



## ■ DANFORTH PROTEST



Sergio Arangio/The Observer

Protesters at the Danforth United Against Hate event face police at the Alexander the Great Parkette in East York. A group called the Canadian Combat Coalition organized a 'True Patriots Vigil,' which prompted a counter-rally attended by about 200 people.

# Protest groups clash at shooting site

'We are a community that stands for love,' councillor says at rally

By **SERGIO ARANGIO**  
The Observer

Seven weeks after the tragic mass shooting at Toronto's Greektown, a clash of "love versus hate" took place Sunday, Sept. 9 at the site of the horrific event.

Following the announcement in early Sep-

tember of a "True Patriots Vigil" at Logan and Danforth avenues by Canadian Combat Coalition (C3), a counter-rally dubbed "Danforth United Against Hate" was planned in opposition to the coalition's alleged anti-immigration and anti-Islamist views.

Stew MacDonald, who ignited the latter event on Facebook, said he was impressed by how the counter-rally grew and grateful for the number of groups and community members who came to offer support.

"To try to create an event to spread hate in a community that's still reeling from a tragedy is quite frankly disgusting," MacDonald said. "That's not something this neighbourhood

needs after the tragedy it had to go through."

The Facebook event for C3's vigil said the goal of the event was to pay respect to victims of terrorism. Among the fewer than 50 attendees were members of the Sons of Odin and controversial commentator and mayor-hopeful Faith Goldy.

A Facebook livestream of the vigil showed speeches criticizing the federal government's immigration policies and referring to the Danforth shooter Faisal Hussain as a terrorist. Chants of protest could be heard in the background.

Meanwhile, the 200-strong counter-rally had speakers voice solidarity with the Danforth

community and disdain for Islamophobic rhetoric. Two of them were councillors Mary Fragedakis and Paula Fletcher.

"Our hearts are with everyone who was touched by the terrible tragedy here," Fletcher said. "But we can't let evil forces that want to take advantage of hate grow in our neighbourhood.

"We are a community that stands for love."

Within an hour of the 2:30 p.m. event, heated words between both camps caused police to delegate C3 to the west side of the street. The two groups exchanged chants until most of the

■ See **PROTEST**, page 5

■ **MARY FRAGEDAKIS**

## 'Ping-pong' election shocks local candidates

A move to cut number of wards in Toronto brings back memories of amalgamation

By **BOBBY HRISTOVA**  
The Observer

Diane Dyson's first run for city councillor hasn't been what she expected. She doesn't know her ward, her competition or her budget, but she does know one thing about this election: "It's making voters' heads spin."

"When they can't figure out what ward they're in and who's running, there's no chance for us to talk about issues," says Dyson, a nominee in what is, for now, Ward 35.

At least, says Brad Bradford, a first-time Ward 37 nominee, the greeting at the door is more receptive.

"When I was knocking on doors in June and July, nobody knew there was an election," he says. "Now I get to the door and we'll make the joke, 'Are you still a candidate, is this still an election, are you still running?'"

But local councillors agree the joke is no laughing matter. This municipal election was already different, adding two wards to the previous 45. Premier Doug Ford's move to reduce the size of city council to match the 25 provincial

and federal ridings mid-election, led to a court battle against the city of Toronto — and use of the notorious notwithstanding clause in Bill 31.

Ontario is still debating Bill 31 after a special House session on Sunday, Sept. 16 led to a rare midnight meeting the next day. After a successful first reading of the bill on Sept. 13, however, protest echoed in the legislature.

"A lot of people were in the public galleries objecting, and instead of removing them, everyone was thrown out," says Peter Tabuns, Toronto-Danforth MPP. "There were grandmothers taken away in handcuffs. I've never seen it before."

While the ping-pong election between the

■ See **MID-ELECTION**, page 2



## MUNICIPAL ELECTION 2018

### WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

#### Cancer walk for awareness

Bladder Cancer Canada is holding a five-km awareness walk on Sunday, Sept. 23, with a stroll through Wilket Creek Park. There will be a DJ, games and a lunch. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the walk kicks off at 10:30 a.m. Registration is free and can be done online or before the walk.

#### Enjoy some art in the park

Each night from Sept. 22 through 30, 7 to 10 p.m., Arts in the Park will be bringing family-friendly, arts-themed events and activities to Dentonia Park. These include theatre performances, dance classes, movies and more.

