the plans to bring water north of the 401 along Graham Road. Water Manager Lloyd Jarvis is ready to buy the water lines because he says this is the cheapest time of the year and the next step will be reviewing the cost of the endeavour.

• Council has assured West Lorne resident Roxanne Kirschner that there will be safety issues addressed at the corner of Graham and Main Streets in West Lorne. On Thursday council heard Kirschner's concerns and have been

looking at alternatives to keep the corner safe, without losing too much downtown parking through regulation and enforcement. Council was hoping to have a decision made on this issue before Christmas.

• Plans are in the works to ask organizers of the Port Glasgow Fish Fry to incorporate the Talbot Settlement Bicentennial in next August's event. Nick Wells from the Bicentennial Committee has asked council and the West Elgin community to take part in the celebrations in May, throughout Elgin County.

• Changes are being made to how the municipality does business since the passage of the New Municipal Act. Clerk Norma Bryant outlined most of the changes which include strict guidelines on notifying the public on meetings, procedural changes with closed sessions, changes in disposal of land, user fees and permanent road closures.

• West Lorne fire chief Allan Beer will be invited to the next council meeting to discuss the possibility of a new fire truck for the department.

• Building permits were over \$7 million by the end of October, a new WE record.



A sure sign of the end of the season!

Tom Jones of Tom Jones Tree Services (on the truck) and West Elgin Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jeff Slater enjoyed the good weather last week while taking down Christmas decorations in West Lorne. Later this year new streetlights will be installed in West Lorne which can hold banners and flower planters.

Carroll remembered by many

Former Aldborough resident and highly accomplished man Lorne Carroll's life was celebrated and honoured during his funeral last week. Carrol, a former Elgin County Warden of 1978, Aldbrough Councillor 1969-71, Deputy Reeve 1972-74, Reeve 1975-78 and director of Aldborough Old Boys for over 20 years (to name a handful of achievements), passed away Friday, June 19.

He is survived by his wife Louis of Strathroy and his numerous family members and extended family including daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

His daughter Anne Jamieson of Kapuskasing read an eulogy last week

that reiterated the amount and caring and volunteering that people will remember Lorne Carroll for.

"Dad was always helpful, in Crinan, Coweal and Strathroy. He was helpful as a Dad, husband, neighbour and friend. His trucks, and there were several over the years from the used pink one that we learned to drive, onto the new one he bought for the camper, to the last red one were frequently used for missions of mercy, picking up and delivering canned goods, Christmas boxes, furniture and playhouses," she read.

Jamieson said her father was incredibly honest in both speech and action. "He was a man of great integrity. He stood up for

what was right even if it meant personal sacrifice," she said.

"Dad really was something else, a loving and caring man whose special touches brought assurance that we were loved and cared for both by Dad and his Lord who must have welcomed him as it says on the bulletin with Well Done Good and Faithful Servant."

His grandchildren also reiterated his unselfishness and his generosity, patience and courage.

Carroll was a life-long member of Argyle Presbyterian Church, Crinan.

Donations can be made in his memory to Argyle Church or the Canadian Cancer Society.

West Elgin reviews residential proposal

West Elgin council met for a meeting on October 24. Here are some highlights from the meeting:

Badder proposes residential lots

The owner of Elgin Bus lines is proposing that lands not used by the bus barn become residential.

Neil Badder has chosen the west side of Finney Street to be the location of the bus barn. He proposes the east side could be split into eight lots including a cul-de-sac.

John Spriet of Spriet Associates spoke on Badder's behalf and told council that there may also be an opportunity to move a water line up Finney, around the Glencoe water plant and bring water to the north of the 401.

Council had no objections to Badder's proposal of severing the east properties for residential.

Official Plan review

The municipality will be holding a public meeting on the draft of the Official Plan Amendment as it deals with new severance plans. These severance amendments deal primarily with rural severances and restrictions on dwellings.

