



Mayor seeks third-party review of police cases

LGBTQ activists say Toronto needs to 'rethink policing' after McArthur investigation

By **BOBBY HRISTOVA**
The Observer

The mayor of Toronto is seeking a third-party review of how police handle missing-persons cases to ensure "absolutely no questions are left unanswered."

John Tory is also requesting a provincial inquiry.

"Maintaining the trust of all our communities is paramount," Tory wrote in a news release. "I want to thank Toronto's LGBTQ community for their leadership, strength and collaboration through this difficult time."

The request is a result of the police investigation of alleged serial killer Bruce McArthur, who faces six counts of first-degree murder.

Det.-Sgt. Hank Idsinga, lead detective on the McArthur case, revealed that police have also started a separate internal investigation related to inappropriate police conduct.

About that internal review, Tory wrote, "I led the board...to ensure that the results of the already underway internal review of these matters is made public."

The Toronto Star reported that police questioned McArthur in 2016 about allegations of physical abuse. Police released McArthur.

Idsinga and his team were unaware of the encounter.

"The actions of some officers potentially did not do what they were supposed to have done, according to our policies and our procedures," Idsinga told the *Star*.

Detectives have taken rare steps to advance the case, releasing an image of a dead, unidentified man possibly related to the murders.

While police review their own work, Tory is not the only one who wants more eyes on the case — and he is not the first to ask.

■ See **MAYOR**, page 3



Shayelle Smith/The Observer

Opening the doors to history

Staff member Alex Myers leads a group of children and their parents on a tour of historic homes at the Todmorden Mills Heritage Site as a part of the Pottery Road facility's March Break Mania event.

Attempted murder charges, manhunt in spate of stabbings

By **DOHA HANNO** and **SERGIO ARANGIO**
The Observer

East York has been hit by a series of unrelated stabbings over the past two weeks.

The latest, occurring on March 14 just before the *Observer* went to press, left one person in hospital with life-threatening injuries and police seeking the assailant who fled from the Danforth and Greenwood avenue scene.

The week before, on March 7, police charged a 15-year-old boy with attempted murder and robbery after the repeated stabbing of a 23-year-old man at Secord and Newman avenues the pre-

vious Saturday.

And on Feb. 28 and March 5, two teenaged boys were arrested for attempted murder following a stabbing of a 16-year-old student at Coxwell and Cosburn avenues.

Danforth-Greenwood

Police responded to a call on Danforth Avenue shortly before 2 a.m. on March 14 to find a man bleeding from stab wounds, media spokesperson Const. Jenifferjit Sidhu said.

The man was moving in and out of consciousness and was rushed to hospital with life-threatening injuries.

Police are looking for an unidentified man who fled from the scene.

He is described as white, 5-foot-9, and wearing a royal blue shell jacket with a baseball cap. Sidhu confirmed he was reportedly seen with a white female.

Secord-Newman

Toronto police have charged a 15-year-old boy with attempted murder and robbery after the stabbing of a 23-year-old man on March 10.

The man was stabbed repeatedly in the neck and head in the Secord and Newman avenues area on March 7, police say.

According to police, two males attacked the victim, who was later rushed to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. He is currently in stable condition, police said.

Sidhu said the victim knew at least one of his attackers.

"They weren't strangers," she said.

Coxwell-Cosburn

One boy, 17, was arrested on Feb. 28, the same day of the stabbing of a 16-year-old male at a bus stop across the street from East York Collegiate.

■ See **SPATE**, page 2

POLICE & FIRE

Police charge man, 45, with possession after seizing drugs

A man, 45 has been charged in a Danforth Avenue and Dawes Road drug bust. Emergency Task Force officers executed a search warrant on Feb. 28, seizing a large quantity of drugs including, cocaine, OxyContin, fentanyl, cannabis substances and ecstasy. Robert Oliver, of Toronto, faces multiple charges including possession of Schedule I and II substances and possession for the purpose of trafficking.

Man arrested after three neighbourhoods hit with thefts from cars

A man has been arrested and charged with 59 counts after a series of property thefts from parked cars in the Parkview Hills, Topham Park, and Edge Park areas. Police allege the accused trespassed on residential properties and checked vehicles for unlocked doors. If doors were locked, vehicles were forcibly entered and property removed. Jordon Cox, 20, of Toronto, was arrested on March 4 and faces 59 charges, including 32 counts of loitering at night and 24 counts of theft not exceeding \$5,000. He is also charged with two counts of possession of property not exceeding \$5,000 and mischief or damage of property not exceeding \$5,000.

~ Jennifer Teixeira



Claire Floody/The Observer

Toronto-Danforth MP Julie Dabrusin (left) and Toronto-Danforth Councillor Mary Fragedakis unpack the federal budget and discuss issues that are important to East York residents.

Drug coverage on the menu

MP hosts budget breakfast to give East York residents a chance to give feedback

By **CLAIRE FLOODY**
The Observer

Barb McCutcheon arrived at East York's budget breakfast with a purpose: to talk about pharmacare.

McCutcheon and her spouse, Rachelle Desrosiers, are East York residents, living only a few blocks away from the East York Community Centre where the budget breakfast — a meeting to discuss the newly released federal budget with local MP Julie Dabrusin — was held March 11. They both want to see more financial support under pharmacare, a system of public insurance coverage for prescription drugs in Canada.

Desrosiers receives Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) Disability benefits, but under the current federal budget her drugs and a lot of other medical expenses aren't covered. Her medications cost \$6,901 last year, and that's just from her primary pharmacy. The government did not cover any of those expenses.

Fortunately, her spouse has a good pension, benefits, and purchased family insurance. Desrosiers also has a small amount of long-term disability insurance from her last job. While their combined insurance covered most of Desrosiers' medications, they still paid \$1,326.25.

Not all those on CPP Disability are so fortunate. In order to qualify for benefits, "a person [has to] have a severe and pro-

longed disability" usually resulting in an inability to work on a regular basis, according to the Government of Canada's website.

That's not all. The person had to contribute to the Canadian Pension Plan for four of the last six years, earning the minimum amount of annual income, which in 2017 was \$5,500 (the number is adjusted each year).

Alternatively, the person could have contributed to CPP for three of the last six years while still needing to earn the required minimum income, but would have had to contribute for at least 25 years. "It's a very high standard in order to even qualify for CPP Disability benefits," McCutcheon said.

People like Desrosiers are left in a limbo, especially if they are disabled early in life. Their disability makes it challenging for them to work and earn income, and many face high drug costs.

In addition, Ontarians aren't eligible for the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program until they are 65. For those on CPP Disability, that could mean a long wait until they get their drugs paid for. To put that in perspective, Desrosiers takes seven types of drugs each day; one of them alone costs almost \$12 a day.

"The government acknowledges these people are so disabled they cannot work, yet they will not cover the cost of drugs until they're 65," McCutcheon said. "It's not fair."

