



Observer, Britney Brady-Maginley

WINTER WONDERLAND: (Left to right) Roisin Keane, Karina Pronski and Felicia Naccarato from Holy Cross Catholic School take a break from the snowshoe relay at the Northern Spirit Games, held on Feb. 22 in East York. For more photos, see page 4.

Sewer grates on nerves

By **JESSE MIRSKY**

East York residents affected by repairs to a huge, cracked trunk sewer buried under their community attended a town hall meeting on Tuesday night to discuss rebuilding the landscape affected by construction.

The Coxwell Sanitary Trunk Sewer lies 60 metres beneath the intersection of Coxwell Avenue and O'Connor Drive. In 2008, a crack was discovered in

the pipe.

After realizing the damage, Toronto's water department recommended that city council take emergency measures to fix the sewer. The project will be completed later this year.

Residents such as David Cook expressed concern at the proposal to have construction workers at the notoriously dangerous intersection of Coxwell Avenue and O'Connor

Drive.

"I was nearly hit there last week and my daughter was nearly hit a few days before that," Cook said.

"I don't think (construction workers) should be coming onto O'Connor at all."

Cook has lived in the community for about 40 years and has a long history with the intersection.

See **BAD**, page 4

Donlands exit reprieve brings tentative relief

By **NATASHA JAFERI**

Almost like a last-minute phone call from the governor to the deathhouse, a dozen Strathmore Boulevard families have suddenly received reprieves from home expropriation by the TTC.

Just last month, it seemed certain that the homes would either be demolished or dramatically infringed on for the construction of a second exit at the TTC's Donlands station.

But last week, Toronto city council voted overwhelmingly to defer the second exit project indefinitely — as well as second exit projects at the Greenwood and Woodbine TTC stations. The councillors say that the transit commission can't afford it.

The houses at 1 and 3 Strathmore faced the wrecker's ball. Others at 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 faced adjustments — like the large hole that was going to be dug in the yard of Brian and Lisa Dymond's home and the wall that would have been constructed a few metres from their front door.

The neighbourhood is just northeast of Pape and Danforth avenues. It's been in the TTC's sights since July, when plans for the Donlands station's second exit were spelled out.

The community proposed alternatives — like the consensual expropriation of a church on adjacent Dewhurst Boulevard — but in January, the TTC announced that it was moving forward with the original plan instead.

Then, on Feb. 23, city council

**It gives
'time for
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— Lisa
Dymond



voted 42-2 to indefinitely defer the project from the TTC capital budget.

Pat Chastang, the executive assistant to Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth councillor Mary Fragedakis, said the plan was shelved because there isn't enough funding available.

"It was budget — the lack of money," Chastang said. "How can we go ahead with the project when the money isn't there?"

She also listed other second exit projects deferred by council, including those at the Woodbine and Greenwood TTC stations.

But whether these reprieves are, in effect, permanent is still unclear.

"We just have to wait for the next budget," Chastang said. She explained that whether the second exit projects ever go through will depend on whether the currently cash-strapped transit commission can ever find the money for them.

For now, the residents along Strathmore are relieved.

"The deferral gives time for a sober second thought," said Lisa Dymond, who also leads the

See **RESIDENTS**, page 8

Hands-on healing for East York's furry friends

By **MICHELLE GRACE**

East York could be dubbed "Far East York" in March — at least around the corner of Pape and Mortimer avenues, where the ancient Japanese art of reiki will be applied to some of our four-legged friends for their health's sake.

An alternative pet store on Pape is offering the alternative approach to pet wellness in free workshops this month.

Reiki, which the International Centre for Reiki Training translates from the Japanese as "spiritually guided life force energy," is a technique of hands-on healing that some people already attest to. But in recent years, it's also been applied to pets — and its practitioners and some pet owners say successfully.

The concept behind reiki is that energy flows through every living being, and loving intentions and touch can have

a tangible effect. Moreover, its devotees say, animals are very intuitive, and reflect the feelings of the people around them. And so, the theory goes, reiki can have positive effects on animals suffering from acute and chronic pain, and even conditions like anxiety.

So an East York pet store is bringing in Leisa Peacock, a certified natural health practitioner and aromatherapy health therapist who has been practicing reiki for three years. Peacock is holding free pet reiki sessions at the store, which is called For the Love of Animals.