#### All about concussions

Dr. Michael Hutchinson of St. Michael's Hospital and University of Toronto will be holding a seminar on concussions on Sept. 27. Hutchinson will be speaking from personal experience as well as drawing from his research. This free seminar will be held at Leaside Memorial Community Gardens from 7 to 9 p.m. Pre-registration online is required at [www.eventbee.com/v/concussionclinic/#/rsvp](http://www.eventbee.com/v/concussionclinic/#/rsvp).

#### Love poetry?

Poet and singer Honey Novick will be hosting an event focusing on all things poetry. The free event will be held at S. Walter Stewart Library on Friday, Sept. 28 from 2 to 3 p.m.

~ Alex Goudge



Bobby Hristova/The Observer

**Councillor Paula Fletcher dubs it the "ping-pong election." The twists and turns include Premier Doug Ford hosting a special House session on Sept. 16, a midnight meeting the next day and Ontario's Court of Appeal ruling in favour of Ford on Sept. 19.**

## Mid-election ward debate 'overshadowing real issues'

Community organizer Justin Van Dette says issues such as transportation, housing, roadwork being overlooked

Cont'd. from page 1

and the premier proceeds, Tabuns says the only outcome has been a chaotic campaign.

"I've talked to candidates in other ridings and this riding and we're all saying, 'What on earth is going on?' Incumbents will be campaigning against each other; people who have worked together for a long time."

Ward 30 councillor Paula Fletcher knows the feeling. After spending two election campaigns working alongside councillor Mary Fragedakis, who is running in Ward

34, their cooperation may become competition. But for now, they wait.

"City councillor Fragedakis and I have worked in the 47-ward model. We're not running a 25-ward campaign now," she says.

"It's very hard for us to think about running against each other. If we do, we'll campaign not against each other, but for what we each believe in."

East Yorkers sense the tension, but it's an all-too-familiar feeling.

"I've always believed sometimes smaller isn't always better," says Justin Van Dette, an East York community organizer.

"When East York was its own municipality, you had eight councillors for 100,000 people."

Though Van Dette says he supports a smaller city council in 2022, he admits the community's defiance reminds him of an older change to the city — Mike Harris's amalgamation of Toronto.

Amalgamation was an unpop-

ular move amongst East Yorkers. Tabuns says it was the beginning of a different community.

"The old East York had virtue with councillors being much closer to them," he says.

"Harris undermined that and Ford will take the next step."

However, Van Dette thinks Toronto needs to take a step "back to basics."

"I'm worried the unnecessary debate about provincial policy is overshadowing the real issues," he says.

"Housing, transportation, making sure the grass in the parks is getting cut and the roads are being maintained."

With uncertainty looming over the election set for Oct. 22, Fletcher hopes East York will have faith in their leaders.

"People are worried with 25 wards, some will be left out," she says.

"It's up to us to prove no one will."

### A LEGAL TIMELINE

■ Premier Ford introduced Bill 31, invoking the notwithstanding clause, after Superior Court Justice Edward Belobaba thwarted Bill 5, Ford's original attempt to switch from 47 wards to 25 mid-election.

■ Nelson Wiseman, a political science professor at the University of Toronto, says the notwithstanding clause, section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which can supersede certain sections. "The judge was dealing with section three, the right to vote, which you can't use the clause to override, but you don't have the right to vote in municipal elections," he says. "We wouldn't have the charter without the notwithstanding clause."

■ The rare use of the clause includes settling language issues in Quebec legislation and a failed attempt by Ralph Klein, former Alberta premier, to foil the inclusion of same-sex marriage in the Marriage Act.

■ The province subsequently appealed, leading to days of debate in Queen's Park. On Sept. 19, after Ontario's Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the province and stayed Judge Belobaba's verdict of Bill 5. This means Premier Ford can implement the bill, rather than impose Bill 31 and the notwithstanding clause. The ruling brings a 25-ward election one step closer to reality.

~ Bobby Hristova



■ TABUNS



■ FLETCHER



■ BRADFORD



■ DYSON



## ■ LEGALIZING MARIJUANA



Bobby Hristova/The Observer

(Above left) Dr. Adam Kaufman, emergency medicine physician at Michael Garron Hospital, says the number of edible marijuana users entering the emergency room increased this summer. He thinks it's because of a lack of knowledge among users. (Above right) James Wigmore, a forensic toxicologist, hosted a lecture series, 'Not Your Granddad's Weed,' on Sept. 6 at S. Walter Stewart Library. Today's drugs are "much more potent" than previous iterations, he says.