Toronto-Danforth MP Dabrusin said universal pharmacare is an important issue for which she advocates. She thanked McCutcheon for bringing her story to her attention.

"These stories are extremely helpful for

me, because statistics can only really go so far," Dabrusin said.

McCutcheon also doesn't think it's fair that, as of Jan. 1, pharmacare extended its coverage to offer free prescriptions for anyone under 25 in Ontario, regardless of income. She believes the government was trying to positively impact the most people possible. But why not support the people with greater need first?

"When I was 25, I was working, able-bodied, and using next to no prescriptions, yet they get their drugs paid for?" McCutcheon said. "When people who are sufficiently disabled, worked for years and paid into the government still aren't taken care of?"

CPP Disability benefits also don't cover costs for things, such as dental, physiotherapy or eye care. These medical services add up, but for people with disabilities they can be even more expensive. Desrosiers has a very high prescription and is legally blind in one eye — they recently paid over \$700 for her new glasses with no help from the government. Their insurance paid them back \$150, but that minimal coverage is available only every two years.

Although McCutcheon and Desrosiers aren't personally struggling to make ends meet, they are advocating on behalf of all people on CPP Disability benefits who deserve the right to universal pharmacare coverage. If it wasn't for McCutcheon's good pension and benefits, their situation might be a lot worse. Those on CPP Disability represent a fraction of the population, but they are most in need of support. The March 11 breakfast was the second meeting Dabrusin hosted to discuss the 2018 federal budget.

Spate of stabbings reported in East York

Cont'd. from page 1

The second arrest — of a boy, 16 — came almost a week later on March 5.

Toronto police had originally responded to a call about a stabbing in the East York area on Feb. 28 at 3:17 p.m.

It is alleged two boys arrived in the Coxwell and Cosburn Avenue area that day looking for a 16-year-old boy who attended the collegiate. They found the boy and

stabbed him multiple times in a bus stop across from the school.

Witnesses reportedly came to help the victim while the two assailants fled. The victim was rushed to the hospital.

Staff at East York Collegiate were unable to discuss the boy's conditions or the incident due to a non-disclosure agreement.

Construction workers across from the bus stop say they witnessed the aftermath of the scene.

"I thought he got hit by a bus with all the blood but turns out, he got stabbed," one said.

The arrested boys appeared in court on March 1.

Both were charged with attempted murder and one was also charged with robbery with an offensive weapon and possession of an offensive weapon.

Neither can be named under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Expert discusses systemic racism

Dr. Jennifer Mills will talk about her research on Black Canadians March 20 at the S. Walter Stewart Library, 170 Memorial Park Ave., from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Join ceremony honouring E.Y.'s Agnes Macphail

The 25th annual Agnes Macphail Award Ceremony will take place on Saturday, March 24 at 7 p.m. at The East York Civic Centre, 850 Coxwell Ave. The 2018 award will be presented to volunteer Carol Burtin Fripp, while guest speaker MP Rob Oliphant will talk about Macphail, the first woman to be elected to parliament. The winner of the Agnes Macphail Public Speaking Contest and the VOCA Chorus of Toronto will also be on hand.

Greektown walk offers an inside peek at history

The Greek Canadian Project, along with Myseum of Toronto, York University and the Clara Thomas Archives & Special Collections, is hosting Gateway to Greektown: A Historical Walking Tour of the Danforth. Tours will be held Saturday, March 24 at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 25, also at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Attendees should meet at the Pape/Danforth Library, 701 Pape Ave. To register, go to www.myseumoftoronto.com/programming/gateway-to-greektown.

~ Observer staff



Photo courtesy of Will Fripp

"I just find it rewarding to work with your friends and neighbours," says Carol Burtin Fripp, co-president of the Leaside Property Owners' Association.

E.Y. resident to be honoured with Agnes Macphail Award

Carol Burtin Fripp to be recognized for her contributions

By **BRANDON WONG**
The Observer

Carol Burtin Fripp is set to become the 25th recipient of the Agnes Macphail Award for her contributions to the Leaside community.

The award ceremony will take place at the East York Civic Centre on March 24, the anniversary of Macphail's birth.

"I was initially surprised when I first heard, but I'm very

flattered to have been chosen," Burton Fripp said. "I'm looking forward to the ceremony."

As the co-president of the Leaside Property Owners' Association, Burton Fripp is responsible for development proposals and traffic studies.

Her role became a "full-time involvement" while she was balancing her job as a producer at TVO until her retirement in 2008.

"I just find it rewarding to work with your friends and neighbours," Burton Fripp said. "It's such a pleasure."

The East York council authorized the award in 1994 to

honour Agnes Macphail, who was the first woman to be elected to the House of Commons. It highlights an individual's contribution to the East York community.

Previous winners include former East York mayor Alan Redway, Rev. Jim Parker of Bethany Baptist Church, and Muhammad Masood Alam, who raised awareness about high-rise safety in his community.

"It's an important award and she was an important woman," Burton Fripp said. "Agnes Macphail showed that persistence is worth it and that it pays off."

Proposal to lower voting age gets mixed reaction

By **JELA TEJADA**
The Observer

At age 16, Canadians can work, drive and file income tax. But should they be able to cast a ballot?

Beaches-East York MPP Arthur Potts introduced a private member's bill in the Ontario legislature on March 5 proposing that the current voting age of 18 be lowered to 16.

"Boosting voter turnout is a part of the goal," Potts said. "But it's more about youth engagement."

Potts gave credit to the young Liberals as his inspiration for the bill.

"I was asked by youth. Most of them are in high school," he said. "They do all this work and are fully engaged, but they asked me, 'Why don't we get to vote?'"

Alex Mulligan, 21, is a member of the Beaches-East



ARTHUR POTTS

York Young Liberals. He said lowering the voting age is a "good way for youth to have some representation in the democracy, as well as to encourage youth activism across the political spectrum."

Potts recalled that when he was 16, he was president of the Young Liberals Association. At that age, he said, he was already mature enough to handle responsibilities.

"There's no right or wrong vote in the election," Mulligan

said. "And people over 18 aren't necessarily more knowledgeable or mature than those a year or two younger."

Councillor Janet Davis (Ward 31) is not against lowering the voting age. She is, however, against the timing Potts chose. She voiced her opinions via Twitter.

"It's almost an insult to young people to put this through as a private member's bill that has no chance at success," Davis said. "If it goes through, I'll eat my words, but normally a private member's bill before the last days of the government has very little prospect of success, and that's too bad that (Potts) chose to do it that way."

Although Davis fully supports giving young people the chance to vote in elections, she said introducing a private member's bill at the "11th hour" is simply "dirty politics."

YOUR SAY

Should the voting age be lowered to 16?



Katie KOMINA

'Yes. The ones who would vote are the ones who care enough and are probably the ones who are aware of the issues going on in the community, so it doesn't really matter how old they are.'