It's a good fit for a store that has already carved out a unique niche with its philosophical approach to retailing: independently owned and family-run, it refuses to sell live animals on ethical grounds, and promotes a holistic approach to pet care with its product line.

See **GENTLE**, page 7



Observer, Michelle Grace

RELISHING REIKI: Leisa Peacock performs reiki at For The Love of Animals, located at 930 Pape Ave. CC the cat and Timmy the guinea pig receive the benefits of energy healing.



Observer, Shannon Keller

FACELIFT FOR HOSPITAL: Toronto East General Hospital is working on community liaison around its \$210-million redesign. The plans include new wings and underground parking.

Hospital plans move forward

East General to add three wings, parking garage

By SHANNON KELLER

Toronto East General Hospital is encouraging the community to get even more involved with its redevelopment plans.

The hospital has budgeted \$210 million toward the construction of an eight-storey building that will make caring for patients easier and more cost-effective.

One of the components of the plan is a two-level underground parking garage. This will increase the amount of parking spaces and reduce traffic congestion in the area.

Inside the hospital, the current flow from one department to another is disorganized, and

patients can be required to travel throughout the hospital for necessary services. The new plan involves a well-organized "racetrack" design with the nurses' stations in centralized locations. This will enable faster response times for patients.

City councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon of neighbouring Ward 32 was part of a Tuesday tour offered by the hospital to educate the community about the redevelopment and why it's necessary.

"The plans look dynamite," she said. "Something needs to be done."

The redevelopment has yet to be approved by the provincial government. And the design will also need official plan and zoning bylaw permissions followed by city council's approval.

In the budget, the hospital has allotted for 90 per cent

of the cost to be funded by the province and \$60 million to be covered by fundraising. TEGH and the Neighbourhood Advisory Committee are convening several community meetings throughout the year. This has opened a dialogue with the public to discuss the redevelopment, hospital updates and concerns they may have.

"Great tour. They've gone above and beyond community consultation," McMahon said.

She acknowledged that a common concern for the community is disruption because of construction. But she said that the general consensus is that changes to the hospital are necessary.

"Most of the community is happy, as I am," McMahon said.

She added that this is her community hospital and it's a big part of the betterment of the neighbourhood.

School hopes focus on arts will boost student enrolment

By MIKE BEAUVAIS

The basement of St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School feels cavernous. The area, filled with computer labs, studios and workspaces, seems vast compared to the relatively small number of students who occupy it. But starting this September, these impressive facilities will see a surge in inhabitants — and the St. Pat's community couldn't be happier.

As of this coming September, St. Patrick will become a Centre for Arts, Media and Technology — a designation bestowed by the Toronto Catholic District School Board this past June. The decision comes after a governmental review determined that the school — currently sitting below student capacity while other area schools are oversubscribed — could better serve the community with increased enrolment.

Accompanying the designation, neighbouring Catholic schools will now impose hard caps on student enrolment, and St. Patrick will be able to accept students from all over the city.

St. Patrick's arts department head Vaughn Perusse says the development has taken nearly two years.

"In an effort to strike a balance in terms of school populations, through the entire process we determined in committee with (area TCDSB schools), the best idea that was tabled was to set up a new program here at St. Patrick to attract more students," Perusse explained.

The new program at St. Patrick, which will cater to disci-

plines such as drama, visual arts and music, will be phased in starting in the new school year, with Grade 9.

"The program won't exist in its entirety until 2014," Perusse said. "That will be the first group (of students) in their fourth year."

Perusse believes the breadth of the program will expand with each successive year.

"As we get more students, it will allow us to broaden our teaching staff," Perusse said, "and that will allow us to increase the number of courses that we can offer."

To enter the program this fall, prospective student face an audition process.

"For example, for visual arts, students will have to submit a sketchbook. They will have a panel interview and they'll answer specific questions and then we'll run a group activity to see how the students respond to and how they operate in a classroom," Perusse said.

While the St. Patrick's community has exerted much effort already, there remains a palpable sense of something special in the air at the school.

"It's pretty exciting," said drama and Spanish teacher Rossana Cossaro. "I think the whole process is going to reenergize the school and the staff."

For Perusse, the daunting challenge ahead is welcome.

"The prospect of what lies ahead is so exciting that it's worth every ounce of energy that you put into it. You can feel it. There's a tangibility in the air," he said.

