



Yvano Antonio /// The Observer

Riders on the storm

East Yorkers Michael and Luka Marrelli (l-r) are ready to conquer Riverdale Hill. The boys and their father, Tony Marrelli, took advantage of Wednesday's wintry conditions to enjoy some family time. Story on page 8.

Sweet valley high

Aerial gondola would give riders a bird's eye view of the Don Valley

By COLIN EDWARDS
The Observer

A public meeting this coming Tuesday should shed more light on a dramatic proposal to run a private cable car line into the sky between Danforth Avenue and the Evergreen Brick Works site on Bayview Avenue. The March 8 meeting is scheduled for 7-9 p.m. at Estonian House, 958 Broadview Ave., just south of Mortimer Avenue.

The aerial gondola idea first came to light about two weeks ago. A private company called Bullwheel International Cable Car Corp. publicly announced it, saying it would cost between \$20 million and \$25 million to install — with no public money being involved.

The idea is for cable cars that would carry residents and tourists over the Don Valley for the picturesque perspective — and for a fee that would ultimately turn a profit for the operators.

"Torontonians love to see the fall leaves and I think there is no better way to see them than an aerial view," said Manissa Patel, a director at Evergreen, which bills itself as a community environmental centre.

Patel said Bullwheel first contacted Evergreen about three years ago.

"When it first came across my desk, it sounded a little crazy and absurd," Patel said. But she added that she now thinks the cable car line would be a unique and interesting form of recreational transportation for the city.

"It's not entirely about bringing people to Evergreen Brick Works, but it's about exposing people to nature and some amazing sustainable ways of getting around in the city," she said.

Bullwheel says it hopes to reconnect residents and visitors of the city with Toronto's ravine heritage.

"The cable car should encourage locals and visitors to reconnect with one of the largest natural urban areas in the world," the company says in a statement on its website.

The city councillor for Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth, Mary Fragedakis,

■ See WANT, page 8

MP leads right-to-die talks

By ADAM DARRAH
The Observer

Should terminally ill minors have the right to die? What about those suffering from mental illness?

According to Don Valley West MP Rob Oliphant and the Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying, the answer is yes.

On Feb. 25, the committee, comprised of a mix of MPs and senators, tabled its report,

"Medical Assistance in Dying: A Patient Centered Approach," which included 21 recommendations for developing legislation pertaining to physician-assisted death in Canada.

Among the recommendations were those to allow "competent mature minors" — persons under the age of 18 — and those suffering from incurable mental illness the right to request a doctor's help to die.

"When we look at the issue of age, we have to balance the right of ensuring capacity from a

younger person and at the same time, safeguard their right if they have intolerable suffering," Oliphant said.

Oliphant, who co-chaired the committee, says members of the panel heard from 61 witnesses and received over 120 reports.

In drafting their recommendations, they considered input from a variety of faith, patient advocacy and disability-based groups, as well

■ See RIGHT, page 2

City worker trashes snow-bylaw busters



Jordan Clarke /// The Observer

Waste management collector Henry Mullet works his East York route after Toronto's biggest snowstorm of the year.

By JORDAN CLARKE
and JESSICA McDONALD
The Observer

Henry Mullet was doing his job, but he says city residents were not doing theirs.

"It's been a good winter so far," Mullet said, "until last night."

Mullet was speaking on Wednesday, right after the biggest snowfall this year. According to Environment Canada, the storm dumped 9.4 cm starting Tuesday night. So Mullet, who is a waste management collector with 27 years' experience as a city worker, had more obstacles than usual on his route through East York on Wednesday.

"When you turn up the street

here... (there's been) no shovelling at all," Mullet said as he made his way down Ferrier Avenue, just north of Danforth between Broadview and Pape avenues.

The Toronto Municipal Code states that homeowners must clear their street sidewalks of snow within 12 hours and not shovel it into city streets. If a bylaw officer spots the offence, the homeowner can receive a fine of up to \$360.

"It slows us down," Mullet said.

He added that snow accumulation is the worst weather condition to work in. Waste disposal trucks not only have to navigate past snowbanks and garbage bins, but also parked vehicles.

POLICE & FIRE

Arrest made in 1989 cold case

The attempted murder of a cabbie in East York has resulted in an arrest — more than 26 years later. On Oct. 28, 1989, a taxi driver was badly beaten by two men and a woman whom he had driven to the area of Dawes Road and Park Vista Drive, adjacent to the Crescent Town complex at East York's southeast corner. The cabbie was permanently disabled as a result of the attack. This year, on Feb. 13, a tip from the public resulted in a woman being charged with the crime. Dale Doherty, 60, of Toronto, will appear in court at College Park on March 21. Anyone with more information is asked to call the police at 416-808-5400 or Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-TIPS (8477).

Man wounded in stabbing at Thorncliffe Park

A man was arrested on Feb. 24 after another man was badly wounded in a stabbing four days earlier at 71 Thorncliffe Park Dr. The victim was knifed in an apartment at the building and was initially described as being in critical condition in hospital. His status has since been upgraded. Maverick Lavina, 26, of Toronto, appeared in court on the day of his arrest, on four charges. Police say they are also seeking two other men.

~ Colin Edwards



Photo courtesy of Jason Ramsay-Brown

East York's Taylor Creek Park is one of the ravines mentioned in author Jason Ramsay-Brown's book, *Toronto's Ravines and Urban Forests*.

Preserving local ravines

Author says 'urban wild' provides shelter to animals, improves human health

By ASHLEY BRUZAS
The Observer

The ecological history of Toronto often gets lost beneath the towering infrastructure that makes up the spectacular skyline.

With the help of the Toronto Field Naturalists, the city is working on a 50-year plan to preserve ravines and forests. Exploring the impact of climate change, a growing population and the function of urban cities, the effort highlights the importance of responsible use.

"When most people think about our ravines, it's the wilderness that they imagine; an urban wild," says Jason Ramsay-Brown.

Ramsay-Brown is the author of a book called *Toronto's Ravines and Urban Forests*. He spoke about it at the East York Historical Society meeting on Wednesday

at the S. Walter Stewart library branch in East York.