Tim SPEARS

'No, I don't think so. Sixteen-year-olds are just not mature enough. They've still got some living to do, so allowing them to vote is just not a good idea.'



Saagari COLEMAN

'Young people have valid thoughts and ideas, too, but it's hard to say because sometimes democracy itself likes to see the populist sentiment, like Trump was elected because a lot of young people were interested.'

Mayor Tory seeking an external review of missing-persons cases



Bobby Hristova/The Observer

Det-Sgt. Hank Idsinga is the lead investigator in the Bruce McArthur case. During a March 5 press conference, he called the case "very disturbing."

Cont'd. from page 1

The LGBTQ community started pleading for police to pay attention after the first two disappearances linked to McArthur in 2010.

Three of the missing men were racialized victims of Middle Eastern or South Asian origin, two of whom - Skandaraj Navaratnam, 40, and Majeed Kayhan, 59 - were murdered, police say.

Haran Vijayanathan, executive director of the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP), was one of the first to request a third-party review and internal review on Jan. 28.

"If we just left it with the internal investigation, no change would have come out of it," he said. "An independent external review will say, 'This is what actually happened.'"

Police and city officials began meeting with Vijayanathan and his representative, Shakir Rahim, a law student and ASAAP board member, in early February.

City officials thought the relationship between law enforcement and the LGBTQ community was improving, but the delayed police response damaged any previous trust.

"The community has changed, the laws have

changed, and systems have changed. However, the way police operate hasn't changed," Vijayanathan said. "Being open and honest right now and listening to what people have to say... is the best way to building trust within the community that's lost it already."

ASAAP suggests that a variety of community leaders should sit on the external review board and dialogues should be held with police to help them understand the issues.

The ultimate goal is to create Toronto's first missing-persons bureau, a database that could change the entire system. The bureau would maintain readily accessible files on all missing persons, speeding up things such as DNA testing, even if a case went cold.

"We can't continue this way. It's a broken system. People are going missing regularly and they're not being found," Vijayanathan said. "Whatever system change that we make... has a potential impact on not just the LGBTQ community, but also every single community across this province and this city."

Despite this, Vijayanathan says a lack of urgency from police is nothing new.

Tim McCaskell, a prominent Toronto LGBTQ

activist since 1974, questions Tory's statement, asking "Why not a month ago? Two months ago?"

McCaskell, who has been openly critical of law enforcement since his first days as an activist, says the case is a "huge black eye" for police and the city.

Moving forward, he says authorities should "re-think policing."

"Forty years of fights to try to get proper, independent civilian oversight of the police and dealing with complaints and it's always suspect," he said.

"They need to relook at organizational structure... so if something like this starts to happen, they understand what's going on, they hear what people are saying, and can begin to take seriously community concerns."

Vijayanathan is optimistic about the third-party review.

"Everything happened really quickly, which we're really pleased with... I think the mayor is willing to have that conversation and so is the police," he said. "It's going to be a never-ending story for the next few years... we'll see where it takes us."

The board will meet on March 22.

SPECIAL REPORT: MCARTHUR INVESTIGATION

Not speaking out a 'crippling issue'

South Asian and Middle Eastern communities need resources for more than coming out: expert

By **BOBBY HRISTOVA**
The Observer

While Toronto police investigate the cases of missing gay men linked to landscaper Bruce McArthur, a new play about the challenges facing gay South Asian men debuted at Toronto's Theatre Passe Muraille in February.

Acha Bacha, by Toronto playwright Bilal Baig, revolves around Zaya, a gay man exploring his identity as a Muslim and queer person. Zaya faces a choice between working on his relationship with his partner or caring for his ill mother, who shames him for his lifestyle. While Zaya's mother suspects he is gay, he never explicitly comes out to her. He also wrestles with early incidents of abuse by an imam at his religious school.

Baig insists that he did not write *Acha Bacha* with the McArthur case in mind, since he created it long before the case broke.

Five of the missing men were racialized victims of Middle Eastern and South Asian origin, including four who police now say were murdered.

While Baig declined to be interviewed on the record about the timeliness of his current play, which ran from Feb. 1 to 18, it has prompted discussion in a community rocked by the serial killer case. Rahim Thawer, an organizer at Salaam Canada, a volunteer association helping queer and trans Muslims, says his community is "in shock."

The play, he says, highlights key community issues.

"It talks about our stories in a way that does not shy away from... issues of shame, issues of abuse, issues of family pressure and the complexities of religion," he said from his office in The 519, a community centre located on Church Street in the heart of Toronto's gay village.

"What's really difficult to wrap my head around is whether or not (the murders were) racially motivated and whether or not this person thought it would be less noticeable to target people who are racialized and perhaps leverage them not being as out as other people and that emotional vulnerability," Thawer said.

The playwright, Baig, has a record of commenting on social issues involving gender and diversity impacting young South Asians. However, Baig told the *Toronto Observer* he didn't want the



Bobby Hristova/The Observer

Haran Vijayanathan, executive director of the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, speaks out about the challenges facing gay South Asian men in Toronto who want to come out of the closet.

play to be associated with this story.

Not speaking out is a crippling issue in the community, said Haran Vijayanathan, executive director of the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP). "For a lot of folks in the South Asian and Middle Eastern community, it's a little bit harder to leave your family and come out of the closet and live your life the way you want to live it," he said.

The obligations which some South Asians and others have to their traditional family values continue to influence them, whether they recently immigrated or have been settled in Canada for generations.

"I have a friend who was born and raised here in this country and his family pressured him into getting married even though he came out to them... and he's married," Vijayanathan said in an interview.

"It's highly common. We work with a lot of international students who use coming here as a student as an escape to safely explore who they are."

And even then, he says, there are still risks.

Vijayanathan said he helps many clients who fear they will meet someone connected to their own families and may send word back home, which could lead to estrangement or excommunication. This pressure forces some to come out selectively.

Two of the missing men, Skandaraj Navaratnam, 40 and Abdulbasir Faizi, 42, hid their identities, family and authorities said.

"Coming out... depends on their access. Who do they know, where are they welcome (and) what feels like a safe place to access," Thawer said.

However, the community needs resources for more than just coming out, experts say. When relationships between gay men turn abusive, it is especially volatile for visible minorities.

"If one person has citizenship status, (and) the other person doesn't, there's opportunity for abuse to happen," Vijayanathan said.

Even worse, when victims, partic-

ularly males, report sexual assault, Vijayanathan said police aren't doing a good enough job.

"When the community comes to say that there's something wrong, 'The cat's not being taken care of' or 'The dog's not being taken care of, this is unlike their character,' and they go to the police and the right system to complain, then those complaints should be taken seriously," he said.

Thawer said the murders and the police response have been "terrifying".

