

FELINES FIND FAMILY

E.Y. residents adopt orphaned cats **Page 7**



Petition aims to curb new bike lanes

2,500 signatures received in three days to remove Woodbine lanes

By **ALEXA BATTLER**
The Observer

A petition to remove the new bike lanes on Woodbine Avenue drew over 2,500 signatures in three days.

Two new bike lanes running north and southbound on Woodbine, from O'Connor Drive to Queen Street East, opened on Sept. 10. The nearly four-kilometre lanes have been making local headlines ever since.

The controversial bike lanes are part of the City of Toronto's 10-year cycling plan, an initiative adopted last June to create a city-wide bikeway network. Another bike lane will be installed on Corley Avenue to connect with Woodbine.

The change.org petition, titled Remove Woodbine Avenue Bike Lanes, was created by an account called Toronto East End. The account has

only one other campaign, which appears to be an earlier draft of the same bike lane petition.

The petition was created on Sept. 18 and gathered 500 signatures in 10 hours. By 2 p.m. on Sept. 19, only 20 hours after it had been created, the petition reached its 1,000-signature goal. By 2 p.m. on Sept. 20, it hit 2,000 and by 10 a.m. Sept. 21, that number had climbed to 2,500.

Over 300 people left comments on the petition, explaining why they signed. Local author Warren Kinsella, himself a cyclist, tweeted the petition to his over 25,000 followers.

"Our street runs east to west and has always been pretty busy at rush hour. But since Woodbine has been reduced to one lane in either direction, traffic has easily tripled," he

■ **See PETITION, page 2**



Cellie Agunbiade/The Observer

Ready to ride: City councillors Mary-Margaret McMahon (in orange helmet) and Janet Davis (in green helmet) cut the ribbon to open new bike lanes on Woodbine Avenue on Sept. 10. But not everyone is happy with the new lanes. See Page 5 for story.



Anissa Calma-Brown/The Observer

Julie Esteban, 36, and daughter Madison Carino, 8, are excited about the new clinic at Chester Elementary School.

Chester Elementary School opens new pediatric clinic

By **ANISSA CALMA-BROWN**
The Observer

As a parent, Julie Esteban worries about how roughly some children play at school. That's because her eight-year-old daughter, Madison Carino, is a retinoblastoma survivor.

Madison, a Grade 4 student, lost her left eye to the retinoblastoma and is constantly reminded to wear her protective glasses.

But now, East York students and their families will have full access to health care services within their own neighbourhood at Chester Elementary School.

"It is a huge relief to

know that there will be an in-school clinic for the children," Esteban says, adding that she's glad there will be a professional that can assess the health of children within the school.

Chester Elementary School, near Pape and Cosburn avenues, opened its new pediatric clinic Sept. 11.

The clinic, a joint program of the South Riverdale Community Health Centre and the Toronto District School Board, will be open to 11 East York schools. It will be staffed by two part-time pediatricians and a part-time psychologist.

Like most family doctors' offices, it features a waiting room, a counsellor's office

and a private exam room. The one thing that differentiates it from other doctors' offices is the number of posters on the walls made by students at the school.

Chester principal Sean Hume is excited families in East York will be able to take advantage of the services offered at the clinic.

"It's an opportunity for families to have more access to medical facilities on the Danforth," he said.

According to the South Riverdale health centre, the East York area is often overlooked when it comes to medical services.

The clinic at Chester Elementary is currently open one day a week.

POLICE & FIRE

Elderly pedestrian struck, killed by truck

An 86-year-old woman using a walker has died after being struck by a Chevrolet pickup truck near the intersection of Broadview and Mortimer avenues on Sept. 19. Police said they received the 911 call at 7:53 p.m. The woman was transported to the hospital in critical condition and was later pronounced dead. Police are investigating the incident.

Arrest follows kidnapping

A man has been charged with attempted murder after a stabbing left a 22-year-old man in critical condition. The victim was stabbed numerous times in an apartment at 444 Lumsden Ave. Kofivoaki Boakye, 33, has been charged with attempted murder and aggravated assault.

Family, dog escape injury in house fire

No injuries were reported after a house fire in East York on Aug. 21. The fire broke out at a home on Mortimer Avenue at Logan Avenue around 4 a.m. Fire crews battled the flames until about 5:30 a.m. Firefighters say the fire appeared to start in the front of the house, but the cause has yet to be determined. The homeowners, their two children and dog all got out safely.

~ Olivia Blackmore, Tiara Chutkhan and Sarah Bhola

ROAD SAFETY



Michael Linnenen/The Observer

A 39-year-old woman's bike lies near where she was struck by a garbage truck on Sept. 12.

Cyclist hit by garbage truck

By SHERIKA HARRIS, SARAH BHOLA and MICHAEL LINNENEN
The Observer

A 39-year-old female cyclist has serious but non-life threatening injuries after being struck by a garbage truck at the corner of Lesmount and Cosburn avenues on Sept. 12 at about 8:45 a.m.

A tweet from Toronto Police services shortly after the accident said the woman was reportedly pinned under the vehicle.

Toronto Police spokesperson Const. Clint Stibbe says both the cyclist and the driver, 47, were travelling westbound on Cosburn approaching Lesmount. The cyclist was hit when the garbage truck attempted to make a right turn into Lesmount.

The woman was transported to the hospital by emergency run, Stibbe said.

Police spoke with the driver, took photos of the scene and said the investigation is ongoing.

"We are waiting for the Commercial Motor Vehicle Inspection team to arrive on scene," Stibbe said the day of the accident. "They are going to inspect the vehicle to see if there is any mechanical deficiency that may have contributed to the collision."