The urban wild he describes shelters creatures and improves health through purification, all while providing recreational activities and economic benefits for the public.

"These ravines have captured and preserved the stories and relics of human history going back thousands of years," Ramsay-Brown told the meeting. "In many ways, they are our largest open-air museum."

East York is home to Taylor Creek Park, named after the Taylor family who shaped the area through connections with the brick works and Todmorden Mills.

"Around 1882, William Taylor was digging holes for fence posts when he realized the area was virtually all clay," Ramsay-Brown said. This high-quality clay established the Don Valley Brick Works that "went on to win 'Best Bricks' at the Toronto Industrial Fair of 1894."

Born in East York, Ramsay-Brown lives on Queensdale Avenue with his wife and three children. His motivation

to explore Toronto's ravines and forests began at a young age, leading to his involvement in stewardship activities in the community. From tree-planting, trail-maintenance and weeding of invasive species, Ramsay-Brown works alongside a small group to bring an ecological focus to Toronto's natural history and civic identity.

Archaeological digs excavated along West Highland Creek unearthed more than 19,000 artifacts, dating as far back as 4700 BC. Gates Gully and the Scarborough Bluffs tell stories of First Nations and cargo-smuggling in the late 1830s. European oaks from France's Vimy Ridge are planted near McNicoll Avenue and Kennedy Road.

Due to industrialization, "90 per cent of wetlands are now gone," Ramsay-Brown said. But he added that by educating the public on wildlife preservation, there's opportunity to reverse the damage.

"From a cultural perspective, we have to explore the new balance of nature and the convenience of modern technologies."

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DEATH

Right-to-die panel tables report

'We are ensuring... that every Canadian has equal protection,' Oliphant says

Cont'd. from page 1

as healthcare professionals, academics, and legislative frameworks already in place in Quebec, the United States and Europe.

The NDP has expressed its support of the report. Conservative MPs, however, questioned the committee's recommendation to extend the right to minors, the lack of safeguards in place to protect mentally ill persons and the issue of physicians who refuse to administer the procedure.

"If an individual with a mental illness does not have the capacity to buy a cell phone contract, how can they be deemed to have capacity to decide to end their life prematurely?" Conserva-



■ ROB OLIPHANT

tive MP Mark Warawa asked.

Toronto-Danforth MP Julie Dabrusin, however, believes that the report adequately addressed these concerns.

"At the heart of our work was to set guidelines that would give access to this constitutional right, create safeguards to protect vulnerable people and respect the conscientious objection of some

medical practitioners," Dabrusin said.

The report comes one year after the Supreme Court's decision in the *Carter v. Canada* case, which ruled section 14 and paragraph 241(b) of the Criminal Code unconstitutional, as they infringe upon a person's right to a consensual death in instances of intolerable suffering.

The federal government has until June 6, 2016 to draft legislation using the recommendations outlined by the committee, and will have to find a way to grapple with these contentious issues going forward.

"There wasn't a day when we were listening to testimony or a moment when we were writing the report that the needs of the vulnerable were not foremost in our minds," Oliphant said.

"We are ensuring that a system is in place and that every Canadian has equal access, and that every Canadian has equal protection."

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

No guff veggie gardening tips on the agenda at E.Y. meeting

The Leaside Garden Society will hold a regular meeting this coming Thursday, March 10, at 7:30 p.m. in the Leaside library branch at 165 McRae Dr. The guest speaker will be Steven Biggs, the co-author of the Canadian bestseller *No Guff Vegetable Gardening*. The meeting will also feature a "Winter Mini-Show." Arrive early for refreshments before the meeting starts.

Make your own mini-jar pendant at the library

The S. Walter Stewart library branch at 170 Memorial Park Ave. is hosting the Get Inspired Workshop on Friday, March 18 at 2 p.m. Youths aged 11 to 18 can learn how to make a mini-jar pendant. Supplies are provided. To register, call 416-396-3975.

If you're good at the three Rs, this is the job for you

The East York Learning Experience is looking for volunteers to help adults with their reading, writing or math skills. They need volunteers from East York who can give two hours a week. Training is provided. To get involved, call 416-425-2666.

~ Rose Hetherington

East Yorkers create a hub for Syrian refugees

By MELISHA RATNARAJAH
The Observer

It was September. The image of Alan Kurdi, the little Syrian boy whose body washed up on a beach, was making global headlines. The image became a symbol for the millions of Syrians who were making desperate attempts to escape their homeland — and for eight new mothers across East York and the rest of the city's east end, the image struck a chord. They decided that something had to be done, and after an impromptu post on Facebook, East Toronto Families for Syria (ETF4S) came to life.

The eight women didn't know each other before the formation of ETF4S. It was their desire to help Syrian refugees that led them to each other.

"When we saw images of children washing ashore, trying to flee and get to safe a place, it really touched a chord. We were all new mothers," said Jennifer Scott, one of the eight founders of the group. "We made a Facebook group together saying there must be something we can do.... We ended up having a meeting and that's how the organization was born."

The eight of them decided to gather donations in their homes — until they realized they needed a lot more space.

"We initially were looking for storage space, maybe even a locker, but when we were given 'The Hub,' we realized that we had a unique opportunity," Scott said. "We needed to make it more than just a pickup space."

The Hub is a store at 1803 Danforth Ave., between Coxwell and Woodbine avenues. It was donated to ETF4S by Remax Hallmark Realty and the Danforth East Community Association. It has functions that go beyond being a thrift store. It's a place where sponsors, donors, and refugees can come and connect.

"The kind of thing we want to encourage is for people to feel like they can come, not only when they need something to help them, but also a place where people can feel comfortable and safe and ask questions, mingle and just engage and get support," Scott said.

Often, sponsors will bring their families in so they can choose the items they need. Whether it may be food, cooking supplies, clothes, toiletries and so on, they're given the ability to pick up the



File photo from Fotolia

Syrian refugees are warmly welcomed by East Toronto Families for Syria. The group has grown to 800 people.

items for free.

"One of the elements we really enjoy is having families choose what items they want," Scott said. "The difference between a blue cup and red cup might not mean something to us, but when everything is being given to you, the ability to choose amongst things is big. I think it restores dignity to the process for a lot of people."

