

# Alachlor is not threat

by KATY AUSTIN  
A cancer-causing herbicide found at unacceptably high levels in several wells in southern Ontario does not pose a threat to people in the Elmvale area.

Neil Embree, from the Ministry of the Environment in Barrie, said Friday that the well serving Elmvale residents will not be among the seven chosen in Simcoe County for testing of alachlor levels this summer. Surveys among farm supply stores are not using the herbicide extensively.

Alachlor, used to kill weeds in corn and soybean fields, was shown as early as 1983 to cause cancer in

laboratory rats and mice. Health officials soon recommended a permanent ban on its use. But Agriculture Canada was reluctant to impose a ban, saying it would be inconvenient and costly to farmers. Last winter, however, the agriculture department put tighter restrictions on the use of alachlor. There is speculation that it may be banned by next spring.

The provincial Ministry of the Environment tested 175 wells across southern Ontario this spring and found unsafe levels of the herbicide in three wells in Middlesex County, and in one well in each Essex, Lamb-

ton, Simcoe and Prince Edward Counties.

Embree explained that alachlor can be removed from the water with activated carbon. In the meantime, the ministry is supplying or paving for

alternate supplies of drinking water for people those wells are affected. In Innisfil Township, the Ministry will probably pay for a new well or cistern for one family.

Clint Nesbitt,

Agricultural Representative in Elmvale, explained Friday that local farmers use little alachlor partly because they grow less soybeans than farmers further south. There are more herbicides to use with corn than with soybeans. Nesbitt added that another reason may be that

many farmers today are aware at an early date of the dangers of modern chemicals and respond quickly to the information.

Groups on both sides of the chemical controversy are calling on the government to do more research into the potential hazards of herbicides. In Prince Edward County, the Women's Institute wants a provincial investigation into what it says is a dramatic increase in cancer in the area. Monsanto Canada Ltd., which produces alachlor under the trade name Lasso, believes that its product is safe if used according to directions on the label. Local farm supplier, Stan Ritchie, said

Sunday, he agreed with Monsanto.

The federal government has agreed to the company's request for an independent public review of the safety of alachlor.

Harold Boker used Lasso as recently as five years ago on his large farming operation near Elmvale. Since then, he has switched to organic methods of farming, abandoning the use of all chemical herbicides, pesticides or fertilizers. He has seen in that time a 90 percent decrease in his veterinary bills. "My animals," says Boker, "are telling me something about the feed I grow for them."



## Pulling down the shades

Midland Sidewalk Sale last week was not without its characters including this fellow who modelled a few glasses for our photographer.



## Georgian College graduate

At the June 15 convocation ceremonies, Suzanne Copeland received her diploma, Tourism Management (Marketing, Planning and Development) after successfully completing a three year School of Tourism and Hospitality Tourism Management Program. Suzanne's

name was placed on the College's Dean's List. She also was the recipient student of the Seagram's Hospitality Award and of Georgian College's Faculty Association Award for her distinguished academic achievement.



## Graduates

Julie Ann LeClair, daughter of Pat and Jackie LeClair of Midland, graduated June 21st from the Flight Services course

at Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology in King City. Julie will be joining Marlin Travel August 1st.

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