



YOUR NEW YEAR'S GUELPH MERCURY



DARREN CALABRESE, GUELPH MERCURY

Wellington-Halton Hills MP Michael Chong walks along a bluff near Guelph. Chong and Linamar CEO Linda Hasenfratz are the Mercury's newsmakers of the year.

Newsmakers of 2006

Introspective MP Michael Chong thrust into national spotlight

BY GREG MERCER
MERCURY STAFF

GUELPH

For a self-admitted introvert, Michael Chong made an awfully puzzling career choice.

If the 35-year-old Wellington-Halton Hills MP says he didn't think about that at least once in the past 12 months, as the public eye focused on him at a level it never has before, he's in denial.

Not long after his January re-election, the young Conservative's political career jumped to new heights with a surprise posting in Stephen Harper's cabinet — which he later quit, making

even bigger headlines; he went to the Olympics and sat on national TV with the CBC's Ron MacLean; had a change of heart on same-sex marriage; rubbed elbows with premiers, and athletes and prime ministers; was out front as Ottawa apologized for the Chinese head tax; slammed Canada Post for cutting back rural mail; and let thousands watch him toss the opening pitch at Canada's junior baseball championships.

That's an abridged list of the reasons the mild-mannered Ferguson native was chosen as the Guelph Mercury's male newsmaker of the year

SEE CHONG: PAGE A3

One is a young politician some have called "the future of the Conservative party." The other heads Canada's second largest auto parts manufacturer. They are the Mercury's newsmakers of 2006.

Michael Chong enjoyed a meteoric rise to the peak of Stephen Harper's government — then he shocked everyone by giving it all up on a matter of principle. Linda Hasenfratz quit a career selling pharmaceuticals and has worked her way to the top of Linamar Corp., a company that has almost single-handedly put Guelph on the auto parts map.

With 2007 around the corner, Chong adjusts — for now — to the quieter life as MP of his rural riding, while Hasenfratz sets her company on a course to become a global and ever-growing industry heavyweight.



Linda Hasenfratz rides high with Linamar's ongoing success

BY GREG MERCER
MERCURY STAFF

GUELPH

The first time Linda Hasenfratz visited the Royal Ontario Museum as a little girl, she was overwhelmed at the wealth of exhibits and promptly started hyperventilating.

"Happily, I've learned to control myself within the walls of the museum now," jokes the CEO of Guelph's biggest employer, Linamar Corporation.

But Hasenfratz hasn't forgotten the impression the ROM left on her as an excited child. This year, she and her husband Ed

Newton helped raise \$500,000 for the museum, and their charitable efforts subsidize ROM tickets for local school children.

"I think it's great we've found a way to help bring the museum to kids in Guelph," she said during an interview inside Linamar's Speedvale Avenue headquarters.

Kids in soccer also ought to thank the CEO. This year, Linamar again sponsored the local minor soccer league. And Hasenfratz again lent her name and chequebook to the Taste of Guelph, the garden party that raises money for Guelph's hospital foundations.

SEE HASENFRATZ: PAGE A3

No Mercury New Year's Day

The Guelph Mercury will not publish on Monday — New Year's Day.

Publication will resume on Tuesday, Jan. 2. The newsroom will be staffed and can be reached at 519-823-6060.

Council urged to ban body-gripping traps

Call comes after city woman's dog killed in trap near walking trail

BY SCOTT TRACEY
MERCURY STAFF

GUELPH

A national animal rights group will ask Guelph city councillors to ban body-gripping traps after a small dog was killed by one while walking with its owner earlier this month.

"The only way for this issue to be solved is for the municipality to say, 'We're not going to allow these traps,'" said Liz White, director of the Animal Alliance of Canada.

The organization opposes all types of trapping, but White is particularly concerned about

conibear-style traps. They are designed to immediately kill animals, but often succeed only in trapping them instead, leading to a slow, excruciating death.

That's what happened to Tara Szczygiel's Jack Russell terrier on Dec. 13.

Szczygiel had taken the dog, Harper, and her other dog, Hero, for a walk at the leash-free area off Kortright Road adjacent to the Hanlon Expressway.

Harper walked near a fence a few metres from the walking trail and stuck his head in the trap, which snapped around his neck.

Szczygiel was immediately drawn by the dog's howls, but



GUELPH MERCURY

This is the trap that killed a city woman's Jack Russell terrier Dec. 13.

could not free her pet, who gasped for air before dying in her arms.

Szczygiel said yesterday she was contacted by Karen Levenson, who lives in Guelph and works for Animal Alliance, proposing a letter-writing cam-

paign aimed at banning the traps within the city. Szczygiel, an avid dog lover who owns a local dog-training school, was immediately on-side.

"These traps are indiscriminate," she said. "Anything can get caught in these traps."

"If it gets caught on something you don't want it to, one person cannot get it off," Szczygiel said. "They are that strong."

Levenson was not available yesterday, but White said Animal Alliance has pushed for similar bans in several other municipalities with some success.

"I don't think urban areas are appropriate settings for those traps," White said. "They are not safe."

Bill Dowd couldn't agree more.

"You don't want one of those traps in an area where a child or a neighbourhood cat or pet could get in it," said the owner of Humane Wildlife Control.

"These are vicious, vicious devices."

SEE TRAPS: PAGE A2

INDEX

Arts & Leisure	C1	Faith	C7
Births-Deaths	D5	Here	E1
Books	C5	Horoscope	C4
Canada	A4	Opinions	A7
Classified	D1	Scoreboard	B4
Comics	C6	Sports	B1
Cryptoquote		Sudoku	D1
and Jumble	D2	Travel	F1
Editorials	A6	World	A5

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