The group encourages the community to drop off even non-essential items. Things like makeup, nail polish and razors may not be necessities of life, but Scott said they help individuals feel "human again":

"I can't speak for every family and individual, but what I can say is, to come from a place where you once were thriving, to then have your country torn apart and then to go live in a refugee camp, where items are being rationed... you're helpless to a large extent," she said. "After all of that, you'd think anyone in those situations would

feel like a crucial part of their humanity has been taken away. To even have the little things now allows them to feel comfortable again. The ability to cook for your family... all of these things I think contribute to an overall feeling of being hopeful."

The group, which began with only eight women, has grown to 800 people, which includes sponsors, volunteers and refugee families who are already giving back to the community.

"We have some people who have been here for two months or so. We had one woman who came with her husband and her two children and she's been there every weekend for the past three weekends, helping us sort and translate," Scott said. "That's the kind of activity we want to encourage. Her English in that period of three weeks has improved immensely. Her children have played with my children and interacted with other families. It's been fantastic to see that and

she really enjoys it."

All eight women have found the experience since September challenging, but worth it. All eight have children under the age of two and are working full-time jobs, like banking, engineering and teaching. Juggling the responsibilities of being a mother, working full-time, and now helping to run The Hub have proved to be challenging.

"It's difficult," Scott said. "We all feel tired but we all have really big hearts. We want to do as much as we possibly can. Mothers often multitask and time-manage. We do what we can to make it work."

And they credit the broader community for the success of The Hub.

"Without the community, we wouldn't exist," Scott said. "Yes, the eight of us are facilitating the space, but we couldn't do what we've done without the community."

A therapeutic experience for the Leaside Garden Society

By CARMEN TORTORELLI
The Observer

The members of the Leaside Garden Society who attended the regular February meeting got confirmation of what many gardeners already suspect: that gardening is therapeutic.

Guest speaker Margaret Nevett spoke about the history and usage of horticultural therapy.

Nevett, a registered horticultural therapist, said that the therapy is based on the connection between plants and people. She said that it can be used to improve physical and mental health.

The history of horticultural therapy goes back to the late 18th century, with Benjamin Rush. According to Nevett, Rush noticed that patients at mental health institutions made significantly more progress in their recovery when gardening, compared to those who did not garden.

After the Second World War, horticultural therapy became recognized as its own profession. Nevett said that horticultural therapy was even used as a rehabilitative program for veterans.

As for her own experience, "my dad was a gardener in our house, so I think I've always been a gardener. In my 40s, I finally had a backyard that I could garden in," Nevett said. But, she added, "I didn't know enough. I wish I paid more attention when I was a kid. I started taking courses at the University of Guelph and through the horticulture society, I found out that master gardeners use the same courses that I was taking. I joined



Carmen Tortorelli // The Observer

Margaret Nevett, guest speaker for the Leaside Garden Society, talked about the use of horticultural therapy to improve mental health.

Master Gardeners. It changed my life."

Master Gardeners is a non-profit organization of volunteer experts in gardening. And how did reaching that level of expertise change Nevett's life?

"Even when I worked in television production, I wanted to make a gardening show," she said,

and with the opportunity to do that, "I think the social aspect of sharing knowledge with the public is really cool."

She added that an advantage of gardening is that it's simple to take up:

"We don't need to know a lot to get started. We're meant to do it. Once you start studying it,

you realize that you can never know it all. So it's a field of study that's so expansive but easy to get started."

Rosea Lonsdale is a member of the Leaside Garden Society. Lonsdale has an indoor garden that she said is about the size of the table she was sitting at during the meeting. That garden in her kitchen contains orchids and plants that used to be in an outdoor garden.

"This is fantastic," said Lonsdale, when she was asked about her thoughts on horticultural therapy. "To give you an idea: When my kids were teenagers, sometimes I would get a bit stropky, with telling them what to do. Once my child said to me, 'Mom, why don't you go and talk to your flowers for a while?' Even at 13, she could tell that working in the garden was doing something for me. I don't know if I noticed consciously, but I know I wanted to garden and it was pleasing."

Lonsdale's joy from gardening is seeing plants bloom.

"This is the bloom that will give you fruits, tomatoes, beans and everything else," she said. "First thing I learned was when you plant runner beans, you get gorgeous red flowers and then you get beans, double. It covers the wall and it's fantastic."

Nevett said horticultural therapy courses should be more widely available. Right now, she noted, there's only one certificate-level program in all of Ontario.

Technician retires after 47 years

By JUSTIN VIEIRA
The Observer

When audio-visual technician Al Bennett first began working at Centennial College's Warden Woods campus, digital technology didn't exist and black and white video was just starting to be used in most colleges. Almost half a century later, and technology sure isn't what it used to be.

"Oh, it's insane if you think about it," Bennett said, talking about the changes in technology over the years.

Now, at the age of 67, Bennett has decided to call it a career after a 47-year tenure with the college. He could have done so 15 years ago, he said, but he enjoyed his job so much that he knew he wasn't ready to sign off.

"I figured I loved what I was doing, so I just stayed," he laughed.

"They didn't want to give me the job in the first place because they thought I was overqualified and wouldn't stay for long. Guess they were wrong on both counts."

Bennett has always believed that his job was unlike any other. He cherished the fact that there wasn't a single day that was the same; every day was different.

"It was almost like a dream job for me. That's why I stayed," he said. "I was having so much fun. I was learning new stuff and with that job it was great because with some jobs, it's always the same thing day after day. I couldn't do that; it would drive me nuts."

For the past six years, Bennett had been working at Centennial's Carlaw Avenue campus in East York. In his early days at the Warden Woods campus, which has since been demolished, he was the drummer in a band. In fact, one of the other technicians he worked with was his bass player.

"While we were playing in the band full time, we were also working full time," Bennett said. "I hadn't planned on staying that long depending on how the band did."

Campus Dean Nate Horowitz and Bennett go back a long way. At one point in their careers, the two had something in common. They both worked in the audio-visual department.

