



Guelph Mercury **saturday**

February 28, 2009 • Serving Guelph and Wellington County • \$1.18 + tax (\$1.24) • weekend edition

Ticket trouble reaches Guelph

Great Big Sea concert tickets being sold for more than face value

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GUELPH — A controversial act of selling concert tickets online at well above the price listed on the stubs is alive and well in Guelph.

Ticketmaster, which is the subject of a related class action lawsuit, is linked to higher-than-list price offerings of tickets for a March 1, 2008, Great Big Sea concert at the Sleeman Centre.

Tickets for the show are available via Ticketmaster at regular prices of \$49.50 and \$57.50. But they're also being offered on TicketsNow, a sister company of Ticketmaster, for \$279 and \$311.

"I wouldn't know enough to know how they got to that, because there are still tickets available at those other (regular) prices," said Matt Newby, director of business operations for the Guelph Storm, which operates out of the Sleeman Centre and also retails tickets online through Ticketmaster.

Newby said he's not aware of any local concerns raised about Ticketmaster's vending practices but said selling tickets above face value is "scalping."

Allegations that Ticketmaster is transferring tickets to its subsidiary website, where they're offered at higher prices — sometimes before they're ever available to the public — are at the centre of a class-action lawsuit filed this month in the province.

► SEE TICKETS ON PAGE A8



RYAN PFEIFFER, GUELPH MERCURY

A deer crossing sign is seen on Edinburgh Road South near Gordon Street. As urban areas expand into rural environments, more and more people are coming into contact with urban wildlife like coyotes, deer and foxes.

“I was looking at the ground watching for ice. Someone in the back yelled ‘Deer!’ and I looked up to see this grey blob coming at me.

Jogger Stuart Kirk on being hit by a deer after it had been hit by a car

People crossing



As urban sprawl bulldozes over rural spaces, animals are adjusting to city life

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Like most drivers, Stuart Kirk keeps his eye out for wild animals while driving. He just never expected he'd need the same caution while out for a jog.

But on Grey Cup Sunday, Kirk, who was running with a group along Kortright Road near Preservation Park, was hit by a deer.

The deer had been hit by a car. The impact launched it into the air and it landed on Kirk.

"I was looking at the ground, watching for ice," Kirk said of what happened on Nov. 23. "Someone in the back yelled 'Deer!' and I looked up to see this grey blob coming at me."

Kirk was stiff and bruised from the collision, but otherwise OK.

The deer did not survive and

a second deer in the vicinity became trapped in a backyard with two broken legs. It was put down.

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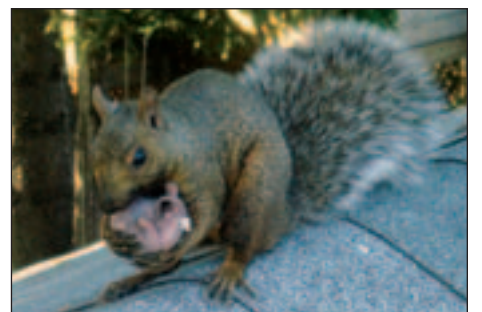
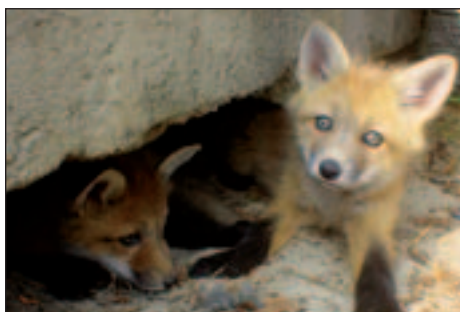
After reading stories about a coyote that killed a chihuahua in the Beaches area of Toronto, and hearing about coyotes roaming Hamilton streets, Dave De Medeiros is worried the same could happen in his

south-end neighbourhood.

"I'm most concerned about young children," said De Medeiros, whose home in the Westminster Woods subdivision backs onto six kilometres of trail that winds through the neighbourhood.

"An adult could probably handle one coyote, but I saw two. And one was definitely the alpha animal."

► STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE A3



HUMANE WILDLIFE CONTROL

Urban wildlife — including foxes, bats and squirrels — are often looked upon as a nuisance by the humans who share their space. Local stewards of animal and public safety say anecdotes of humans butting heads with nature are becoming increasingly common.

U of G gets \$3.62M to create 231 new graduate spaces

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GUELPH — The University of Guelph will create more than 200 new graduate spaces in the next three years as part of a government plan to train more students in high-demand fields.

Guelph MPP Liz Sandals was at the university yesterday to announce the local share of a \$51.6-million

government commitment to expand graduate programs in areas such as engineering and environmental studies. U of G will receive \$3.62 million to create 231 spaces.

Sandals said the funding comes at a time when the economy is shifting.

