

## Aware of beach pollution

HIGHER LEVELS OF E. coli have been found at Centennial Park beach. High bacteria warnings have also been issued for Branford-Cundick beach along the St. Clair River. Water may become temporarily polluted up to 48 hours after heavy rainfall, and water cloudy from wave activity may be suspending bacteria in the bottom, increasing the risk of illness.

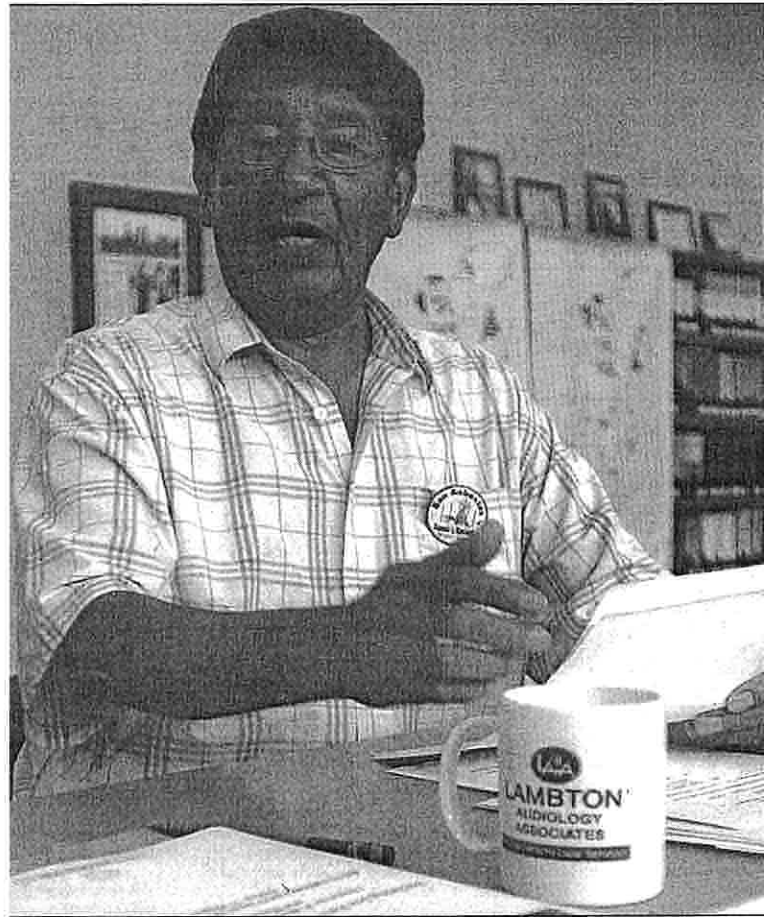
## West Nile Virus found in crow

A FIFTH BIRD has tested positive for West Nile Virus in Lambton County. The dead crow was found Friday in the Corunna area, where an infected mosquito was also found recently, the Community Health Services Department said. Eliminating standing water around the home can reduce mosquito breeding areas.

## Port Huron man in custody

EDWARD MICHAEL SHAUN Brabson, 32, of Port Huron, was taken into custody Monday afternoon by officers of Canada Immigration, RCMP and Sarnia Police, following a warrant for his arrest from Canada Immigration. It is alleged Brabson was illegally in Canada. He has been deported in the past for illegally living in Canada.

## DEVISING A PLAN



SHAWN JEFFORDS The Observer

Wilson Plain of Sarnia's Aamjiwnaang First Nation was among those who met Wednesday with Ontario Environment Commissioner Gord Miller. Plain recently told The Observer a buffer should be created to protect natives from industrial expansion.

# Activist seeks input

## AAMIJWNAANG MAN WANTS AN INDUSTRY BUFFER ZONE

by GEORGE MATHEWSON  
The Observer

Tired of being ignored by the petrochemical industry, an Aamjiwnaang First Nation activist has proposed a plan to deal with future plant expansions.

Wilson Plain says existing legislation could be used to adopt setback regulations, making it more difficult for industry to arbitrarily build on property touching the reserve's boundaries.

He said residents aren't opposed to development, but want to be consulted

tion of industry. They need to communicate with us."

The Sarnia reserve is virtually surrounded by industry, yet its members have had little say in projects that directly impact it, said Plain, citing Suncor Energy's multi-million Genesis project as an example.

In recent years, Aamjiwnaang residents have been evacuated or experienced "shelters-in-place" several times because of toxic releases to the air from.

"What is certain is that the health of Aamjiwnaang residents will continue to be impacted over the long term," Plains said in a brief to the band's environment committee.

A bylaw designating band lands as "sensitive" under the Environmental Protection Act could effectively

reserve, he added.

Suncor Energy spokesperson Jason Vaillant said the company kept residents informed of the Genesis project at every stage.

The expansion plans were posted on the Environment Ministry's website, a public open house held in December of 2003, and letters sent to every household on the reserve.

Band council has been updated regularly, with offers to hold additional open houses for residents, Vaillant said.

"Basically, we are trying to develop an on-going relationship with Aamjiwnaang, and to keep the community in tune with what's going on in our refinery," he said.

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# Gender-bending issue featured in prestigious journal

## BIRTH ANOMALIES EXAMINED IN U.S.-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVES NEXT MONTH

By JACK POIRIER  
The Observer

Gender-bending chemicals believed by some to be responsible for birth anomalies among Aamjiwnaang residents will be discussed in a highly-respected U.S. journal.

Environment Health Perspectives, one of the leading environmental journals in the world, will publish an article next month documenting the declining sex ratio in the First Nation community and the possible impact that years of chemical exposure may have played in that end.

"I think this is an enormous validation of what the First Nations was concerned of," said Dr. Jim Brophy, executive director of the Sarnia office of the Occupational Health Clinic for Ontario Workers (OHCOW).

A community health survey of 428 Aamjiwnaang residents found the birth ratio for boys has plummeted about 60 per cent, between 1998 and 2003.

Female births outnumber males by a two-to-one ratio.

The survey also found abnormally high incidents of miscarriages, infertility, still births, birth defects, endometriosis, learning disabilities in children and other health problems affecting

Aamjiwnaang residents.

Close to 40 per cent of the women who responded reported at least one miscarriage or stillbirth.

Another First Nations community in southwestern Ontario used as a comparison was found to be near the Canadian average.

**"It's sad. You cry, then go do some more research."**

Ada Lockridge

"Their concerns are being validated by what they're hearing door-to-door," Brophy said of the survey. "We think this is really something that requires investigation."

Because the reserve is virtually surrounded by a complex petrochemical plants, some environmentalists say there is anecdotal evidence to suggest years of exposure to hazardous chemicals could be the trigger for these changes.

A 1996 study of the reserve's Talfourd Creek found high concentrations of heavy metals and "gender-bender" pollutants that mimic sex hormones.



Brophy

Aamjiwnaang community.

However, the reaction to this article in the journal could help on that front, he said.

"I think what's going to happen is it's going to cause a lot of interest among some top researchers," Brophy said.

For Aamjiwnaang resident and environment committee member Ada Lockridge, she hopes the article will help steamroll more attention that will help to provide more answers instead of questions.

She and her two sisters alone have an eight-to-one female-to-male, child ratio.

"I see others with boys and I'm left wondering 'Where do they play at? What did the eat?'"

Both Lockridge and OHCOW health researcher Margaret Keith gathered the data for the sex ratio survey.

"It's sad," Lockridge said. "You cry, then go do some more research."

Keith said they need to delve further.

"There's still more data to be researched."

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