"I think we haven't had a lot of information from the police... about whether or not there was a serial killer, (if) gay men in the community should be concerned, or what we should do," he said. "There's this experience of our community having to rally for itself because larger institutions are not there to do that."

But Thawer acknowledges that perhaps police may not know what to do.

"I'm not sure that they understand our community well enough to say, 'Here's what you have to look out for,'" Thawer said. "Police or any official institution that wants to focus on keeping minority populations safe is going to have to understand those populations, and clearly they don't."

Vijayanathan's organization, ASAAP, is creating a SAFE program, which launches Friday. It allows clients to notify them of their whereabouts and follow up to ensure they are safe - especially for dates. If they go missing, ASAAP follows up with police. The organization hopes to crowdfund \$50,000 to expand the pilot project.

"A majority of the men were in a heterosexual relationship and didn't have family or friends they could talk to and share where they're going and what they're doing and that's something ASAAP has recognized we need to have," he said.

ASAAP will request an internal investigation on Project Houston and Project Prism after the investigation ends.

The organization is also demanding a third-party review of how police handle missing persons cases, which both Mayor John Tory and the chair of the Toronto police board have recently supported.

"We clearly think there is racism, homophobia and classism that played a part in how this investigation was conducted," Vijayanathan said. "We are not going to step back on this."

Det.-Sgt. Hank Idsinga, the lead detective on the Bruce McArthur case, responded to AASAP's concern during a press conference on March 5.

"If people want to look at what we've done, I welcome that," he said.

What happens when men go missing?

By **TAYLOR BRIDGER** and **BOBBY HRISTOVA**
The Observer

When two men who frequented Toronto's Gay Village went missing in 2010, police did not formally launch a comprehensive police investigation. But when a third man, Majeed Kayhan, vanished two years later, Toronto police began Project Houston, a task force to locate missing men from Toronto's gay village.

That investigation would unknowingly expose a series of killings - the worst in Toronto's history.

Yet, the terrifying trend continued - six more men missing in the span of seven years - until a new police task force with a new name led to the eventual arrest of a suspect, Bruce McArthur, in January 2018.

After unearthing human remains belonging to some of these missing men, police charged McArthur, 66, a former landscaper, with six counts of first-degree murder.

Police later released the photo of an unknown deceased man who they think is also linked to the case.

More charges are expected, police say.

As the investigation continues, and while the public and political leaders are trying to understand how this could have happened, attention is now on the fallout that the murders have had on the city's gay community.



To see our full Special Report on the McArthur case, check us out online at torontoobserver.ca

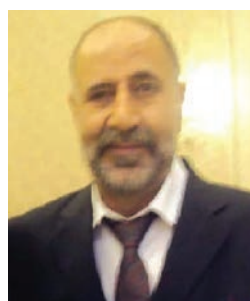
Alleged serial killer has been charged with the murders of these six men



■ **SOURESH MAHMUDI**



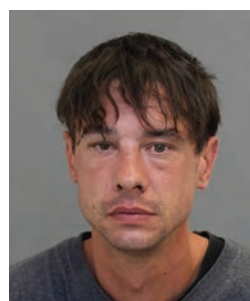
■ **SELIM ESEN**



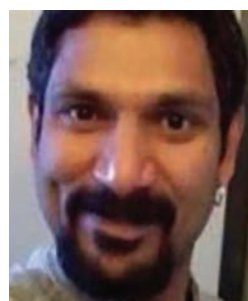
■ **MAJEED KAYHAN**



■ **ANDREW KINSMEN**



■ **DEAN LISOWICK**



■ **SKANDARAJ NAVARATNAM**

SPECIAL REPORT: MCARTHUR INVESTIGATION

Serial killer experts debunk stereotypes

Sasha Reid, Michael Arntfield, Michael Shane explain the psychology behind what drives serial killers to do what they do

By SERGIO ARANGIO
The Observer

Paul Bernardo. Robert Pickton. Clifford Olson. The list of notorious Canadian serial killers may soon have another name added, with the high-profile murders and disappearances of men from Toronto's Church-Wellesley Village.

Experts who study serial killers are now weighing in on the habits and personality of the former Toronto landscaper who stands charged with six murders of local gay men.

Sasha Reid, a PhD candidate in applied psychology and an expert in psychopathic serial killers, says killing can come quite easily to certain people, particularly psychopaths.

"They only care about themselves," she said in an interview at her University of Toronto office.

Canada has seen around 60 serial killers in its history, according to a report from Radford University. Of those, some of the country's most notorious murderers, like Bernardo and Pickton, have also been diagnosed as psychopaths. But Reid pointed out that it is not necessarily the case for all of them.

The gold standard for diagnosing psychopaths is the Hare Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R). It was developed by Canadian criminal psychology researcher Dr. Robert Hare in the 1970s. Now in its second edition, the checklist rates a subject on 20 items such as superficial charm, lack of guilt and lack of remorse. The subject is interviewed by a psychologist and scored from zero to two on each item (zero is weak, one is somewhat, two is strong). If the subject's score reaches 30 or higher, that person is classified as a clinical psychopath.

While psychopaths make up only one per cent of the general population, Reid said the proportion of psychopathic serial killers is much larger. She admits, however, that it's hard to know just how many psychopathic serial murderers there are.

"(Some) never see a psychiatrist, and so we would never know whether they were psychopaths or not," she said.

Michael Arntfield, a former London, Ont. police officer, criminologist and expert in serial killers, proposes that the suspect in the Toronto case may very well be a psychopath, too.

"The telltale indicator ... is the fact that (the suspect is) dismembering the bodies," the associate professor at the University of Western Ontario said. "This is extremely rare."

The remains of seven people have been found in planters at a Leaside home. Three of the victims have since been identified by police as Andrew Kinsman, Soroush Mahmudi, and Skandaraj Navaratnam. The four remaining victims have not been identified.

Arntfield said the act of hiding a victim's body parts in planters outside people's homes is extremely rare – even for a phenomenon like serial murder. This suggests a more emotional and sexual drive, he said, as well as a sort of performance by hiding the victims right under people's noses.

"That would ... provide them with a great sense of power," he said.

While psychopathy may make it easier to murder, what sets serial killers apart from the rest of society is an urge to commit horrible acts and possibly take pleasure in doing so, experts say. That's the view of forensic psy-



Sergio Arangio/The Observer

Sasha Reid, who researches serial killers, says police need clearer guidelines when investigating potential suspects.

chology professor Matthew Shane, who is also an assistant dean at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology.

"They don't kill people unless they get something out of it," he said.

Even so, a serial murderer is not born that way, as Reid points out. She explained that the development of a serial killer can stem from a poor relationship with parents or guardians, which keeps them from having warm, caring personality traits, and developing social ties with people. This leads to them turning inward and fantasizing about a world where they have power, control and domination.