"More jobs in the new economy require not only an undergraduate degree but a graduate degree," she said.

According to government estimates, seven out of 10 jobs created in the province in the next decade will require post-secondary training.

U of G will see 218 master's spaces and 13 PhD spaces created in the next three years. Across the province 3,300 new graduate spaces will be created at 17 schools. Ontario's seven largest research universities will receive about 75 per cent of the new spaces.

"Ontario's highly skilled workforce is our province's greatest asset," Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities John Milloy said in a release.

"By helping more Ontarians pursue higher education, we can strengthen our economy and attract the kind of jobs and investment that will build prosperity for all Ontario families."

One U of G grad student wor-

ries the new spaces will cause financial strain on the university.

"This money doesn't account for the basic infrastructure," said Aaron Masecar, a PhD student in philosophy, following Sandals' announcement.

Masecar said he welcomes the spaces, but the reality is the University of Guelph will have to find additional money to sustain them.

► SEE FUNDING ON PAGE A2

GuelphMercury.com



Arts **C1**
Births-Deaths **D6**
Business **B6**
Canada **B7**

Classified **D1**
Comics **D7**
Cryptoquote **D2**
Editorials **A6**

Here **E1**
Horoscope **C4**
Lottery results **A2**
Scoreboard **B4**

Sports **B1**
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Travel **F1**
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A LOOK AT
TOMORROW'S
WEATHER
FULL FORECAST, PAGE A2



high: -8 low: -17

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HUMANE WILDLIFE CONTROL

An employee of Hamilton's Humane Wildlife Control attempts to remove a raccoon from a tight spot. Local stewards of public and animal safety say sharing our land with urban wildlife is becoming increasingly important as cities encroach on rural spaces.

Walk on the WILD SIDE

► STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

Around 9 p.m. one evening in mid-January, De Medeiros saw two coyotes on the other side of his chain link fence — one was eating something, the other was standing guard.

They didn't leave when he made noise. They didn't leave when he tossed a snowball. They didn't leave when he walked out to his backyard.

Eventually they did move to the edge of the forest, "but they stayed there quite a while and watched me," De Medeiros said. "It was unnerving."

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Anecdotes of humans butting heads with nature are increasingly common, say stewards of animal and public safety, though scarce data is collected on the movements and populations of wild animals in urban settings.

"In some ways it's our own fault," said Bill Dowd, president of Humane Wildlife Control, a Hamilton-based wild animal removal company that includes Guelph in its territory.

Creatures are beginning to stir from their winter slumber, and they are hungry. Those that have foraged all winter have exhausted their food supplies and are searching further afield. Mating season is upon us and critters are looking for safe places to nest.

Between garbage and insufficient protection of our homes from animal invaders, "we make cities a great place to live for these animals," Dowd said.

"Food and shelter. That's what they're looking for."

As urban sprawl bulldozes over woodlands, marshes and other natural habitat, some wild animals are discovering city living isn't so bad after all.

Suzanne Young, an environmental planner for the City of Guelph, said the city is working on a natural heritage strategy. This means protecting — or at least accommodating — the wild animal populations that live in and around Guelph.

"Collisions (with animals) are becoming more and more of an issue, especially as Guelph roads are more travelled," Young said.

At the same time, wildlife is an important part of the ecosystem.

"We have to balance development with preservation," she said.

As it develops its plan, the city is using data collected by University of Guelph environmental science students in a 2007 report, Urban Wildlife Management in the City of Guelph. It recommends establishing deer crossings along the Hanlon Expressway and amphibian crossings on Maltby, Watson and Eastview roads.

Young said a "critter culvert" will be built under the road when construction begins on the former Pergola site at Clair and Gordon roads. She said the city sometimes sprays chemical deterrents along the shoulders of the Hanlon, which keeps deer from trying to cross the busy highway.

The study indicates that generally, residents enjoy having wildlife in the city. They only perceive it as a

problem when nature comes a little too close to home, like when animals make their homes in attics or basements or when they collide with vehicles.

"We should look at (wildlife) as a big plus," agreed Elizabeth Bonkink, executive director of the Guelph Humane Society. "Animals need trees, water and nice green spaces to live, so if we have animals, it means we have all that, too."

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But the idea is to share the space, so educating residents about how to handle brushes with wildlife is central to the city's strategy, Young said.

The Grand River Conservation Authority doesn't protect birds, fish or animals specifically, but wildlife populations benefit in general from the agency's focus on protecting the wetlands and woodlands on its property.

GRCA ecologist Tony Zammit said Canada geese, great blue heron, and several species of duck frequent the banks of the Speed and Eramosa rivers, as do muskrats, mink and beavers. He said raccoons and skunks in particular have adapted well to city life.

“We should look at wildlife as a big plus. Animals need trees, water and nice, green spaces to live, so if we have animals, it means we have all that, too.”