According to Toronto Police open data, the downtown area and Etobicoke had a higher rate of cyclist-related collisions than the East York area from 2006 to 2016. There were 40 reported cyclist-related collisions in 2016.

Cosburn is one of the many streets in Toronto that now have bike lanes.

However, cyclist Gayle Fowler, who was passing the scene, says drivers still need to

be more aware, especially when making right turns on the street.

"(Bike lanes) only work if drivers are cautious," she said. "Especially someone who has an upgraded licence – they should know better."

Experienced bike rider Declan Keogh, also cycling by the scene after the accident, has advice for both cyclists and drivers.

"Just because there is a bike lane, or even if you have the right-of-way, it doesn't mean people are going to give it to you," Keogh said. "You've got to recognize that, and not just ride straight ahead without looking."

And for drivers: "Check your mirrors, don't open your door without looking and try not to get mad when a cyclist gets mad, and vice versa."

Petition reaches 2,500 signatures in 3 days

Cont'd from Page 1

said in an email interview. "The problem is those commuters who are avoiding congestion are now speeding through our neighbourhood. Someone getting hit and hurt, or worse, is just a matter of time."

According to the site, the petition will be sent to Mayor John Tory and Beaches-East York councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon.

McMahon has been a vocal proponent of the bike lanes and cut a ceremonial ribbon for its opening.

"I personally favour bike lanes. They save lives. But I don't favour bike lanes on what is essentially a highway, and I don't favour them when they are going to inevitably lead to people getting hurt," Kinsella said.

Recurring comments on the petition mention a lack of parking on Woodbine

Avenue, the inability for service and delivery vehicles to stop on the west side of the road and increased traffic congestion.

The petition's goal was quickly updated to 1,500 signatures, then to 2,500 and then 5,000. It was at 2,500 signatures at the time of publication.

"I am amazed at how quickly the petition reached its goal. Amazed. That tells me we are not alone," Kinsella said. "People power works."

Pair faces numerous charges in roofing scam

By TIARA CHUTKHAN
The Observer

Toronto police have made two arrests in connection with a roofing scam in East York.

Police looked into several cases involving a man and woman posing as roofers. The earliest reported incident took place in March, while the most recent happened

in July. The suspects would claim to be roofers and tell residents their vents were damaged.

In the July incident, a resident of Sibley Avenue said she paid \$350 in cash for the job and claims she was overcharged by \$150. A debit machine was given to her and once she entered her PIN, the man and woman ran off with her card.

She later discovered \$800 was taken

out of her account.

Late last month, police arrested Kevin Sampson, 41, and Aimee Jayne-Ann, 35.

They face a total of 26 charges, including fraud, theft, harassment and failing to comply with probation.

The investigation is still open. Police are asking anyone who believes they may have been scammed to contact 54 Division at 416-808-5400.

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Pop-up tells local history

The Cosburn Arts Centre will be hosting a pop-up museum that will tell East York's history. "East York, A Living History" will feature historical photos and artifacts from the community. The "Spark Photo Wall" project will also showcase photos taken by East York youths who have been mentored by professional photographers. The event will be held Oct. 14 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and is free to the public.

Halloween unmasked

The Todmorden Mills Heritage Site will be holding a Halloween mask-making workshop. Participants can create a spooky mask in a family-friendly atmosphere in preparation for trick-or-treating. Treats will be served. The event will be held on October 21. Pre-registration costs are \$10 adults and \$5 for children.

Danforth East on the big screen

The second Danforth East Film Festival will showcase the best films in 15 minutes or less. The theme for this year's festival is transformation and the changes in East Danforth. The films will showcase action, drama, animation and documentary shorts from Toronto and around the world. It will be held at the Time Capsule Board Games Cafe & Bar on Oct. 22. Tickets cost \$15.

~ Ahmed-Zaki Hagar



Anna Boyes/The Observer

Steven Mastoras, owner of Whistler's Pub, has announced that the popular local restaurant will be closing its doors on Dec. 31.

Whistler's waves goodbye

Local restaurant set to close on New Year's Eve

By ANNA BOYES
The Observer

For Steven Mastoras, the closing of Whistler's Grille and Cafe-Bar at Broadway and Mortimer avenues is more than the end of a job.

Mastoras has worked at the family-owned restaurant since the age of 17.

Now, after 36 years, the East York establishment has announced it will be closing its doors at the end of this year.

"I'm fortunate enough to be a young person still with lots of experience under my belt," said Mastoras, who has been managing director for more than three decades. "But also a passion for a lot of different things."

Mastoras has been an involved member of the East York community for his entire adult life. At 22 he was elected as a councillor for the Borough of East York, a position he held for six years. Though his time

as a restaurateur may be coming to a close, he has no plans of stepping down from his public life.

"We will continue to live and be a part of our community," Mastoras said. He plans to continue as a volunteer with organizations like the Toronto East Rotary Club.

Mastoras will also continue his work as a member of the Board of Directors for Restaurants Canada.

On Sept. 9, the Mastoras and Kanopoulos families took to social media to announce the property has been sold and their final business day will be Dec. 31.

Little information has been given on what will come next for the location. The announcement notes the new property owners plan to "redevelop the site over the coming years."

The hard-to-miss building sits at the corner of Mortimer and Broadway avenues. The grey exterior is adorned with bright red neon signs and art deco inspired paintings that feature lively jazz musicians.

Whistler's live jazz and blues nights have made the restaurant a cherished part of patio life in East

York. During a year where the Toronto music scene has witnessed a tragic decline in venue options, the loss of yet another live music outlet strikes a bitter chord.