French-speaking college stays put

By JESSE MIRSKY

The proposed move of Collège Boréal from its East York campus is off for now, but the college's administration says a new location is only a matter of time.

For nearly a decade, the French-language college headquartered in Sudbury has operated a Toronto branch at 951 Carlaw Ave. — a building it shares with Centennial College. But in December, Collège Boréal announced that it is preparing to open a new, larger building in September 2012, to consolidate students from its two Toronto-area campuses.

It now appears that deadline will not be met.

But Benoît Clément, communications manager for Boréal, says an increase in enrolment in the last year at the school's Toronto campuses means an eventual move is even more necessary.

"We have an enrolment increase by 20 per cent for the whole Collège Boréal," Clément said. "That means at some point

we need to put these students somewhere."

Clément says that in response to the growing student population, the school is planning a space that will include a school daycare centre — and new programs in health services, social services and trades.

"What we need is at least a 30,000-square-foot facility," he said. "We have some plans and we are working on that right now."

Nate Horowitz, dean of Centennial College's Carlaw campus, said his school would like to take advantage of the extra space currently used by Collège Boréal.

"We would certainly like to have the space," he said, "but if it's not available, we'll look at alternatives."

Horowitz said Centennial is assuming a shared space arrangement, at least for the time-being.

"They wanted to consolidate their space into a downtown location," he said, "but it looks like that's not going to happen now."

Collège Boréal has seven campuses across mainly northern Ontario.

Some 32 different nationalities are represented in the college's student population. At the Carlaw Avenue campus, for instance, there are immigrants from former French colonies in Africa and elsewhere.

Last June, Collège Boréal's Toronto-based student population reached 400.

First-year nursing student Koester Riviere said that the eventual move of her college campus has benefits to her and her fellow students.

"If it does move, that means that we will have more space so that we can have more classrooms and more programs," Riviere said.

For Clément and the rest of the college's administration, the rush to find an appropriate new building continues. In the meantime, 951 Carlaw Ave. is home.

"So far, we are still at Centennial," Clément said. "We're very happy to be there."

Daycare worker facing new charges

By COURTNEY KRAIK

Police have laid additional child sex charges against an East York daycare worker.

Following a Feb. 18 court date on the original charges against him, the suspect was also charged with sexual exploi-

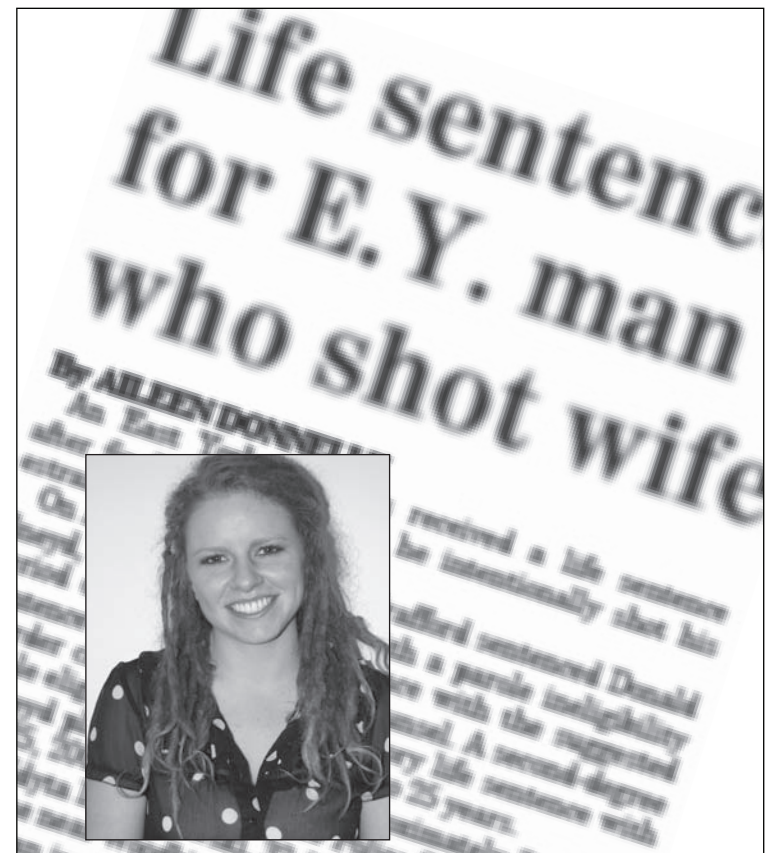
tation, sexual interference and sexual assault.