# Doctors bracing for uptick in hospital visits

Number of emergency room visits linked to marijuana edibles is already higher than usual, local doctor says

By **BOBBY HRISTOVA**  
The Observer

While Toronto waits for marijuana legalization on Oct. 17, one doctor in East York is already taking action.

Dr. Adam Kaufman, emergency medicine physician at Michael Garron Hospital, says they are preparing for more visits to the emergency room because the number of emergency room visits involving marijuana edibles has already gone up.

"You have no idea how many times I hear, 'Well, I only had one cookie,'" he says. "Usually the younger clients are the ones overdosing. They come in feeling anxious, very uncomfortable, or it's flat-out paranoia."

Although Kaufman says someone would have to ingest an amount equal to 20 joints in one sitting before

they were in any danger, edibles pose an increased risk because of the lack of standardized amounts and portions.

It can also take up to two hours for the effects of edibles to kick in, compared to smoking marijuana, which takes 15 to 30 minutes on average.

"If you go to an LCBO, they print the percentage of alcohol on the bottle. You can taste it. It burns and you know it's a lot," Kaufman says.

"Marijuana is not the same. One cookie is not a measure."

He is not against consuming the drug. However, he advises against eating "the whole cookie. Just take a nibble and wait."

High hospital-goers tend to be first-time users with no knowledge of what they're ingesting. Emergency rooms treat them with a supportive care approach that consists of keeping the patient comfortable and hydrated, he says.

## 'Not Your Granddad's Weed'

James Wigmore, a forensic toxicologist, saw what he says is a lack of information about cannabis legalization and developed his own talk, 'Not Your Granddad's Weed.' He spoke at S. Walter Stewart Library on Sept. 6.

"When you have it totally illegal, you don't know what's going on," Wigmore says.

"If a drug causes a high, it's a bad drug. It's

much more potent and grown than before."

In his presentation, Wigmore explains the history of marijuana, the science behind the drug, how it affects you and what to expect when it's legalized.

He says the black market sells unlabelled cannabis products containing anywhere from six to 30 per cent THC, the ingredient responsible for the high.

## Cannabis package warnings

Marketing and packaging for cannabis will resemble cigarettes, listing a warning and the percentage of THC and CBD in the marijuana, although Wigmore thinks the commercialization of cannabis will be the real problem.

When marijuana is legalized, it will only be available at the government-run Ontario Cannabis Store (OCS) online shops until April 2019.

The age restriction for marijuana will match the 19-year-old legal drinking age.

Wigmore says the legal age for cannabis use should be higher or at least a different age to prevent youth from mixing marijuana with alcohol.

"No one wants to buy a high CBD product because that won't get you the high, so everyone is going to make products with a high THC content and there's nothing stopping younger people from walking in and buying it," he says.

## 'Do it with a friend nearby'

Both experts agreed that although marijuana, like any recreational drug, is unhealthy, people will still use it.

"Do it with a friend nearby, don't drive a car, don't operate machinery, don't supervise kids and don't treat it like it's less dangerous than alcohol," Kaufman says.

"It's not."

Wigmore's recommendation for someone insistent on trying marijuana is a product with five per cent THC and three per cent CBD.

Edibles won't be legal to sell on Oct. 17. However, users will be allowed to bake their own.

## Cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome

Daily cannabis use can cause cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome – a syndrome Dr. Adam Kaufman says he's seeing more of in the emergency room. "We don't understand it enough to know, but the prolonged smoking affects temperature regulation in the brain," he says.

A side effect is uncontrollable vomiting. One temporary way to stop the effect is to stay in a warm bath. Kaufman thinks the potent cannabis and acceptance of the drug may be the cause.

After decriminalizing cannabis in Colorado, cases entering emergency rooms doubled. "On average, patients visit the hospital seven times before it's properly diagnosed because no one knows what it is," says forensics toxicologist James Wigmore. The fix is simple — you can't ingest cannabis.

"The one nice thing in all of this is that it's easily treatable," Kaufman says.

"The most important thing is to be cautious and know what you're doing."

~ Bobby Hristova



Photo by Fotolia





Danielle Clarke/The Observer

Designer Paul Nguyen stands next to his custom-made jackets at Foot Action at the Eaton Centre. He was part of a 988 Concept pop-up event.

# 988 Concept merges art and fashion

By DANIELLE CLARKE  
The Observer

Whether you want to make a bold political statement with a Colin Kaepernick jacket, fangirl for Drake with a T-shirt or even put the lyrics of your favourite song on an item of clothing or accessory, artistic clothing creators Paul Nguyen and Sophia Noronha can make it happen.