"He's a great guy. I know he's very proud of the years he's been here and the contributions he's made to the college," Horowitz said.

Upon retiring, Bennett chose to leave quietly without a reception and requested that donations be made to the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in memory of his late wife and his brother, who both died of cancer.

When asked what he'll miss most about working at Centennial, Bennett only had one answer in mind.

"People," he said without hesitating. "You're seeing people all day, helping them with what they need and seeing the smiles on their faces when you're done. That was the neat part about the job."



■ BENNETT



Sanjeev Wignarajah /// The Observer

Museum-goers can experience time travel to the Ottoman Empire through a new exhibit at the Aga Khan Museum on Wynford Drive. The exhibition of images and artifacts runs Tuesday through Sunday until June 26.

Istanbul then and now at Aga Khan

By UMMEMA CHUTANI
The Observer

The Aga Khan Museum's new exhibit, *A City Transformed: Images of Istanbul Then and Now*, promises a time-travelling adventure to the heart of the old Ottoman Empire.

The museum of Islamic history at 77 Wynford Dr. recently acquired rare and historic pieces that show portraits of Constantinople, which was once the capital of the Byzantine Empire. The images are juxtaposed with ones of 19th century Istanbul.

According to curator Dr. Filiz Cakir Phillip, the exhibit was created in collaboration with the private gallery of Turkey's wealthiest businessman, Omer M. Koc.

The mounting of the exhibition has been in negotiations almost since the Aga Khan Museum opened in 2014.

One of the exhibits in *A City Transformed* is called *Murat Germen*.

It features the work of a photographer who corresponded from Istanbul, where he captured the city's urban transformation into a modern metropolis.

In a city as multicultural as Toronto, Phillip said he thinks it's important for the Aga Khan Museum to signify Istanbul — because it represents Islamic history and culture so intricately.

"Istanbul is important to us because it is a city where the East intertwines with the West," Phillip said.

"It is the Muslim gateway to the Western world."

The exhibition runs Tuesday through Sunday at the museum. It is on display now and until June 26.

Commuters wish Line 1 a happy birthday

By MELISHA RATNARAJAH
The Observer

Cold temperatures and a threatening sky didn't stop people from marking last week's golden anniversary of the Bloor-Danforth subway line in a celebration at Chester station along East York's southern border.

Commuters paused in their afternoon rush-hour travels on Feb. 25 to observe the 50th birthday of what's now called Line 1.

The Bloor-Danforth subway line opened on Feb. 25, 1966, and Moe Angelos, one of the volunteers who run the so-called artists' newsstand at Chester station, decided the anniversary had to be celebrated.

"The Toronto subway system is amazing and I think it is very under-appreciated," Angelos said.

"I know everybody loves to complain about the subways but you know, they're sort of like our little companions that we have to go with every single day. Sometimes they fail us, just like friends, but it is there, it is reliable, it will get you around this town."

Her newsstand is a kiosk at Chester station that used to be vacant, but that was adopted last spring by a collective of artists who now sell traditional

newsstand fare from it — along with quirky arts and crafts.

Angelos, who is an actress, was dressed as a "humble newsie" for the occasion, sporting a '60s polyester orange suit as she educated commuters with a performance-history lesson about the Bloor line.

As she performed, another member of the newsstand collective, Nelinda Antiga, stood by her side, wearing a white dress that she had decorated with TTC Metropasses she's collected since 1997.

"I wore this during Halloween," Antiga said. "Everybody liked it and they said 'Go to the station today.' I came down today to show off what I got."

Angelos and about 20 other volunteers helped organize the party. The celebration kicked off at four in the afternoon. It included music from DJ Nick, helium balloons for young passers-by and cake for everyone. Artist Jackie Lee refashioned the newsstand as a piñata for the party, and Dainty Box performed a PG-rated burlesque.

As Angelos finished her history lesson, she joked about being an amateur subway enthusiast, and repeated that Torontonians should take pride in the TTC and its stations, much like those in New York City, Paris and London.



Andrew Holland /// The Observer

Eliza McKenzie, 3, poses with Nelinda Antiga during an event at the Chester TTC station celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Bloor-Danforth subway line.

Program designed to heal hospital's own

Staff at Michael Garron get a helping hand with mental health issues

By **BRADLEY DOBSON**
The Observer

It's what an average day looks like when Laura Istanboulian goes to work.

"You could be assisting a patient who is suffering from delusions, and in the bed beside you another patient is dying," she said.

"You have phones ringing off the hook, and might not even have eaten lunch that day."

Istanboulian works as a nurse practitioner in the Acute Respiratory Unit at Michael Garron Hospital (formerly Toronto East General). Because of the demands that hospital staff face, Istanboulian said she feels caught between two stressful forces.

"The problem is we're dealing with our own mental wellness, and at the same time we're dealing with another human being," she said.

At MGH, it's Christine Devine's



Bradley Dobson // The Observer

Staff members take part in a meditation session at Michael Garron Hospital.

job to spot when staff members, such as Istanboulian, are buckling under the strain.

"These workers can suffer from what we call compassion fatigue or a burnout. It's when staff are working long hours, and neglecting their own

needs and sleep," she said.

In 2004, MGH implemented a program to help raise awareness of mental health in the workplace. The program helps hospital colleagues discuss strategies to end the stigma around mental health and provide as-

sistance in creating a work environment that is free of that stigma.

"Stigma is hugely prominent in the health-care industry," Devine said. "People sometimes brush it off and think that health-care workers should be able to handle it and realize what

they've gotten into."

The wellness program offers meditation, group therapy, and it utilizes social media to help staff members cope with their own mental health. Devine and Istanboulian agree that hospital workers may already live with mental health issues, and in a bigger lens, their work environment is stressful by nature.

"A lot of the time the jobs of first responders and health care professionals can be incredibly unpredictable," Devine said. "There's a high risk for trauma."

While providing medical services for close to 90 years, MGH is also only one of three organizations in Canada to be awarded Excellence Canada's Mental Health at Work Award at a platinum level.

Despite this achievement, Devine believes there's more work to be done.

"By 2020, one in eight Canadians will suffer from a mental health disorder," she said. "We need institutions to go beyond saying, 'We have a gym. That's enough,' and focus on more solutions."