The release thanks patrons for their years of "loyalty and friendship" as well as stating how "grateful" they are for the dedication of their "amazing staff."

Fans of the establishment responded to the announcement by sharing positive memories of their own time there as well as sending the family their best wishes.

Online messages show the restaurant appeared to have fulfilled its mission to serve the community through "family-friendly service."

"We've got a lot of touching stories," Mastoras said. "We've been a part of thousands of family celebrations over the years and we've taken care of each and every one of them with our heart and soul."

Though no plans have been made yet, Mastoras said that patrons should expect "something special" the final night, which happens to coincide with New Year's Eve.

Green P parking app credited with drop in number of tickets

Though result may be an increase in parking rates

By CONNOR ATKINSON
The Observer

East York resident Lori Arnall says the Green P mobile app has eased her worries about getting a parking ticket.

"I like how [the app] tells me my remaining time. I don't need to walk back and scramble for more change," said Arnall, who uses the app on a weekly basis. "I don't think I will be getting a parking ticket any time soon."

It has been 10 months since the app was launched to help local drivers pay for parking throughout Toronto. Since then, the number of parking tickets issued has plummeted by 29 per cent.

According to figures from Toronto Police Services, over 200,000 tickets were issued in the 10 months that fol-

lowed the October 2016 addition of Toronto's street parking app. That's a decrease of nearly one-third from the 261,000 tickets issued in the 10 months prior to October 2016. Approximately 33 per cent of parking transactions are now made through the mobile app.

The decline in issued tickets has affected the City of Toronto's revenue by approximately \$1.5 million in loss of money from fines, according to Anthony Fabrizi, manager of Revenue Services for the City of Toronto. He says the decrease in issued tickets and revenue is "an excellent trade-off for more compliance."

However, the price of parking in some Green P spaces could soon increase, with some rates potentially increasing up to 50 per cent, according to a recent Toronto Parking Authority report. The increases are expected to result in an annual revenue increase of \$3.5 million for the authority.



Connor Atkinson/The Observer

A Green P parking meter along Pape Avenue.

Streaming alive and well in local high schools: Report

By ADAM DARRAH
The Observer

Imagine being 13 years old, about to enter high school. Maybe math is not your forte, but you are a good writer, and an even better speaker. Or perhaps you are excellent quantitatively, but English is not your first language, and writing is a struggle.

Now imagine taking an applied course in one of these disciplines in Grade 9. Unfortunately, you have effectively removed yourself from a huge pool of post-secondary and employment opportunities.

This practice, known as streaming, is the grouping of students into pathways that determine their access to college and university.

Though Ontario claims streaming has been abolished, a new report from Social Planning Toronto suggests the practice in local high schools,

including those in East York, is alive and well.

The report, *Still Streamed: How High Impact Decisions are Shaping Students' Futures*, also suggests streaming is often misunderstood by students and parents.

Sheila Cary-Meagher, trustee for Beaches-East York, has witnessed this discrepancy.

"People are left with the idea that you can switch," she says. "If you took Grade 9 in applied and did well and decide in Grade 10 you want to switch, you can't, because you haven't got the background that you would have if you were taking Grade 9 academic."

De-streaming has been around for decades. In fact, it was recommended 30 years ago in journalist George Radwanski's report for the Ministry of Education, *The Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts*.

"There had been a push for a long time to get rid of streaming and the Rae government at that

time said do it," Cary-Meagher says.

In fact, Ontario was in the preliminary stages of de-streaming in the 1990s, until Premier Mike Harris's administration reintroduced it in the form of applied and academic streams, which remain in place today.

According to the 1987 report, students in the low and middle streams are held to lower standards and, as a result, their educational experience suffers and their social mobility is limited.

"Now we're back again to actually recognizing that there are differences in what kind of education poor kids get compared to those from well-off families," Cary-Meagher says.

Additionally, black and Aboriginal students are over-represented in the applied and essentials pathways, while South and East Asian students are over-represented in the academic pathway.

The report also finds many students feel they

lack the maturity necessary to make informed decisions about their futures, especially predicated on their elementary school performance.

So, is streaming on its way out this time around? Probably, says Cary-Meagher, noting the de-streaming pilot at C.W. Jefferys Collegiate Institute and others popping up across the province.

In East York? Not at this moment.

"We have mostly comfortable schools — only a couple that would be called in the TDSB language 'inner-city schools,' but every community has poor kids."

As for the future, the TDSB's Enhancing Equity Task Force is set to release a report later this year to help combat inequity in Toronto schools, including the issue of streaming.

De-streaming is going to be "problematic because its been embedded for so long," Cary-Meagher says.



Anissa Calma-Brown/The Observer

The 37th annual Terry Fox run was held nation-wide Sept. 17 to raise money and awareness for cancer research. The Wilket Creek Park site alone has raised \$10 million since beginning in 1981.

Continuing Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope

By **TINA ADAMOPOULOS** and **ANISSA CALMA-BROWN**
The Observer

Maria Fong, 55, was diagnosed with lung cancer in August 2016. She later learned that it spread to the bone. She didn't have any symptoms, but tests for a fractured vertebra revealed the diagnosis.

Her experiences with cancer, and the treatments she's been undergoing to deal with it, convinced her to put on her walking shoes last Sunday and participate in the Terry Fox Run for the first time in her life.

"I feel blessed that I'm able to do this walk today," she said.

Fong was one of many people taking part in the annual fund-raising event at the Wilket Creek Park location, just outside of East York. This year marked the 37th anniversary of the run, which continues Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope to raise money and awareness for cancer research.