When Noronha and Nguyen opened fashion boutique 988 Concept in Pape Village in June of last year, they didn't expect to be collaborating on exclusive repurposed custom-made jackets that would be the main attraction of their store.

Nguyen went to school for graphic design and marketing and is the co-owner of 988 Concept. He uses fabric paint and sometimes a mixture of his own paint to craft abstract images of notable people in pop culture and personalized texts and pictures on clothing, most commonly jackets.

"Most of my inspiration comes from pop culture and music art," he says. "A lot from social media too. Drake and Cardi B, artists like that."

Nguyen and Noronha stumbled upon their unique clothing designs by chance.

"Sophia has a YouTube channel and she has a video with over 44,000 views where she is making a jacket with rips on it," Nguyen says.

"That inspired me to start painting on one of my old jackets. Then I sent Sophia a picture and she was amazed. That's how we started customizing."

The motivation behind Nguyen's designs comes from his fascination with wearable art.

"I decide what I want to draw when I look at a jacket, or sometimes when I see an image. Like reggae artist Chronixx —when I saw his latest album cover, knew I had to recreate it on a jacket," he says.

The jackets Nguyen uses for his designs are environmentally friendly, repurposed apparel. The army jackets are sourced from the Canadian and American military, while the denim jackets are used vintage pieces because "nowadays, it's hard to find that material and quality," he says.

Nguyen likes to leave most of his art open to

interpretation.

"I like to do abstract painting instead of the actual image. Sometimes people look at the jackets and they are like, 'who is that,' and sometimes they recognize them immediately," he says.

The duo also designs items other than clothing, including purses, shoes and furniture. In terms of the latter, they collaborate with an East York business called Luxe-KCInteriors, which specializes in upholstery and refurbished vintage chairs.

"We work together," Nguyen explains. "I paint the canvass and I give it to them and they make the chair."

In terms of jackets, the process of placing an order for a custom-made piece is relatively quick and easy.

"Tell me your idea of what you want on the jacket. Then I'll work on the design and we go from there," Nguyen says.

"Let's say you want a picture of yourself. You would send me a picture and I turn it into an abstract image."

Each design takes a couple of hours to create. "The more detail, the longer it takes to make," he says.

Nguyen's designs are garnering traction and solidifying an international fan base.

"I have many customers from America, Germany and France. People reach out to me through my website or social media," he says. "I make sure that the jacket is the perfect size for them and they are happy with the jacket. Then I start customizing."

Nguyen's favourite designs are the ones created with the customer's vision in mind.

"I love seeing their reaction when it's finished," he says.

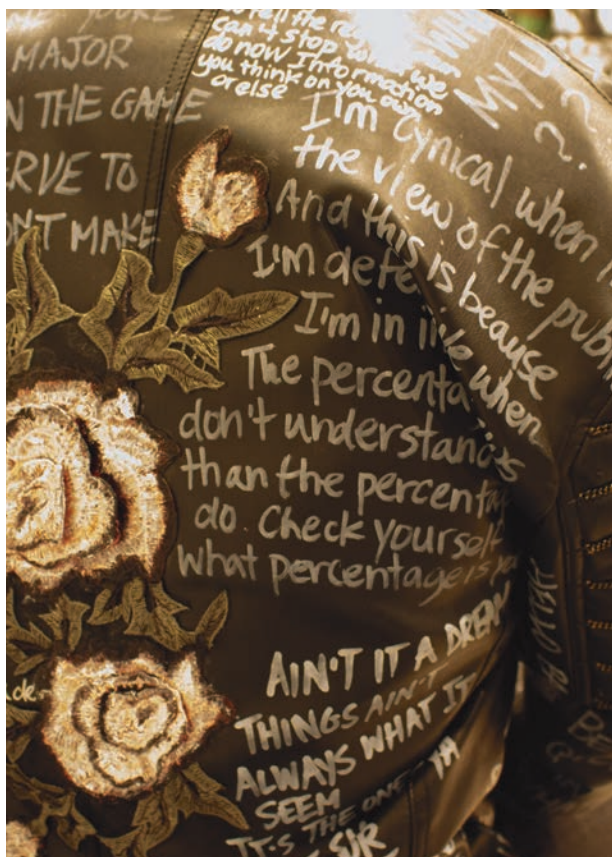
Jackets range in price from \$300 to \$500 if a customer wants to add crystals or other specialized details.

"Every jacket is one of a kind," Nguyen says. "If a customer orders a specific custom design, I will never repeat that design. If it's something that I made to sell in the store, it won't look exactly the same."



