



David Lynch/The Observer

Marching for fallen heroes

A group of veterans participate in the Todmorden Legion's recent Heroes of Suicide march. It was followed by a vigil in honour of veterans and first responders who died of suicide. See story, page 5.

ELECTION 2018

Incumbents under fire at Ward 14 debate

80 area residents attend election event held at Centennial for expanded ward

By **BOBBY HRISTOVA, DOHA HANNO and TIARA CHUTKHAN**
The Observer

Two city councillors sat beside each other, while other candidates criticized them at the Ward 14 debate on Wednesday.

Paula Fletcher and Mary Fragedakis were natural targets as they were both incumbent councillors for the two areas that have been combined into one ward for this municipal election.

"They've been in power for way too long about the same issues without any material movement made on them," said one of the critics, candidate Chris Budo, afterwards.

At the meeting Budo described council's cycling plan under Fletcher and Fragedakis as "just painted white lines" and criticized the TTC board as being more political than knowledgeable.

Fragedakis replied to the latter charge: "We've actually built a subway system while I've been on the board of the TTC. It's called the York University-Spadina extension."

Though neither city councillor responded directly to comments about the cycling plan, they

See **WIDE AGREEMENT**, page 2

Local parents fear for kids without revised sex-ed

Community divided as old curriculum brought back by the province

By **BOBBY HRISTOVA**
The Observer

Grade 1 students don't usually explain to other kids how they were born or how they can have a family without a father, but Eleanore Hargreaves is used to it.

Eleanore comes from a queer family in Leaside. It's been a topic on the jungle gym since her first days in kindergarten. After the provincial government nixed the plan to use the new 2015 sex-ed curriculum in elementary schools, the six-year-old had questions.

"The first time Eleanore was bullied, she was

in tears," says Merlin Hargreaves, who uses they/them pronouns and is one of Eleanore's parents. "This year, when we asked our child's teacher what she would do when Eleanore had to answer questions from kids in the class, the teacher said, 'I heard her doing that the other day. It was great.'"

It wasn't the answer they were looking for.

"It shouldn't be her job and she shouldn't have to reveal so much about her family and her life to make them understand that stuff," Hargreaves says.

The teacher tried to reassure them, explaining she has never witnessed homophobia in East York, hosts an inclusive classroom and that Eleanore would be 'cool' for having two moms. When Hargreaves challenged that stance by asking about bullying, the answer was devastating.

See **SOME PARENTS**, page 4



Bobby Hristova/The Observer

Eleanore Hargreaves, 6, has had to explain her parents, Merlin (left) and Helen, to her classmates since her first day of school. Her parents worry teachers won't be able to support queer families like theirs.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION 2018

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Art show and sale celebrates local artists

The Riverdale Art Show and Sale will be held at St. Barnabas-on-the-Danforth, 261 Danforth Ave., on Oct. 12 from 6 to 8 p.m. This free event will feature more than 200 original artworks by 23 local artists.

Donate blood at Northlea Public School

You can be the life-saving difference to those in need by donating blood at the next Leaside blood donor clinic on Oct. 16 from 2 to 7 p.m. The clinic will take place at Northlea Public School, 305 Rumsey Rd. To book an appointment call 1-888-236-6283 or visit blood.ca.

Nutrition talk for seniors will include recipes

Seniors can learn how to optimize health at a nutritional talk on Oct. 25. The presentation will include healthy shopping tips, recipe ideas and health-conscious cooking methods. The talk will take place at S. Walter Stewart Library, 170 Memorial Park Ave., from 2 to 3 p.m. Admission is free.

Calling all fern fanatics

The Leaside Garden Society is hosting its next meeting Oct. 11 at 7:30 p.m. Learn about the fern craze with speaker Kathy Kavassalis at the Leaside Library, 165 McRae Dr. Refreshments will be served at 7 p.m. before the meeting.

~ Anjelica Balatbat



Bobby Hristova/The Observer

A seat at the big table: One candidate was added late to the panel at the Ward 14 candidate's debate on Oct. 3 and ended up with a chair at the end of the table.

Wide agreement on most issues found among council candidates at Toronto-Danforth ward debate

Cont'd from page 1

found common ground with Budo when discussing the importance of studies and evidence-based programs.

Urbanization, rental housing, parking, handguns, cycling, crime and mental health were topics at the Toronto-Danforth debate at the Centennial College Story Arts campus from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

people in the community sent in their questions prior to the event which saw nine of 10 candidates and 80 people attend.

Candidates agreed on most topics and presented similar ideas, though there were some outliers.

Marisol D'Andrea felt the dismay of the audience when she proposed a bicycle licence after stating cyclists are able to dodge enforcement without any way of tracking them.

Warren Huska, a voter attending the debate, wasn't impressed.

"The world over attempted to license cyclists and it's a money and time waster," he

said. "I've got a GoPro and that's my way of holding people accountable."

Ryan Lindsay pitched his #ShiftTheFordTax plan to move funds away from a Scarborough subway and towards non-subway rapid transit projects claiming the city would have \$50 million per year.

There was also one late attendee, Alexander Pena, who caused a scene after demanding a seat.

He says he wasn't invited, though co-organizer Mary Vallis says they could not find any information online while trying to contact candidates.

"On Monday, I saw an Alexander Pena sign and took a good look to figure out how to contact him but it had no information," she said.

Pena said his focus is to regulate rental units by when they were built.

"It's not possible that for a building that was built in 1960, they're going to charge \$1,500 for rent."

The audience applauded Lanrick Bennett's ideas about building a local constituency

office, building a full cycling network from east to west and being a term limit candidate.

He clarified he supports a three-term limit and hopes to "get in, do good things then get out."

Fletcher said she aims to focus on transit hubs like Gerrard and Carlaw while organizing a group to assess "what the impact of transit will be" and the best way to develop on these hubs.

Anne Smith, a voter from Old East York didn't hear enough about critical, area-specific issues.

"What do you think about vacant storefronts on Danforth? What do you think about vacant lots down on Carlaw? What do you think about highrise development on Broadview, on Pape, the downtown relief line," she said.

