



# GUELPH MERCURY

## The crack explosion

By DEIRDRE HEALEY  
MERCURY STAFF

**GUELPH**

He was 14 years old when he had his first hit of crack cocaine.

Less than a decade later, Craig McCue is one of hundreds of drug dealers who roam the city, thriving off Guelph's exploding crack problem.

"It's so easy to sell in this city," said McCue, 32. "People hang out downtown looking for the drug. They don't care if you are a cop or not. They want to get high. It goes on every day."

McCue was a Grade 9 student at Centennial high school when he was first introduced to the powerful drug.

Back then, crack was rare and very few people in his circle of friends had tried it, he said.

"Now it's everywhere." In the late 1990s police noticed crack starting to become a bigger problem in Guelph and in the last two years it has

taken over the city's drug world.

Smoking crack, which is a condensed version of cocaine powder, first began in the United States in the 1970s.

One way of making the potent rock-like drug is to cook the cocaine in ammonia. Cooking the cocaine down is a method originally developed so dealers could test the purity of the drug before buying it from the supplier. Now people smoke crack because of the drug's quick and powerful high.

The availability of crack and its highly addictive nature has made it more popular than almost any other type of drug currently circulating through Guelph.

It has invaded every neighbourhood, bringing with it a trail of violence and crime.

Today, the Guelph Mercury launches a five-part series on Guelph's crack epidemic and the players involved.

It all begins with the dealers, like McCue, who are opening the doors and ushering the

**TAKING THE HIT**  
A five-part series on Guelph's crack scourge

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**The Deal**  
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drug into the city. We will examine how the city's flourishing demand has attracted drug suppliers from nearby metropolitan areas. These gun-toting dealers are flocking to Guelph to exploit the market and ensure people like McCue are equipped with a steady stock.

Crack addicts, who are increasing in number exponentially every day, are the next link in the drug chain. They are living in all four corners of

the city and the drug has turned them into ticking bombs on the verge of a violent explosion.

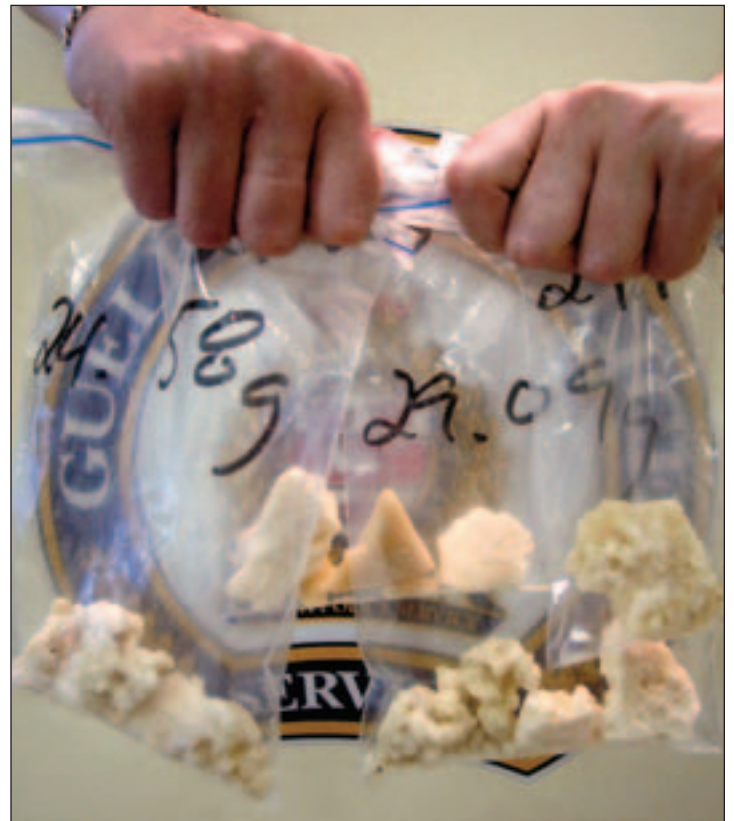
Then there are the police who are in a constant battle against these crack addicts venturing out on impulsive crime sprees to pay for their habit. We will look at how crack is eating up police resources and tearing away at the safety of the city. Suburbs have become hot spots for break-ins and every resident is viewed by crack addicts as a potential quick hit for cash.