Danielle Clarke/The Observer

A painted chair, including popular lyrics, pays tribute to rapper Notorious B.I.G.



Danielle Clarke/The Observer

This leather jacket features an intriguing mix of poetry and art.



Danielle Clarke/The Observer

A sample of Paul Nguyen's art featuring Colin Kaepernick. It can be painted on an item of clothing.



## ■ DANFORTH PROTEST

# Protest groups clash in Greektown

200 attending anti-hate rally drown out 50 holding 'vigil'

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Coalition supporters abandoned their event after being drowned out.

A similar rally was planned to be held at Nathan Phillips Square by the Worldwide Coalition Against Islam in August. That event was cancelled amidst plans of a counter-protest and massive social media backlash.

As the last of the C3 supporters left for the day, council candidate Iola Fortino talked about her anger over not being able to "speak the truth" at the event.

The counter-rally supporters "have mental illness, they are not facing the truth," said Fortino, who is running for Ward 12 in Toronto and is an avid Goldy supporter.

As she spoke, Fortino paused to argue with a man who vehemently disagreed with her Islamophobic language and called her "disgusting."



Sergio Arangio/The Observer

**Stew MacDonald, centre, worked with the Urban Alliance on Race Relations and the Eastminster United Church to organize the counter-rally.**



Doha Hanno/ The Observer

(Above left) A wide variety of local artists displayed their work at the Danforth East Arts Fair in East Lynn Park last weekend. (Above right) Julie Glick's artwork was on display at the fair. Although she specializes in pets, she also paints botanicals and creates play-work pottery sculptures.

## Danforth East Arts Fair celebrates 10th anniversary

By DOHA HANNO  
The Observer

For artist Julie Glick, it's all about the dogs.

"It's hard to knowingly run into cat-people on the street and go, 'Hey, I do cats!' but dogs are always part of the conversation," says Glick, who specializes in paintings of pets and was one of over 60 local artists at last weekend's annual Danforth East Arts Fair in East Lynn Park.

"About 13 years ago, I adopted my dog and

there was a little neighbourhood gallery just up here on Danforth and I went in one day and said, 'Hey, how about I do an exhibition on dogs? It will be a great community effort and a great way to bring people from the neighbourhood to your gallery!' and he said OK, and ever since then I've been doing pet paintings."

The event, which includes food, live music, and children's activities, is Toronto's largest not-for-profit, most family-friendly arts fair.

It's hosted by the Danforth East Communi-

ty Association (DECA), a volunteer-run residents association dedicated to making positive changes to the East York community.

Professor, journalist and community activities coordinator Mary Cowan founded the fair, which celebrated its 10th anniversary this year.

"There was a need for events in the community to support local artists, and that's what we're doing with this fair," says Amanda Olson, who ran this year's fair. "Everything is a hundred per cent hand-crafted, and it ranges

from photography to T-shirts to ceramic bowls and oil paintings."

Another artisan at this year's fair, Henry VanderSpek, is a photojournalist from Culture Snap Photography.

"I meet people, interview them, take their portraits, take detailed shots of their work," says VanderSpek.

"I also do street photography, which I show and sell as art images. Those two areas are both my loves — people and their stories, and then the street scenes that I capture."



EDITORIALS

# Violent lessons

Toronto needs to treat guns as a public health issue if it wants to get a handle on gun crime

On June 14, the unthinkable happened. Two sisters, ages 5 and 9, were shot at a playground in Scarborough. The nine-year-old was shot in the leg and her five-year-old sister was shot in the abdomen. Both were rushed to the hospital in critical condition. Though they both survived, it is inconceivable that a place that epitomizes childhood innocence had become a crime scene.

On July 22, tragedy struck again. Three people were killed and 13 injured in a drive-by shooting on the Danforth. Among the dead was Julianna Kozis, a 10-year-old from Markham.

Over Labour Day weekend alone, five people were killed and two were injured due to gun violence in the GTA.

One of the shootings occurred on Sept. 2 at an annual memorial for Kamal Hercules, a 21-year-old who was shot dead in 2009. Thirty-year-old Michael Lewis, who was visiting the memorial, was shot dead in front of his two kids and pregnant girlfriend.

Each of these shootings was different. Each affected a wide range of people. According to the Toronto Police Service Crime Statistics, there have been 302 shootings this year as of Sept. 18. That is 17 more shootings than at the same time last year.

