

# Woodlot a birdwatcher's paradise

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

For someone with about an hour to spare, a walk through Forrest Elmslie's nature sanctuary can prove to be a delight to the senses.

Colourful birds chirp and tweet their little songs, the aroma of wildflowers hangs in the air and a variety of vibrant creatures from the Great Horned Owl to the Blue Skink Lizard make brief appearances before disappearing back into the woods.

It's no wonder the 100-acre bush is a popular destination for bird watchers and photographers.

Located just south of Harrow, For the Birds birding and nature sanctuary has been family-owned since 1970.

It features 4.5 kilometres of graveled trails and a pond where Elmslie scatters wildflower seeds and his wife Jan uproots White Trilliums this time each year to put up for sale.

Hummingbirds, sparrows, woodpeckers and American Gold Finches dart among 300-year-old black oak trees to make nests or dine on nectar and insects.

"Birdwatchers will come out and stay two to four hours," said Elmslie, who



Forrest Elmslie dumps a pail of birdseed at For the Birds nature sanctuary just south of Harrow. The observatory and 100-acre woodlot will be welcoming birdwatchers, photographers and nature lovers until June 10.

spends most of his time inside the observatory. "There are 35 varieties that you can see right here through the windows."

Elmslie will often take a stroll down the trails at 6 a.m. before visitors arrive and at 6 p.m. after everybody has left.

It's at this time when he looks for sprouting wild geraniums, woodland violets and Jack 'N' Pulpits, which grow up to four feet high. Or he'll simply stop to admire a patch of White Trilliums that blankets the

forest floor like snow.

He loses about 30 trees every year. Felled by windstorms or lightening, the trees have to be hauled off the trail.

He's often delighted to see a herd of deer grazing through but irritated to see a pack of coyotes or raccoons scrounging around the bush.

Some Saturday mornings he has a "buzzard watch", where he dumps 80 pounds of meat on a scaffold and watches for turkey vultures and bald eagles to come

and feast.

For Elmslie, the woodlot is full of possibilities, which generate an abundance of ideas for its owner.

Next year he is planning to plant stakes along the trail, where birders will be able to identify from a list different flower varieties or animal habitats.

He also contemplates the development of a butterfly exhibit or a star gazing tour in August, when open areas in the trail provide great viewing during meteor shower season.

But for now, Elmslie is busy planting new flowers, keeping the birdfeeders filled and catering to visitors.

"People have come from different countries," Elmslie said. "They pick up a brochure from Point Pelee and come down. Some of them say they see more birds here in 10 minutes than a whole day at Point Pelee."

For the Birds is open Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. until June 10. The sanctuary reopens September 16 to November 10. Admission is \$5.

# Essex to host Purina Walk for Dog Guides

Essex and District Lions Clubs are once again hosting the Purina Walk for Dog Guides, a fundraising event set to raise money for the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides.

The event will be held on Sunday, June 3 starting at 11:00 a.m. at the Kinsmen Field House in Essex. All ages and fitness levels are welcome to attend the event with or without a dog. One hundred percent of the pro-

ceeds from the Walk go directly towards funding Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guide programs.

Lions Foundation of Canada receives no government funding and provides Dog Guides at no cost to Canadians with physical disabilities. For more information or to register for the Walk please visit [www.purinawalkfordogguides.com](http://www.purinawalkfordogguides.com).

# Lakeshore looking to end doctor shortage

While a physician shortage continues to affect communities across the province, Lakeshore announced last week the formation of a Health Care Recruitment and Retention Committee in an effort to bring more doctors to the area.

The committee is made up of 15 volunteers, including council representatives, resource members of the

health care sector and Lakeshore residents.

Working with the \$70,000 set aside by council for health care marketing and promotion, the committee plans to develop a recruitment strategy, which may include establishing a new clinic.

Currently, the municipality is short at least 10 physicians according to provincial standards.

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**Take a picture of your Mom shopping in Essex!**

To enter our "Shop, Smile & Snap" in Essex Photo Contest:  
Email to [bia@townofessex.on.ca](mailto:bia@townofessex.on.ca) or Drop off at Town Office 33 Talbot S.

**So get snapping...you may have to follow Mom about town, try for a candid shot!!**

All photos can be picked up after May 13 at the BIA office. Winners will be announced in the paper, with their winning pictures!

**1st place:** Win a digital camera for you and your Mom to share!

**2nd place:** Win \$50 in BIA bucks to spend in Essex!

**Don't forget that special gift for Mom on May 13th - Mother's Day!**

Essex has a great selection of flowers & gifts!