Journalist critical of 'red-boot multiculturalism'



Renee Allen // The Observer

Hamlin Grange spoke to college students in East York.

Hamlin Grange stresses importance of digging deeper into race, culture

By **RENEE ALLEN**
The Observer

At first, the racial slur his former boss made about him didn't bother him. It had been 17 years since Hamlin Grange had worked with him at the Toronto Star. That's when another working colleague, John Miller, told him about the derogatory remark.

"My wife knew something (had) changed inside me," Grange said. "She said I looked vulnerable, as if I'd lost something.... She was right."

This was a defining moment in

Grange's career. He went on to report and anchor on Global TV and CBC TV, and eventually to co-create DiversiPro Inc., a company dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion.

Grange spoke to a student audience in East York on Feb. 25, at a special Black History Month lecture at Centennial College's Carlaw Avenue campus.

Although Grange said it's impossible "to know everything about every culture," understanding it above a superficial level creates "inter-cultural competence." He was critical of the way the public and media often view different cultures too superficially.

"Red-boot multiculturalism: (People don't) dig deep... into these communities to understand the peo-

ple who wear these costumes and eat these food," Grange said.

Instead, he said, Toronto's multiculturalism can create opportunities for conversations about cultural difference and bridge racial gaps. Exploring outside their comfort zone helps people to accept and promote understanding.

"Represent people as they are and it may mean getting out of your comfort zone... When you're in the learning zone, you're engaged. You're curious," Grange said. "The more you stay in the learning zone... (the more it) becomes your comfort zone."

For the past year, the Black Lives Matter movement has swept across the United States before making its way to Canada. It sparked conversations around racial injustice and

misrepresentation by shedding light on inequalities.

"Take a look at these people in these protests," Grange said. "It's multiracial. There are black folks, white folks (and) South Asians.... There are women (and) there are gays. They're all there to say the same thing: 'Something must change.'"

He added that the movement is sometimes misunderstood as exclusionary. But Grange said it represents a pro-black stance that is not against other races, but is rooted in equality. He said it's the opposite of racial profiling.

"It sends a strong message," Grange said. "If your black kid, neighbour (or) friend can be stopped and frisked, so can you.... It can happen to anybody."

Shot putter puts her all into Rio

By **JONATHAN YUE**
The Observer

As Brittany Crew steps into the shot put circle, she knows exactly what to do to execute the ideal throw.

"Slow out the back, hips quick in the centre, and staying in the circle," she tells herself.

A product of East York, and currently studying at York University, Crew has managed to balance her school and athletics to become one of the best throwers in her age group.

After competing at the 2015 Summer Universiade in South Korea, Crew is using that experience to carry her toward her main goal for 2016: the summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

"Winning the bronze medal in Korea really helped boost my confidence as a thrower," Crew said. "I also realized

how important it is to stick to the training program in order to obtain my peak performance."

Currently competing in the indoor season with the York Lions, Crew has recently broken numerous indoor shot put records with a throw of 17.78, a result that would have qualified her for this summer's Brazil Olympics — had it been done outdoors.

Working with her coach, Richard Parkinson, for the last two years, Crew said that the relationship goes beyond the lessons learned in the circle. She credits him with going above and beyond the call of coaching duty — and becoming a true mentor.

"I look to him for advice," Crew said, "and I believe and trust that he is the coach that can make me one of the best throwers in the world."

But Brittany Crew isn't just another

talented athlete for coach Parkinson. Praising Crew for her agile and athletic abilities, coach Parkinson said he thinks that Crew's inner strength is what sets her apart.

"What really separates Brittany from other very talented athletes is Brittany, internally, has a special strength and stubborn determination to continue to train hard and overcome obstacles that get in her way," Parkinson explained.

With less than six months before the Olympic Games in Rio, Crew and coach Parkinson are staying focused on finishing the indoor season strong.

"I'm looking to break the indoor national CIS (Canadian Intercollegiate Sports) record and to repeat as a double gold medalist at the CIS championships," she said, "but my mindset is to stay focused on the big picture: Rio."



Jonathan Yue // The Observer

Brittany Crew practises for the Rio Olympics in the shot put circle.

■ EDITORIALS

Pride in Toronto

When it comes to pride, perhaps East Yorkers are entitled to some... for the way they've elected representatives to various levels of government, regardless of sexual orientation.

But when it comes to Pride — as in the June celebration of gay pride and of course the Pride Parade — we and our politicians may be a little too self-congratulatory. Up to and including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who announced last week that he'll attend this year's Pride Parade.

Trudeau will be the first sitting prime minister to march in the parade, and in doing so he'll hopefully further Canada's international identity as an inclusive and tolerant place to live. This year marks the first month-long pride celebration, with the entire month of June being dedicated to a variety of events and demonstrations across the city. Members of the federal and provincial parliaments are slated to attend the festivities, and Mayor John Tory will be joined by a number of city councillors ready to portray the city in a light of inclusivity.

But underneath the glitz, glam and photo opportunities lies an issue still hard-fought in many parts of the world. The rights of the LGBT community are well-respected in Canada. But in many other countries around the world, those rights are continuing to be neglected, oppressed and demeaned.

The Toronto Pride Parade and the surrounding celebrations bring in close to \$300 million dollars into the city's economy, and with the event now growing in length from a week to a month, the financial impact is sure to be stronger than ever. The celebration is surely one of the largest in the world, and gets coverage from news media across the globe.

The joyous (and lucrative) exterior, however, is belied by the continued struggle of many outside Canada. In other parts of the world, homosexual activity is subject to grievous punishment, such as life in jail or even the death penalty. And political powerhouse countries like Russia and India have laws in place restricting even an explanation of the gay lifestyle to children, even in the simplest terms.

So while we may be tempted to give ourselves a nice pat on the back this June for our liberal-mindedness, let's not forget the broader, global context. Yes, it's important to promote the inclusive nature of Canada. But amid the festivity, let's remember the people around the world who still face grave consequences for actions of love.

