



Coriandr  Lawrence /// Observer

Have a heart...

Shannon Mandel (left), Joseph Laflamme and Pamela Valerio run a Valentine's Day fundraiser at Centennial College's East York campus on Carlaw Avenue. The three are raising money for Leave Out Violence Everywhere (LOVE), which seeks to reduce violence in the lives of youth in the community.

Grits pick candidate

Leader Bob Rae on hand for nomination meeting

By **NICHOLAS PROSPERO**
The Observer

After confusion over the date and a flurry of party nominations, the byelection race in Toronto-Danforth is clearer.

It's widely expected that the real contest leading up to next month's vote will be between law professor Craig Scott, whom the NDP nominated almost six weeks ago, and the man the Liberals selected as their candidate last week: communications executive Grant Gordon.

On Feb. 9, the Liberals met at Riverdale Collegiate Institute to choose Gordon as their contender to replace Jack Layton, following the death of the MP and NDP leader last August.

After waiting until almost the last legal moment

to announce the date for the byelection to replace Layton, the prime minister's office said on Feb. 5 that the vote would take place on March 12. The following day — citing an "administrative error" — that was revised to March 19.

At the Liberals' nomination meeting three days after the election was set, Gordon, president and creative director of Key Gordon Communications Inc., was chosen over the only other Liberal in the running, Trifon Haitas. The Liberals' interim leader, Bob Rae, visited Riverdale Collegiate for the nomination vote, along with deputy leader Ralph Goodale. Dennis Mills, who represented Toronto-Danforth on behalf of the Liberals for 16 years before Layton, also attended, and placed Gordon's name in nomination.

Gordon, a resident of the riding, explained to

voters that he values the community's diversity.

"I want my children to grow up in the most diverse community possible," Gordon said. "Toronto-Danforth is extraordinarily diverse — culturally, socially and economically. I won't stop until every person in this riding remembers that this country was built on the Liberal values of fairness and equality."

The New Democrats, Gordon said, "seem to speak out of both sides of their mouth. I have some hard questions for the Rhodes Scholar (Scott) who's running for the NDP."

Meanwhile, the Conservatives — who garnered 14 per cent of the votes in Toronto-Danforth in the 2011 election — nominated communications consultant Andrew Keyes at a closed meeting on Jan. 27.

Besides him, and Green Party candidate Adriana Mugnatto-Hamu, there are also two independent candidates so far: Leslie Bory and Bahman Yazdanfar.



■ Grant Gordon

Greens choose climate-change crusader

By **SHAUN THOMPSON**
The Observer

Adriana Mugnatto-Hamu is reprising her role as Green party candidate in Toronto-Danforth.

Mugnatto-Hamu has been a member of the party since 2005, and got seven per cent of the vote as the Green candidate in last year's federal election. At a riding association meeting

at the Riverdale library on Feb. 5, she defeated Emma Richardson and Ann Peel to earn the party's candidacy in the March 19 byelection.

Mugnatto-Hamu, born in Brazil, is fluent in Ukrainian, Portuguese and English, and has a degree in anthropology. She lives with her family in Riverdale and is outspoken on issues of human rights, climate change and energy sustainability.

Beyond her commitment to global issues, she is also concerned with issues affecting Toronto-Danforth on a daily basis.

"There are longstanding concerns in the riding," she said. "Our riding has one of the highest asthma rates in the country. Toronto-Danforth is home to the largest number of organic and local food products and people here want fair and honest labelling of all foods."

Thorncliffe tenants air complaints

Tory, Wynne tour three apartment buildings

By **TEONA BAETU**
The Observer

Depending on whom you talk to, conditions in three big apartment buildings on Thorncliffe Park Drive are getting worse — or better.

Last week, the Thorncliffe Park Tenants Association invited Newstalk 1010 radio host John Tory and MPP Kathleen Wynne to visit the buildings at 71, 75 and 79 Thorncliffe Park Dr.



● For more East York stories, visit torontoobserver.ca

"Cockroaches are there, mice are there, bed bugs are there," said Abbas Kolia, president of the tenants association. He called the building "filthy," and added, "It's getting worse and worse every day."

And the association says that despite previous rallies and involvement by local politicians, Q Residential, the building's management, isn't heeding tenants' concerns.

Tory said he would talk to Q Residential, after touring the apartment buildings and speaking with tenants.

"I'm going to talk to these landlords myself, because I know some of the people involved," he said, "and just say 'How can you put up with this sort of thing?' and see what they have to say for themselves."

He also requested a list of outstanding work orders, and promised that if nothing is done, he will invite tenants onto his radio show to tell their stories.

■ See THORNCLIFFE, page 8



Teona Baetu /// Observer

John Tory addressing tenants' complaints at 71 Thorncliffe Park Dr.

POLICE BRIEFS

Loaded gun seized

The Toronto Police Service's Guns and Gangs Task Force found a loaded pistol at an apartment building near Eglinton Avenue and the Don Valley Parkway, after executing a search warrant on Feb. 6. Police also seized a quantity of cocaine, two sets of weigh scales and cash. Calvin Prosser, 18, is facing 11 counts of firearm- and drug-related charges.



Police seek burglar

Police are looking for a burglar after several break-ins of apartments and office buildings in East York, Scarborough and downtown Toronto. The man was last seen using a brick to smash a glass window to gain entry to a building on Oak Street, in the Riverdale area. They've released a photo of the suspect.

Misdialed 911 calls down

Police say East Yorkers and other Torontonians are getting the message about accidental 911 calls. They continue to urge people to lock their phones. In the event of a misdial, users should remain on the line and let the operator know that no assistance is needed.

~ Sunnie Huang



Dylan C. Robertson // Observer

Second World War-era bungalows are being dwarfed by built-up homes as people seek the location and space of East York.

Real estate prices climbing

By DYLAN C. ROBERTSON
The Observer

Linda Reid loves living on the western edge of East York. "It's a fabulous neighbourhood," she said, citing its diversity, good schools and nearby transit.

Reid likes exploring local shops and catching up with neighbours. This sense of community, along with recent trends in the real estate market, is what's attracting people to East York.

This month the National Post reported on a neglected two-storey house next door to Reid that fell into disrepair after its owners took ill. Though potential buyers who toured the house encountered peeling paint, piles of clothes and the smell of cat urine, the house sold for \$1 million.

