

# Neighbours demand clean-up of Peel St. 'eyesore'

By Frances Niblock

Watched by frustrated neighbours who called a Global Television news crew to film the event, a man in a hazardous materials suit and respirator took swabs and air samples, checking for toxic mold from two storage bins on the front lawn of a Peel Street house last Thursday morning.

The property, owned by Marion Gordon, who lives in a Guelph nursing home, is under control of the Of-

fice of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPG) that hired TraumaCare Cleaning Services to clean the property and to search for valuables belonging to Marion Gordon.

TraumaCare general manager Michael Maedel said there is no health danger because the bins are sealed.

"We don't know what we're dealing with — once we know, then we'll know how to protect not only the people that will be working here and the residents, but

the general community as well," Maedel said, adding the test results should be available within a week.

Neighbour Lori Cunningham said Marion Gordon's daughter Nancy Gordon regularly stays at the house, which has no heat, water or electricity, and also takes things from the bins.

Gordon lived in a tent on the front lawn during the summer and her porta-potty sits on the driveway, another eyesore the neighbours want removed.

As the crew finished the testing and put new locks on the bin doors, Regional Ward 1/2 Councillor Clark Somerville drove by and stopped to see what was happening.

He quickly denied the neighbours' contention — put to him by the Global reporter — that the Town had dragged its feet to resolve the long standing issues surrounding the derelict property.

"I can't tell you about the number of meetings that I've been at with the Town, the Region, with staff and



**ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING:** Halton police, a locksmith and staff from TraumaCare Cleaning Service were at the Peel Street home of former Acton resident Marion Gordon last Thursday to test two storage bins on the front lawn for mold. — Frances Niblock photo

with the police to see what we can do to try to resolve this situation, so there has been a lot of stuff done, but to say the Town bylaw enforcement officers have dragged their feet is not true," Somerville said, adding they are constrained by the other various levels of government, including the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee.

"Do I like to see this? Would I like to see this gone tomorrow? Absolutely. But, we still have to follow the proper process," Somerville said.

Neighbour Cunningham, who helped Nancy Gordon remove 15 dumpsters of garbage from the home during the summer, says the bins have been sitting illegally on the property since June 12.

"The Town ordered her to remove the bins by October 3 and they are still there. How long are we supposed

to put up with this?" Cunningham said on Sunday, adding she is tired of people saying "leave it me, I'll get back to you."

"This has dragged on long enough and we want the bins and the porta-potty gone. I went to Global (Television) not to hurt Nancy (Gordon), but to look out for the best interest of our community," Cunningham said, adding if there is toxic mold in the material in the bins and house, Gordon is spreading it all over Acton.

On Tuesday, Ron Stein, the Town's municipal bylaw enforcement officer, said the house was tested on October 12 and it took until October 19 to get keys to open the storage bins to do the testing order by the OPG.

"The reason we held off doing any enforcement with respect to the (bin removal) order was because the Public Guardian and Trustee asked us to not do anything

until they had an opportunity to search those bins," Stein said.

The bins were moved back several feet to make it safer for neighbours when pulling out of their driveways, and Stein said a reassessment of the order relating to the bin removal showed that although they are still on Town property, they do not "encumber, foul or injure the highway" and so are not in violation of a Town bylaw.

Stein said he would call the OPG and request a meeting to find out when the test results would be available and what it intends to do about the bins and the porta-potty.

Stein said the Town has taken into consideration the "unusual" circumstances of this case.

"You have to care a little about people also. We've done and quite frankly we're prepared to do something, but if it a violation of our zoning bylaw, I have to go to court and I can't begin to tell you how long that's going to take," Stein said adding he wouldn't expect a trial date until March on a charge of illegal storage.



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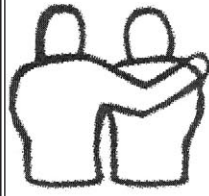
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