The charges stem from a 2004 sexual assault investigation at the Selwyn Community Child Care Centre, at 1 Selwyn Ave. The accused was an employee at the daycare centre at the time of

the alleged offences.

He was initially charged in January, while he was working as an early childhood educator at Jackman Community Day Care, 79 Jackman Ave.

James Mallais, 38, of Toronto is charged.



Observer file photo

THE WINNER IS... You're reading one of the best student newspapers in the province, according to the Ontario Community Newspapers Association. On Tuesday, the OCNA revealed its unranked list of first-, second- and third-prize winners in the annual provincial Better Newspapers Competition. The final rankings will be announced in Niagara Falls on May 13. At that gala, East York's Observer — produced by Centennial College journalism students at their Carlaw Avenue campus — will be awarded for "general excellence." In addition, reporter Aileen Donnelly (inset) will be awarded for news reporting, for her April 23 story about the sentencing of convicted East York murderer Donald Sneyd. It's the third year in a row that East York's Observer has won an OCNA award, and the first time it's won two of the competition's prizes at once.

Author explores secret world of animals

Giller finalist immortalizes Don Valley in newest book

By BETH FORD

Inside the Riverdale library, a captive audience is in suspense, as Giller Prize finalist Alissa York describes a recent telephone conversation with her father.

"My father phoned me up and said, 'I'm getting near the end of the book, and you need to tell me if you're going to kill Billy off,'" she said during her Sunday talk.

Billy is an oversized, sloppy, part Labrador retriever-part mystery breed character in York's latest book, *Fauna*. Set in the Don Valley, *Fauna* explores the mystical animal life of the valley.

York brought a smile to many faces in the crowd as she rhymed off familiar names of local streets and buildings. She even mentioned the Riverdale library as the first place her teenage runaway character, Lily, stumbles upon early in the story.

"She'd found her way to the Riverdale library on her third day in town," she said. "I did a lot of walking through the streets and alleyways around here, writing down names of every store and building I set eyes on."

Fauna is the Alberta native's third novel. Her other two, *Mercy* (2003) and *Effigy* (2007) explore similar themes of nature, animals and isolation. In *Fauna*, both humans and animals struggle with loneliness and painful memories of the past.

They seek refuge in the valley as well as in each other's company. The human drive to conquer one's environment is dealt with through antagonist Darius (Coyote Cop) who blogs about the nuisances he perceives urban coyotes to be and how he will go about ridding them from the valley.

Roxanne Miller lives in the northwest



Observer, Beth Ford

STORY HOUR: Giller Prize finalist Alissa York paints a vivid image of the wayward souls in her latest book, *Fauna*. She read passages from the book to a small group of fans at the Riverdale library branch on Sunday.

part of the city. She said she became accustomed to frequent encounters with city wildlife as a child.

"What struck me about the book is York's depiction of animals and how identical to my experiences with them here in the city it is," she said.

Riding the subway over the valley first set York's mind in motion. Staring down at the brush piqued her curiosity enough to venture in on her bicycle.

"As I passed over the valley, I looked down and thought, 'What's living down there, who's living down there, what kind of lives do they lead?' Then certain wayward souls popped into my head," she said.

Among these souls is 29-year-old proprietor Guy Howell. York says he hatched from her imagination and is connected to a specific part of the valley.

She describes it as a "wild" lot locat-

ed at the south end. The lot soon took shape as the setting for Guy Howell's Auto-Wrecker. This is the spot where the characters spend most of their time. It quickly becomes their sanctuary.

"The story kind of revolves around Guy and the auto-wrecking yard," she said. "This character grew from the auto-wrecking yard; he has the gift of empathy."

Guy has a rare talent for understanding the fragility of damaged creatures. He encourages them to take refuge in his wrecking yard.

York's compassion for animals is woven into his character as well as in the fiery spirit of young Lily, who rescues migratory birds with her guard dog Billy.

As for Billy, reading the book will determine his fate.

Marie Lynn Hammond travelled from Stouffville to have her copy of *Fauna*



INSPIRATION: This is the 'wild lot' that sparked author York's imagination.

'As I passed over the valley, I looked down and thought, What's living down there, who's living down there, what kind of lives do they lead? Then certain wayward souls popped into my head.'