Reid says the new owners are already planning big renovations. Linda Ing-Gilbert is a realtor, based in East York.

"A lot of people move for location," she said. "Everything else in a home can be changed."

Reid knows this well. She said her neighbourhood

has been under "constant renovation" over the last 10 years. While she's enjoyed meeting new neighbours, she knows house prices – as well as her own taxes – are going up drastically from when she moved in three decades ago.

"I could afford to move here then; I couldn't now," Reid said. "I'm one of the few that are left."

Like the rest of the city, East York house prices have recently been on the rise because of a shortage of homes on the market. Last week, the Canadian Real Estate Association announced the average cost of a single-family home in Toronto hit \$606,600 as of January, a 50-per-cent jump in six years. That's \$100,000 higher than the Canadian average and slightly higher than the surrounding GTA.

These rising costs are making East York's Second World War-era bungalows attractive, as buyers can build onto these smaller homes to fit their needs.

"What East York offers is more land," Ing-Gilbert said. "There are lots of World War

Two bungalows with a lot of space. That can be hard to find."

While some people choose bungalows to accommodate reduced mobility, many homeowners add and extend floors at a lower price than buying a large house.

Madeline MacKay lives in a three-storey build-up, down the street from Reid.

"You'd never know you were downtown," she said. "It feels like a real community. You get one-of-a-kind businesses and lots to see. My son loves the parks and the attractions."

MacKay says she hears streetcars rolling by her house from her third floor on quiet Sundays.

"It's magical," she said.

Jane Pitfield, head of the East York Historical Society and former city councillor, says she welcomes a mix in housing, but feels it's important to preserve the area's identity.

"People choose a neighbourhood because of the character of the neighbourhood," she said. "When the character begins to change it does affect real estate values potentially and all of a sudden it doesn't feel like the

neighbourhood you chose to live in."

Ing-Gilbert agrees that a community's feel is important for homeowners and suggests concerned residents form preservation groups.

"I think that history's important for our neighbourhoods," she said.

Pitfield remembers pioneering real estate guidelines for Leaside when she was councillor for Ward 26/Don Valley West. The community's suggestions included maintaining most of the houses' height, materials and distance from street. The guideline was "consulted like a bible" by the city's adjustment committee and promoted to residents.

"If you had property sold beside you, you could make sure the developer knew about the guidelines," Pitfield recalled. "Ninety per cent of the time, just by talking about it, I found that builders and private citizens who owned the land tried to get it right because they wanted to conform and build something that would fit into the neighbourhood, knowing it was important."

Police give warning of home break-ins

By SUNNIE HUANG
The Observer

Police are reminding East York residents to be extra vigilant following a rash of break-ins in the area over the past few weeks.

A vacant house under renovation near Victoria Park and St. Clair avenues was broken into twice in January. A total of \$4,500 worth of equipment and tools was stolen.

A similar incident took place at a house near St. Clair Avenue and O'Connor Drive, where tools were also missing after a break-in.

Const. Victor Kwong, media

relations officer for Toronto Police Service, said the same individual or group is likely behind these incidents, based on the close proximity of the two houses and the similar nature of the crimes.

He said that the suspects might keep the tools or pawn them for cash.

Kwong said it is difficult to keep tabs on houses under renovation because of the traffic on site. Not all residents hire contractors to stay on the premises. Owners should negotiate the responsibility of home security with contractors beforehand, he advised.

"It's always good to have neighbours know when

(workers) would be in," Kwong said. "If you know there should be no work done on the weekend, let someone know."

Const. Ingrid Hannah, a crime prevention officer from 54 Division, said common sense is more helpful than panic when it comes to home security.

Hannah noted that simple tasks, such as taking out the recycling and bringing in the bin on time, make homes appear lived-in. Homeowners can also purchase several light timers and set them to come on at different times. If a house is left vacant for renovations, windows and doors should be

secured.

"If you as a resident feel something is wrong, you should call us," she said. "These are the calls that we appreciate."

Crime prevention officers are available on the phone or in person to speak to residents. They also talk at condo meetings, neighbourhood gatherings and community group meetings.

"It's much easier to prevent than to have to undo all the damage afterward," Hannah said.

Residents with information or concerns are asked to call the non-emergency number 416-808-2222.

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

The East York Agnes Macphail Recognition Committee is holding its annual public speaking contest this coming Wednesday, Feb. 22, at 7 p.m. at the East York Civic Centre, 850 Coxwell Ave.

The public is invited to the first of 2012's series of public commemorations of this illustrious East York politician and social activist — when speeches written by East York-area students will be delivered in the council chambers of the civic centre. Free parking will be in the staff parking lot located off of Mortimer Avenue.

For more information, contact committee chair Lorna Krawchuk at 416-425-4431 or e-mail lkrawchuk8@aol.com

Meanwhile, the East York Historical Society is asking for donations for a plaque on the Macphail home at 2 Donegall Dr. Please make cheques payable to the East York Foundation and mailed to EYHS, 10 McKayfield Rd., East York, ON, M4J 4P7.

Finally, the Macphail committee reminds residents of the Agnes Macphail Award ceremony at the civic centre on March 24 at 7 p.m. The award recognizes an East Yorker for outstanding volunteer work.



● For more info on keeping your home secure, go to <http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/crimeprevention/homesecurity.php>

■ POLICE SHOOTING



Kristopher Morrison // Observer

Police taped off R&S Convenience store at the corner of Woodington and Sammon avenues after Michael Eligon reportedly entered and stole two pairs of scissors, before being fatally shot in a nearby confrontation with police. EMS was on the scene tending to the clerk inside.

SIU probes shooting

Man, 29, shot and killed by police after carjacking attempt

By KRISTOPHER MORRISON
The Observer

The province's Special Investigations Unit is looking into the fatal shooting of a 29-year-old man by police on Milverton Boulevard near Coxwell Avenue on Feb. 3.

An eyewitness told the Observer that she saw the man, Michael Eligon, dressed in a hospital gown and brandishing scissors, attempting to car-

jack a hospital employee near Woodington and Sammon avenues, about half a block away from Toronto East General Hospital.

The witness, an elderly woman who asked for anonymity, said the man managed to get one foot in the employee's car as the female driver was getting out.

The driver, whom the witness recognized, yelled at the man and was able to pull him away. The witness said the man then ran off.