She even asked her own question about mental health in the area.

But despite hearing from nine candidates, she says the election is straightforward.

"It's incumbent versus incumbent."



PENA



MARINAKIS



LINDSAY



FRAGEDAKIS



FLETCHER



BENNETT



BUDO



CHAN



D'ANDREA

Christmas comes early for local students

By CHELSIE ORTIZ LUIS The Observer

For some local students, the first day of school turned into a very early Christmas.

John Vuong, whose Vietnamese parents came to Canada as refugees in 1980 and who is the owner of Local SEO Search Inc., has donated 200 backpacks to five Toronto schools, including two in East York: Crescent Town Elementary School and George Webster Elementary School.

Not only did Vuong supply backpacks, but he (along with his company and volunteers) also packed them with school supplies, such as writing utensils, pencil cases and notebooks.

"I find joy in giving to people in need," he said. "Growing up as a new immigrant in Hamilton, I didn't have much in terms of clothes and school supplies."

This act of kindness began last year when Vuong donated 80 backpacks to two schools. This year, he more than doubled that amount. It definitely wasn't easy, he said, but it was all worth it.

"It took us months and endless hours of co-ordinating with the participating school principals," Vuong said.

"We spent hours purchasing items from retail outlets and enlisting volunteers to help pack the items. But making a small difference is what I enjoyed."

With the consecutive successes of those donations, Vuong hopes to beat the 200-backpack mark next year.

"This is an annual event that started last year," he said.

"I'm proud to equip students with necessary items their parents may not be able to afford. In 2019, with the continued support of clients and the community, the plan is to donate up to 500 backpacks."

After accomplishing this donation, Vuong hopes to expand his kindness.

"I want to do more," he said. "My company and I are also talking about the possibility of funding some students for March break camps or summer camps."

"Now that I own a company, my success has allowed me the ability to impact a greater number of people," he said. "I am committed to do what I can so our next-generation children know that in Canada, if you stay in school, you can become and do whatever you truly want."

Last-minute war story moved author to tears

Ted Barris stopped the presses for *Dam Busters* after hearing moving tale from daughter of late war hero

By **DAVID LYNCH**
The Observer

Dam Busters, the latest book by author Ted Barris, was about to go to press when he heard a final story that he knew he had to add.

That story was a highlight of a talk Barris gave at the Leaside library on Oct. 2 about the Dam Buster raid during the Second World War. He focused on the Canadian presence in the pivotal War mission, on which 19 teams took out major dams in Germany, flooding key munitions plants. The mission featured 113 soldiers, a quarter of whom were Canadian.

Among those Canadians was Jimmy McDowell. Barris met McDowell's daughter, Marilyn, during a talk about the Dam Busters at Hamilton's Warplane Heritage Museum.

After the presentation, Barris learned of Marilyn's heritage and realized he missed a part of the Canadian history of the Dam Busters. With his book about to go to press, Barris talked to McDowell a few days later and she told him this story.

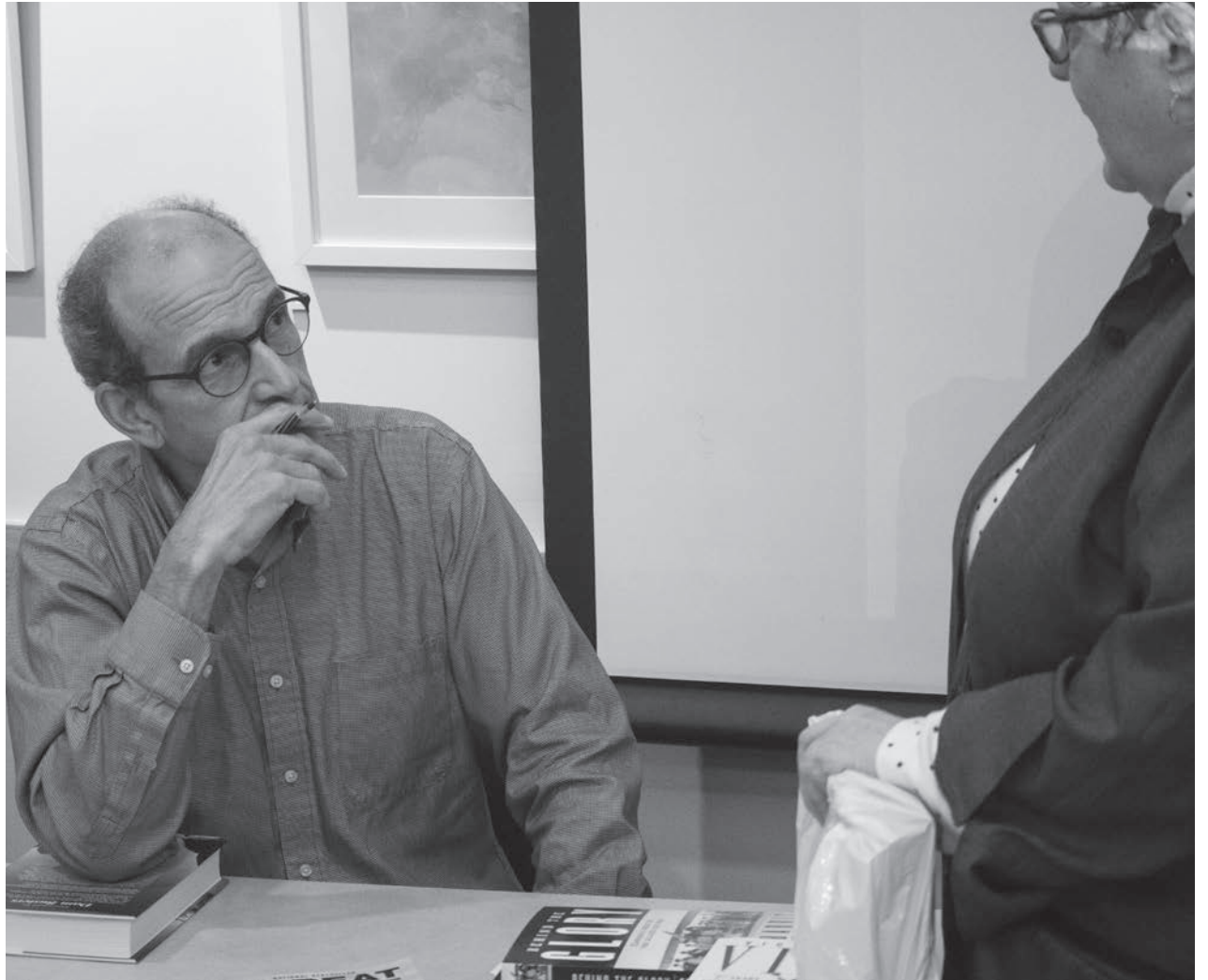
"(Jimmy) comes home for the final time in 1942 before going overseas," Barris said. "In the darkness of the night, Marilyn gets up, comes out of the darkness, finds the flight gear in a pile in the middle of the room, crawls inside her dad's flight suit, and sleeps in it that last night.