Anyone can experience this and not become violent, but serial killers do, Reid explained, while glancing at a photo of Ted Bundy pinned to her office wall, and it is usually due to a strong sexual desire. At some point down the line, they cannot keep these urges under control.

From fantasy to reality

"Fantasy is not enough for them," Reid said. They start feeling the need to live out their desires by committing small crimes, and then become increasingly violent, eventually leading to outright homicide.

"Some people will fantasize for years or decades before they act," she said.

Arntfield, who has written books on crime and serial killers, said a major red flag is a history of making obscene phone calls to people.

"That is actually an antecedent to often very sadistic behaviour," he said, adding that the joy a person gets by terrorizing strangers on the phone leads them to become more confident, adventurous and dangerous.

Serial killers come in a variety of forms, as Arntfield's research shows. One category of serial murderer is what he calls "The Poacher" or "The Commuter Killer." This person chooses a career that allows them to be mobile, so they can conceal their more sinister actions as they move from place to place.

"A job on the road, whether it's as a trucker or a travelling salesman, is among the best covers," he said.

As they claim their victims, Arntfield said, they tend to space out their murders over time. Serial killers experience a cooling-off period

between murders, he said. During this time, they find other ways of "compensating for their urges," but there is eventually a personal trigger that brings them back to bloodlust.

As one can imagine, it is not very easy to kill someone and get away with it. Which is why, as Reid explained, serial killers must be calculated in where they choose to kill and then hide their victims. Oftentimes, she said, people who target members of the LGBTQ community lure their victims home or get invited to their victim's home before killing them.

The suspect could have picked victims from the Church and Wellesley area easily since the killer would have been very familiar with the community. However, as to why the specific victims were murdered, Reid theorized that they could have been easy targets.

"Some people choose strangers; some people choose acquaintances. It's just whatever is convenient at that time," she said.

After committing the act, serial murderers tend to hide the bodies at home or nearby, so they can relive the experience. Reid said many serial killers like to hide bodies outdoors. She is still trying to figure out why that is.

Prior to the arrest of Bruce McArthur, the Church-Wellesley community had been very outspoken in its attempts to push Toronto police in the right direction. Their cries of a possible serial killer in the gay village were discounted, at least publicly, by police.

Even following McArthur's arrest, Det. Hank Idsinga dismissed "serial killer" as a "media term" during a news conference in January 2018. Many activists have slammed the lack of transparency and the fact that the police didn't issue warnings to the gay community that there was a predator in their midst.

Researchers say part of the problem is that police forces must have a better definition of what a serial murderer is. The FBI defines serial murder as "the unlawful killing of two or more victims by the same offender(s), in separate events."

What bothers Reid is the ambiguity of that definition.

"Gang members would fit within the FBI definition of serial homicide," she said. "So, too, would a hitman, or a whole range of people who for whatever reason commit two (or more) homicides in separate events over a period of time."

Such a broad definition with so much irrelevant data can inhibit the ability of people who study serial killers to do proper research. To combat this, Reid has created a new definition for serial killer which she hopes researchers will use without getting needlessly lost in a sea of police records.

Her definition, called "compulsive criminal homicide," sets the minimum criteria for serial killing at two murders and one attempted murder. It also makes the distinction that serial murderers use self-gratification as a baseline motivation.

Reid hopes that having clear-cut criteria "created by academics, for academics" will help researchers get consistent data, so they can focus on studying the people that give the term "serial killer" its meaning.

This will, in turn, make police investigations more efficient, she said, as they consult with criminologists about the data they collect on serial murderers.

Issues with investigation

Arntfield has gripes with Toronto police's handling of their gay village investigations, and their failure to admit they had a serial killer on their hands.

"In Canada, (police are) very scared to use the term," he said.

Arntfield said a perfect example of how a police force should operate was a case of a serial shooter in Tampa Bay, Fla. in November 2017. He highlighted how the local police department warned the public of a serial killer in their midst, which kept the community on alert. According to Fox News, it led to 5,000 tips being sent to police, one of which led to the suspected gunman's arrest.

If Toronto officers had had a similar mentality, Arntfield said, an arrest in the Church-Wellesley murders could have been made much faster. He added that police should have done a better job of looking into the Village's missing persons cases early on.

"These were not treated and investigated as suspicious until Project Houston was formed. And then it disbanded."

Project Houston was assembled by Toronto police to investigate the disappearances of Skandaraj Navaratnam, Majeed Kayhan and Abdulbasir Faizi. The project shut down in April 2014 due to insufficient evidence.

Arntfield compared it to how Niagara police badly handled disappearances and murders that would later be connected to Paul Bernardo.

The solution to overlooking strange groups of disappearances can be as simple as better training for officers, he said, and proper distribution of workloads so that public concerns are taken seriously. Once they are, police must be able to put the pieces of missing person cases together in order to find out if a serial killer is behind them.

Reid said she will continue with her research to discover exactly what motivates people to commit these heinous acts. She has developed a missing person's database and a serial homicide database that can be used to identify strange disappearances and make profiles of potential killers.

Reid hopes to one day make it public to help people recognize unsettling patterns in missing person's cases and cross-reference them with a database of thousands of serial killers to create a profile of a person who may be responsible.

Having spent a decade studying serial killers, she believes having comprehensive data to look through is the key to putting pieces together that will "speed up investigations and make them more effective."

EDITORIALS

Crossing guards put safety first

Toronto needs more crossing guards.

Crossing busy city streets can be dangerous, especially for young students who, like all Toronto pedestrians, must deal with speeding cars, stopping just before a crosswalk or racing through before those on foot have made it to the other side.

Early this year, *Toronto.com* reported that crossing guard Amir Siyani was absent from Donlands Avenue and Plains Road in East York. According to Toronto Police Traffic Services, the crossing guard retired.

However, the report states the crossing guard was removed following a four-day survey of the intersection that determined a guard was unwarranted. It's an intersection used by East York children on their journey to and from school.

The loss of this position was just one of the cutbacks contributing to a crossing-guard shortage across the city.

In areas where there are no crossing guards, police often have to stop while on duty to help children cross the street.

Compared to the reported six-figure salary of many Toronto police officers, the approximate \$14 per hour that crossing guards receive for the four and a half hours they work per day is a cost-effective solution.

Siyani has returned to his intersection, following a petition signed by parents and other community members concerned about children's safety. What about the rest of the city's children?

The Toronto District School Board is the largest in the country, with about 172,000 elementary school students. Under the Toronto Catholic District School Board, there are 61,173 elementary students.

The total number of elementary schools in Toronto is 633, but Toronto Police Traffic Services only employs 600 school crossing guards.

Crossing guards are a necessity.

This year, 11 pedestrians have died due to collisions, according to Toronto Police Services' traffic statistics.

Speed limits and pedestrian crossing signals are not enough to protect Toronto children.

Hire and deploy more crossing guards.

~ Shayelle Smith

Walking the walk is one way to help

What if you hosted a safety walk and no one showed up?