— Alissa York

signed. She said York's portrayal of the connection between humans and animals is as close as it gets.

"I like the way she dealt with the relationship between people and animals," she said. "Her depiction of animals is not at all sentimental. It's very sympathetic and realistic."

York said her love of animals and nature runs deep.

"Growing up in Alberta left a very deep imprint on me," she said. "I grew up thinking about wilderness and wildlife, it's natural for me."

Though York's message of co-existence is quite clear, she said she fears there are many who share the mentality of her Darius character.

"Darius lives in fear, thinking he can exterminate other creatures to fill a void within himself," she said. "I think Margaret Atwood said at one point, 'We write about the things we worry about.'"

Toronto Card Show may become monthly event

By NICHOLAS M. PESCOD

During the 1980s, Leaside Memorial Community Gardens was a popular place for sports card enthusiasts who gathered once a month to buy, sell or trade memorabilia.

When the recession of the 1990s hit, the sports card industry began drying up and in 1994 the regular card show at the Gardens shut down.

Leaside Gardens has since returned to its former glory after the organizer of the Toronto Card Show, Frank Williamson, decided to bring a monthly card show back to the area in 2006.

"We brought it back," Williamson said. "We brought back something that started many years ago."

When the card shows at Leaside Gardens ended, that meant there was no longer a regular card show in Toronto. At that point, Williamson and some other collectors got together and started one.

"There wasn't a regular monthly show in Toronto," he said. "There was in Cambridge, Kingston and Ottawa, but not right here in Toronto."

Williamson wanted to bring something unique to the event and make it fun for everyone.

"We started off as fans and collectors ourselves," he said. "We wanted to put together a well-run and fun show with



FRANK WILLIAMSON
Card show organizer

door prizes every hour and bring in autograph guests."

While the show is still small compared to other sports card events, it's managed to attract a number of big-name athletes.

Williamson explained that when former Toronto Maple Leaf Frank Mahovlich made an autograph appearance at the show the lineup went around the building and out the door.

Jeff Tyson, 22, has been collecting sports card for 14 years and is a card dealer.

He started dealing cards because of his dad's considerable assortment of cards.

"I started collecting when I was eight," Tyson said. "I started with Curtis Joseph and I went from there."

This is only the second time that Tyson has attended the Toronto Card Show as a dealer. However, he doesn't really feel he is one.

"I am not a dealer. I am more of a collector," he said. "I've really enjoyed it."

Tyson is currently collecting Minnesota Wild player Cal Clutterbuck cards.

"He's one of my favourite players," he said.

Besides collecting hockey cards, Tyson has another sports hobby. He collects autographs through the mail.

"For anyone looking to get into hockey collecting, it's a really inexpensive way to start," he said. "You can get a couple autographed cards for two or three bucks."

Shane Yan has been collecting hockey cards for over 20 years and has been coming to the Toronto Card Show for at least 10.

"It's fun," Yan said. "You never know what you are going to get."

The next show is on March 20. Admission is \$3 at the door, and free for women and children under the age of 12.

For more information, visit www.torontocardshow.com



Observer, Nicholas M. Pescod

CARDS, CARDS, CARDS: Jeff Tyson shows off his booth at the Toronto Card Show, held at Leaside Memorial Community Gardens on Feb. 20. Tyson has been collecting sports memorabilia for more than 14 years.

Inuit-inspired fun for kids



Observer, Britney Brady-Maginley

TOP: Rachel Reighber, Danielle Callahan, Ciara Heron and Sarah Gharibo gather after performing an aboriginal ceremony in light of the Northern Spirit Games. **BELOW:** Dylan Siziba and John Alves take instructions from teacher Adrian Olsthoorn.



WINTER GAMES: The Northern Spirit Games were developed to celebrate the aboriginal and Metis spirit of northern Canada. This year's celebration, held at St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School on Felstead Avenue, involved 300 Catholic elementary students from across Toronto who participated in indoor and outdoor games.

'Bad intersection' sparks fears

Cont'd. from page 1

"I spent a year in front of the traffic department here and the mayor getting the 'yield to pedestrians' signs put up," Cook said, "and I find that it's not enforced."

Lou Di Gironimo, general manager of Toronto Water, hosted the meeting alongside Bob Dobbin, manager of Landscape Architecture for AECOM. Gironimo thought that Cook's concern was completely legitimate.