"The next day she's up, and dad's packing to leave to go overseas. And the radio is on. And on the radio is none other than Vera Lynn singing *The White Cliffs of Dover*," Barris said. "Now, in the song, there's a line that goes, and Jimmy will go to sleep in his own little room again.' Jimmy McDowell turns to six-year-old Marilyn and says, 'No, he won't.' And he didn't come back.

"By this time, I'm weeping and so is she. And I'm thinking, even tougher than that, the book's gonna go to press without this story!"

Earlier in the evening, he talked about other Canadians in the raid, including a wireless radio operator and avid photographer named Al Gershowitz.

He was part of a team that scouted and took photos of the path that the teams were going to take to the dams. He also took photos, illegally, of his fellow crew members and of the



David Lynch/The Observer

Ted Barris chats with woman attending a recent talk about his new book, *Dam Busters*, at the Leaside library. The book looks at a pivotal point in the Second World War.

Lancaster planes practising flying low for the raids.

"He wasn't allowed to take photos of anything but the landscape," Barris said. "This is a totally top-secret operation."

Gershowitz took the photos, according to Barris, because he thought they would be interesting to his family.

"As a result, he gave history an image which otherwise would not have been taken, because it was illegal," Barris said.

Gershowitz's plane crashed after being shot down on the way

to the dams. No one on board survived.

According to the organizer of the talk, Barry Penhale, this was one of the largest crowds he's ever seen at one of Leaside's historical event talks. He credited that to Barris's energy and the way he conducts himself.

"(The audience) has come to realize that Ted is not pushing himself, he's recording important Canadian history, and he tells the stories through the people who've experienced them."

■ TRANSIT

The end of Metropass is drawing near for TTC riders

Get ready to pay for transit in a whole new way in 2019

By **TAYLOR BRIDGER**
The Observer

Stand in the entrance to a Danforth subway station for just a few moments, and you realize two things.

First, you notice all the Presto cards tapping the automated gates, allowing a smooth entrance for commuters.

Second, you realize that quite a few people still pay their fare using the cash and token system in the much smaller lane overseen by a TTC fare collector.

Now, after years of competition between the Presto system and the now-antiquated token and cash system, the plan for Metrolinx's Presto to completely merge with the TTC is set in stone. Some key dates:

Dec. 31, 2018

Metropasses will be discontinued at the end of this year (Dec. 31, 2018). Customers can purchase either a TTC Monthly Pass or a 12 Month Pass on Presto.

June 2019

A paper Presto ticket will be introduced in June 2019. This ticket will be good for single-use travel. Customers will also be able to purchase multiple-ride Presto tickets. They will cost the same as the cash fare: \$3.25 for adults and \$2.10 for seniors/youth.



Taylor Bridger/The Observer

Next year will bring a new way of payment for commuters, who will now have to use daily paper Presto tickets instead of Metropasses.

Aug. 3, 2019

Tickets and tokens will be available for sale until Aug. 3, 2019.

Dec. 31, 2019

Tickets and tokens will be valid until Dec. 31, 2019.

January 2020

As of Jan. 1, 2020, customers will need a Presto card to pay their fare. They can also pay by cash. They will no longer be able to pay by ticket, token or TTC pass.

Trent Duncan is a young commuter who travels daily through East York on his way to work. "Every weekend I take my gran to and from

whatever she's doing with her friends, and she doesn't let me drive her, she always makes us ride the bus. For a long while, she didn't have a Presto card for when I couldn't make it or when I'm not around. She still needs help keeping it loaded, so I do it for her."

When it comes to Presto, it appears there is still a split among some users of East York's transit system. Many don't have the knowledge or patience to attach a credit card to their Presto card.

They will have to resort to converting cash or debit into Presto fare at the station if they choose not to use Presto's online benefits.

The TTC's Heather Brown offered some advice.

"We have information on our website at ttc.ca/presto. We share information on social media, through PA announcements in our stations, and we also share the information internally with our staff so they are able to answer questions.

"We've also launched a TTC and Presto advertising campaign at the end of August called Another Reason to Presto. The campaign is promoting monthly passes on Presto, the 12 Month pass on Presto, the two-hour transfer on Presto, and kids 6-12 needing Presto cards."

In the last year, Shoppers Drug Mart has begun selling Presto cards, in concert with Metrolinx. In order to purchase your card and a month-long or 12 Month Metropass along with it, you have to take the card to an eligible TTC station in order to get the pass portion of the card activated.

That makes this next part incredibly important. When purchasing a Presto card and Metropass at a Shoppers Drug Mart, make sure to ask the cashier where your nearest eligible station is to link your card to your purchased pass.

These steps can often be seen as roadblocks by impatient commuters who simply want to get to their location quickly and without having to register or load an empty card.

That makes the awareness campaign by the TTC and Metrolinx a test for the offices in charge of outreach to seniors, students, disabled transit users and others relying on transit who may not be able to fully take advantage of the Presto system on their own.



Bobby Hristova/The Observer

Quinne Kendall-Mitchell was one of the last students protesting as it began to rain. She led East York Collegiate Institute's charge against Ontario's rollback of the new sex-education curriculum.