It's clear that guns are becoming a more pressing issue. So what can be done? For years, the United States has grappled with gun violence, with many mass shootings taking place in schools and putting children at risk. Does that mean parents will now be compelled to keep their children indoors for fear that not even a playground is safe?

According to the Prevention Institute, some less obvious solutions proposed in the U.S. have been used to treat the issue as a preventable public-health concern; to provide mental-health and trauma services; and to investigate the link between anger and gun violence to see if any anger-management sessions may help.

That is not to say that Toronto has to implement those specific changes, but after such a violent summer, it might help to consider other approaches -- for the safety of all of Toronto and, especially, for the sake of Toronto's children.

~Jessica Lam

# Problem premier

Ford cut city council and invoked notwithstanding clause without any advance notice in election

There are certain unwritten rules in politics that our politicians have generally abided by — until now.

For example, we expect that our representatives will act in a manner that is open to the public, that decisions involving our province will be well thought out, and that legislation will actually address some sort of concern that we have.

Whether we agree or disagree with a politician's decisions, we've always had ample notice of what's to come.

But recently Doug Ford's idea of cutting city council seemed to come out of nowhere.

This is the sort of plan that a politician would be transparent about from the time of their campaign period. However, city council cuts were not previously on Ford's agenda, nor had he ever mentioned it before becoming premier. Yet in his short time in office it's been one of the first major changes he is fighting for.

The fact that it has come in the middle of an election makes the decision seem even less thought out. He supported his actions with next to no political argument or reason as to how it would make things better or solve a problem. It raises a lot of suspicion as to what Ford's true motivation for the decision was.

Another violation of norms has been Ford's threat to use the notwithstanding clause. Any reasonable person would know this action of setting aside the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is to be saved for an extreme situation.

If Ontario is facing a real crisis or threat, that would be the time for drastic measure. While council reform might be something to look into to, there was never a rush for it. Though the Ontario Court of Appeal's decision let the province avoid using the clause, Ford has admitted to not being afraid to use the clause again in the future.

Doug Ford's hasty decisions could very well not turn out the way he is planning. Although he is new to office, he won't be there forever.

To democracy we'll leave the future of his mandate.

~ Tiara Chutkhan

COLUMNS

# Students need sex ed

One of Doug Ford's campaign promises was to remove the 2015 sex-ed curriculum for elementary students. He is, unfortunately, keeping his word.

Instead of being allowed to continue with the 2015 curriculum, which is more diverse and covers sensitive topics such as same-sex marriage, teachers must now follow the more conservative one from 1998, until the education ministry creates a new one.

So here's the big question: Who will take responsibility if the safety of students is at risk due to a lack of knowledge?

According to an online report, 60 per cent of sexual-assault victims are 17 years old or younger; 80 per cent of accusers are either friends or family of the victim; and sexual assault is not limited to the physical, but verbal, as well.

Gerry Connelly, a former director at the Toronto District School Board, said in an article that she worries students will begin to think sexual harassment is a usual part of school life. That article came out 10 years ago. It is unacceptable that these inappropriate behaviours are being normalized.

Many teenagers don't even know the meaning of "sexual harassment" and are not knowledgeable when it comes to sex and safety.

If students don't learn about sex-ed in school, they could turn to potentially unsafe sources, like movies and music. Also troubling is the role of social media.

A recent survey of 800 Canadian students from the ages of 16 to 20 showed that six out of 10 had received a sext, and four out of 10 had sent one. Almost half of the senders confessed that their sexts were shown to other people without permission. This often happens be-

cause the senders don't know the seriousness of sexting and the receivers don't know how to say no.

The 2015 sex-ed curriculum not only teaches elementary students about sensitive topics like LGBTQ, it also covers critically important topics such as consent and online safety. The earlier children learn about those, the earlier they'll realize which actions are acceptable and which are not.

Ford, however, is insisting teachers go back to the 1998 curriculum, saying he will soon create a new "age-appropriate" curriculum. Teachers who still use the one from 2015, he emphasizes, will face consequences. "Make no mistake, if we find somebody failing to do their job, we will act."

Mistake? What Ford is insisting on doing is the mistake. Just because students now follow the 1998 curriculum does not mean the world is a better place.

So let's ask one final question: Which is more important, students or a campaign promise?



Tiffany Fung

# City needs more drive

Mayoral candidate Jennifer Keesmaat knows how to create safer Toronto streets.

During a press conference this month, Keesmaat revealed her plans for Safer Streets.

She would reduce residential speed limits to 30 km/h, redesign intersections, and improve sidewalks and streets located around school zones.

