



# GUELPH MERCURY

## Serenity House will be missed

By SCOTT TRACEY  
MERCURY STAFF

**GUELPH**

As some yesterday mourned the demise of a local addictions treatment program, one of its operators pledged to continue serving the community.

Ed Pickersgill, who started the Serenity House program with Dan Murray in 1999, said the pair will continue serving the community "but how we do that without offending people will remain to be seen."

Murray, a recovering alcoholic celebrating 24 years of sobriety, ran counselling sessions at various locations across the city before announcing his retirement last Friday.

One of those locations, a home at 316 Grange Rd., recently came under fire from area residents opposed to the program operating in their neighbourhood. This week, Murray conceded that opposition played a part in his decision to "retire" from the voluntary position.

Justice Norman Douglas, who often ordered addicted offenders to serve their sentences in the Serenity House program, said yesterday it was "one resource that I used as a last resort to sending the accused to jail."

"From a court's perspective, any help we can get in dealing with the difficult task of finding the appropriate sentence for someone is welcome," Douglas said. "I'm sorry to see it go."

Murray was not available for comment yesterday, but Pickersgill said he is confident his friend and colleague will continue working with those battling personal demons.

SEE STAYING: PAGE A2



Chris Jess, foreground, leads a group taking part in street theatre to protest the north-end location of the proposed Wal-Mart in Guelph. The performance, which preceded an OMB hearing at the Italian Canadian Club last night, saw protesters wear labels to represent the people they feel would be affected by the retail giant.

# Wal-Mart site blasted

By PETER COWAN  
MERCURY STAFF

**GUELPH**

Wal-Mart attracted a lot of people last night, but they weren't in the mood for shopping.

Burlington's Vickey Chen received an e-mail about the Wal-Mart planned in the north end of Guelph and felt so strongly she drove all the way to the Royal City to speak out against it.

"Wal-Mart is a symbol of consumerism," she said at the Ontario Municipal Board's public hearing last night. "What it promotes is in direct contrast to what Jesus teaches through the Jesuits."

Chen, a professor of pathology and molecular medicine at McMaster University, attended a retreat in 2002 at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre which is located

near the site of the proposed store. Her experience at the centre was life-changing.

"You have a national treasure," she told the board members and the over 200 people gathered at the Italian Canadian Club for the hearing.

Chen was one of the overwhelming majority of speakers at last night's OMB hearing that spoke in opposition to the Wal-Mart proposed for the corner of Woodlawn and Woolwich streets in the north end of Guelph. It was the third day for the hearing which wraps up next week.

Many of the opponents shared her views that the added noise and traffic Wal-Mart would bring to the area would be detrimental to the peace and tranquility people seek at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre.

Outside the Ferguson Street

**More on Wal-Mart**

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hearing, 25 protesters took part in a street theatre performance where actors used musical instruments and costume to tell the story of the City of Guelph.

"We did this to give an alternate view of the Wal-Mart story," said Brian Holstein who played the ring leader.

The story ends with the citizens chasing away from the city a person dressed as a giant Wal-Mart.

"It's almost a pre-game rally," Holstein said.

He said the groups aim was not to influence the board members but to encourage people to speak up on the issue.

Inside the meeting, one of the few people who spoke in favour of Wal-Mart's application was failed 2003 mayoralty

candidate Bill Craven.

Craven called the Jesuits "hypocritical" for opposing Wal-Mart when they are already selling meat and produce themselves and have office spaces at the retreat centre. He reminded the board of a 9,000-name petition signed in 1999 supporting a Wal-Mart in Guelph.

Last night's meeting remained under control but was interrupted by board member Robert Boxma after spectators clapped after one person's presentation.

"Did you not hear the first thing in my opening remarks? No applause," Boxma said.

After that, to support speaker people gave the thumbs up sign, until Boxma stopped that too.

With 60 people pre-registered to speak in the four hours allot-

ted, the board made the unusual decision to take written submissions. Anyone wanting to have their views considered may submit them at Guelph City hall before the end of Monday next week.

Those submissions will be read by the board. Lawyers for the city, Wal-Mart and Residents for Sustainable Development can highlight sections to bring to the board's attention.

John Newstead, who was scheduled to speak as number 57 on the list, was not impressed by the decision to cut off submissions.

"People are being denied the right to speak," he said. "This should be run better."

Newstead said the board should have foreseen this and added a second night.

The hearing will continue next week.

**WEATHER**

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Variably cloudy  
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**SPORTS**



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## Dead crow sign of times – West Nile is here

By JOANNE SHUTTLEWORTH  
MERCURY STAFF

**ELORA**

A dead crow found in Elora Wednesday has tested positive for West Nile virus, bringing the total count of virus-positive birds in this area to four this year.

That in itself is not alarming, said Scott Hutchison, program manager at the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Health Unit, but it does underscore the message of prevention and protection.

"The public should understand that as we find dead crows, it reinforces the message that West Nile virus is here," Hutchison said.

"The public needs to take these precautions to heart."

Dead crows testing positive for the virus have now been found this year in Fergus, Guelph and Dufferin County.

It takes a while for the disease to spread through the bird population, Hutchison said, "but the more birds that are found, the greater the risk to humans."

The virus is spread from



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Crows gather on tree tops as a full moon rises in this file photo. The local health unit says four dead crows have tested positive for West Nile virus in the area. The latest bird was found in Elora.

birds to humans through mosquitoes. Now is the time of year when human cases will begin to show, Hutchison said, although no human cases have been reported in Ontario to date.

Symptoms take anywhere from three to 15 days to appear after infection and may include mild to severe fever, body aches and headache.

In very rare cases West Nile virus causes swelling around the brain and even death in humans.

"You could be bitten and not know you have the disease," Hutchison said, "but for some people it's a very serious disease."

That's why it is a public health concern and why the health unit continues to ham-

mer its message for people to avoid mosquito-ridden areas, remove standing water from their properties and wear insect repellent that contains DEET.

The rainy spring and summer has been good for mosquitoes because they breed in standing water.

Hutchison said it is a good idea for property owners to

check for standing water after a rainfall and unclog eavestroughs and empty flower pots, cups or bottles that might collect water.

"Mosquitoes can breed in one-inch of water," Hutchison said.

More information is available at www.wdghu.org or by calling 1-800-265-7293.

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