Local students rally behind sex-ed protest

East York Collegiate protesters get a late start, but make up for it with stomping, shouting

By **BOBBY HRISTOVA**
The Observer

While Ontario students protested the province's decision to roll back the sex-ed curriculum taught in elementary schools by walking out of class on Sept. 21, the demonstration at East York Collegiate Institute didn't follow the script.

At 2 p.m., an hour past the scheduled start, the school remained still. Minutes later, students began trickling out of the halls, calling friends to meet up while they laughed and headed straight for the bus stop.

"I don't really care. Doug Ford can do what he wants because I don't really have a say," said Ben Arndt, a Grade 9 student at the school. "I'm a 13-year-old kid. I'm not going to do anything."

But at 2:45 p.m., 15 minutes before the walk-out across Ontario was over, stomping and hollering were heard. About 30 students huddled together waving signs and shouting in unison. Quinne Kendall-Mitchell, a Grade 10 student at the school, led the crowd.

The rally was a response to Ontario's decision to abandon the 2015 revised sex-ed curriculum in elementary schools, which would teach students about same-sex marriage, consent, sexing and gender identity. Instead, the province is opting to continue using the current sex-ed curriculum, last updated in 1998. The movement

sprouted and grew online through hashtags like #WeTheStudentsDoNotConsent and #WalkOutForOurEducation.

Although Kendall-Mitchell was upset that staff didn't allow students to protest inside the school, she said some teachers admitted they supported the students as they monitored the demonstration.

The school did not comment, but Ryan Bird, manager of corporate and social media relations at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), said the board did not sanction the event, but it encourages students to "express themselves in constructive, respectful and responsible ways."

Bird said the TDSB "advised high schools not to plan any major tests or assignments so that students were not penalized academically for participating in the walkout," but in a phone

call to the school on Sept. 21 just after 12:30 p.m., a staff member in the main office said that if parents hadn't called ahead, teachers would mark students who protested as absent, and phone home.

Grade 9 student Arndt felt that the teachers "didn't really care" about the absences.

While teachers stayed tight-lipped, Phil Pothen, a TDSB trustee candidate for Ward 16 (Beaches-East York), wanted to reassure parents that their children are doing a good thing despite the messages they might find on their answering machines.

"These students are really sticking their necks out for a good cause. They're trying to make sure that their school is safe for everyone," he said. "Without the new curriculum, I really feel like we're putting our kids in danger."

Some parents concerned about impact of return to 2015 curriculum

Cont'd. from page 1

"She said, 'There's nothing you can do about it. People don't change; you can't change the system,'" Hargreaves says. "She never said she would teach the updated curriculum."

Now, they're approaching the principal for a response.

"I hope to hear that she is supportive of the sex-ed curriculum, that she would talk to the teacher and help change the school system if need be," Hargreaves says.

But not everyone was happy with the new curriculum. The Thorncliffe Parents Association held multiple protests in 2015, opting instead to "let kids be kids." They also encouraged parents to boycott their schools, hosting a group homeschool at Thorncliffe Park.

While the Facebook group moderators and members did not comment, Evan Kanter, the Don Valley West director of recruitment for the Ontario PC Youth Association, doesn't care for the backlash towards using the old curriculum.

"I think we're overreacting a bit. Our education isn't being stolen from us," he says.

However, the protests left at least one East York parent concerned.

"It's become a lightning rod for polarization in our community," says Rabea Murtaza, a moderator of East Enders Against Racism. "Why is there this mass freak-out about gender identity? I'm flabbergasted about why we would make this even harder and add to this discrimination."

After the protests, Murtaza co-founded a movement for families just like the Hargreaves and worried parents like her via Facebook — People for Ontario's Sex-Ed Curriculum. It grew to more than 11,000 likes in one week and became a province-wide page.

"There's a community in East York which is progressive and cares," Murtaza said.

It also prompted her to create a smaller, online community for Muslims who support the newer sex-ed courses.

Kanter thinks the current consulta-



Bobby Hristova/The Observer

Eleanore Hargreaves' parents Merlin (left) and Helen worry teachers won't be able to support queer families like theirs.

tion process, launched Sept. 28, will do a better job of making sure "all parents get a fair consultation." And while he thinks the new curriculum "does need to be taught, it's a matter of what the appropriate age is and how it can accommodate various religions."

Amelia Golden, a former Peel district school board investigator from

East York, says the appropriate age is before children grow up.

"I see firsthand the trouble that these young adults get into both in the way that the confusion around what consent is and the impact of intoxication on the ability to form a real consent," she says.

While she's been using the language of consent with her 11-year-old twin

boys their entire life, Golden says everyone is at risk without the updated sex-ed curriculum.

"I'm concerned about my kids knowing what consent is," she says. "There are so many different examples, people who are 19, 20, 21, who weren't raised on the 2015 curriculum and are blowing it."

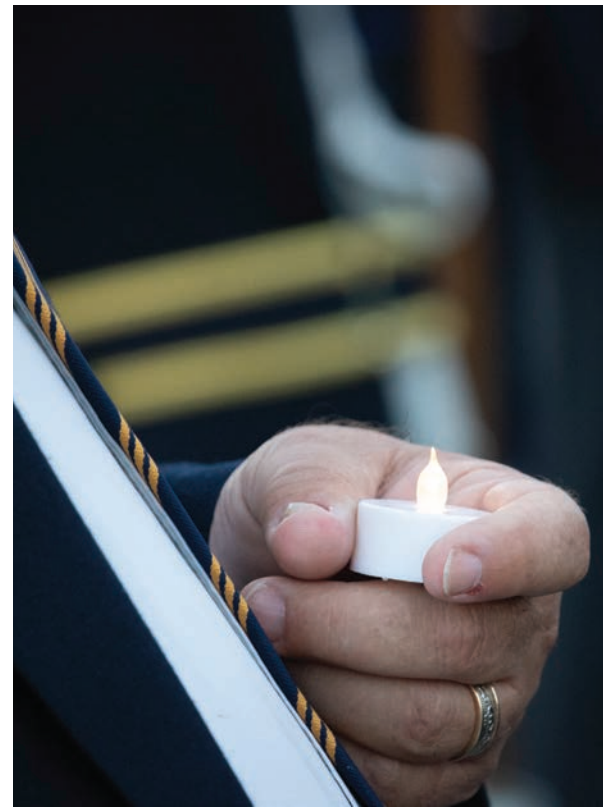
But Golden also warns it could be fatal for trans kids. Research from 2017 shows trans teens aged 14-18 were five times more likely to think of dying by suicide, with three-quarters of them reporting self-harm in the past year.

