

# YOUTH TALENT SEARCH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1  
The event included separate competitions for juniors ages six to 12, and youth ages 13 to 21. The majority of the contestants sang to recorded music although there was a dance performance, a performance by a band and a drum solo that also impressed the audience.

The winners of the competition advance to the Western Fair in London, Ont. in September. The top four performers in the junior category were Emily Krol, Gabrielle Neurt, Hailey Neels and Morgan Deschaine. Nine of the performers in the youth category will advance to the Western Fair, including the top three finalists who also won cash prizes. The top three winners were Jordan Collins, Victoria Zahaluk, and Jen Knight. The other finalists were Jordan Roy, Adam Gauthier, Chantelle Finderup, Janina Teaney, Sarah Battersby, and Jessica Ryan.

"I think I did very well," 12-year-old Chantal Davidson of Windsor said after her performance in the junior competition. "Last year I didn't think I did very well, but this year I think I did a lot better."

Davidson was not selected by the judges this year. However, contacts with Western Fair organizers got her a spot in the competition last year and her mother, Christine, will try again. Western Fair judges have that discretion, Christine Davidson said before the results were released.

The Youth and Talent Show is organized by Cheryl Skilton. Skilton said she started to receive entries for the competition June 1. Although the number of entries was low initially, interest in both the youth and junior competition improved quickly.

"People were calling even after the closing date, but I try to be accommodating if I can," Skilton said.

Skilton's daughter Devon Sokoloski, along with Cassie Ames and Mike Cullen were judges for the talent show. The trio took several minutes after the end of the youth competition to announce the 10 finalists.

The crowd waited and cheered at the final name announced. Jordan Collins, last year's second place winner at Western Fair, once again impressed the crowd with his drum solo. Before

his performance was complete the audience began clapping. The audience agreed with the judges' decision that Collins should compete at the Western Fair. According to the rules, judges evaluated the contestants based on their natural ability, the quality of their performance, showmanship and their rapport with the audience.



Members of the band Problem Child perform July 9 at the Youth and Junior Talent Show at the Essex Fun Fest.



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