As the employee called police, the witness said she saw the suspect run up a driveway on Woodington Avenue and

disappear behind the homes.

"I was so scared," the witness said.

Reports indicate the man was then seen waving scissors while trying to enter a house on Milverton.

That's where he was eventually shot, but Toronto police and EMS workers were also on the scene at R&S Convenience store, near the scene of the attempted carjacking, where the man appears to have gone on a rampage after stealing two pairs of scissors.

Right after the shooting a few blocks away, investigators could be seen speaking with the clerk inside the store. Bro-

ken glass and chip bags lay scattered on the floor. No witnesses reported seeing EMS take anyone away for medical treatment.

Officials from the Special Investigations Unit were also at the convenience store and the house where the shooting took place.

Angela Pappaianni, a media relations representative for Toronto East General Hospital, confirmed that the hospital never went into lockdown, but would not comment further.

"We're co-operating with the police investigation at this time," Pappaianni said in a telephone interview.

It's the real thing: Coke pops off to downtown

By REBECCA STECKHAM
The Observer

East York's loss is downtown Toronto's gain as the Thorncliffe community waves goodbye to Coca-Cola headquarters over the next year.

Coca-Cola Canada headquarters, located on Overlea Boulevard since being built in 1965, is moving to a more modern location to provide the company with new, fresh ways of functioning.

According to the principal at ERA Architects Inc., Michael McClelland, the appeal has to do with quality of life issues downtown.

"They like things like the pedestrian aspect of it, the fact that there is lots of shops and stores," McClelland said. "They're attracting people to work for them.... They want to work in the downtown core."

According to Toronto Star urban issues columnist Christopher Hume, locating downtown has become a trend for businesses.

"People want to be in the city again," Hume said. "In the last two to three years, all of a sudden corporations, businesses are opening or under construction (downtown). That would never have happened five to 10 years ago. It's part of a much larger trend."

Hume points to the Royal Bank, a large corporation building its headquarters at Queens Quay.

Coca-Cola may anticipate that moving to a busier area will invigorate its presence with the general public. However, its relocation removes a key landmark from the Thorncliffe Park business community.

The area, originally conceptualized as housing many businesses, has not evolved as planned, and that lack of maturation may have influenced Coca-Cola's decision.

"Thorncliffe is a very interesting neighbourhood but they need to look at how they can make themselves better to entice companies like Coca-Cola to stay around," McClelland said.

So far, the distinctive building's future has yet to be decided. Buildings that are abandoned enter a process where the city determines if the building can be repurposed for other use. Both Hume and McClelland hope that comes to pass.

"Most people don't really care about architecture in the postwar period," Hume said. "But I think the best thing would be to keep it. It's a period piece, spirit of the time."

Program helps seniors stay young at heart

Neighbourhood Link provides everything from Ping-Pong to ballroom dancing classes

By LILIAN ASANTE
The Observer

From the basement of the Toronto Chinese Logos Baptist Church, the sound of seniors singing a popular Christmas carol — *Do You Hear What I Hear?* — spills out onto Amroth Avenue.

Although the holiday season is over, the participants don't care, as this group singalong is part of their Friday fitness routine.

It's an example of one of the programs hosted by Neighbourhood Link Support Services, headquartered at 3036 Danforth Ave. near Victoria Park, to help East York-area seniors stay active.

Phebe Pang is the community worker for the organization's Chinese program. It's important, she said, because it helps keep seniors feeling young and prevents them from getting lonely.

"Many of them in the community can feel so

isolated when their children leave for work," she said. "They come to find a place where they can make friends and do something good for themselves."

The program runs from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and involves stretching exercises, traditional Chinese line dancing, ballroom dancing and Ping-Pong, as well as such activities as painting, karaoke and sing-alongs.

Mary Wong, 76, has been retired for over 10 years. She said she always tries to attend the program because it's a great way for her to keep fit.

"I walk for 20-25 minutes to come here," Wong said. "It is better than staying at home and watching TV, which can sometimes get you down; here I can be active."

The program's members range in age from 60 to 92, Pang said, and they're all quite lively.

"One of our members is 91 years old," she noted. "He also teaches the ballroom dancing class."

Marketing manager Lorie Fairburn said Neighbourhood Link has been assisting seniors

since 1975. It initially began as a seniors' group that was started by members

of the East York community who wanted to help their neighbours in need.

Although the agency has expanded its services to newcomers and youth, Fairburn said much of what it does is still directed at seniors.

"Part of our role is to help seniors live independently with dig-

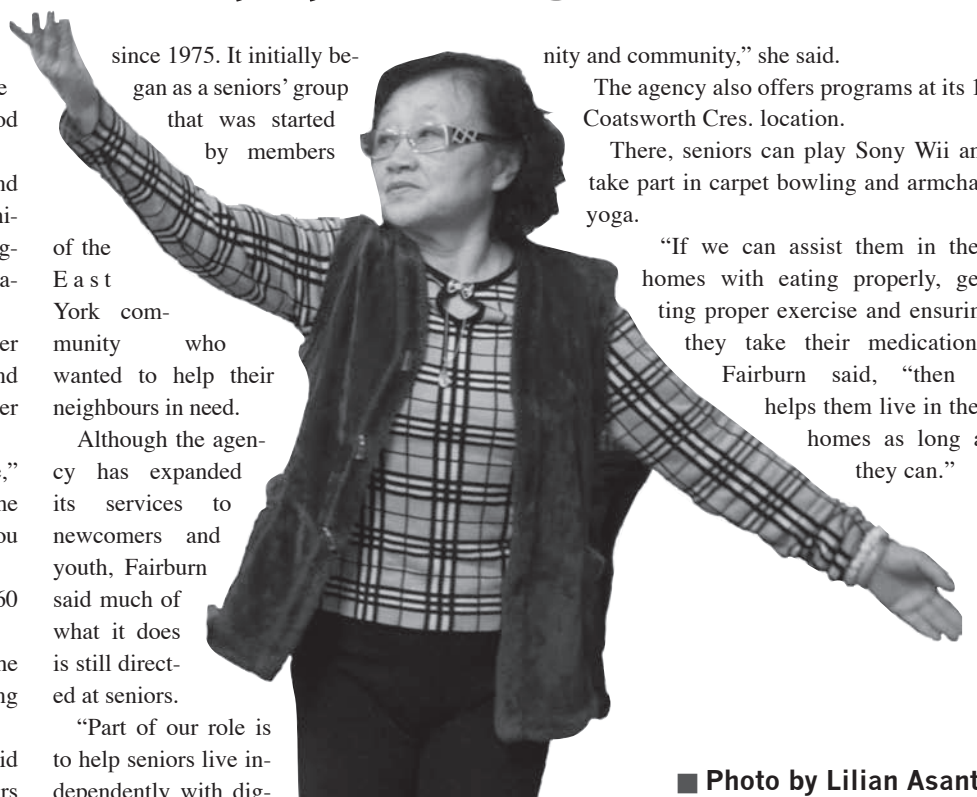
nity and community," she said.