And while the politicians of Canada, the prime minister included, march and throw water balloons in the spirit of love and acceptance, let's think of our brothers and sisters elsewhere who are still struggling for their own love and identity.

~ Trevor Goulding

Long-term gain

It seems East Yorkers and other Ontarians will need to wring more money out of their wallets this year — but it's for a good cause.

East York's own Kathleen Wynne — the MPP for Don Valley West who also happens to be the premier of the province — introduced a budget at Queen's Park last week that will likely result in an increase in gas prices of 4.3 cents per litre... as a direct effect of Ontario's new "cap-and-trade" plan to fight against greenhouse gas emissions.

Since September, the price of gas in Toronto has fluctuated. Recently, it's been hovering at just below 90 cents per litre.

A newspaper poll run just before the provincial budget was introduced suggested that the vast majority of Ontarians are unhappy about the price hike. Most are already worried that when the price of oil rebounds, the prices of gas will inevitably go back up too.

Nobody wants to shell out more to Shell. But we need to look at the bigger picture. Climate change is a clear and present danger that needs to be dealt with as soon as possible to limit the damage that's already apparent. The government is also spending billions on public transit every year and there's a reason for it. As human population grows, so does the problem of climate change, and paying a few more cents for gas pales in comparison to the alternative.

Wynne also predicts that as a result of cap-and-trade, an additional \$5 a month should be expected on the average natural gas bill. But while gas prices are increasing, at least there should be lower rates for electricity, according to the premier.

The goal of the government's cap-and-trade system is to get greenhouse gas emissions to 80 per cent below what they were in 1990 within the next 34 years. Ambitious. But absolutely the right thing to do.

It's a classic case of short-term pain for long-term gain. These price hikes will ultimately result in benefits to Canadians in the future, even if they don't feel good at the moment. So rather than worry about what gas prices might go to when oil prices recover, Ontarians should worry about what will happen if climate change continues unabated. A mere 4.3 cents increase should not make anyone doubt the plan that Wynne has to make a greener province, country, and planet.

~ Jasmine Hui

■ COLUMNS

Mom, I am so sorry

Two years and three months. I have not been here, doing this, in two years and three months.

I can feel the \$5 bill lacerate my nasal passage as I shake, and then I feel the rush of cocaine for the first time in what seems like a lifetime.

Pretty soon, I am licking the remnants off the top of the urinal. They say this is the most glamorous drug in the world.

My name is Scott, I am 31 years old, and I just relapsed.

Then I'm sitting in a dive bar, nose dripping, pounding beers and using the money for cat food to buy shots for anyone who will stand next to me. It doesn't matter.

With coke racing through your bloodstream, your last thought is for a loved one.

I didn't want to do coke again. I never wanted to do coke again. I swore I would never do coke again. But that's how cocaine works.

It's never the plan, but after you're eight beers deep, you get the itch and you'll hand

over all of your grocery money just to scratch it.

And then those two years of AA mean nothing. Cocaine is a door, and once you open it, you just can't close it.

I know what you're thinking... but no, this wasn't in some Kensington after-hours, or some club in the entertainment district. This happened right here on Pape Avenue — where it took me about 10 seconds to find cocaine.

It was as simple as looking at the stranger next to me and saying, "you got any blow?"

But when the rush fades, all you're left with is shame.

The part that hurts

the most is Mom:

"I'm so proud of you, Scottie! I know you were an addict, but you did the hardest thing in the world and quit drugs. I love you."

I end the night crying when I realize I had one person in my corner, and I just hurt her in the worst way.

I can't bear to tell her that I betrayed her trust.

Once you do cocaine, your life is always missing something, and all I know is that will never go away.

Now I have to face the facts, I have to live with the shame, and know that I will always be an addict.



Scott Dell

Let's jump on board

Otherwise, craft beer bandwagon will leave us behind

Toronto is becoming a craft beer hot spot. Craft beer sales are up at LCBOs in Toronto more than anywhere else in the province. The craft beer industry itself has grown by 30 per cent since last year.

Toronto is a big place, craft beer producers and consumers are a big family, and there's actually a neighbourhood — around the Keele and Dundas streets area known as The Junction — that's becoming a craft beer creators' community.

But what about us folks on the east side of the Don Valley? Are we not thirsty? Or is it that we're not trendy? (Maybe our pants just aren't tight enough, or we need half-shaved heads

with knots of hair...)

The culture of the Danforth, combined with the intimacy of craft brewing, could create something special. Imagine adding a craft beer from the community to the Taste of the Danforth — having a local, accessible enterprise where everyone can see the beer being brewed in a neighbourhood where it could be showcased.

There is one craft brewery east of the Don Valley: Left Field Brewery, just off Greenwood Avenue, just a few blocks south of the Danforth. And it is, dare I say, a home run. (Call the pun police.)

But that's it. No other brewery has crossed the valley threshold. And the craft is

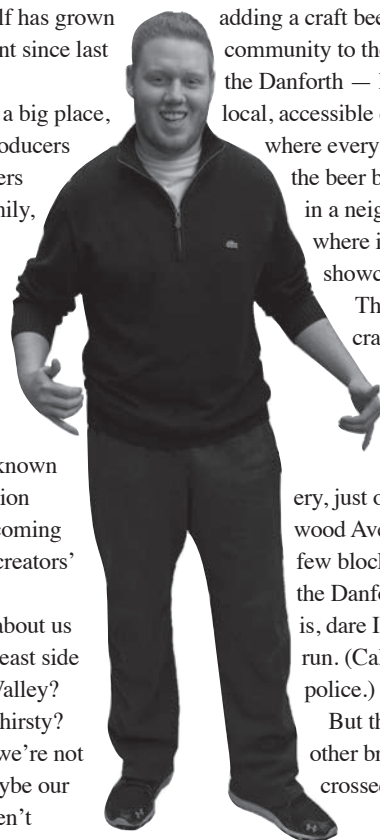
becoming so focused in the west end that they've almost taken to calling it the Brewery District.

On a recent swing through the area, I stopped counting after eight breweries — but I could have kept going. In the east, meanwhile, I'm hard-pressed to find another brewery other than Left Field (unless you're counting some guys' basements).