He explained that he has had a similar experience.

"I've seen the concerns. A lot of people do silly things at that

intersection," Gironimo said. "We saw one lady almost get hit one time when we were there. And we aren't there very often."

In the East York Civic Centre, seated in council chambers around three diagrams depicting the landscaping plans, the approximately 15 East York residents in attendance took turns talking.

Ward 29 Councillor Mary Fragedakis was also in attendance. Although she was quiet throughout the evening, Fragedakis spoke with many residents after the meeting.

"It is one of the most dangerous intersections, certainly in East

York," Fragedakis said. "But, they realize they are working in all sorts of conditions as city workers so they are prepared for that."

For Cook, preparation and experience won't be enough to combat bad drivers. He has seen too many hazardous situations at the intersection to believe that anyone working on the street is completely safe.

"We've had two people hit from our street," Cook said. "They may think it's safer for themselves, but that intersection... is a very bad intersection with many accidents."

A daughter's film explores a father's life

Documentary shares life of first black judge born in Canada

By **SCOTT REID**

Although her name may not be instantly recognizable to some, her family name has certainly made an impact on black history in Canada.

As part of Centennial College's speaker series, actress, filmmaker and model Linda Carter was on hand Feb. 22 to discuss her documentary film, *The Making of a Judge*, in honour of Black History Month. The film details the life and accomplishments of her father, George E. Carter, the first black judge to be born in Canada.

Carter says part of her motivation for creating the documentary, besides the significance her father had on pioneering the achievements of black people in Canada, was to show his extremely humble beginnings.

"One of the reasons I had to do this film was because of the stories he would tell," Carter said. "He'd start talking about when he had to Simoniz cars on Bathurst Street and having to cut the chamois himself."

She says despite her father being the first Canadian-born black judge, she felt there was no negative pressure from the community.

"Everyone was happy for him, particularly in the law community," she said. "He was well-liked and well-respected in the community and they were very happy for his accomplishments."

Linda Carter was born and raised in Toronto and attended predominantly Caucasian schools throughout her youth.

Carter was the only black student at school and growing up in her community.

She said she lived in a neighbourhood where the black community was almost non-existent.

It was her family that would



Observer, Scott Reid

MAKING BLACK HISTORY: Model, actress and filmmaker Linda Carter explores the life of her father George Carter in her film *The Making of a Judge*.

educate her on matters pertaining to her black heritage and help her maintain her ties to the black community.

"My grandmother was the one that would give me cultural insight," she said.

"She would take me to different functions and different places and you'd always see the same people there. That was the black community, and through them I was able to learn the history of our people."

Despite its somewhat controversial nature, Carter says the Africentric school that opened in Toronto in 2009 will ultimately do more good than bad, and will be beneficial for those new to Canada.

Carter has worked in the entertainment industry for nearly 30 years, starting in modeling and eventually finding her way to film. Some of her more recognized works include guest spots on *Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye*, *Degrassi: The Next Generation* and more recently *The Border*.

Carter is currently working on a new documentary on the life and career of actor and musician Joey Hollingsworth.

Bengali community celebrates native tongue

By **ALIMA HOTAKIE**

Language is an integral part of one's identity. It's not only a means of communication and expression, but also a marker of distinction.

According to the United Nations, 7,000 languages will disappear within a few generations.

While most of East York enjoyed Family Day on Feb. 21, the Bengali community celebrated International Mother Language Day at Harmony Hall Centre for Seniors on Gower Street.

Khalilur Rahman, a former professor in Bangladesh, attended this year's celebration. Teary-eyed, he pointed to the monument erected against the hall's wall and explained its symbolic meaning.

"The monument is a replica of the original Shahid Minar monument in the city of Dhaka," he said. "It's to remember those who sacrificed their lives to fight for their language."

In 1952, Bangladesh was part of Pakistan. At the time, it was divided into West and East Pakistan (Bangladesh today).

When Pakistan proclaimed Urdu as the state language, protests erupted in Bangladesh.

On Feb. 21, activists and students organized a massive protest demanding Bengali as an official language.

During the protest, Pakistani police fired at, and killed, unarmed students.

Nazly Sultana, the Bengali program co-ordinator at Harmony Hall, acknowledged the sacrifices they made.

"Today we can talk in Bengali because of them," she said.