The agency also offers programs at its 11 Coatsworth Cres. location.

There, seniors can play Sony Wii and take part in carpet bowling and armchair yoga.

"If we can assist them in their homes with eating properly, getting proper exercise and ensuring they take their medication,"

Fairburn said, "then it helps them live in their homes as long as they can."



■ Photo by Lilian Asante



Photo courtesy of Charles Kadin

Charles Kadin is pictured next to his painting, *The Griffon Gunner*. The painting is exhibited by the Air Force Museum of Alberta.

Artist's labour of love

Aviation inspires Leaside resident

By SCOTT BARBER
The Observer

On clear summer days when school was out and the ball games were over, Charles Kadin would hang around the shoreline of Lake Ontario. Somewhere between Fort York and the Exhibition grounds, he would watch visitors from the Royal Norwegian Air Force zip by overhead as they flew in and out of the airstrip at Toronto Island.

"I would go down to the waterfront and sit on the parapets to watch the airplanes off in the distance," Kadin said. "I had a fascination for anything that went up in the air."

Kadin's interest in aviation was put on the backburner for a while as he pursued a career as a graphic artist.

But after five decades in design and art direction with Eaton's and Harlequin Books, his passion for aircraft took flight once again, when the Leaside resident discovered the United States Air Force art program.

"My friend told me the United States Air Force had an art program and that they assigned people to go on military trips," he said. "I thought I had died and gone to heaven."

Kadin, 76, has experienced the military in ways that most can only dream about.

"I've been in a KC-135 doing air-to-air refueling," he said. "You watch an F-16 suddenly appear out of nowhere, the boom comes out and in two and a half minutes you've got

a load of fuel and he's gone."

Such are the perks of being an artist in the U.S. Air Force art program.

"You go to anywhere the U.S. Air Force finds itself," he said. "You fly with them."

Kadin's access to military bases and airstrips gives him control over the content and composition of his paintings. Using his camera "like a rifle," he photographs the aircraft and scenes he will paint.

When he is unable to take a picture, Kadin relies on reference material.

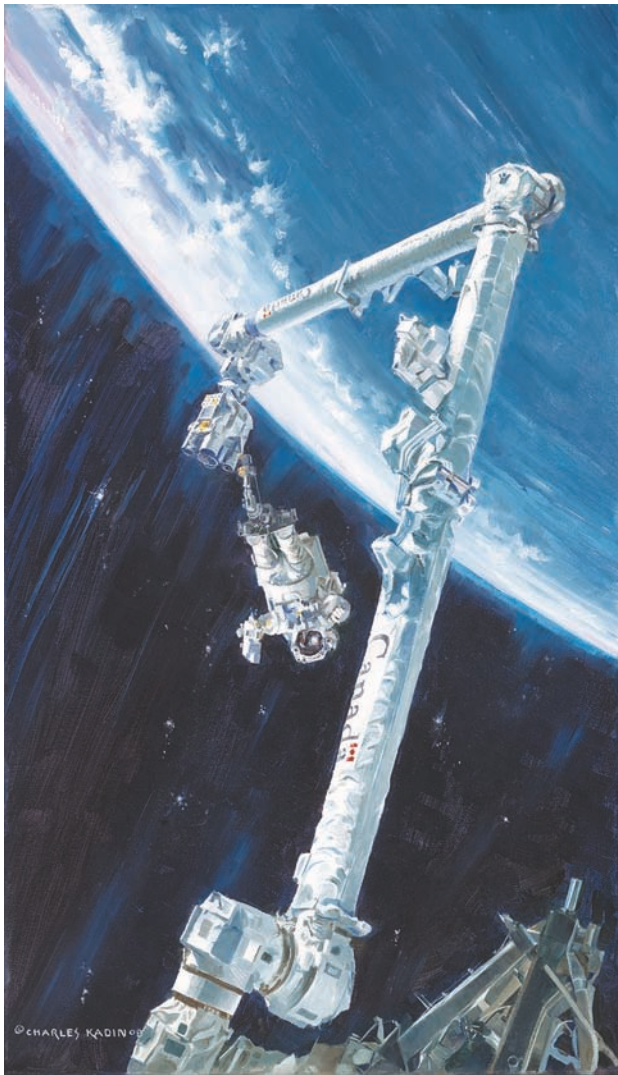
In the case of *Griffon Gunner*, he met with a Chinook Squadron leader who provided authentic photographs and a first-hand narrative.

In that painting, Kadin focused on "the man behind the Dillon rotary gun and the job he was entrusted with." Using pictures of the desert background, as well as the Chinook and three different gunners (in order to ensure the accuracy of the helmet, uniform and gun position), the artist illustrated how Griffon gunners protect Chinook helicopters in Afghanistan.

Kadin's painting talents are not reserved for our southern neighbours, though. He is also a founding member of the Canadian Aviation Artists Association and his work is exhibited at a number of Canadian museums.

While his art has been displayed in magazines and awarded prizes in juried competitions, recognition was never the primary goal for Kadin.

"It's a labour of love," he said. "The worst thing in the world is to be bored and this keeps my head going."



Canadaarm2 (top) and *Fall of an Arrow* (bottom), two of Charles Kadin's paintings.

Ball hockey team heading overseas

The Withrow Park Ball Hockey League sends players to Czech Republic

By SHAUN THOMPSON
The Observer

If the success of the Withrow Knights is any indication, ball hockey is no longer just a sport played on suburban streets and family driveways.

The Withrow Park Ball Hockey League's (WPBHL) master's division team, with players 40 and older, are heading overseas to face off against the sport's top teams at the World Ball Hockey Championships in Pilsen, Czech Republic on Sept. 12.