"Most of them have not told their parents when they're in grade school, most of them haven't told their friends, most might not even know themselves," Hargreaves says. "They need our support and we're yanking it away from them."

Murtaza is hopeful that some teachers will be supportive, but the inconsistency is troubling.

"In 2018, it shouldn't be up to chance," she says.

COMMUNITY



David Lynch/ The Observer

(Above left) Police officers and an air cadet remember those who died by suicide, saluting newly lit candles. (Above right) A veteran holds a candle during a recent vigil for veterans and first responders who have died of suicide.

Heroes of Suicide march honours all veterans

March and vigil expanded this year to include first responders, along with military veterans

By DAVID LYNCH
The Observer

According to Todmorden Legion Branch 10 president PJ O'Neill, veterans aren't just people who have worked for the military.

"Veterans can be in any service," he said. "You can have veterans anywhere."

On Sept. 23, the Todmorden Legion held its third annual Heroes of Suicide march and vigil.

In past years, the event was held to honour soldiers who died of suicide, but this year it was expanded to include first responders as well.

"They're out there serving their country and their community constantly," O'Neill said.

The ceremony started with a march down Gamble and Pape avenues and ended in front of the Todmorden Legion.

Members of different branches of the military and first responders lit candles in memory of those who died of suicide.

Among the veterans who attended the ceremony was retired Sgt. Bruce Kaysmith, who served for the Canadian military for 25 years, including a deployment in Kuwait.

After serving in Kuwait for nine months, Kaysmith came back to Canada. Shortly after that, two of his friends who served with him died of suicide.

"Personally, I felt very, very much on a low for months until I could start getting back to the normal situation," Kaysmith said. "You're almost thinking yourself, maybe I shouldn't be here either."

He appreciates the march and vigil because people have a chance to connect with others who have gone through similar situations.

"It's a social event where everyone can talk to each other and raise your morale a little bit," Kaysmith said.

O'Neill thinks it's important for the legion, as a community organization, to show it's there to help anyone going through a tough situation.

"Old, young, the issues are the same. You have to help people," he said. "And being a community organization, that's what we hope to do."

Kaysmith said mental health issues such as PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) have gained greater acceptance over the years, starting when he was still in the military himself.

"I retired in 1992. I'd say the last 10-15 years before I retired it became more prominent," he said. "They knew how to deal with it, and they started to deal with it."

Leaside resident steps up to fight bladder cancer with fundraiser

Putting together walk in honour of her late father was 'healing' experience, local woman says

By SERGIO ARANGIO
The Observer

Leaside resident Deanne Puder's eyes teared up as she addressed nearly 400 people at Wilket Creek Park on Sept. 23 for Toronto's ninth annual Bladder Cancer Canada Awareness Walk.

It was Puder's first time organizing the walk in honour of her father, Ingo Puder, who died of bladder cancer in October 2017.

It was an emotional but successful day of fundraising, Puder said.

Taking on the huge task of running the event was her way of helping others affected by the disease by doing more than serving coffee at BCC support group meetings, as she had originally planned.

Her sister Michelle helped with the event as well, having also held a yard sale the previous weekend to raise money for the cause.

"This was a project where I could ... really make a difference to bladder cancer patients, survivors and help the families of people like us who have lost family members," Puder said. "It's actually been healing, in a way."

One of 20 walks across Canada, with about 4,000 people expected to participate nationwide, the Toronto event brought in over \$140,000 in donations. In 2017, Bladder Cancer



Sergio Arangio/ The Observer

(Above left) Bladder Cancer Canada co-founder David Guttman (centre right) and board of directors chair Ferg Devins (centre left) cut a ribbon to signify the start of the ninth annual Toronto Bladder Cancer Awareness Walk. (Above right) Deanne Puder tears up as she speaks at the Sept. 23 event.

Canada raised over \$600,000 through its awareness walks. The organization uses the money to fund support services for those affected by bladder cancer, as well as awareness and research efforts.

For Puder, the charity was the perfect opportunity to turn her family's heartbreak into an opportunity to help others. As an open-minded, free-spirited man — and the "coolest dad that you could ever have," as her sister put it — Ingo would have been proud of it.

Among the participants were the Lorusso

family. Mike Lorusso won his fight with bladder cancer five years ago after he was diagnosed in spring of 2012.

His wife Grazia said their family has participated in the Toronto walk for four years because of their belief in BCC's mission and the good the charity has done for those battling bladder cancer.

"They're doing something for people to have a chance (at life)," Grazia said. "It's like hope."

BCC board of directors chair Ferg Devins said that while the charity has made great strides

in supporting bladder cancer patients, raising awareness and financing research, there needs to be much more funding in order to achieve its goals in fighting the disease.

It's the fourth most common disease in men (12th for women), with over 80,000 people suffering from the disease and 9,000 diagnosed annually, but bladder cancer is 20th in terms of funding, Devins said.

Devins encourages those looking to donate or learn more about the disease to visit bladder-cancercanada.org.

EDITORIALS

City will survive slashing of wards

The bombshell that was Premier Doug Ford and the Ontario Tories' decision to cut the number of wards in Toronto with an election campaign underway is not the first time Toronto has seen a large political change.