Wrapped in traditional saris, many women were dressed in the colours black and white to symbolize sorrow, respect and happiness.

The celebration kicked off with an art contest for children, followed by singing and dancing.

Later, Ward 31 Beaches-East York Councillor Janet Davis presented the Bengali community with a greeting card on behalf of Mayor Rob Ford, expressing city council's support and best wishes.

"We want our future generations to know what is their culture and heritage," Sultana said.

"It's the parents' responsibility and not that of the children to make sure at least one person at home talks in their mother tongue."

Today the Bengali language does not face a serious risk of extinction, but there are still thousands of other languages worldwide that do.

While most people rarely hear about the death of a language, the risk is prevalent.

According to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, nearly every country in the world is at risk of losing a language.



Observer, Alima Hotakie

SARI STORY: Shaheda Azami's sari is detailed with Bengali letters honouring those who died for their language.

New liquor rules being considered

By SIAN DAVIES

Proposed changes to Ontario's liquor laws could see the end of restrictive beer tents and drinking pens at this summer's Taste of the Danforth.

Attorney General Chris Bentley announced Feb. 23 that the government is considering relaxing a number of "outdated" alcohol rules, including allowing people with drinks to walk freely at events.

"The proposed changes will remove unnecessary barriers and restrictions," he said in a release. "This will provide Ontarians with a more enjoyable experience and improve tourism and local economies."

Tony Pethakas, manager of Mezes restaurant, a Taste of the Danforth participant, welcomed the news that patrons could soon enjoy all the food and activities the festival offers with a pint in hand.

"I'm excited about the proposed changes," he said. "I think it enhances the experience for the visitor and benefits the small businesses that are a part of Taste of the Danforth."

Bentley said that the government would "only proceed with changes that would not compromise enforcement of the law" and plans to expand enforcement options against those who violate liquor laws, including the introduction of fines.

Other proposed changes include extending the period when alcohol can be served at charitable events and weddings to 2 a.m. from 1 a.m.

The move is part of the five-year Open Ontario Plan to stimulate the economy.

Michael Chan, Ontario's minister of tourism and culture, said the new rules will better serve Ontarians and help generate revenue for event organizers, vineyards, spas, bars and restaurants.

"Festivals and events are powerful economic drivers. They draw tourists to our communities, create jobs and stimulate local economies," he said.

Each year, tourism contributes \$22 billion to Ontario's economy and supports approximately 300,000 direct and indirect jobs.

The government is currently conducting a one-month consultation period regarding its proposals.

If reaction to liberalizing liquor laws is positive, changes could be in place in time for this year's Taste of the Danforth. The province is accepting email submissions at consultwithus@ontario.ca.



Observer, Farhana Uddin

A SCARY THOUGHT: Scarygirl is artist Nathan Jurevicius's signature character. Originally a character in an online game, Jurevicius quickly transitioned this unique little girl in various other media, including a graphic novel and a feature film.

Artist scares up quirky toys

By FARHANA UDDIN

Ten years ago, Nathan Jurevicius received a midnight phone call from Hong Kong. The man on the other end of the line asked Jurevicius if he would like to create adult toys with him.

Not *that* kind of adult toys, the man explained when Jurevicius hesitated. Instead, he was looking for vinyl toys suggestive of children's playthings... but with a mature twist.

He represented a design firm called Flying Cat and had spotted Jurevicius's illustrations on his website.

At the time, Jurevicius had finished a bachelor's degree in design at the University of South Australia and was working as a freelance illustrator for various magazines in Australia, Asia and the United States.

"I was a starving artist with a craving for work," Jurevicius told a roomful of art students at Centennial College's East York campus on Feb. 23.

That late-night phone call from Hong Kong turned out to be the kicker in his career as a working relationship soon formed between him and Flying Cat. They took up a character in one of Jurevicius's online games called Scarygirl, who is by no means a conventional Barbie doll.

Over the years, Scarygirl's look has evolved, but she's best known for sporting an eye-patch, a tentacle topped with a hook for one arm and what appears to be a dog's bone for another.

"All the characters in my work have



'I was a starving artist with a craving for work.'

—Nathan Jurevicius

deformities," he said. "It's my way of saying, 'don't judge based on appearances.' There's an unexpected beauty and kindness you can find to things that might ordinarily seem scary."