That's almost what happened to Ward 31 Councillor Janet Davis, who was disappointed with the "very low" turnout for the community initiative at Stan Wadlow Park on March 7.

Perhaps there's good news in the lack of interest. Maybe, as Davis believes, it means East York residents feel safe, despite the fact that 15-year-old Isaiah Watt was fatally stabbed in the park last October.

It's just as likely, though, that most East Yorkers weren't aware of the walk, or the two or three that have been held previously. So, for those who weren't aware, the March walk was held in response to Watt's death and to collect suggestions to make the park safer for residents.

The walk is actually part of a survey, called a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design audit, that aims to determine areas of the park that are unsafe, from an environmental design perspective.

The team looks for areas that require additional lighting or video surveillance, among other things.

Davis is already talking about improvements to the lighting to make the park more visible to residents and to Toronto Police.

That's great - for this park and for any areas where neighbours gather.

But the real win will be to get more residents involved in safety walks and other efforts to improve safety, and take away the need for these walks in the first place.

Ask yourself, "What can I do to make my neighbourhood safer?" Share your ideas with your neighbours, and with your city councillor.

~ Jennifer Teixeira

COLUMNS

The commoners' everyman

Plain-talking populist Doug Ford is the new Progressive Conservative leader of Ontario, ushered in a few short months before the election.

This outsider, the commoners' everyman and every man's common man, the little guy who's had enough, is expected to deliver Toronto to the Ontario Progressive Conservatives.

It looks like the PCs are taking a page out of Donald Trump's *The Art of The Deal*, or at least hoping for enough angry reactionaries to come out to polling booths June 7.

The Star has tentatively predicted a win for the party led by the former Etobicoke North councillor and older brother of the late Toronto mayor Rob Ford.

Doug Ford, 53, the middle son of a millionaire businessman-politician, previously hosted a radio show on *Newstalk 1010* and tried his hand at television with Sun TV.

He claimed to hate politics, sayin he couldn't wait to get back to running the business he inherited, Deco Labels and Tags.

That didn't stop him from running for mayor in Toronto in 2014, publicly floating the idea of running again this year, and considering seeking the nomination as a Tory MPP candidate in June.

Party bosses didn't seem to agree, so they let him take over the whole party.

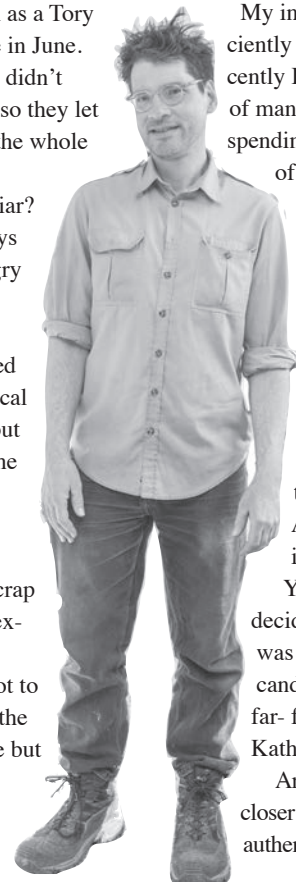
Sound familiar? It certainly plays into Ford's angry outsider brand.

Previously, Ford has defined himself as a fiscal conservative, but more recently he has touted his social conservatism as well, promising to scrap the Liberals' sex-ed curriculum.

He claims not to wish to revisit the abortion debate but wants to invite the parents of minors who are pregnant - the would-

be grandparents - into the discussion. Have I really been living in that oft-discussed progressive bubble? I hadn't thought so.

My income is sufficiently low, and until recently I shared the plight of many Torontonians, spending more than half of it on rent. My job is dirty and physical and I work around plenty of small-c conservatives, but I didn't think there was the level of paranoia and misplaced animosity that characterizes American politics in the Trump era. Yet the PCs decided Doug Ford was the most likely candidate to defeat the far-from-unbeatable Kathleen Wynne. Are their fingers closer to the pulse of real, authentic, hardworking Ontarians? We'll soon find out.



Erik Twight

Real Olympic champ? Hockey

When the National Hockey League announced on April 3, 2017, that its players would not be allowed to participate in the 2018 Olympics, viewers were not amused.

There was disapproval from fans, hockey analysts, and even some of the league's top players.

The resulting event was called a "can-miss." Some wondered who in their right mind would wake up in the early hours of the morning to watch what would essentially be teams of nobodies take the ice.

Now, with the Olympics having come and gone, it's fair to say the competition was enjoyable in its own right.

Don't get me wrong. It sucked seeing Canada not win what

would've been its third consecutive gold medal. But when we put national bias aside, the tournament did more benefit to hockey than harm.

Take the enhanced unpredictability. For most international hockey tournaments, you don't need a genius to tell you who is going to win. With the likes of Sidney Crosby and Jonathan Toews playing for Canada and Alex Ovechkin and Evgeni Malkin suiting up for Russia, you're almost guaranteed a win for the beavers or the bears.

This time, although Canada was considered a favourite and the Olympic Athletes from Russia ultimately won the gold medal, it was difficult knowing for certain who would finish on top and who would be a flop.

Be honest. Did you think the Americans, finalists at two of the last four

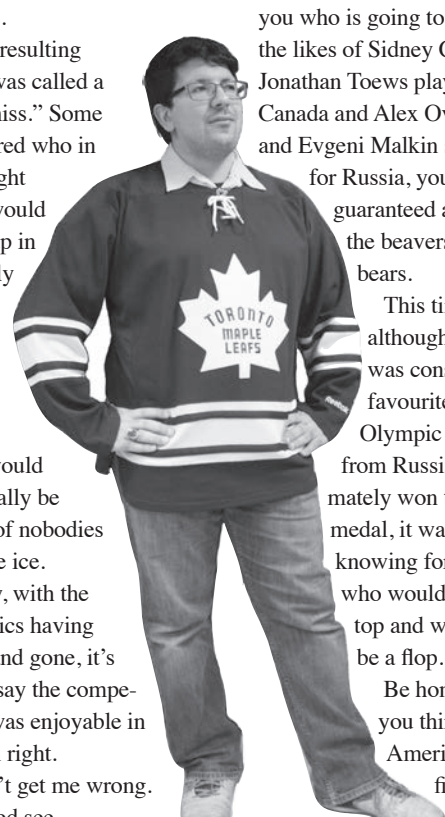
Olympics, would be eliminated in the quarterfinals by the Czech Republic? Did you predict Germany, a team who had never medalled in hockey, would beat 2006 gold medallists Sweden and hockey powerhouse Canada en route to silver?

The absence of NHL players brought a sense of unpredictability and a belief among teams that anybody could go far; that you didn't need to be a Canada or a Russia or a U.S.A. to have a chance.