Judging by past experience, the city will be just fine. The latest controversial move slashed the number of wards from 47 to 25, leaving many feeling frazzled as we approach an election slated for Oct. 22. However, this whole situation is similar to something that happened to Toronto 20 years ago: the amalgamation of its six municipalities. Amalgamation is still considered one of the most controversial decisions in Toronto politics. At the time, former mayor John Sewell led a group of those opposed. According to The Toronto Star, 76 per cent of voters were against the move. Many of the arguments for the suggested benefits of amalgamation are similar to those behind the proposed benefits of ward-slashing: saving time and money. Governance is not what makes areas in Toronto such as East York what they are. It's the people who make it such an interesting and diverse city. Post-amalgamation, East York has retained its working-class roots and charm. In fact, that was its *second* amalgamation. East York and Leaside amalgamated in 1967, making it Canada's first borough. If the community can stay fairly undamaged through two amalgamations, it can certainly handle Ford's ward-cutting. Over the years, this city has gone through numerous changes. This is just another one to add to the list. Despite the fears of many, Doug Ford is probably not going to declare war, or anything of the sort, on Toronto. Yes, this landmark change comes at an inconvenient time, but once Toronto pushes past the adjustment period, everything will more than likely go back to being OK. It has before. After all, Toronto has always been a city driven more by the people than the politicians.

~ Alex Goudge

Eight-year-olds are not activists

Do you remember being eight years old? When your concerns were getting homework done, finding your friends on the playground and wondering what your parents were making for dinner?

Do you recall thinking deeply about political matters? Probably not. On Sept. 21, elementary and high school students held "walk-out" protests at schools across the province. Tens of thousands of students left class that day in opposition to the Progressive Conservative government's decision to repeal the 2015 sex-ed curriculum, which covers sensitive topics like same-sex marriage. On its face, there doesn't seem to be anything wrong with the protests. After all, any reason to stop leaning and get out of class when you're young is a perfect one. So what could be the issue with students being more civic-minded and exercising their democratic rights? The problem, even if you agree with their cause, is that the younger students were being primed as future activists. They were being told and encouraged what to think and not *how* to think. Instead of learning during class time, they were out chanting slogans and waving placards. It's totally understandable that older students, who are in Grade 11 and 12, protested. But is eight- and nine-year-olds chanting political statements and carrying signs reasonable too? Children that young do not have the mental capacity to understand what they're being told to protest. Or let's put it this way: how often were you thinking about provincial politics and your sex-ed curriculum before you were even 10? These kids weren't protesting out of their own desire to do so, based on an understanding of the issues involved. They were being prodded by adults who object to the Ford government's decision to pull the updated curriculum. Whether the cause is just or not isn't the point. Using them as political tools is always unacceptable.

~ D.J. Llewellyn

COLUMNS

Crazy Rich Asians film inspires ethnic groups

Growing up, I didn't identify with actors I saw in films and television. It wasn't until adolescence that I started to question why.

From kung fu masters to terrorists and mathematicians, Asian actors, I began to notice, were routinely typecast.

Not to mention, their narratives were carried by Caucasian protagonists.

But it wasn't until *Crazy Rich Asians* that I believed my ethnic group could be represented in media without resorting to stereotypes and clichés.

In its opening weekend, the movie brought in \$26 million in North America and has since surpassed its \$30-million budget by five times.

In support of the film, numerous industry creatives bought out movie theatres across North America with the hope of a #GoldOpen, a movement made popular by social media.

Based on a novel by Kevin

Kwan, the film is a modern take on Cinderella and follows the love story between a Chinese-American professor, Rachel Chu, and her boyfriend, Nick Young, one of Singapore's most eligible bachelors.

But unlike other rom-coms, the film features a predominantly Asian cast. It is a pivotal moment in Hollywood cinema.

Beyond that it shows Asians as dynamic and successful, while staying grounded in the cultural differences that make us unique.

Still, a Hollywood Reporter article detailing

a report by the University of Southern California on diversity in media found that "roughly 50 per cent of the examined content didn't feature one Asian or Asian-American character."

At least the cultural conversation is beginning.

In the same manner, Netflix recently released an original film titled *To All The Boys I've Loved Before*.

It has garnered the attention of audiences worldwide and been recognized as the first teen film to feature a female Asian lead.

For people like me, *Crazy Rich Asians* is more than a film. It is a reminder that Asian stories are worthy and deserve to be told.



Anjelica Balatbat

Time for workplaces to recognize tattoos as art

When I went for a job interview last month at a jewelry store, I was in for a shock: The hiring manager told me that not only would I have to cover up my tattoos — all five of them — but I could not even mention their existence to my future co-workers if I end up working there.

The hiring manager's words left me feeling so confused. Tattoos are works of art; they are not anything negative. So why would I feel the need to hide them in a workplace?

According to Tattoos in the Workplace statistics,

approximately 40 per cent of Canadians in the workplace, a lot of whom are young adults, have been under the needle at least once.

Consider how much exposure they have achieved. Many celebrities have promoted tattoo culture by getting inked. Prime examples include singers and actresses such as Rihanna, Drake, Cara Delevingne, Scarlett Johansson and Beyonce. Among their distinctive tattoos are, respectively, the Goddess Isis (chest), a flower and bee (right shoulder), a lion (finger), a sunrise (left arm) and an angel (left hip).

Nowdays, the tattoo industry is worth more than \$50 billion, according to a recent article in

Business Insider. Tattoo culture has become so mainstream in the world that tattoo artists have become celebrities just by tattooing celebrities.

For example, Kat Von D tattooed Beyonce; Nikko Hurtado tattooed Drake; and Keith "Bang Bang" McCurdy tattooed both Justin Bieber and Rihanna.

Combine that with the power of the internet, and you have an instant platform for tattoo artists to expose their work.

No wonder the term "tattoo" has been the most searched beauty term since 2003, according to online resource The Vanishing Tattoo.

Such broad acceptance has made the tattoo less a rebellious object of disapproval than a mainstream act of creativity.

That makes it all the more puzzling that the stigma around tattoos in the workplace lives on.



Chelsie Ortiz Luis

Hazelwood Avenue a century later



City of Toronto Archives



Taylor Bridger/The Observer

The eastern-facing photo of Hazelwood Avenue above left was taken in May 1917. The picture, on the right, of the same street, taken in October 2018, shows the same houses, although everything else has changed, including the foliage, the light standards, the vehicles — and the casual fashions.