The municipality is proposing to modify existing policies on lots designated 'Agriculture' and 'Restricted Agriculture'

The meeting will be Thursday, November 28 at

9:30 am at the West Elgin Municipal office in Rodney.

MMAH calls for Santos subdivision

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has no objections to the latest construction of lots by local developer Tony Santos, but future ones will have to be hooked up to municipal sewers. The ministry notified that all future developments by Santos 'must proceed by a plan of subdivision.'

Currently, Santos has 42 lots in the Evandale, Catherine Street areas, and they have all been approved to have individual septic tanks. Further expansion of the areas will have to be hooked up to the municipal sewers.

Tridon Construction changes Eagle lots

Don DeJong of Tridon Construction came to council to announce changes to the real estate lots in Eagle.

Council has approved Tridon's plan to change the area to less lots, but bigger.

Roads to have overnight winter shift

West Elgin Roads Department will once again have an overnight shift for the winter season. If it does not snow prior, the new shift will begin December 15. Roads superintendent Rick Jackson said the overnight shift allows for better snow removal coverage, eliminates overtime pay,

and allows more work to be done within the department. Overnight employees will also be responsible for signage, vehicle maintenance and reporting on streetlights and other municipal issues.

Pig barn questions from neighbour

Although he said he has no issue with his neighbour, West Elgin resident Harry Vanderkuyl came to council with concerns of a 300 pig operation running around his property. Vanderkuyl said he was worried about contamination of his water well.

Council was confident there will not be problems from his new neighbour. They were also confident the new rules and regulation of the Nutrient Management Act are strict and intolerable.

"The (Ministry of Environment) is there. You cannot pollute," said Warwick who pointed out complaints are mostly neighbourhood driven, but the MOE is ready and has been enforcing the laws.

Mayor Duncan McPhail sent a message to all rural neighbours about communication being the best solution.

"Talk to the farmers, build a good relationship and be involved in the Nutrient Management process through conversation. Ask them to respect the family wells," he said.

West Elgin sees bus barn and church dispute

West Elgin council held a meeting on August 22. Here are highlights from the meeting. 2002

West Lorne residents cry out on bus location

Some angry West Elgin residents came out with a last minute delegation of people that filled council chambers to dispute the last two proposed locations for a bus barn.

As reported last week some West Lorne residents are adamantly against a Finney or Gilbert Street location because of issues with children, noise and pollution from the buses.

Members from the last delegation from Queen Street

also came to this meeting and one resident, David Lawley has written a letter to the Thames Valley District School Board, begging questions why this is all necessary.

Resident Joe Fischer called the decision by the TVDSB to move the Elgin Bus Lines out of the high school area "ludicrous."

Fischer was also quick to defend the former Town of West Lorne's policy to create an industrial zone, when it was questioned.

"They didn't want any industry to locate south of West Lorne," said Fischer and added later that "they had a vision."

Other residents like Mike Mulhern advised council to have an official plan study to find out and approve where industrial, commercial and residential areas are in the municipality, to prevent further rezoning problems.

Melody Fellowship issue now a legal issue

McPhail announced to council a lawyer from the legal firm HarrisonPensa Lawyers in London was in touch with him asking about issues dealing with Melody Fellowship and the municipality. McPhail said from after reading into the tone of the conversation that he advised the lawyer to contact the municipality's lawyer. The

two lawyers will now be discussing issues pertaining to the church over the past year.

After reiterating council's view on the property that Melody Fellowship owns in Eagle, council decided to stand by their earlier decision to call for the owners to have agriculture, environmental and residential impact studies on the property.

Council has also decided to stand by all its decisions pertaining to Melody Fellowship, including the decision to not let the church meet at the municipal building (West Lorne Community Complex) and these will be reiterated by a lawyer.

McGuinty appoints Peters to agricultural post

For The Chronicle

It's official. The riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London has a seat at the cabinet table.