The Wilket Creek site alone has raised almost \$10 million since the first run in 1981.

According to a 2017 report by the Canadian Cancer Society, one in two Canadians will be diagnosed with cancer within their lifetime. The lifetime risk is 49 per cent for males and 45 per cent for females.

"It's very important because

there are so many people with cancer," Fong said. "I go for treatments at Sunnybrook and it's always packed. It is important that we find a cure. We have to find a cure."

"It doesn't matter how old you are. One day you are fine and the next day you are told that you have cancer."

Fox, who lost his right leg to cancer when he was diagnosed at the age of 18, began his cross-country run in April 1980 to raise funds and awareness for the disease. The cancer spread to his lungs and he died on June 28, 1981 at the age of 22.

On the day of the most recent run, participants sported T-shirts bearing the iconic image of Fox running his marathon. The park was adorned with posters of Fox, along with a signing wall where participants wrote who they were running for, be it the memory of someone who has died or to honour a loved one currently fighting the disease.

Ontario premier Kathleen Wynne and Don Valley West MP Rob Oliphant took part in the opening ceremony, sharing their thoughts on the legacy of Terry Fox.

"The run has grown but the cause remains the same," said Wynne, participating in her 33rd Terry Fox Run. "There is nobody here who doesn't know someone who is

struggling with cancer or who has lost someone to cancer, and so we are all touched by this struggle."

Oliphant shared his story of being diagnosed with cancer in the 1980s and said what gave him hope was that developing research would help.

"When I look out into this crowd, I see a tremendous example of Canadian citizenship," he said. "What Terry Fox did was show that one person can make a huge difference in the world. What you are doing today is keeping that dream alive."

Mia Craig, 41, who received the Terry Fox annual athlete of the year award, was a university student when she was diagnosed with papillary thyroid cancer.

After surgery and radiation, she fought the disease and was cancer-free six months later. That was 18 years ago.

"I'm one of the lucky ones. I was blessed with access to world-class medical care in Toronto," Craig told the crowd. "The experience was nothing short of life-altering, but today I am stronger physically, emotionally and mentally because of it."

Craig has watched her mother, aunt and good friends struggle with breast cancer. This year — her 30th time participating — she dedicated the run to her friend who is battling



Anissa Calma-Brown/The Observer

Maria Fong, 55, was diagnosed with lung cancer, which spread to the bone August 2016.

brain cancer.

"This teaches and inspires future generations what an incredible difference Terry's Marathon of Hope has made," she said. "Everyone here today represents the generos-

ity, the courage and the hope that is Terry's legacy.

"You are teaching our children what it truly means to be a Canadian hero."



Anissa Calma-Brown/The Observer

Julie Ly looks over the stories on the board and calls the event an emotional experience.



Anissa Calma-Brown/The Observer

Premier Kathleen Wynne joins Rob Oliphant, MPP for Don Valley West, on stage at the annual Terry Fox Run at Wilket Creek Park.



Cellie Agunbiade/The Observer

Cyclists of all ages showed up on Woodbine Avenue to welcome new bike lanes on Sept. 10.

Sun shines on Woodbine bike lanes

By **CELLIE AGUNBIADÉ**
The Observer

It was a good day for bike riders in East York.

“The weather is beautiful and the sun is shining on Woodbine bike lanes,” East York councillor Janet Davis told more than 40 cyclists who gathered on Sept. 10 for the opening of the much-anticipated lanes.

The new bike lanes stretch on Woodbine Avenue from Queen Street East in the south to O’Connor Drive in the north.

Davis and Beaches councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon spoke at the celebration, which featured a ribbon cutting, face painting and a scavenger hunt. The councillors also led a bike ride down the lanes.

“Woodbine is a very significant north-south connection, it will make cycling easier and safe for thousands in the east end,” Davis said.

The bike lanes are considered the first step towards the city’s 10-year cycling plan, which was approved in June of last year, by city council.

“It is the quickest bike lane installation across the city,” McMahon said. “It basically took a year, connecting two different wards and I would like to assure people that it actually makes everyone safe.”

McMahon also says the turnout for children biking on the lanes to school is the most she has ever seen on any bike lane.

“It’s not a war against the car — it’s connectivity,” she said. “It is active transportation that offers multi-modes to anyone. We have seen kids on these bike lanes that we’ve ever seen biking to school and it is fantastic.”

Peter Low, 61, who has been riding bicycles since he was 9, agrees the new bike lanes are practical and necessary.

“Obviously, as a cyclist, you feel safer because you are separated from a motor vehicle in traffic, and as a driver, because the cyclists have their own lane and you have your own lane — there is no friction,” said Low, a North Toronto resident who drove to the event to celebrate with East York residents and also tried

out the lane by riding his bike.

He said, although there would be opposition to the Woodbine bike lanes, he expects Toronto residents will learn to accept them.

“It is going to be a learning curb for everybody,” he said. “Change is difficult for the general public, but I believe that the majority of people [on the road] are adults and are educated, therefore they can learn to readjust to the new reality.”

Coun. Davis also spoke about plans to expand the bike lanes in the East York area.

“We are doing construction in the next few years, soon we would have access right at the south bridge, over and into Scarborough and in the north end,” she said. “Connection across the Woodbine bridge to St. Clair is not going happen until 2020.”

Davis said bike lanes will not only make cyclists feel safer on the road but also encourage Toronto residents to be environmentally aware.

And as for those who firmly do not like the Woodbine bike lanes, Low has four words: “Try them for yourself.”

Reporter checks out the ride from O’Connor to Queen Street

By **MICHAEL CHACHURA**
The Observer

This week I tried out the new Woodbine Avenue bike lane, cycling the full length from O’Connor Road in the north to Queen Street in the south.