However, her approach isn't fresh. It would likely work just as well as Mayor John Tory's Vision Zero in collaboration with police.

The one major difference seems to be the timeframe. Keesmaat's Safer Streets is a two-year plan, while Vision Zero is a five-year plan (2017-2021).

The only thing missing from these proposals are the city and the council's support.

The Vision Zero Road Safety Plan would use the city's data to focus on locations where improvements are most required. It's a decent approach. The funding is there. In fact, Vision

Zero has been funded in the millions.

In June, Mayor John Tory pushed to seek an additional \$13 million for Vision Zero. The move would bring the plan's total budget to \$100 million. A list of improvements would include doubling pedestrian intervals, speeding up road design, and installing speed bumps. Intersections would be repainted and bike lanes improved to give them more prominence.

City council approved Vision Zero in 2016 in hopes of completely eradicating traffic deaths. So far this year, four cyclists and 26 pedestrians have been killed. According to Toronto

Police data for the past 10 years, 2011 saw the lowest count of KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured) in traffic collision deaths with 35. The highest year was 2016 with 77.

Though the city has the funding, our politicians lack the determination to follow through on the proposals.

In September 2016, Councillor Sarah Doucette pushed to reduce speed limits to 30 km/h. It was rejected by councillors.

Likewise, a move to add sidewalks was rejected in 2017 due to homeowners' concern that building new sidewalks would kill trees.

Toronto is not making road safety a priority.

Political concerns fall short.



Rushanthi Kesunathan



# Local Presbyterian church then and now



City of Toronto Archives



Taylor Bridger/The Observer

The Riverdale Presbyterian Church at Pape and Harcourt avenues is depicted on the left in 1920, and on the right in 2018. The church has since had a storey added with open balconies facing Pape Avenue. The large trees visible on the left have been replaced with an open garden. Finally, the outer walls have been replaced with a black iron fence, and a large oak tree now stands guard instead.

## ■ CRIME

# Video shows man firing gun at house party on Alder Road

Adult male wounded at East York incident, one of three shootings in one night across Toronto

By TAYLOR BRIDGER  
The Observer

Dramatic surveillance video emerged on social media Saturday after the Friday night shooting of a male at an East York house party on a night that saw three shootings, one fatal, across Toronto.

The video appears to depict a male brandishing a handgun and firing down the street as a woman's voice screams not to bring violence around her house.

Police said they received a report of shots fired at 10:49 p.m. just four hours after an unrelated shooting claimed the life of a 16-year-old boy in Scarborough.

The victim of the East York shooting was reportedly attending a house party on Alder Road, near St. Clair Avenue and O'Connor Drive. He was taken to hospital with a gunshot wound to his hand.

Surveillance video appear to show a male wielding and firing a handgun.

Other people can clearly be seen walking with the gunman in the video.

A police investigation is "ongoing to determine whether or not there were any other suspects involved," according to Const. Allyson Douglas-Cook, a spokesperson for the Toronto Police.

"The witnesses reported seeing a tall, black male shooter," Douglas-Cook said. "There are no other details at this time."

The shooting occurred at a house party in a residential area.

A few hours after the shooting on Alder Road, more shots rang out onto Toronto pavement as police received reports of shots fired around Keele Street and Pond Road near York University.

When police arrived, they treated an adult male victim with a gunshot to his arm.

"At this time there is no evidence to suggest that either shooting is connected to the homicide which occurred earlier that evening," Douglas-Cook said.

"In these types of investigations however, that possibility is always explored."

■ Watch the surveillance video online at [torontobserver.ca](http://torontobserver.ca)



Justin Chan/The Observer

(L-R) Caio, Jack and Mila Snow pose with their guinea pig after winning in the "Piggie Pageant".

# 3rd annual Toronto 'Pignic' raises money for homeless guinea pigs

Event provides 'space for the guinea pig and local community to come together'

By JUSTIN CHAN  
The Observer

More than 250 guinea pigs participated in the Toronto Pignic last Saturday at Greenwood Park. The third annual event raised over \$1,900 for Helping Homeless Pets and Piggles Rescue, two organizations dedicated to helping pets find

suitable homes.

"The event was meant to advocate for responsible pet ownership and for the care and welfare of guinea pigs," says Olivia Pudney, who has organized it for all three years.

The Pignic provides "a space for the guinea pig and local community to come together."

Over 1,000 people attended, as children and adults alike brought their prized pets to mix and mingle with guinea pigs of different breeds and sizes.