Now I'm not saying that what's happening isn't good for craft beer. Of course it is. But it's a problem when it's overly focused in one area. For one thing, it can lead to craft consumers being stereotyped as a certain type of person. And that doesn't make sense.

So why go to bars and pay for a mass-produced carbon copy American beer when there are small-batch, home-grown Canadian products at competitive prices?

The craft beer bandwagon is rolling and East York, along with the rest of the city's east end, needs to jump on — and take advantage of a piece of Canada's culture.



Kirk Budden

The lasting legacy of Agnes Macphail



Courtesy of City of Toronto Archives

The Observer continues its look back on East York history through photographs from the City of Toronto Archives. The picture on the left resonates especially for this issue — considering the coverage of the Agnes Macphail Speaking Contest that appears below. This photo above shows Macphail, East York's most famous politician and activist, with W.J. Caldwell of Regina, at the Toronto conference of the World Federation of Education Associations, on Aug. 8, 1927. Macphail was a member of Parliament at the time, having been the first woman elected to the House of Commons six years earlier. The photo on the right is politics of a different sort: It depicts civic officials on an "annexation tour" of East York (and its sewage disposal works in particular) on April 4, 1930 — when East York was struggling financially at the outset of the Great Depression, and the municipality had approached the City of Toronto about a possible merger.

Public speaking co-winner takes on wage inequality

By HAYDEN LANDOLT
and SCOUT MCGRAW
The Observer

One of East York's premier community events is the Agnes Macphail Public Speaking Contest, which culminated this year on Feb. 17 with the finals at the East York Civic Centre.

Students from grades 6, 7 and 8 first presented original speeches in semi-final competitions at their neighbourhood schools in the East York area.

This year, eight semi-final winners from both public and Catholic schools advanced from that round to the finals.

The contest is named after Agnes Macphail, East York's most historic provincial and federal politician, who died in 1954.

The public speaking contest for young people is complemented by another event later this month: the presentation of the 23rd annual Agnes Macphail Award for civic activism in East York. That takes place at the East York Civic Centre on March 24 at 7 p.m.

In this edition of the Observer, we present the co-winner of the speaking contest on Feb. 17: Hayden Landolt and his speech on wage inequality.

Hayden is 13 years old and attends Grade 8 at Westwood Middle School on Carlaw Avenue.

In an interview with the Observer prior to his win, Hayden said that his favourite subjects are music and history. His Scottish culture is also a very big part of who he is.

Much of his spare time is spent practising the bagpipes and playing with the Toronto Black Watch Association Pipes and Drums.

He even wore a tie with his family tartan when he contested the semi-finals of the speaking contest. And he is auditioning for the 48th Highlanders of Canada.

"My life is pretty much dominated by any-



Courtesy of William Wilson

The winners of the annual Agnes Macphail Public Speaking Contest enjoy their moment in the limelight, along with the lead judge in the competition. From left: Judge Michael Smith, co-winners Hayden Landolt from Westwood Middle School and Olivia Walsh from St. Anselm Catholic School.

thing to do with Scotland," he said.

Here is his award-winning speech:

"Eighty-seven thousand and forty-six per cent. That's how much the CEO of Onex Corporation earns over his employees. In other words, Gerald Schwartz makes more than 87,000 times what his average mid- and lower-level employee makes.

Onex Corporation is an investment company that has stocks traded publicly on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Unfortunately, this is not a one-off situation. Many middle- and lower-level employees earn substantially less than their CEO. This is why I believe CEO wages must be decreased, employees' wages increased, and

laws put in place to make sure these changes follow through.

In Ontario, minimum wage is \$11.25 an hour, which translates roughly to \$24,000 a year. If the CEO of Onex earns \$87 million a year, decreasing his salary by one million, it's nothing to him.

But it could pay 50 workers minimum wage. Thousands are out of work, and 50 people making minimum wage would greatly impact their families' quality of life — as well as the Canadian economy.

Salary increases for employees are just as important as salary decreases for CEOs. Most if not all workers desire a larger paycheque.

Pay raises can lead to higher morale in the workplace and, by default, greater productivity.

Studies have shown that pay raises are commonly given to those who show high levels of productivity.

One could reason that giving out raises to deserving employees would encourage other employees to increase their own productivity. Salary increases will ultimately improve the happiness of employees and the overall quality of life for their families.

The only thing that prevents a CEO from not paying their employees at all is minimum wage — minimum wage being legislation.

There is no minimum wage specifically associated with each job; in the same way, there is no maximum wage. That is why I suggest that a \$5 million wage cap for CEOs and other executives be put in place.

This would affect many CEOs, such as that of Rogers, Air Canada, and RBC, all of who have their middle-level employees working for (on average) less than \$60,000 a year. The wage gap needs to be tightened, can be tightened, and will be tightened.

The proposed decrease is essential to achieving fair pay for mid- and lower-level employees, as well as fair pay for CEOs.

By the time you graduate from postsecondary, a job that pays \$75,000 a year might only pay \$40,000 a year. More people will be looking for jobs, and the whole employment market will be a huge mess.

But... What can we do, how can we help? The one course of action we can take is simply to write to or call your local MP. Ask them to bring up CEO wage caps in Parliament and guarantee your next paycheque."

(In our next issue, we'll feature the speech by Hayden's co-winner in the Agnes Macphail Public Speaking Contest: Olivia Walsh from St. Anselm Catholic School.)

Want a sky-high view of East York?

Aerial cable car could be in the works for city

Cont'd. from page 1

said there could be specific benefits for East York.

"It would bring people into the East York community from the city, other parts of the province, other countries and abroad," Fragedakis said, adding that she first learned of the idea last year.

"The planning staff came to me this term about creating a process so that the city could consider proposals like this," Fragedakis said. "There are lots of steps in this process and it's a little premature to say if it's realistic, but these kinds of things exist in the world.

Bullwheel's timeline to opening is three to four years. The company's plans call for one terminal next to the Playter Gardens Parkette near the intersection of Danforth and Cambridge avenues — adjacent to the eastern end of the Bloor Viaduct. The other terminal would be at the western edge of the parking lot at Evergreen.