Elizabeth Bonkink, executive director of the Guelph Humane Society

"They are generalists. They don't have specific requirements. And human garbage offers a steady supply of food," Zammit said.

The Ministry of Natural Resources sets and regulates policy regarding wildlife, from stray or dangerous coyotes, right on down the food chain. There are very specific rules around removing wild animals from private property — it requires permits, humane traps and releasing the animal no more than one kilometre from site of capture.

The humane society is licensed to raise and release wildlife that's been captured or injured, but the regulations are very specific about how orphaned or injured critters should be raised and released, Bonkink said. Between the threat of parasites and disease, and strict regulations, "you're best to leave wildlife alone."

Back in Westminster Woods, De Medeiros is happy to take that advice. He only hopes the coyotes will stick to their side of the fence.

"I'm originally from Toronto. We came here to get away from the big city," De Medeiros said.

"At the same time, I'm not a hunter. I wasn't expecting to see this."

Where the wild things are

Majority of critter complaints by Ward in 2006

Ward 1: deer

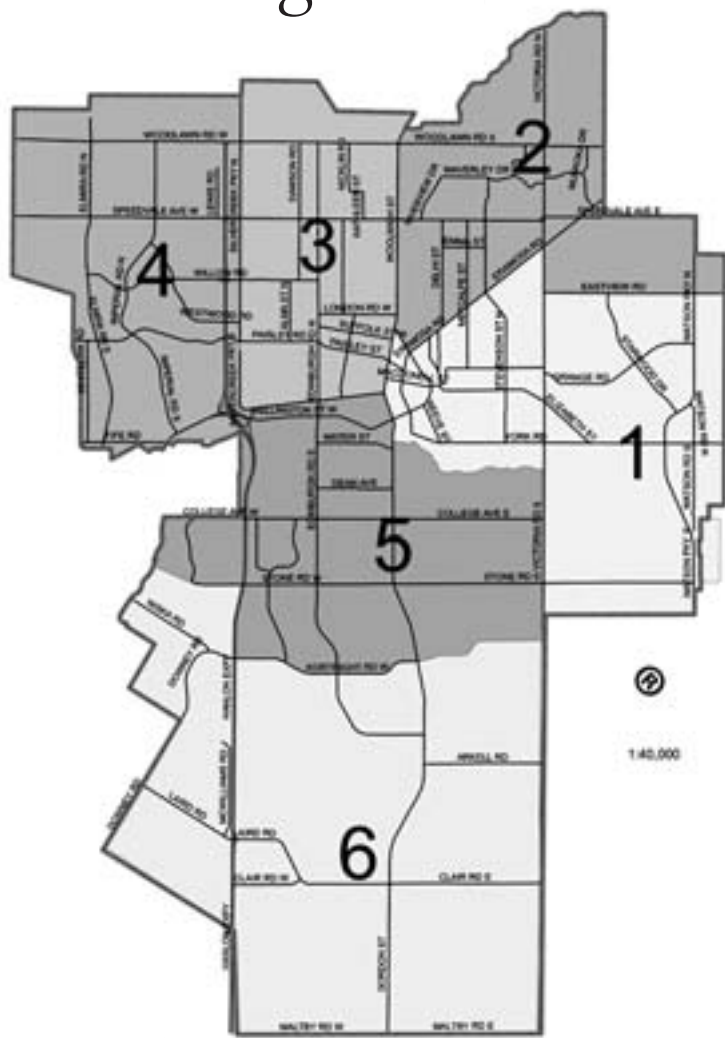
Ward 2: raccoons and skunks

Ward 3: squirrels

Ward 4: rabbits

Ward 5: squirrels

Ward 6: skunks



SOURCE: URBAN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IN THE CITY OF GUELPH

MAP COURTESY OF CITY OF GUELPH

tips for dealing with urban wildlife

It is important to remember that animals that fall into the category of urban wildlife are not pets, but are not truly "wild" either. They have adapted quite well to living in urban and suburban areas and may not be as afraid of people as their wild cousins. They can become aggressive if threatened and may also carry diseases that are harmful to humans. It's best to view them from a distance.

Dos and Don'ts if you find wildlife on your property:

- DON'T: Try and trap, grab, poison or smoke the animal out.
- DON'T: Separate a mother from her babies.
- DON'T: Seal animals in your attic, walls or roof. They will die and cause odour, damage and human health problems.
- DON'T: Feed animals — it will just encourage them to come back and potentially access your house.
- DO: Treat wildlife with respect.
- DO: Call for professional help (a humane society or urban wildlife company) if you have questions or concerns about urban wildlife conflicts.

SOURCE: WWW.URBANWILDLIFE.CA



HUMANE WILDLIFE CONTROL

Two skunks are seen stuck in a window well. Hamilton-based company Humane Wildlife Control was called to remove the skunks.