Guinea pig owners also got a rare chance to show off their pets at the

main event of the day: the Piggie Pageant. Guinea pigs were judged in several categories, from biggest guinea pig and best costume to a pig's likeness to its owner.

Pudney advised anyone thinking about adopting a pig to do their research.

"(Guinea pigs) can live up to 10 to 11 years old, which is the same level of commitment you should expect from a cat or dog."

With many similar events dedicated to more popular pets like dogs and cats, the Pignic offers Toronto a fresh glimpse into the city's diverse pet culture.



● For more stories about the East York community, visit us online at [torontobserver.ca](http://torontobserver.ca)



## TEACHING CHILDREN TO PLAY

## Local education 'literally outside the box'

Pilot program at East York school gives students the freedom to get outside, be creative and play. There are three rules: have fun, be inclusive and safe - enough

By DAVID LYNCH  
The Observer

Principal Sean Hume walks through the playground during lunchtime at Chester Elementary school. He passes groups of students climbing on shelters, making forts, and climbing trees.

He gets to a group that has a rope attached to a tire swing. They're trying to lift the swing — and a student — off the ground.

He gives them pointers and helps them easily lift the student.

"That's what we expect of our staff," Hume says.

This scene would be foreign to most schools in Toronto, but it's about to become more common.

Chester Elementary is one of three pilot schools selected for the Toronto school board's Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) program.

The program gets students outside more and gives them freedom to do what they want in their recess time.

At Chester, there are trees, ropes, tires, and shelters that the students are welcome to use in any way they want.

"They have opportunities to think outside the box — quite literally," Hume says. "This school is a box, and we get them outside, and they get to be as creative as they can in deciding what they want to do."

Despite students having control of what they want to do, parents are mostly on board, Hume says.

"The biggest challenge was getting (parents) comfortable with having kids be outside in all



David Lynch/The Observer

**Students at Chester Elementary climb on a shelter. They're encouraged to use trees, ropes, tires and shelters in whatever way they want. The biggest challenge, says principal Sean Hume, was getting parents comfortable with having their kids go outside in all kinds of weather. He sees the pilot project expanding to another 25 schools in the near future.**

kinds of weather," Hume says.

The OPAL program has three main rules. What the students are doing has to be fun, inclusive and safe enough.

"And by that I mean safe enough for them, because what's safe for one child might be unsafe for another child," Hume says.

Lunchroom supervisor Georgia Hadjicosta, who has been at Chester for over 20 years, likes the OPAL program because it reminds her of her youth in Europe.

"I like it because it reminds me of back home," she says. "Back home, there was a lot of outdoor activities."

She also likes being able to help the children learn and see what's right to do.

"I'm glad that I'm here and I'm giving them some advice about safety," Hadjicosta says.

Even though the students only have three rules they have to follow, they as a group have made more rules to make sure their play is safe.

"We provide place, and we provide the stuff, but we don't dictate how they use it," Hume says. "They make the decisions mostly, and more often than not, they're making rules, not us."

He expects the OPAL program to be in 25 more schools soon.



David Lynch/The Observer

**Principal Sean Hume lends a hand with the rope swing.**



(Above left) Charlie Weitzman holds out his hand to receive some cotton candy at the Rotary Club of Toronto-Leaside's 25th annual corn roast.

(Above right) Monique's Dog Show was a crowd favourite at the roast. Here, local children get up close and personal with one of the dogs.



Justin Chan/The Observer

## Leaside corn roast raises money for new hospice

25th annual event featured food, family activities and a dog show

By JUSTIN CHAN  
The Observer

People of all ages came to Trace Manes Park on Sunday to enjoy food and family activities and to help raise money for a new hospice.

The highlight of the Rotary Club of Toronto-Leaside's 25th annual corn roast was Monique's Dog Show.

Hosted by Monique Savin, its goals were to showcase the diversity of dogs in Leaside and to "(instil) in kids a sense of wonder about animals."

Leasiders showed off their canine companions to the crowd, as owners led their pets into

and around the ring.

"(The event) sees a lot of new faces every year," said Philip Russel, a longtime member of the Rotary Club.

While the Corn Roast was a fun day for the community, he added, "the event aims at raising money towards building a new hospice in Toronto."

Proceeds will go to the Toronto Command-

ery Hospice.

The ultimate goal is to raise \$10 million to build a state-of-the-art residential hospice on the new West Park Healthcare Centre Campus in Toronto to bring dignity to end-of-life care in the community.

The Rotary Club received a letter of recognition from MP Robert Oliphant and greetings from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.