Between the two terminals would be three to six towers and a kilometre of cable on which 40 cars would run back and forth — each capable of carrying eight passengers for a projected ridership of between 500 and 1,500 passengers a day. Ride time would be four to eight minutes, and a ticket would cost \$10.



Bringing dreams to life on ice

By JODY ANDERSON
The Observer

They are called the Ice Dream Synchronized Skating Team, and they are competing at Skate Canada's March Mania competition in Innisfil today, March 4.

The East York team, which consists of 16 girls aged 8-12, is skating along with other teams from all over the province in the competition being held through this Sunday in Innisfil, which is on the western shore of Lake Simcoe, just south of Barrie.

The Ice Dream team is a part of the East York Skating Club and its members have been practising their routine for this competition since September.

Under the guidance of their coaches, figure skating medalists Allison Proudfoot and Karen Ballinger, the girls competed at last year's March Mania and left with positive results.

"Last year they finished ninth," Ballinger said. "We hope [or] expect to improve on that result this year."

The team has been perform-

ing in various competitions since December, including Ontario's Regional Synchronized Skating Championships in February, where they placed 11th in the elementary category.

March Mania is the last competition of the year for the girls and their technique is expected to be at its best.

"As the last competition of this season, it's sort of the peak," Ballinger said. "All of their hard work and all of the long hours of practice [is] for their final performances."

Still, Proudfoot added, there's been some fine-tuning in the run-up to this weekend.

"They're working on turning their heads at the same time," Proudfoot said, "making sure of their timing and that they're stepping at the same time."

The coaches have even introduced a particular manoeuvre for the girls to use to impress the judges and collect more points.

"We have a Mohawk in our pivoting block that we've been working on so that we can get a whole extra point," Proudfoot



Jody Anderson /// The Observer

Members of East York's Ice Dream Synchronized Team, aged 8-12, prepare for today's performance at Skate Canada's March Mania in Innisfil.

said. "That's our major goal for this competition. It is getting them to pick up their feet so they can get that Mohawk called."

A Mohawk is an advanced turning technique that requires the skater to transition from one foot to the other foot while positioning their body from go-

ing forward to backward in a circular motion.

This requires the girls to skate with only one foot and to show the judges a successful lift of the other foot.

Tracy Scott, co-chair of Ice Dream, has an 11-year-old daughter on the team and she said she appreciates how the

girls develop camaraderie on and off the ice through pool parties and movie nights hosted by the parents. On the ice, that team unity shines.

"Their success is the team's success and their failure is the team's failure," Scott said. "When kids fall, they cheer themselves on."

REVIEW

History has never been this fun

By SCOTT DELL
The Observer

He steps onstage, pike in tow, stomping the ground in full guard regalia and with an accent that says, 'I know what's buried in the River Thames.'

He wants us to turn off our cell-phones. A laugh in an unexpected place, and that's a recurring theme in *Anne Boleyn*, a modern reworking of the story of the wife of King Henry VIII — whose marriage ended (spoiler alert) badly. It's being performed by the East Side Players at their home in the Papermill Theatre on Pottery Road in East York.

The play, written by Howard Brenton and first performed in 2010 at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, has left the dodgy diction of dead mother tongues behind for a modern take on a classic. Letters are replaced with text messages and there's gasping humour that isn't afraid to go blue.

But amid its silliness — the forefront of which is Michael Harvey as the delightfully fey King of Scotland



Courtesy of Cindy Alexander

Actress Madeline Leon is under the gun of the Protestants in the play *Anne Boleyn*, onstage at the Papermill Theatre.

— the play seamlessly eases into the dreadfully serious. Women are subjugated to men's will. It became all too real as I watched a male hand creep up Lady Rochford's thigh as the threats on her life grew more serious. But what is brilliant about the historical

comedy is that its humour departs from traditional high-minded British sensibilities. Scenes move from religious leaders arguing faith to two men locked in glorious amour, groping buttocks on full display.

This is not your father's British

comedy.

But while *Anne Boleyn* maintains comedic elements, it excels as a drama — as characters move and grow and fate molds their destinies. *Anne* emerges onstage in the first scene as a ghost with a devilish smile and a near-taunting air, but she becomes a tough talking woman of virtue and power.

Unfortunately, she never really comes full circle, back to the grinning ghost and the devious charms that kicked off a night of brilliant intrigue, lust... and occasional crotch-thrusting.

The East Side Players' production of *Anne Boleyn* began its run last week onstage at the Papermill Theatre, 67 Pottery Road.

There's a performance tonight, March 4, and tomorrow night at 8 p.m. There's a Sunday matinee at 2 p.m., and then performances resume at 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, March 12, when the show closes. Tickets are \$24; \$17 for students.

The telephone box office is 416-425-0917. Tickets can also be purchased online at www.eastsideplayers.ca

There's no day like a snow day for this family

By YVANO ANTONIO
and ROBERTO SAPRISSA
The Observer

While some Torontonians considered this week's snowstorm a disadvantage, East Yorker Tony Marrelli saw it as a plus. On Wednesday, he took his sons to Riverdale Hill, just outside East York's southwest corner.

"Work was cancelled today because

of the weather," he said. "(City officials) wanted people to stay off the roads or stay home."

But the snow and the sunny afternoon made for a great tobogganing outing. From families to adults playing hooky, many gathered at the hill. That included Marrelli and his sons, Luka and Michael, who made the short trip to toboggan in the fresh snow.

"It's a classic Canadian winter sport,"

Marrelli said. "I grew up in this area, but this is the first time bringing the boys here."

With a Tuesday-Wednesday overnight low of -18, Environment Canada issued an extreme weather warning and called it the biggest snowfall of the season. Wind gusts also climbed to about 40 kilometres per hour. But the Marrelli family wasn't fazed.

"This is nothing when you're born

and raised in Toronto," Marrelli said.

Although it wasn't official, Wednesday was pretty much a snow day for some students. Luka Marrelli, eight, said there weren't many kids at his school. He's usually prepared for math class, but today he came prepared for the hill, dressed in a snow suit and ski goggles.

"You go really, really fast," Luka said. "I even got some air time."