It also increased the level of competitiveness. Without NHL players, there was a lack of stars. Everybody had some sort of label on them, from nonentity to wasted potential to has-been. Everybody had something to prove, and this was their moment to prove it.

We may not have seen Stanley Cup-winning, multi-million-dollar-making players participate in what is basically a friendly tournament amid their 82-game NHL schedule. But what we did see was heart, determination, and a defiance of the odds among the athletes.

And at the end of the day, isn't that what the Olympics are all about?



Mouhamad Rachini

Shack evolves into Pape Station



City of Toronto Archives



Tijana Turner/The Observer

The Lipton Loop shelter that once stood at the end of the East York Transportation System (left) has long been replaced by an entrance to the Pape Subway station (right). The building shown in the 1931 photo is a rustic transportation hub. Eighty-seven years later, thousands of visitors pass through the site each day.

LGBTQ workshop helps young writers tell their stories

Workshop leader sees surge in LGBTQ characters and writers

By NIDA ZAFAR
The Observer

Writing a story seems like an easily achievable task for most. But according to author Kai Cheng Thom, LGBTQ writers face many roadblocks when developing their voice in their writing.

As a social worker, Thom finds that LGBTQ individuals are at a higher risk of grappling with mental health issues.

She says this is because of things like bullying and discrimination.

That “impacts LGBT writers’ ability to move through life in a comfortable and easy way, as all of us deserve,” she said. “Specifically, in the writing industry... there’s often a belief that only LGBT people will want to read LGBT stories, so a lot of the major publishers have been hesitant to publish that kind of work.”

On March 12, Toronto Public Library’s youth group, Young Voices, held a workshop on helping young writers develop queer fictional characters. The event was held at the Pape/Danforth branch and was hosted by Thom, who also does spoken word and is the recipient of the 2017 Dayne Ogilvie Prize for LGBTQ Emerging Writers award.

Young Voices hosts writing conferences and workshops and publishes an annual magazine.

The magazine consists of writing and art pieces created and selected by a group of youth.

This event came about after a youth requested a workshop, said Michael Warner, the Youth Service Specialist at the Pape/Danforth branch. “As much as possible, we like to get youth input on the programs being offered. It was such a unique idea and definitely an underserved community.”

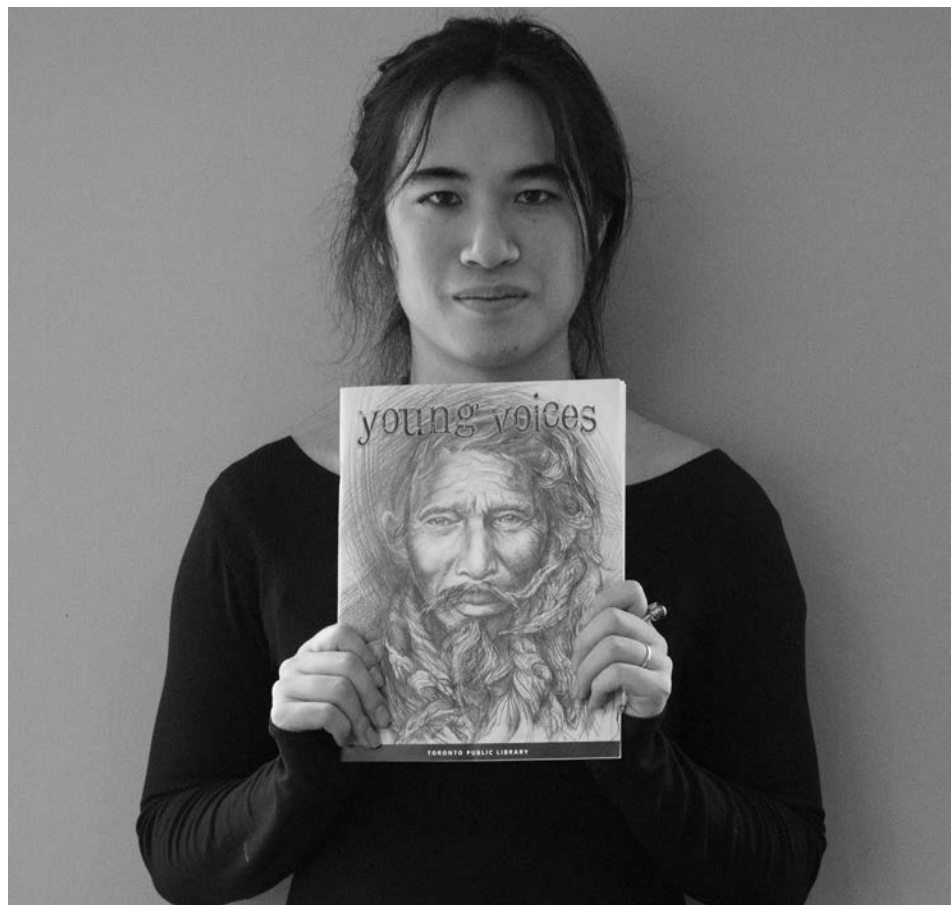
Unfortunately, only two attendees showed up, making for an intimate workshop.

Warner said the low attendance isn’t surprising. “There may be a lot of teens that may not want to self-identify as queer or come out to an event like this,” he said.

The event was held for, but not limited to, people between the ages of 13 and 17. This important age in the developmental cycle for adolescents is a high-risk zone for mental health issues, Thom said. “At that age, you’re developing a sexuality, opinions... (and) you’re becoming independent from your parents. So essentially you’re becoming an adult, but you don’t have the power or the experience of an adult... so there’s a high vulnerability.”

Even though LGBTQ writers face these daily struggles that affect their writing, there are a lot more LGBTQ publications than there were when Thom was a teenager.

“I’m happy to say that, in young adult fiction in particular, we’re seeing a great surge of LGBT characters, LGBT writers and LGBT stories emerging.”



Nida Zafar / The Observer

The event, hosted by author Kai Cheng Thom, focused on creating realistic and compelling queer characters.

Staff at Toronto high schools to begin opioid-overdose training

By FRAN MBADIWE
The Observer

The Toronto District School Board will train secondary school staff to respond to opioid overdoses.

The board voted on Feb. 7 to provide every secondary school with a naloxone kit, as part of an overdose-prevention plan implemented November 2017. Naloxone is a medication used to block the effects of opioids and is able to temporarily reverse the effects of an overdose.

The school board’s initiative, ac-

ording to its Opioid Overdose Prevention Plan, is in response to the City of Toronto’s action plan on the rise of overdoses.

Toronto’s annual opioid toxicity death count has been rising since 2013, with fentanyl and heroin now leading in lives claimed.

“We’re looking to begin scheduling the training once staff return from March Break next week,” said Ryan Bird, spokesperson for the TDSB.

“Following the completion of that training, naloxone kits will be distributed to schools.”

The board should be finished training staff in its 112 secondary schools before the end of April.