For the first time, the Canadian Ball Hockey Association (CBHA) is sending two men's master's teams to the international tournament. The first spot automatically goes to Team Canada. However, the CBHA decided to give the second spot to a team representing the vibrant ball hockey community, and chose the Knights.

"With respect to selecting Withrow, it was both the strength of the Withrow league – we have a good strong team that will be able to compete at that level – and also that it's a truly great recreational league. It's a focal point for our community and a really positive community experience," said Lenny Abramowicz, the team's co-director of hockey and a player travelling to the Czech Republic.

The community on East

York's southern edge has shown remarkable support to the team in the build-up to the tournament. The league has been active since 1976, with participation and its popularity growing annually.

"There has been tremendous community support on many levels. We've held a series of community fundraising events and there is actually a contingent of supporters from the community – family and friends – who plan on coming over with us to the Czech Republic to cheer us on," Abramowicz said.

With an average player age of 46.5, the Knights will be the oldest team at the tournament, but won't let that deter them.

"I anticipate that our team therapist won't get a lot of time off once the tournament starts," Abramowicz said. "We've got some ageing bones and muscles out there, but most of the guys on the team have been playing together for years. We have a fair bit of experience and we hope to make up for the fact that maybe we're going to be a little bit older than the other teams."

The Withrow Park Ball Hockey League operates out of the Withrow Park Rink on Carlaw Avenue, just south of the Danforth, between April and September. Fundraising for the Knights is ongoing, and all community support is welcome.

Family health centre set for spring opening

By TICHAONA TAPAMBWA
The Observer

Construction of a new East York family health centre is nearly complete.

Located at 1871 Danforth Avenue, the South East Toronto Family Health Team's (SETFHT) new building promises to transform local primary and community patient care. Highlights include improved infection control, increased privacy for patients and families and enhanced accessibility.

"The Family Health Care

Centre is aimed at trying to have the skills available that cover the full range from medical care to social services," Allan Carswell, a retired doctor and chairman of the board at Optech Inc., said.

Carswell also donated \$1 million to the facility shortly before Christmas.

"I was brought up in the area and am closely connected to it," Carswell said.

The SETFHT is affiliated with Toronto East General Hospital and the University of Toronto, and is scheduled to open this spring.

Prince of African-Caribbean culture

Althea Prince speaks about Afro-Caribbean contributions across the GTA

By JODEE BROWN
The Observer



■ Althea Prince

Jobs, money and culture all affect a country's development, and one speaker aims to ensure that contributions offered by a section of Canada's black community aren't overlooked.

On Saturday, the Pape-Danforth branch of the Toronto Public Library held "It started with the Maroons: Caribbean Roots" in Canada, an event dedicated to exploring settlement experiences for Afro-Caribbean people in Canada.

Prominent Antiguan-Canadian author and professor Althea Prince hosted the Black History Month event,

sharing the history of Maroons in the Caribbean and facts about African-Caribbean societal contributions to Canada with a rapt audience.

Prince, who teaches sociology at Ryerson University's G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, pointed to the success of the Caribana Festival as an example of how African-Caribbean people contribute greatly to progress in the GTA.

"The profits from Carib-

ana are the largest that the city receives," she said. "There are businesses, strides in education, cultural production. There has been a lot of cultural production. The contribution in terms of economy is phenomenal. Our contribution in education is phenomenal."

Prince thinks the biggest challenges facing African-Caribbean people in Canada come when they're trying to settle here.

"The largest obstacles are always the ones that prevent you from having food, shelter and work," she said. "For African-Caribbean people this means acceptance; lack of acceptance may be the largest obstacle."

Prince believes that nationwide, schools need to introduce more teachings on the history of African-Caribbean people in Canada, given that Black History Month only tells footnotes of a long tale.



Tatiana Herman /// Observer

Fancy footwork

Joey Donovan skates with ease as she shows her dad, Dan Donovan, her moves at East York's Evergreen Brick Works skating rink.



Dylan C. Robertson /// Observer

Author Sandra Joyce points to a photocopy of the pier record that revealed her father was an orphan. The discovery led her to write a book about the British home children.

Writer discovers her roots and advocates for orphans

Visit to Pier 21 sheds new light on family's history

By DYLAN C. ROBERTSON
The Observer

A few years after her father's death, Sandra Joyce visited Halifax. She stopped by the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 to check if they had records of her father's arrival in Canada.

"It says here: 'Orphan Homes of Scotland'," the English teacher says, now pointing to a copy of the document that changed her family history. "I never knew he was an orphan."

It was a discovery that would lead to publishing a book and travelling halfway across the world.

The Street Arab: The Story of a British Home Child is Joyce's first novel. Based on her father's life, it tells the story of one of the 100,000 orphans that Britain sent to Canada between 1869 and 1939.

Joyce spoke to members of the East York Historical

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

■ Sandra Joyce once worked as a publicist for CBS Records

■ She's currently writing a sequel to her first novel, which she said was "the hardest thing I've ever done in my life."

Society on Jan. 31 at the S. Walter Stewart library branch. Though the characters are fictional, her book sticks closely to the history of home children. The novel took Joyce four years of research and a trip to the Scottish orphan house where her father lived.

"It's very rewarding, but also the hardest thing I've ever done in my life," Joyce said.

Faced with crowded orphan houses following the First World War, Britain created a scheme, in connection with Canada's agriculture department, to send young labourers to the sparsely populated colony. Some were sent over in boats that shipped Canadian timber to Britain, since they were empty for return routes.

The children, who mostly came from large cities, were sent to rural Canada to work

as domestic or farm labourers. Seen as "deviants" on both sides of the Atlantic, they had derogatory nicknames.

Government monitors were only interested in whether farmers were satisfied with the children's behaviour — while many children suffered isolation and abuse. The program was finally ended after a number of suicides.

She recalls growing distant from her father and says many descendants of home children never got to know their family members and their history.

"These children were not able to form relationships very easily. While I was a child he was very sweet, but as I got older he grew away from me," Joyce said.

Although she was told from birth that her grandmother was dead, Joyce found out that she

had actually died in 1985. In her research, she even came across a photograph of the dozen children who arrived in Canada from the same orphanage in 1925.