Prostitution is the financial answer for some of the women in the drug world.

On Saturday, we will examine how women become wrapped up in the cycle of trading their bodies for a taste of the drug.

When crack hits a city, no one is left untouched, Guelph Police Chief Rob Davis said.

"It's not like any other drug. Crack does a lot more destruction to a city," he said. "It tears away the moral fibres of a community."



NATHAN DENETTE, GUELPH MERCURY  
More than \$12,000 worth of crack cocaine was confiscated by Guelph Police after a bust of several drug dealers this spring.

## Car sales hot this summer

By VIK KIRSCH  
MERCURY STAFF

**GUELPH**

Cars speeding off his dealership lot have created a bit of a dilemma for Mike Woods: more sales than supply.

"Some models we've run out of — which is a nice problem to have," Woods, vice-president of the Wellington Motors Chrysler, Jeep and Dodge dealership, said yesterday.

He's flat out of the sport utility Jeep Liberties, high-end Grand Caravan SXT minivans, and Town and Country luxury minivans.

"I just can't get any more. I'm trying," Woods said. "I think consumer demand just outstripped available supply. Those were just so hot that we ran out quicker than we thought we would," he said, adding the Daimler-Chrysler automaker is already turning its focus to this fall's 2006 model year.

A Statistics Canada report yesterday suggests that "incentives by new motor vehicle dealers helped boost sales" in June, particularly from the Big Three North American automakers, General Motors, Ford and Daimler-Chrysler, offering irresistible deals.

The incentives essentially give customers traditional employee discounts for vehicles they buy.

Discount pricing "really strikes a chord with Canadians," Woods said. "There's no better deal than that."

Summer weather, innovative designs, and sales incentives have all contributed to increased vehicle sales, Brian Osler, president of North American Automobile Trade Association, said yesterday.

"The big one seems to be employee discount pricing," said Osler, who is based out of Richmond Hill.

Countrywide sales shot up 5.8 per cent to 138,875 cars and light trucks this past June from the same month a year earlier, Statistics Canada reported.

Sales sped ahead even faster in July, powering ahead almost 17 per cent to 154,830 cars and trucks sold, compared to a year earlier, DesRosiers Automotive Consultants of Richmond Hill reported.

SEE CARS: PAGE A2

**BUCK-A-LITRE GAS IS HERE**

**PETRO-CANADA**

Self 105.9

WELLINGTON ST E

SCOTT TRACEY, GUELPH MERCURY  
Buck-a-litre gas hit the Royal City yesterday. This Petro Canada station on Wellington Street was selling regular gasoline for 90.9 cents a litre in the morning, but by early afternoon had motorists turning their heads as the sign out front advertised 105.9 cents per litre.

## Cousin convicted of sexual assault

By SCOTT TRACEY  
MERCURY STAFF

**GUELPH**

A teen hung his head and wept in court yesterday as a judge found him guilty of drugging and then sexually assaulting his female cousin.

"The circumstantial evidence in this case is overpowering," Justice Norman Douglas said in convicting the Guelph-area 16-year-old for sexual assault and administering a stupefying substance.

During a trial last week, court heard the accused admitted to his grandmother — who is also the victim's grandmother — that he slipped two sleeping pills into his 15-year-old cousin's juice during a sleep-over at the boy's home in March.

The boy, who cannot be identified because of his age, denied inappropriately touching the girl.

The victim, now 16, told court she noticed blue powder in the bottom of her cup and asked the accused what it was. She said the boy told her there must have been something in the cup before he poured in the juice, but four days later admitted putting the pills in her drink.

"The question is begged, Why?" the judge asked. "Why did he give her those pills?"

"Why does a male person sneak drugs into a female person's drink, and then lie about what he's done to overcome her suspicions?" Douglas continued.

"His intent, and not spur of the moment, was to sexually assault her."

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