MPP Steve Peters was sworn in as minister of agriculture and food last week in a Queen's Park ceremony alongside Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and his ministerial colleagues.



Steve Peters

Peters was elated with his

appointment and he is eager to get started on his agricultural portfolio.

The local MPP served as a critic for the portfolio in opposition.

"It's great news and it's great for Elgin-Middlesex-London," said Peters. "I was surprised but just as any of my 71 colleagues, everyone hopes that they will be asked to take some additional responsibilities. I am quite honoured."

Although the official announcement was made at a ceremony last Thursday, Peters was invited into McGuinty's inner

circle last Wednesday night and was sworn to secrecy until the ceremony.

Peters says his first item of business was meeting with his deputy minister, Frank Ingratta, to discuss the transition period and to check out his new office.

Ontario's agriculture minister noted that his priorities include a complete review of the Agriculture Policy Framework (APF), a federal program that Ontario has yet to sign on with.

"I don't want to just sign on unless it has the best interests of Ontario farmers in mind. More

works needs to be done to improve the APF."

Another priority cited was food safety and inspection at the 209 meat processing facilities across the province.

When asked if he was particularly interested in the situation at Aylmer Meat Packers, Peters responded, "We can not dwell on Aylmer. We need to look at the situation in context with all 209 facilities in the province. We must ... ensure public confidence and ... work in the best interests of Ontario's farmers."

OCT 2003 Continued on Page 2



PARTING GIFTS...

Retiring West Elgin Mayor Duncan McPhail presents Administrator Joanne Groch with a framed print of the Elgin County building as a gift to the municipality as he retired last week at the final meeting of West Elgin Council's current incarnation. The municipality presented McPhail with a plaque. DEC. 4/03

Chronicle photo

Tickets refunded

West Elgin council accepts blame for parking ticket woes in villages

By Scott Hilgendorff
The Chronicle

West Elgin council accepted responsibility for turning innocent people into criminals at council's July 10 meeting where 10 parking ticket-holders attended looking for answers.

They wanted to know what council was doing about the rash of tickets issued to people since the end of June for parking overnight or on the boulevards.

"If there's anyone at fault, it's the people in this room," said Mayor Duncan McPhail to the audience after a segment of the meeting was set aside to examine the parking ticket issue.

And he offered refunds and amnesty to ticket holders.

"This genie got out of the bottle before we were ready for it," said McPhail.

Close to 100 tickets were issued in West Elgin, the majority in Rodney, since 39 new parking bylaws came into effect June 30. The bylaws were the result of a three-year effort to create a set of bylaws that OPP could enforce across Elgin County to be able to respond to parking complaints.

But instead of targeting the trouble areas municipalities had identified, the bulk of tickets issued were for people parking overnight and for parking on boulevards.

The result of a generic bylaw, those specific infractions were not identified as problems in West Elgin but received the most enforcement, taking residents by

surprise not once, but twice in a week after being told OPP would relax their enforcement of those issues.

"It's quite obvious we don't have all the problems worked out," said McPhail. He accepted responsibility for the public not being made aware these new bylaws existed and were about to be enforced.

For those receiving tickets in the first wave of enforcement, largely between June 30 and July 1, McPhail said residents have no choice but to pay the tickets, now on record in the courts.

However, if people bring their receipts to the municipal office, the money will be refunded.

On July 8, after council assured residents they could park on boulevards for the time being until the bylaws and

enforcement of them could be sorted out, more tickets were issued, many getting hit a second time, particularly on Stinson Street where several residents do not have driveways.

After discussions with the OPP, McPhail said those tickets have been withdrawn and anyone receiving one will also be receiving a hand-delivered letter from the OPP stating the ticket is only to be considered a warning.

"We go to a much greater length to notify people we're going to flush hydrants," said McPhail of the lack of warning residents received before the new laws came into effect.

He said there are several options council will consider in the coming weeks as it



McPhail

JULY 17, 2003