I wanted to see if it was the smooth and safe ride local cyclists have been wanting and find out along the way how locals were receiving it.

I donned my GoPro camera to record the trip and headed down the lane. (See the *Toronto Observer* website for the entire ride, with commentary.)

The bike lane is separated from the road with paint and sometimes with plastic gradients. On the east side of the lane, there are parking spaces lining its path.

At some points, parked cars separate the bike lane from traffic.

The most dangerous intersection I found was at Kingston Road. The bike lane abruptly stops and merges with the road going both north and south. Cars are turning in the same lane as bikers.

Just south at the Queen Street bus stop is a huge pothole. It not only dips down, but also bellows up. Biker, beware!

Another cyclist I met at Danforth told me she feels safer now that there are bike lanes.

“I love them,” she said. “I think there are probably just as many parking spots as there were before and now they’re well defined and everyone knows where they’re supposed to be.”

A pair in their car waiting for the light at Danforth also expressed positive thoughts on the bike lanes.

“It allows people to pick their mode of transportation,” one of them said.

“It’s a lot safer for people who choose to bike,” said the other.

Asked whether bike lanes are a hindrance to drivers, one said, “No, unless somebody is being stupid and not paying attention to where their lane is.”

Another driver had the opposite feeling. “That’s going to be awful in the winter when they’re running plows up the street,” she said, adding that bike lanes are “absolutely” a hindrance to drivers.

A resident I met walking out of her house near Kingston Road also complained. “I haven’t seen any bikers. The neighbours are all complaining about the parking.”

A crossing guard at the same corner told me she thought a bike lane would be better on Coxwell Avenue than on Woodbine.

Don White, a regular biker, spent his day off work experiencing the Woodbine bike lane.

“I’m blown away. I am so happy. It’s time, it’s 2017,” he said. “I do not cycle unless there is a bike path.”



■ CHACHURA

New lanes spark mixed reaction



Tina Adamopoulos /The Observer

Danforth Avenue is being considered for new bike lanes between Coxwell and Victoria Park.

By **TINA ADAMOPOULOS**
The Observer

Not everyone is happy about the bike lanes that opened on Woodbine Avenue on Sept. 10.

“We already have so many issues with traffic in the city,” commuter Sarah McMullen says. “Woodbine is a very busy road, especially during rush hour and when you take away a lane from each side, it creates a massive problem and wastes time.”

McMullen, a mental health counsellor who has been driving on Woodbine Avenue for the past two and a half years from Scarborough to see her clients all over Toronto, noticed the new bike lanes as she was driving to work.

“The city is really hard to get around in and, for people to commute into it, this is not improving transit,” McMullen said.

She also doesn’t like the fact that no one was using the bike lanes while she was in traffic because of them.

McMullen said she likes bike

lanes and believes promoting cycling is a good initiative to decrease the excessive congestion on Toronto roads, but she disagrees with them on major roadways.


“Woodbine is such a busy street for commuting, that cutting the road down to one lane on each side is very frustrating.”

Instead of the city putting them on major roads, the city could have bike lanes on side streets and less congested areas, she proposed.

But local councillors are hoping to make East York’s major roads more bike-friendly.

Councillors Mary-Margaret McMahon and Janet Davis, whose wards are connected along Woodbine Avenue, have their eyes set on installing a bike lane running across Danforth Avenue connecting Coxwell and Victoria Park avenues.

“Hopefully we will see bike lanes on Danforth, to make the major connect on Danforth and Woodbine that people in this community have been calling for sometimes,” Davis said.

 To see our reporter’s video of his ride along Woodbine, go to torontoobserver.ca

■ EDITORIALS

Toronto, beware

Hurricane Harvey lasted nine days and caused an estimated \$220 billion in damages, mostly in Texas.

Five days later, Hurricane Irma began its two-week wrath, stripping the ocean from a shoreline in the Bahamas.

Torontonians should be very afraid.

Toronto is nowhere near the ocean and it hasn't been hit hard by a hurricane in decades. But Harvey and Irma, even though they didn't impact Canada, are only the most recent examples of increasingly intense and sporadic weather conditions that have crept across North America in recent years.

Toronto can barely withstand a rainy spring.

Harvey dumped 33 trillion gallons of water on Texas in a nine-day period. That's about seven per cent of Lake Ontario, which recorded its highest water level ever this summer.

Rainfall from January to May this year was double what Toronto typically sees, and two out of every three days saw some degree of rainfall. It sank Toronto Island for three months.

It was only four years ago in July that severe thunderstorms created a massive flood that had cars driving through water up to their headlights, and left a quarter of a million people without power. After the flood, Toronto increased its spending on extreme weather programs, including storm water systems, by \$3.1 billion over 10 years.

And yet, almost one quarter of Toronto's sewer system comprises combined sewers — a design that most North American municipalities stopped using after the 1940s. In a combined sewer, one pipe carries both sewage and storm water. Modern systems use two separate pipes for each.

These sewers are up to a century old and are much more prone to flooding than modern sewers. When these sewers flood they spew water and sewage, which can carry a litany of diseases, including hepatitis A and typhoid.

Committing the city to flood prevention would be expensive and require a complete gutting of much of the sewer system. But it is necessary.

It should be clear. The 14th largest lake in the world, which has about as much water as 10 Dead Seas and was the focus of a four-month imminent flood warning, lines the entire southern border of a city that was hit with record rainfall and can barely prevent regular basement floods.

And yet, the City of Toronto hasn't said anything at all.