Joyce, who is working on a sequel to her first novel, is pushing for awareness of this episode of history. Her book's foreword is written by MPP Jim Brownell, whose grandmother was a home child from the same Scottish orphanage.

With Joyce's help, he enacted an annual British Home Child Day. Her book launched on the inaugural commemoration, on Sept. 28, 2011.

Estimates say roughly 10 per cent of Canadians descend from home children. Britain had smaller child emigration schemes with Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Within the past decade, Australia and the United Kingdom have apologized, but Canada has only issued a statement of "regret."

"As Canadians, we tend to think of ourselves as advocates of human rights and freedom. And here we were doing things to children not so long ago. So how can we point the finger at other countries?"

EDITORIALS

'Broken windows'

Recently, there have been a few blemishes flaring up on the usually serene and pleasant face of East York.

The breakout has come in some disturbing forms. One was an armed robbery at the Castries barber shop on Fulton Avenue. Another was the case of a man dressed in a hospital gown and wielding scissors, then shot by police. But the police blotter column of this newspaper and others lists more mundane occurrences — that many in the community (understandably) dismiss. These are the cases of minor crimes in quiet communities around Toronto that don't register on our collective radar.

It's only when we're shaken by an incident like the one on Milverton Boulevard two weeks ago that some sense crime with a capital C. Then, of course, it's too late.

According to Toronto police statistics, there have been about 29 shootings involving 39 victims so far in 2012. For the most part, East York has been limited to "lesser" criminal activity.

But we're reminded of what then-mayor Rudolph Giuliani taught us from the streets of New York City a decade ago: When you crack down on petty crimes — even things like vandalism — the rate of major crime will drop. Prof. Vincent Henry of the U.S. Homeland Security Management Institute wrote about this "broken windows" theory, calling minor crimes "criminogenic — when left untended, they subtly convey a message that disorder and incivility prevail, that social controls have broken down and that no one really cares about the neighbourhood in which they occur. This message often translates to the idea that such conditions are somehow acceptable and that because minor offences are acceptable, more serious ones must be as well."

"Ultimately," Prof. Henry wrote, "if minor offences are left unchecked, they lead to more serious crime."

Now seems to be the time for residents to call community meetings and analyze strategies with police to help keep this community safer. There is strength in numbers and together we can address the looming threat.

With organizations such as the Crime Prevention Association of Toronto along with the police, residents can get help to move in the right direction. It would be fitting for our city councillors to help lead this process of addressing this previously inconspicuous issue.

So East Yorkers, the time to take a stand is now — and not when you're dialing 911.
~ Coriandre Lawrence

A chance for vision

The once-popular Ontario Place, located on Toronto's waterfront, was opened in 1971. In its first year, it brought in over 2.5 million guests. But that number has dropped steadily over the years — to the point that, this month, the province announced that it's shutting most of the park down for a reassessment.

With nine separate groups of architects all lunging at the chance to express their visions for Ontario Place — not to mention all of the armchair architects out there — there's no shortage of ideas about what to do with the site: ideas like a shoreline neighbourhood, public boardwalks, even a waterfront casino (although the idea of a shoreline or downtown casino was sharply rebuked at Tuesday's Toronto-East York community council meeting).

Steven Dale, an urban planner with Creative Urban Projects, has a few suggestions of his own for Ontario Place. Dale's ideas include some sort of transit link for easier connectivity to the park from the city's core. That might make the park more of a destination for East Yorkers and others who now feel at a distance and out of touch.

This plan to better connect the city to the park could only benefit the East York area. It would create more accessibility not only for weekend escapes, but in terms of economic development (translation: jobs). But Dale goes further; he wants better connectivity to link other tourist attractions as well, including Yonge-Dundas Square and East York's Greektown.

So East York residents and other Torontonians removed from the vicinity of Ontario Place still have a stake in the redevelopment of the park and its new place in the GTA. While concrete plans may be a long way off, let's not overlook the fact that there's an opportunity to exploit the considerable potential that the site represents for the benefit of East York and the rest of the city.

~ Rebecca Steckham

Letter: LRT issues, solutions

Kudos to Nicholas Prospero for his honesty (column: LRT may cause drivers problems, Feb. 3).

But he sounded selfish — promoting his individual solution... not the best stance for a

columnist. The situation will only worsen unless something is done, and the LRT won't solve everything — but it will get transit done faster and cheaper.

One big problem in

Toronto traffic is that cars mostly carry one passenger. Maybe Mr. Prospero or someone else could investigate that for the Observer.

David Kidd
East York

COLUMN

Mutual respect, please

It's been six years since a certain theatre chain that I happen to work for removed the word "customer" from their company vocabulary and replaced it with "guest." So "customer service" became "guest service," and "next customer in line" turned into "next guest in line."

Even their new philosophy, "The Guest is Why..." is printed on the back of employees' nametags.

A guest is someone you'd invite over to your home. It's someone whose presence you value enough to bring them into your personal space.

Under those circumstances, we're no longer in the business of serving, but rather in the business of pleasing — overtly. But if someone is a guest, isn't a certain level of etiquette expected of them as well? It goes both ways, right? Having worked for one of the chain's theatres for the past four years, I've seen over-the-top customer service accommodation.

I remember the time when I was watching *Moneyball* (not in uniform) and at the very end of the film the projected image went dark for maybe 20 seconds — hardly enough to make an impact on the two-hour film. In fact, the picture

came back in time for the audience to read the epilogue of the story before the credits began to roll. But that didn't stop a lineup from forming at the guest services counter — a lineup of movie-goers asking for passes for their next movie to compensate for those few seconds when the screen went to black. And they got their passes.

My question is: Where do you draw the line?

Most customers deal in good faith. And maybe there were some cinephiles in the *Moneyball* audience for whom the movie was ruined by the momentarily blank screen. OK. And I get it when there's a strand of hair in that bag of popcorn and you want a new bag.

Fair enough.

But it isn't just at the theatre where I've noticed that some people seem to go above-and-beyond to try to get freebies.

My favourite example may be a story told by a friend of mine who works with me at the theatre, who said that a "guest" actually resorted to dirty name-calling — in front of her young children — when my friend pointed out that the film she wanted to take her kids into was rated 18A and not really meant for 3-5 year-olds.

The result of the altercation? Free passes for mommy dearest.