■ CRIME



Tyrone Henry/The Observer

Louis March speaks to attendees at a recent meeting on gun violence.

Activist asks community to help end gun violence

By TYRONE HENRY
The Observer

Louis March says to fix the gun violence problem, the government needs to bring the communities involved into the struggle to save lives.

“The first word in community safety is community. It’s not police, it’s not politics, it’s the community,” the founder of the Zero Gun Violence Movement told a town hall meeting at St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School on Sept. 23.

“In a solution to the elimination of gun violence in Toronto or across Canada, the community has to be an integral part or a stakeholder in what’s being discussed,” March said.

The meeting was organized by Beaches-East York MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith and Toronto-Danforth MP Julie Dabrusin and Nathaniel Erskine-Smith.

March said kids as young as 14 are getting their hands on guns, something they could not do in 2005, the year known in Toronto as “the year

of the gun.”

He added that if he were Bill Blair, recently appointed Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, he would call all the key stakeholders to the table, including the leaders of the three levels of government, academics, mental health practitioners and family planning professionals.

Blair, who also took part as a panelist at the meeting, said he believes this city is one of the safer communities in the country.

“Compared to other large urban centres across Canada, Toronto remains one of the safest and more livable cities anywhere, but that should never mean that we be complacent about violence that takes place,” Blair said.

With Blair’s appointment he is tasked with examining measures the government could take, he said. He said he has traveled across the country to understand what other jurisdictions do to face the issue.

“Canada is a vast country and we

have a responsibility in our federal laws to make sure we bring forward laws that work to keep the entire country safe,” Blair said.

Panelist Scot Wortley, associate professor of criminology at the University of Toronto, said the issue has many levels that need to be addressed.

“We can start at the most immediate level and look at psychological factors, pro-crime attitudes, opposition to law enforcement and mental health issues,” Wortley said. “We can look at the next level down being family problems including fatherlessness, generational poverty and generational trauma.”

Wortley said one of the discouraging aspects of his findings was a correlation between social alienation, injustice in society and justifications for criminal activity.

“Many of the young men that are most involved in this perceive that Canada is not a fair country to them, that they don’t have the same opportunities, the same life chances as people living in this neighbourhood,” he said.

Business owners take trans fat ban in stride

By DOHA HANNO
The Observer

Canada’s trans-fat ban may have just taken effect, but East York businesses have been preparing for it for years.

The ban took effect Sept. 15. Health Canada considers trans fat the worst kind of fat, and now considers it a contaminant.

Trans fats are created when hydrogen is added to vegetable oil. They can be found in hard margarine, vegetable shortening and commercially baked goods such as cookies.

With this ban, many popular foods such as doughnuts, fast fried foods, breakfast sandwiches, frozen pizzas, muffins, pies, cakes and much more will be affected.

How are East York businesses reacting to the ban?

“We’ve already adjusted our recipes, but I’m sure other East York businesses are having a difficult time coping,” says Kostas Katsamakias, owner of Select Bakery on Donlands Avenue.

“Suppliers and anybody who sells fats like canola oil, margarine, butter, shortening and things like that, they’ve already phased it in and switched to zero trans-fat recipes. We’ve been doing that for at least a year, we’ve already had a chance to see it.”

“It’s a question of how sharp you are in your industry,” he adds. “The Baking Association...has been telling us about these things and it’s been government-wide. As an industry, as a lobby, we gave our input on this. It wasn’t just, ‘OK. We get it.’”

The government is giving businesses a two-year phase-out period to clear their shelves of trans fat products made before the ban took effect.

Bakeries are looking for shortening substitutes to perfect their new recipes. Shortening is any fat that is a solid at room temperature. It’s used in pastries and other food products. Even though butter is solid at room temperature and is frequently used in making pastries, shortening creates higher, lighter-textured

baked goods. Butter naturally has water in it but shortening doesn’t.

Trans fats increase shelf life and add to the flavour of foods and goods, however, not all manufacturers use them in their recipes.

“For your everyday day loaf of bread, I don’t think it’s going to make a large difference,” says Sven Dedic, a sales associate at Cobs Bread Bakery on Bayview Ave.

“Generally speaking, I think it will have a huge impact on other businesses. However, I don’t think it will be a negative impact because if ingredients get healthier because of this, it’s a good thing.”

Avoiding trans fat isn’t easy. A lot of the time, products will claim they contain zero trans fat when they really do.

“I think the ban will have a significant effect on communities,” says East York nutritionist Sarah Goldstein. “One issue with trans fat is that it’s not always labelled appropriately and so it’s difficult for individuals to be informed consumers.”

“Another issue with trans fat is that it’s not found naturally. We have naturally occurring forms of fat, but trans fats are created chemically in a lab. Basically what that does is alter the fat structure. Natural fats are generally malleable, but trans fats aren’t. The structure of trans fat becomes almost like a block. Imagine that in your body.”

According to Health Canada, trans fats are non-essential, not required for any specific body function, and provide no known benefit to human health.

“Trans fats are not a nutrient. Fats are typically very healthy for us,” says Goldstein.

“If you have fats from nuts, seeds, olive oil, avocados, and oily fish — these are healthy fats for us. They have benefits to our cardiovascular health, to our skin health, to our hormones. The problem with trans fat is that it’s non-nutritious. It doesn’t offer us anything good.”



Jessica Lam/The Observer

(Above left) Artists worked on their creations, like this one, inside the Dentonia Park clubhouse, with some of them spending up to 12 hours at a time on their pieces. (Above right) Sculptures in the People and Trees exhibit were on display each evening from 7 p.m. on. Lights were an integral part of the installation.

Celebrating people and trees through art

Dentonia Park exhibition creates world of light, sculpture and trees as part of Cultural Hotspot project

By JESSICA LAM
The Observer

Anyone walking through Dentonia Park after dark recently would have seen a world of arts, lights and wonder. What they wouldn't have seen is all the behind-the-scenes work that went into creating that world.