In addition to overdose-response training, each school will have at least two staff who hold a standard first aid certificate and CPR training certificate.

“A number of TDSB staff have received training organized through Toronto Public Health, and they will, in turn, train the two to three staff members at each secondary school,” Bird said.

Toronto Public Health is working

to promote public education about overdose prevention and response for high school students, including informing students how they can obtain naloxone.

TPH’s medical officer of health sent communications to all Toronto school boards last fall with information about overdose prevention and response. Students and caregivers were addressed in letters.

“Included was information on how they could obtain naloxone,” said Susan Shepherd, TPH spokesperson and manager of the Drug Strategy Secre-

tariat. Also included was how to register for TPH overdose training.

According to statistics by the City of Toronto, naloxone is administered by a community member before paramedic arrival in an average of 11 non-fatal opioid overdose cases per week.

Paramedics administer naloxone in an average of nine non-fatal cases per week.

For more opioid or overdose statistics, visit TPH’s Toronto Overdose Information System website through toronto.ca.

Riverdale 'It' house is one hot property

116-year-old Cranfield House played big role in Stephen King movie 'It,' now in demand from filmmakers and developers

By **BRANDON WONG**
The Observer

It has taken star turns in *Orphan Black*, *Designated Survivor* and *Fahrenheit 451*.

Last fall, it scared the wits out of movie audiences as a dark, creaky, cobwebbed home to Pennywise the Dancing Clown in Stephen King's horror blockbuster *It*.

Built in 1902, the two-storey Cranfield House at the northwest corner of Pape and Riverdale avenues is in greater demand than ever.

"There have been 11 productions that have been issued permits to film there since 2015," said Shane Gerard, a spokesman for the City of Toronto.

That popularity has brought complaints from some local residents about inconveniences during film production, including noise and road closures.

However, Gene Lee, owner of Atomic Age Comics on Pape Avenue near Bain Avenue, isn't one of them.

"I haven't experienced any inconveniences due to filming at the Cranfield House," said Lee, who sees the film industry as just "regular people going to work and doing their jobs."

"I think film productions are good for the film community. They provide jobs for people who are in the film industry who do, in turn, spend their money in their communities, so you could say the industry is good for the community as a whole."

The mansion has also been a target for developers.

"It's a hot commodity," said Anna Michaelidis, owner of Royal LePage Urban Realty.

"The neighbourhood is amazing, and it's a sought-after location that local developers have been looking at."

"There were talks recently about a deal to purchase the house for \$3 million, but it wasn't confirmed and it is possible the deal just fell apart."

Plans to redevelop the area with a 28-unit condominium have also surfaced, but "there



Brandon Wong/The Observer

The 116-year-old Cranfield House, located at Pape and Riverdale avenues, has been featured in multiple film and TV productions. The house is also protected under the Ontario Heritage Act (see below).

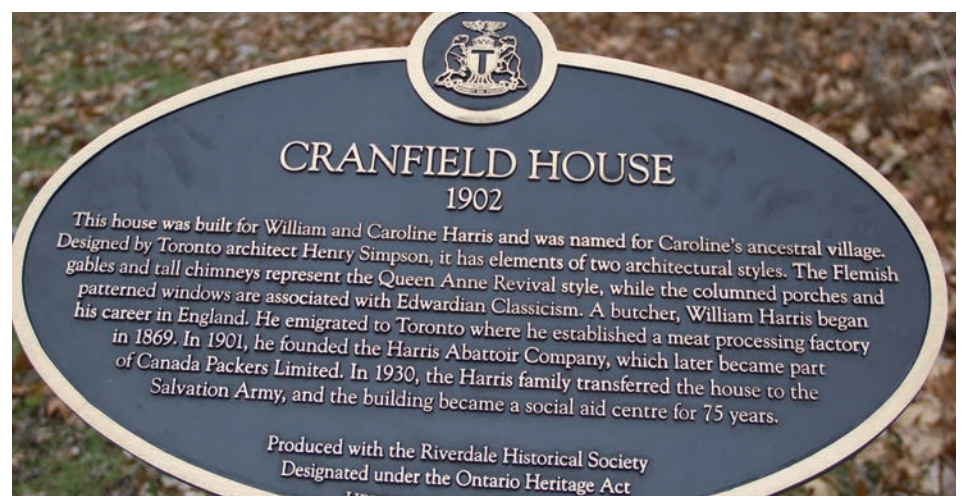
has been no formal announcement on the condos," Michaelidis said.

Redeveloping the Cranfield House is complicated because it is protected under the Ontario Heritage Act.

"That makes it difficult for developers to remodel it and maintain its historical significance," Michaelidis said.

The lack of attention paid to the aging building does not sit well with Councillor Paula Fletcher, Ward 30 (Toronto-Danforth), who said she "would look forward to it being restored at the earliest possible time."

She added that it's "under private ownership now and the city doesn't have any control over private owners."



HEALTH AND SAFETY

If you see a raccoon acting strangely, it could be distemper



Photo by Fotolia

Symptoms of distemper in raccoons include seizures, chewing fits and walking blindly, animal control officials say.

Hundreds of cases of CDV reported over last few years in Toronto

By **TRISHA SALES**
The Observer

The illness that sparked a local report of a raccoon biting a man's boots could be one that can also affect dogs: Canine Distemper Virus.

There have been hundreds of cases of raccoon distemper in the last few years in Toronto. The disease had led many people to believe that the cause was rabies.

In a Feb. 11 incident in Scarborough, a man was chased by a raccoon. The Animal Services' dispatch officer was told the animal bit the toe of his boots.

Similar encounters with raccoon

distemper in East York have been reported.

There have been no cases of raccoon rabies in Toronto, said Tammy Robinson, spokesperson for Toronto Animal Services. However, the animals could be affected by CDV, which exists within the raccoon population in low numbers.

"They may behave aggressively if they are sick, disturbed from their den, are being protective or feel threatened," Robinson said.

Abnormal raccoon behaviour includes seizures, chewing fits, and walking blindly. They might also have mucus around the nose and eyes. Robinson's advice if you see a raccoon reacting abnormally: Call 311. Do not feed it or make contact.

One east York resident encountered a raccoon with similar symptoms.

"We had a raccoon looking to get into our house about a month ago. It was pacing back and forth for over three hours," said Effie Papadopoulos, who called Toronto Animal Services.

"We could see that its eyes were full of pus," but the animal had gone by the time the city arrived, she said.

Sick raccoons are euthanized after being captured.

"There is a zero chance of survival for a raccoon with distemper, so the most humane thing to do was to euthanize it," Robinson said.

In 2015, there was a rise in CDV cases among the raccoon population in the GTA, but that has levelled off.

Despite the virus's name, it is not that common for dogs to be infected, since most are vaccinated. Symptoms can include vomiting, diarrhea, fever, coughing and thick mucus.