That old service adage, the customer is always right, certainly has its place. But it seems to me that in some quarters, among some people, it's gotten a little out of hand. Customers seem to have gained a sense of entitlement and lost their sense of respect.



Leigh Cavanaugh

End a shameful practice

Throughout history, humans have been fascinated and inspired by horses. We have a long history of companionship with

these noble and loyal creatures. Even if you have never been around horses or experienced the thrill of riding one of these magnificent animals, you have surely been captivated by their image in books and films.

It's unfathomable to me how horses could be slaughtered for food — and yet there are seven horse slaughterhouses in Canada. In 2007, horse slaughter was banned in the United States. But the horse-killing industry in Canada has responded to U.S. slaughterhouse closures with a colossal effort to cash in. Canada is rapidly becoming the horse slaughter capital of the world.

Horses are not raised for slaughter. They are not traditional food animals. They have been raised in close human contact for racing, ranch work and pleasure riding. This sudden treatment as pure livestock disorients and frightens them, compounding their suffering.

Veterinary experts have denounced horse slaughter as inherently inhumane, due to the

animals' extreme response in the "kill chute." Horses have an instinctive flight response and will often thrash their heads in the kill chute, making it difficult to accurately stun them prior to slaughter. They are sometimes shot three or four times before they are finally dead.

Shocking video footage obtained by the Horse Defence Coalition of Canada clearly shows the terror experienced by the horses... who are seen shaking violently, falling, unable to stand from fear.

Their final experience is also the worst betrayal that we humans could possibly inflict on these trusting creatures.

Animal advocacy groups are working towards implementing Bill C-322, legislation that will ban horse slaughter in Canada as well as the importing and exporting of horses to slaughter in Canada.

For more information, visit www.defendhorsecanda.org. And urge our MPs to support Bill C-322.



Valentina Krgovic

Let's talk future

By VALENTINA KRGOVIC
The Observer

The automotive future is on display at Evergreen Brick Works this month.

The community centre with an environmental orientation is hosting the "Better Place Demonstration Centre" until Feb. 29 to educate visitors about electric cars.

Who Killed the Electric Car? was a 2006 documentary examining how oil companies played a role in suppressing the development and adoption of electric cars. One company that is helping to resurrect electric vehicles today is Better Place, headquartered at the Evergreen campus on Bayview Avenue.

Better Place describes itself as a global company developing a mobility solution that provides an alternative to gasoline. With the support of the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Better Place is running its electric car demonstration at the Brick Works — including an electric car-charging network and an education and demonstration centre.

Part of Evergreen's mandate is promoting initiatives around sustainable living. It provides a venue where environmental innovators and companies can share ideas and present emerging clean technologies.

Sarah Marchionda, the host at the demonstration centre, explained the necessity of adopting electric vehicles.

"The easiest and most cost-effective way an individual can make to reduce greenhouse gases is to replace their fossil-fuelled car with an electric car powered by renewable energy," she said.

An average car produces more than four tons of emissions each year. So switching to electric vehicles can deliver a big reduction in carbon emissions. Every 100,000 electric cars on the road powered by 100 per cent renewable energy would prevent approximately 400,000 tonnes of carbon emissions per year.



Paulina Pestryakov /// Observer

The anti-suicide fence on the Bloor viaduct has eliminated the average 17 suicides per year from the bridge — but a British study said that the city-wide rate of people taking their lives is essentially unchanged.

Barrier a qualified success

'Luminous veil' stops jumpers — but suicides steady

By PAULINA PESTRYAKOV
The Observer

As the "luminous veil" enters its 10th year of suicide prevention at East York's southwest corner, the Bloor Street bridge's now-familiar see-through barrier is a qualified success, according to the local organization that helped spearhead its installation.

The East York chapter of

the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario was instrumental in developing the barrier.

And despite questions about its ultimate effectiveness in deterring despondent people from taking their lives, the society still considers it a life-saver.

Suspended high above the Don Valley, the Prince Edward Viaduct — as the Bloor Street bridge between Broadview and Bayview avenues is properly known — was once infamous for its high number of suicide jumps. In 1997, a report from the SSO stated that people threw themselves off the bridge at an average rate of

once every 22 days. That put it second only to San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge as a venue for people taking their lives by jumping.

The Schizophrenia Society's East York chapter took a leadership role in the years-long campaign to get the barrier put up.

According to Graeme Storey of the SSO, "30 to 40 per cent of those suffering from schizophrenia commit suicide."

He added: "The Schizophrenia Society deals with people suffering and their family members."

Simplified, the luminous

veil consists of vertical beams rising from the edges of the bridge and supporting horizontal beams running along their tops. Those beams, in turn, act as curtain rods — and closely spaced cables are hung from them to block anyone from jumping off. An additional aid can be seen at each end of the viaduct: signs with several phone numbers for emergency counselling.

But while the installation has stopped people from jumping off the viaduct, a 2010 study published in a British journal said that the number of suicides across Toronto had not changed. The study

said the number was holding steady at around 54 per year. The authors speculated that people are simply finding other means of committing suicide, including other bridges and tall buildings.

Still, other tall structures around the world have anti-suicide barriers — like the Empire State Building and the Eiffel Tower.

Storey said the SSO still considers the veil to be a significant accomplishment.

"Even though it didn't help to entirely eliminate suicide rates in Toronto, the barrier is an extra step in reducing suicides," he said.

Full-day kindergarten on a rollercoaster ride

By SCOTT BARBER
The Observer

The province's on-again/off-again full-day kindergarten program appears to be on again, after Finance Minister Dwight Duncan said this week that Queen's Park will not follow consultant Don Drummond's recommendation to save money by dropping it.

Full-day kindergarten started in a few schools last school year, but it's supposed to be ramped up to 1,700 schools by this September.

If all-day kindergarten survives, East York's Holy Name and Holy Cross Catholic schools are scheduled to institute it this fall.

But unlike their public school counterparts, these schools have the added challenge of handling the student influx without boundary restrictions.

The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) policy of open access to schools has resulted in admissions problems, according to

East York/Ward 11 Trustee Angela Kennedy.

In many cases, there simply isn't enough space to accommodate every student at his or her desired school.

As a result, some school administrators have contradicted the board's open access policy and created boundary restrictions themselves. But this has left a number of families, some of which already have children attending the schools in question, on waiting lists.