Titled "People and Trees," the installation — a Cultural Hotspot project sponsored by the Toronto Arts Council — took place from Sept. 22-29 in Dentonia Park near Victoria Park and Danforth avenues.

It all began with a sketch by Toronto artist Sarvenaz Rayati. She took it to a Cultural Hotspot officer, who liked her idea and decided to give her a chance. Pieces from an installation done last year in Dentonia Park were reused, and more artists joined the project to make sculptures out of them.

"It's about trees, the life of trees, how they are alive, and how we're connected to them," Rayati said.

The group of artists started working on the project on Aug. 27. Each created their own sculpture with their own interpretation of the concept of people and trees. Those were then placed among the trees and lights.

The sculptures were created in the park's Dentonia Clubhouse. Each was made with bamboo sticks, scotch tape and papier-mache. Small tea lights wrapped in paper made up the path.

The artists spent up to 12 hours at a time working in the clubhouse.

Once Sept. 22 came, they started setting up the installation in time for the showing at 7 p.m. The location of the sculptures changed each night, but the concept of the lights stayed the same.

The artists would group the most lights together at the base of the biggest and oldest tree, which was deemed the "main character" of the story.

From there, the lights would connect with the other trees, becoming less dense and representing the main tree spreading its energy.

At the Sept. 27 showing, there were eight sculptures in the park. In the clubhouse, one more was being created. It would be added for the remaining showings.

Among the artists was Banafsheh Erfanian, a visual artist, illustrator and painter. This was her first time taking part in an installation for a park. Erfanian was inspired by a myth: a plant that turned other plants around it yellow and killed them. The word "love" was derived from the plant's Arabic name.

"It inspired me to take this as a relation between a plant and human. So it's about love that's killing but still beautiful at the same time," Erfanian said. Her sculpture was placed

on its side on the grass with a leaf representing the plant and lights unfurling from it.

Artists Sophie Lau and Azadeh Pirazimian also worked on the project. Lau created one of the sculptures.

"I was a little bit more literal with the connection with the trees," Lau said. "For the design, in terms of the pattern on it, I was thinking about the transport of water."

The ribbon designs on the sculpture represent flowing water, and the spots on the sculpture resemble the lights on the path and represent the same thing: the flow of energy. Her sculpture was also placed on its side because, Lau said, when she thinks of nature, she thinks of relaxation.

Meanwhile, Pirazimian helped create the pathway of lights.

"First, it was something that Sarvenaz asked me to design and sketch some energy that moves between the trees. Based on that, I was already working on a drawing project named 'They Are Around,' which is about the connection between nature and everything that is around us," Pirazimian said. "I thought it was a good idea that I apply the project to Sarvenaz's idea, so I started to do the energy and working between trees and the sculptures."

Besides the artists, many others came to help out. Sarvenaz's friend, Pamela Schull, helped with the set-up. When they come across the installation for the first time, "People have a sense of wonder I see and they're very quiet," she said.

Shawkat Ara and Zebun Nessa are part of the Bangladeshi organization called Shwasti. After Sarvenaz informed the Shwasti president about the installation, Ara and Nessa jumped at the chance to volunteer.

"I live nearby and I thought, what is the point of sitting at home when I can go and help them?" Ara said.

They helped take out 500 bulbs and put them in baskets. Seeing the sculptures, they love how they look in the dark, and the messages behind them. Ara has seen people from nearby neighbourhoods look amazed when seeing the installation.

It was a group effort to make everything come together in time, but it was not without its challenges.

"This whole day has been very stressful," Rayati said. The night before, on Sept. 26, there had been a break-in at the Dentonia Clubhouse. "They damaged a lot of the pieces. It was very shocking." Most of the sculptor's heads were smashed. The police were notified.

Despite the setback, the artists showed resilience and worked together all day to fix the sculptures in time for the showing that night.

"Everyone was so generous to come last-minute and fix everything," Rayati said. "I love the group effort. Everyone working together is the amazing part."

In the future, she hopes they can bring the installation on a tour to other parks for more people to enjoy.

Bringing the community together, one apple at a time

By MICHAEL GEZAHEGN
The Observer

Apple Fest might sound like a high-tech gathering, but in Leaside, it's actually about apples.

The Lea family once occupied apple orchards on this land. Although these historical orchards are no longer present, the community maintains the spirit of the family farm.

That rich legacy, along with all things apple, was celebrated by The Bayview Leaside BIA at the third annual Apple Fest, which took place Sept. 29-30 on Bayview Avenue from Soudan to Davisville avenues.

"The Lea family used to have an orchard here, and Apple Fest is all about bringing our history back to the city," said Cheryl Sims, co-ordinator of the Bayview Leaside BIA.

The Leaside family is just one of the apple-orchard owners the event paid homage to. For example, the "Lawrence family farms on the west" were celebrated, too, notes the Bayview Leaside BIA's website.

Along with looking back, Apple Fest also fo-

cused on bringing the community and local businesses together in the present.

People walking down Bayview Avenue and Millwood Road were greeted with free apples by vendors such as Patrick Rocca, a real estate broker with Bosley Real Estate, one of more than 40 businesses that participated in the event. "Just a little something to promote myself and the community," he said.

Some stores offered clothing discounts, while food stores like Cobs Bread had employees handing out apple scones served with vanilla ice cream.

Others, like the Academy of Culinary Arts, offered free apples for customers and encouraged people to peel them. Some of those apples were provided by local Ontario apple supplier Badali's Fruit Market, which has been running for over 80 years, just down the street from Culinary Arts.

Not only small businesses participated. Large



■ SIMS



Michael Gezahegn/The Observer

The Academy of Culinary Arts provided a complimentary apple-peeling station at the Bayview Leaside BIA's third annual Apple Fest.

chains on Bayview Avenue sported apple-themed posters whether they were directly involved in the celebration or not.

Along with all of the sweet apple treats was a chance for a community to enjoy the warm-

weather before the coats come out.

As Wilmar Kortleever, a resident in the Leaside area, said, "You actually see all the shops and you meet a lot of people, and it's just nice to run into neighbours every once in awhile."