Our answers to flooding can no longer be fixing one basement at a time and crossing our fingers for a dry spring.

It is time to take this seriously.

~ Alexa Battler

Cycling safely

A 39-year old cyclist was pinned beneath a garbage truck at the intersection of Cosburn and Donlands avenues on a recent morning. She was hospitalized with life-threatening injuries.

Vehicle-cyclist encounters on city streets are nothing new. According to the city, 539 cyclists were killed or injured in vehicle collisions from 2005 to 2016. Two more cyclists were killed this year.

A 2015 report on Pedestrian and Cycling Safety by Toronto Public Health found that 69 per cent of cyclist injuries are from collisions with vehicles at intersections.

Among the report's recommendations was lowering the speed limit on Toronto streets to 40 km/h. That mirrored a recommendation made by the chief coroner of Ontario in 2012.

Following the release of the report, the city implemented a Vision Zero Safety Plan, a five-year plan to reduce traffic-related incidents. Among the new safety measures are advance green lights for cyclists and cycle tracks to separate bike lanes from vehicle lanes.

Despite the safety measures, and the introduction of more, and more controversial bike lanes, cycling on city streets can be a dangerous proposition.

There have been 58 reported incidents of dooring — when a cyclist collides with a car door opened in their path — in Toronto this year. And there has been a 58-per-cent increase in that statistics over the past three years, according to advocacy group Cycle Toronto.

In June, Toronto Police had held SPACE to Cycle, a week-long safety campaign where parking enforcement officers cycled the streets to curb infractions such as dooring.

Incidents of dooring can be reduced if parking enforcement keeps cars out of bike lanes. However, not everyone is in favour of the steps taken to make the roads safer for cyclists.

Opponents have suggested that implementing cyclist safety measures can cause tension among drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

However, the *Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety* report makes a strong case for reduced speed limits. It found that a cyclist hit by a vehicle travelling 30 km/h has a 90 per cent chance of survival, but the number nearly doubles if the vehicle is travelling 50 km/h.

We should be able to give cyclists roads where their lives are not in danger.

Incidents like the one at the intersection of Cosburn and Donlands could be prevented with the introduction of even more steps to improve cyclist safety.

~ Ahmed Hagar

■ COLUMNS

Sex-ed needs a revamp if it's to remain relevant

In the recent years, we've seen a controversy over improving sex education and implementing it at a younger age.

Sex education might be one of the most useful lessons for young people and their relationships. Research shows people between the ages of 16 and 21 have reported problems in their sex lives.

Traditionally, sex education doesn't really go past disturbing STI photos and an emphasis on abstinence. The truth is, teens and young adults are going to have sex and it's going to take more than new classes each year to rock the boat.

So, instead of leaving young people in the dark, sex education classes should include specialized seminars on how to create and maintain pleasurable, comfortable and, most importantly, healthy

relationships.

What sex education is missing is a focus on teaching young people about relationships. Learning how to treat one another, as well as openly communicating, will go a long way.

If we start showing children what a healthy relationship looks and feels like from a younger age, they'll be more capable of identifying those elements by the time they're teenagers.

We also need to show young people how to communicate their wants and needs sexually.

Taking the time

to talk to one another and learn about each other is something that's lacking.

Ultimately, our sex education needs a revamp to catch up with the times.

We're past the days of awkward videos and photos.

Instead, we need to fill in the gaps so young people don't go

looking for sex facts and relationship goals in the media or from friends.

We want them to avoid the negative outcomes like early pregnancy and STIs, but also to enjoy the experience of a satisfying,

comfortable relationship.



Tiara Chutkhan

The benefits of talking

East York mom Rani Seepersaud says she is "struggling every time September rolls along."

The back-to-school blues are in full effect as the leaves begin to change colour and fall and the dreaded school year begins.

Seepersaud, a single mom of a 15-year-old daughter, worries for her daughter every time she drops her off at high school.

"My daughter puts 110 per cent into her studies, she is very dedicated to her work which makes me nervous because I can see how much she overworks herself," Seepersaud says.

August feels like a never-ending Sunday, and as the days grow closer to September, there

is high-packed anxiety and stress for not only students but for their parents, too.

Seepersaud wants to make school life more enjoyable for her daughter but has a hard time helping her daughter cope with stress because she does not know how to provide appropriate support.

School anxiety is common among students.

The results of a 2011 study conducted by the Toronto District School Board show that 63 per cent of students in grades 7 and 8 and 72 per cent of those in high school felt nervous or anxious often or all of the time.

One-third of Toronto high schoolers reported feeling under a lot of stress and three-quarters said they felt tired for no reason and struggled to concentrate and make decisions.

It is common for students to overwork themselves,

with post-secondary expectations looming.

"I want my daughter to attend university, but I want her to be sane while she tries to attain it," Seepersaud says.

During my high school career, I spent countless hours burying myself in books and studying

Over the past year, my third and fourth in post-secondary, I have had a particularly difficult time coping with school stress.

I tend to put a lot on my plate, and overwork myself.

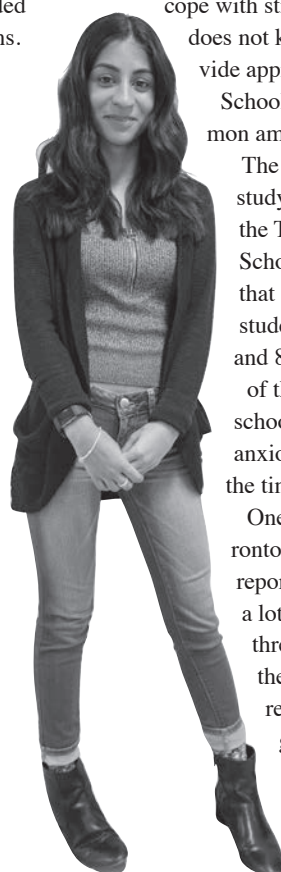
Like every other student, I just want to do my best and sometimes my best means I have to shed blood, sweat and tears to achieve it.