"I've had some calls from parents who've been turned away from Holy Cross," Kennedy said. "So we've asked the board to follow our policy so that there are no boundaries for our local schools."

She expects the issue to be resolved shortly, so that parents will not have to worry about sending their children to separate schools.

"According to our policy, they would have to admit those students even if they were outside of the catchment areas the schools have arbitrarily decided upon," Kennedy said.



Aldis Brennan /// Observer

Angela Kennedy, separate school board trustee for East York, participates in the first board meeting of the new year at the Catholic Education Centre on Jan. 26.

Workshop adding another piece to the autism puzzle

Seminar leaders advocate taking a lifelong approach when working with autism

By **CORTNEY COOK**
The Observer

With practical, life-long planning for children and adults and a special focus on physical impairments such as deafness, autism research specialists Barbara Doyle and Emily Illand are hoping to change the way people see autism.

Today (Feb. 17) and tomorrow, Autism Ontario is hosting From Diagnosis to Daily Living: A Lifelong Approach to Working with Individuals with an ASD. The workshop will be held at the Japanese-Canadian Cultural Centre, 6 Garmond Court, on the edge of East York.

Doyle and Illand will be running the workshop themselves. The sisters also wrote the award-winning book Autism Spectrum Disorders from A-Z in 2004.

"I've been the field of disability services for 41 years," Doyle said. "I started out as a teacher for the deaf, and then in the '70s I worked with people with autism, trying to bring about what we knew about sign language to children with autism. Ever since, I've been in the field of autism."

Her sister, Illand, has a son with autism. He is one of five family members coping with the developmental disorder. Illand personally translated the book into Spanish due to



Photo courtesy of Fotolia

the high demand of readers in the U.S. who speak Spanish as their first language.

"It took us four years to write that book together," Doyle said. "It's 400 pages

long and once we started, we couldn't stop."

Tiffany MacDonald is the family support co-ordinator for Autism Ontario for the regions of Peterborough and

Durham. She began planning Doyle and Illand's visit last July.

"I started researching their work and really enjoyed what they spoke about.... Since July, we've been having weekly conferences over the phone," she said.

The workshop will cover a variety of issues and assessments in autism, such as dealing with children, adults or individuals who suffer from deafness and other physical impairments.

By presenting life-long plans and step-by-step goals, Doyle and Illand provide practical solutions for families, individuals, and professionals in the education system to help improve the situations and lives of those affected by autism.

WHAT IS AUTISM?

■ According to Doyle and Illand, autism is a developmental disability that occurs early in life and is expected to last the life of the individual.

■ It makes the person less able to learn, communicate and socially interact automatically.

■ It also changes the way the autistic person processes sensory input (touch, taste, sound, sight), as well as reactions to the rest of the world.

Thorncliffe residents trudge through 'improvement' process

Cont'd. from page 1

After the tenants rallied in 2011, their city councillor, John Parker of Ward 26/Don Valley West, set up a meeting between management and tenants.

Parker says he's stayed in touch with Q Residential, to "keep an eye on the buildings," and things have now improved.

"The problems are not nearly as bad as they were in years past. I used to hear a lot of complaints from residents of these

buildings. Those complaints have diminished substantially recently, although there are a few individuals who complain quite often," he said. "So fewer complaints from fewer people, but some tenants still come forward with a lot of complaints."

Kolia, who has lived at Thorncliffe Park for more than 30 years, disputes that. He said no improvements have been made.

"It's only one meeting he wants to have and we go to the meeting where nothing hap-

pens," Kolia said. "No progress. Nothing has been done."

Lorne Stephenson, senior vice-president of Conundrum Capital Corporation, the buildings' owners, said that for the last three years management has been repairing all of the garages, and working on other ongoing issues such as repairing stairwells and plaster bubbles that reoccur due to humidity.

"It's an ongoing process," he said. "We're spending significant dollars there every year."

East York senior preserves proud family history

By **ZENAIRA ALI**
The Observer

As East York senior Joyce Crook sat at her kitchen table, much of which was covered with war memorabilia, she reflected on her family's past with a smile on her face — and tears in her eyes.

For three generations, the Crook family has dedicated itself to war efforts. It started with her grandfather.

"My grandfather was in the British army," Crook said. "I've come from a military family."

The Crooks have resided in East York for a century. Joyce Crook's father, the late Albert Crook — known as "Bert" by his loved ones — left Wales for Canada in 1912.

Soon afterward, he and his elder brother joined the Canadian Army and served overseas.

"The older brother was killed in 1917," Crook said. "It was from a shell. A shell exploded and several of them were killed."

According to Crook, her father worked with the Royal Canadian Engineers as a "listener."

It was his job to go deep into tunnels and listen with a stethoscope-like device to make sure the Germans weren't getting too close.

"My father said the place was honeycombed with tunnels. The Germans were trying to blow us up as we were trying to blow them up," she said.

Crook said her father was never injured, but was gassed.

"Breathing, he had said, was never quite the same," she re-

called.

Throughout her childhood, Crook felt the military influence in her life.

"You know with youngsters, they're always falling down and skinning their knees. And I'd go to my father and he'd go, 'Oh! She's been a brave little soldier. I'm going to bandage her up like the soldiers do,'" she said. "You know, I wasn't a 'brave little girl,' but a 'brave little soldier.'"

Her father taught her about the different ranks, from private to general, and the handling positions for rifles.

"He'd get a broom to show me as a child.

'Soldier arms and present arms!' He made a game out of it. I loved it," Crook said.

When the Second World War came, Bert supported efforts in Canada while

working for Massey-Harris, a company specializing in farm machinery.

"When the war started, they stopped making farm implements and they turned their work to the war effort. They were making 25-pound shells. My father was in charge of keeping things rolling on the maintenance," Crook said. "He did his duty in the Second World War too."

Although it has been years since her father passed away, Crook is still anxious to learn more about the First World War and through it, more about her father.

"I'm very proud of him," she said. "He said he was proud to have done it."



For more on this story, please visit us online at torontoobserver.ca



Teona Baetu // Observer

The tour of Thorncliffe Park apartments included this view of damaged flooring.



Zenaira Ali // Observer

East York resident Joyce Crook sits behind photos of her grandfather (upper right) and father (left and bottom centre). The maple leaf she's sewn on her jacket is the same one her father has on the collar of his Canadian Army uniform in the photo.