

Guelph Mercury **wednesday**

May 13, 2009 • Serving Guelph and Wellington County • 71 cents + tax (75 cents) • guelphmercury.com

A sick boy's guardian angel



TONY SAXON, GUELPH MERCURY

Although far from his home in Sierra Leone, Foday can't stop smiling, say Liz and Steven Peloso of Guelph, who are looking after the five-year-old while he's in Canada for life-saving help from the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

Tony Saxon
tsaxon@guelphmercury.com

GUELPH — Five-year-old Foday sits in the Guelph living room of the Peloso family without a care in the world, his smile igniting others.

He is days removed from his West African home, separated from virtually all he knows and loves. He is fed or feeds himself through a tube in his stomach and hasn't eaten solid food in 18 months.

Today he will undergo potentially life-saving surgery in Toronto.

Yet the five-year-old boy doesn't stop smiling.

"He understands as much as he can

When Liz Peloso met Foday, he faced near certain death in Sierra Leone after consuming a caustic cleaner he thought was a drink. Soon Peloso was helping the five-year-old get life-saving surgery here.

understand, considering how new every single thing is here," said Liz Peloso, who met Foday at a northern Sierra Leone hospital while doing volunteer work last fall.

"He understands he is going to have an operation, that he will be sore afterwards and that afterwards he will be able to eat by his mouth."

Hospital for Sick Children surgeon Dr. Jack Langer will take a piece of the boy's stomach, sew together a new esophagus, then bring it up inside Foday's body and connect it to the remaining inch of his esophagus that wasn't destroyed a year and a half ago when he drank a cleaning chemical.

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"We are determined that we will react quickly, that we will find a way to turn this situation into an opportunity."

Linda Hasenfratz,
Linamar chief executive

Linamar poised for growth while other auto suppliers fall

Rob O'Flanagan
roflanagan@guelphmercury.com

GUELPH — Linamar should be a larger, stronger and richer company in the near future, company officials indicated yesterday, as the automotive parts, industrial equipment and consumer products manufacturer positions itself to grow while other suppliers collapse.

Following one of the worst years in automotive history, Linamar officials said the Guelph-based company has taken drastic steps over the past several months to cut costs, reduce its workforce by over 40 per cent, and chase billions in new business.

Company chief executive Linda Hasenfratz, speaking during the annual shareholders meeting — which was held in the company's new technology centre on Woodlawn Road — said roughly 30 per cent of North American automotive suppliers are in extreme financial distress and face "imminent bankruptcy," while another 30 per cent are expected to be in the same position by year's end.

Hasenfratz said analysts' reports indicate that 41 per cent of these suppliers are currently unable to pay their debts and are in violation of bank covenants — a percentage that is predicted to grow to 59 per cent by the end of 2009.

Enter Linamar:

"Someone needs to take over that business," Hasenfratz said, speaking of one of the central components of Linamar's ambitious growth strategy.

In no danger of defaulting on its debts, with a much leaner workforce, and with a more diversified product line and customer base than most suppliers, Linamar could scoop up close to \$1 billion in new business by the end of the year, Jim Jarrell, chief operating officer, said to about 75 shareholders.

The company has already garnered \$300 million in new business. About \$100 million of that new business will go into production this year.

► SEE LINAMAR ON PAGE A5

OPINION

Instead of stewing about squirrels, make squirrel stew

It's time for a squirrel cull. There, I said it.

For too long, those pests have grown fat on our gardens, our garbage and our bird feeders. There is nothing majestic about these oversized rats with their Phil Spector tails.

They are like hairy, small, clawed teenaged boys — once they find out where the food is, they don't let up.

Here's three reasons for a squirrel cull right off the bat:

- 1) We are bigger than them.
- 2) Man always one-ups nature. Need proof? Nature made the apple, but it took man to figure out a way to coat it in candy. Take that, nature.
- 3) Squirrels would harm you



GREG MERCER
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and everyone you care about if they had the chance.

In the eyes of our local governments, rats are vermin. The owner of a property infested with them can be ordered to clean it

up, or pay to have the municipality clean them out. Fines in Ontario range from \$100 for a first offence up to \$25,000.

But squirrels? Oh no, they get a free ride.

They go on terrorizing humans, like my poor brother, up



GUELPH MERCURY FILE PHOTO

A squirrel eats a french fry atop a garbage bin in Royal City Park. Squirrels have outlived their welcome, columnist Greg Mercer writes.

from the squirrel-deprived east coast, who jumps at the site of a "cat" that has just climbed up four storeys to perch on a balcony. That is no cat, though, but the well-fed Eastern grey squirrel.

Seems every year there's more, digging up freshly-planted bulbs, shredding garbage bags placed at the curb, and plotting.

Always watching and plotting.
► SEE MERCER ON PAGE A2

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Multimedia: Robot on Earth controlled on a space station

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A LOOK AT TOMORROW'S WEATHER
FULL FORECAST, PAGE A2

high: 17 low: 7



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