My advice to parents who are not able to approach their kids about school stress is to take the time to really talk to them.

My parents always make it a priority to talk to me about what I am doing at school.

Talking to your kids helps them open up and creates better relationships.

High stress and anxiety levels are real, so make sure to reach out to your kids because talking really helps.



Kristen Doopan



Joseph Burrell/The Observer

Tom Power (centre) joins journalism students (L-R) Michael Chachura, Kristen Doopan, Nicole Royle and Neil Powers for an interview about CBC's Q.

Speaking to Power: Student journalists quiz new Q host

By JOSEPH BURRELL
The Observer

From a small, anti-Confederation household in Newfoundland to one of Canada's best-known radio talk shows, Tom Power spoke about his career, and what it's taught him about his country in a recent interview at Centennial College's East York campus.

Power, CBC's newest host of *Q*, was joined by Centennial journalism students to talk about what it's like speaking with the biggest stars in entertainment for a living. A panel of students asked Power about everything ranging from his own love of music to the tougher parts of interviewing celebrities as a job.

"I didn't listen to a lot of radio, I'll tell you that," Power said about his childhood in Newfoundland. "I was a musician until I worked for CBC. I used to listen to records."

Power spoke about growing up as a regular Nintendo-loving kid, until the day his dad bought him a guitar and music became the centre of his world.

Power's grandparents were born in Newfoundland before it became a Canadian province. Through them Power learned an appreciation for traditional Irish folk music, but through that love of music, he discovered legends like Leonard Cohen, Neil Young and k.d. lang. He credits Canadian music as a key factor inspiring admiration for the country his family now belongs to.

"I heard about what was happening in Vancouver and what was happening in Montreal... through that one particular show (on CBC), Sounds like Canada," Power said. "I found the country to be really captivating."

Power joked about his own band, The Dardanelles, saying "both of (his) audience members really like me." He also mentioned that the band is a huge part of what gives him the confidence to do his job. He can speak to musical greats because he also knows what it's like to struggle with recording or touring.

"I've driven from Toronto to Winnipeg to perform... I've eaten at some of the worst gas stations in the country," Power said. "That's the reason I can sit and ask these people questions."

For all of the fun that he has at *Q*, Power also didn't pretend that the job isn't also full of unique challenges. Praised for his quick-wittedness by his co-workers, Power said the only reason he is able to think his way out of awkward conversations so effectively is because of his late father.

"My father was very very quick, he always valued being able to think on your feet. I channel him whenever I don't really know what to do, and I think of him an awful lot," Power said.

While he admits that some days at the office are tougher than others, ultimately he loves his new role at CBC and was thankful for the opportunity to be the voice of *Q*.

"In no way is any of this work to me," Power said. "It's an awesome job."



Marjan Asadullah/The Observer

Blankets were laid out in order to get participants involved in the exercise.

Traditional blanket exercise draws attention to Indigenous rights

By MARJAN ASADULLAH
The Observer

As dozens of blankets were laid out at East Lynn Park, participants and witnesses slowly gathered to watch the Kairos Kitchi Blanket Exercise. The event came just in time to mark the 10-year anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People.

Developed over 20 years ago, the exercise was created to engage ordinary Canadians "on an emotional and intellectual level, as the Blanket Exercise effectively educates and increases empathy" for participants, according to the organization's website.

It was held to teach Canadians what Indigenous persons experienced — as First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples — when the European settlers came to Canada.

Ward 32 councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon and Beaches-East York MP Nathaniel Erskine-

Smith and MPP Arthur Potts, hosted the event.

During the exercise, blankets represented "the land" of the Indigenous people. Some participants read excerpts from letters written by Indigenous people, while others played the role of the European colonizers. Stories were told to show what Indigenous people had to deal with and the lasting effects of colonization by Europeans.

In June, a similar kind of exercise was held at Parliament Hall to commemorate the importance of Indigenous history as Canada turned 150.

"The point of this exercise and bringing Kairos to East Lynn Park is to raise awareness and ensure that in raising awareness we can better hold this government and future government to account," Erskine-Smith said.

McMahon said: "As chair of parks and environment, I have asked the city to report back on Indigenous places to be made in all our parks," she said. "We need to engage with the Indigenous community."

Local pet adoption event helps find furry friends some homes

Leaside store's adoption blitz matches cats with new owners

By SARAH BHOLA
The Observer

Sidney Nielsen and Matt Ross, both 31, walked into the Leaside PetSmart store last weekend planning to adopt one cat.

They left with two.

When the East York residents' roommate moved out the previous week, she took her cat with her. That prompted the visit to the Laird and Eglinton avenue pet store, which was holding one of its national adoption weekends.

"We've always had an animal, so we were like, 'we need an animal,'" Nielsen said.

When they reached the display of adoption-ready cats, two of them "just gravitated towards us," Nielsen said of Sally and Sullivan, the newest members of their household. Both were strays that had been picked up by Toronto animal services.

A total of 16 cats were adopted during the event. Mary Lou Leiher, program manager at Toronto animal services, says the Leaside PetSmart has been partnered with the City of Toronto for over 15 years.

Cats supplied by animal services are available for adoption there year-round, but a national adoption blitz is held four times a year.

"We generally choose animals that we know will tolerate the change of location," Leiher explained of the process used to determine which cats are transported to adoption centres.

"Mostly we send cats, and cats hate their environment to change so we try to pick cats that can handle it."



Sarah Bhola/The Observer

A young girl tries to pet a cat through its cage.

A long-haired domestic cat named Felicia was also adopted during last weekend's event. Her new owner, Rose Godin, 27, celebrated by buying a leopard print carrier especially for the occasion.

Kabul skateboarding 'girl power' on display

By **FATIMA AL-SAYED**
The Observer

Female empowerment comes in many forms, even in little girls decorating their hijabs with helmets and riding skateboards down the streets of Kabul.

Their pictures are on display in Toronto at Aga Khan Park until Oct. 8.

They are a result of a trip British photographer Jessica Fulford-Dobson took to Afghanistan in 2013. The last thing she expected to see was happiness in what was supposedly one of the most dangerous cities on earth, she said.

"There was so much joy, so much colour, so much laughter and it was just so intoxicating. The first thought I had was 'How on earth am I going to capture this?'" Fulford-Dobson said.

Fulford-Dobson has collected the images of the girls in a book called *Skate Girls of Kabul*. She wanted to take this to a bigger audience in different parts of the world. The Skate Girls exhibit has visited Britain and Qatar, and has now made its way to North America for

the first time.

"Initially it was just to bring back something that could make us

all feel a little bit happy and to show that, through all the horrors, there has been change and it mustn't stop," Fulford-Dobson said.

The Skate Girls of Kabul are part of Skateistan, a program in Afghanistan, Cambodia, and South Africa that empowers youth through skateboarding. Skateistan aims to give them the chance to grow into leaders within their society.

Although the program incorporates all genders, Fulford-Dobson said she always knew it was the girls' stories she wanted to capture.

"I loved that they brought their own style to a sport that is normally just caps on the backs of heads," she said. "They show you can do it in whatever you want — headscarf, dress, flower-power, and just general girl-power! It was wonderful,"

Alongside the exhibit, the Chill Foundation held a pop-up skate park on Sept. 16 at the Aga Khan Park where over 40 kids learned to skateboard for free.



Fatima Al-Sayed/The Observer

The Skate Girls of Kabul', an award-winning exhibit by photographer Fulford-Dobson, makes its North American debut at the Aga Khan

Chill Foundation representative Bree Oda, 29, was impressed to see so many kids come out to learn how to skateboard.

"It's really nice to see girls skateboarding," Oda said. "It used to be dominated by boys but we're coming out in bigger numbers and we're showing them we can do it as well—even in war-torn countries."

Hadley Carpenter, 42, was

helping his 6-year-old daughter, Mabel, unbuckle her helmet after a long day of mastering a new skill.

"It seemed like the perfect opportunity for these guys to learn about what the skate girls are doing and get a chance to skateboard themselves," she said.

Mabel enjoyed skateboarding so much that she looked up at her dad eagerly asking him to



Fatima Al-Sayed/The Observer

Twin sisters Beatrix and Rhoda Hadley, 4, learn to skateboard at the Aga Khan in an event sponsored by the Chill Foundation and inspired by The Skate Girls of Kabul exhibit by photographer Fulford-Dobson.

build her a ramp at home.

"Here we are now, with the Skate Girls of Kabul inspiring

the skate girls of Toronto," said Fulford-Dobson. "And isn't that a great story?"

Local businesses at premier nookFEST in E.Y.

Gala gives business chance to market and network

By **ALICE CHEN**
The Observer

Entrepreneur Sean Kung's concrete home-ware business, 1842, acts as a physical outlet for his creativity.

Compared to his "boring adult job" in digital media, creating concrete planters and lights is "a way to get that hands-on tangible work in," he said.

Kung was one of more than 40 vendors at this year's nookFEST. The event took place Sept. 9 on Woodmount Avenue and in the laneway behind The Nooks' design store.

According to owner Colleen Imrie, The Nooks is a set of business accelerators that focuses on creative entrepreneurs. Their stores provide artisans with a retail space for their products, as well as business development opportunities such as workshops and events to sell and advertise products.

Locations range from a design store that carries handmade goods to a general store that sells locally produced food and drinks.

It's also a way for small businesses to network with and support each other.

"Entrepreneurs don't have a ton of time to hang out, so it's challenging to have an ongoing channel of communication," Imrie said. "Something like [this event] The Nooks is hosting can bring everyone out ... it brings action, which helps everyone."

The event featured live music all day,



Alice Chen/The Observer

NookFEST brought together creative entrepreneurs and local businesses to sell products and enjoy such activities as live music and karate demonstrations. Enjoying the event on Sept. 9 are (left to right), city councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon, The Nooks owner Colleen Imrie, Tara Jeronimus and The Laneway Project co-founder Michelle Senayah.

a comedy group, craft beer and food and demonstrations by local youth.

Jessica Beaver, creative operations director for the event and local to the area, was excited to be a part of something that promoted the culture in her neighbourhood.

"All the cool things happen in

the west end, so we wanted to do cool things in the east end and also help the artists out," she said. "It means a lot. It feels really good."

Beaver added the event was planned with the help of non-profit The Laneway Project, which aims to bring more

awareness into communities via laneway-hosted events.

Kung said he'd only previously been to markets and similar events in the west end. East York's nookFEST was the biggest event he's attended so far.

He discussed how difficult it can be to run a small business.

He himself handles marketing, product and business development, design, sales, retail "and all that stuff you have to learn on the fly," he said.

"It's a lot of no's for a few yes's and you have to push forward and just believe in your craft."