Scarygirl quickly branched out into designer toys. The toys would later lead to an explosion of artistic work tied to different companies from around the world.

"With all my projects, I start off with a seed of an idea. I then expand it into multiple avenues and explore different partners to do it with," Jurevicius told the art students. "Scarygirl started off as a toy and then went on to different things like mini-robots, online flash games, a graphic novel and limited edition products."

While Jurevicius's career launched with Scarygirl, by no means did it end with her. Companies like Medicom and Kidrobot have commissioned him for other projects.

MTV Canada hired him to create characters for their TV spots. The result was Godzilla-like 3-D characters dancing to hip-hop beats in the streets of Toronto.

Subsequently, MTV in Latin America adopted one of those characters and used it as a figurine for awards nights, handing them out to musicians like Snoop Dogg and Fall Out Boy.

Kidrobot, a designer toy company in New York, recently sent Jurevicius on a three-day triangle tour of the U.S. to promote a toy he designed, the Dievas Dunny — a "soul-escorting black owl."

"They sent me from Boston to San Francisco to Miami to New York and now I'm here," Jurevicius said, referring to his venue at the Carlaw Avenue college campus.

David McClyment, the co-ordinator of the fine arts program at Centennial, said Jurevicius is the quintessential embodiment of an artist.

"This is the kind of designer, artist, cross-disciplinary person that we wanted our students exposed to," McClyment said. "I know our students will feel both challenged and inspired in terms of what they think their life is going to be like as an artist."

Remembering his own start in the industry, Jurevicius easily relates to the students.

"I got started by bugging people to death. I formed relationships with other people who did work I wanted to do," Jurevicius said. "I wouldn't hear from them for a year. And then one day someone asks me to create images for a book. Those images go online and someone from Hong Kong just happens to see it and calls me up."

The final curtain call for Danforth theatre

By LESLIE MARCINIAK

They laughed. They cried. They impregnated a lobster.

It was a festive night onstage at the Bad Dog Theatre Company as a cast of veteran performers said goodbye to the Danforth Avenue location that served as home to the well-known improv comedy theatre for the last eight years.

Earlier this month, a decision regarding the theatre's future on the Danforth was finally made. High rent and the HST were among the many reasons for shutting down the east-end location.

"It was clear that staying here wasn't financially viable anymore," said artistic producer Julie Dumais.

"We're saying goodbye to the Danforth, but we are still continuing with shows in the city," she said.

Technical director Rob "Bullets" Bartlett (named for the amount of gunfire sound effects he often throws into scenes without warning) has supplied the theatre's sound and perfectly timed lighting five nights a week for the last seven years.

"In a few days or so it's going to finally

hit me that it's closed for good," Bartlett said. "It really is a cool job. I get paid to watch comedy every night. How can you go wrong with that?"

Bad Dog's final night of comedy started at 8 p.m. with a Theatresports show, followed by "It Ain't Over," a sketch and improv show hosted by Ron Tite at 9:30 p.m.

The final show, "Hasta La Vista, Danforth!" began at 11 p.m., hosted by Jan Caruana and James Gangl, featuring an all-star cast.

Alastair Forbes, who began performing at the Bad Dog six years ago, said the theatre is where he and many others cut their teeth.

"I know everyone keeps saying it's bittersweet, but I think this is an exciting opportunity right now for the theatre. It's a chance to find a new home, a better home," he said. "Maybe even one with a liquor licence this time."

Improv workshops are expected to begin in March at the Comedy Bar, where Theatresports shows will resume on April 23.

A new, permanent space for the company is expected by the fall.



Observer, Leslie Marciniak

BYE-BYE BAD DOG: (Left to right) Carmine Lucarelli, Tom MacKay and James Gangl perform an improvised scene in the Bad Dog Theatre Company's final show, "Hasta La Vista, Danforth!" on Feb. 26.

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Vote vital for TTC

With the provincial Liberal government on the move to designate the Toronto Transit Commission an essential service, let's not forget that arbitration settlements will be on our dime.

Although many commuters are on-board with the idea of prohibiting transit strikes, farepayers and taxpayers need to consider another side here: When wage agreements are renegotiated, arbitration is likely to wind up costing us more than negotiated settlements. Maybe tens of millions of dollars a year more.

What everyone also needs to be aware of is that defining the TTC as an essential service and stripping transit workers of a tool that many of them consider important to their employment terms may well demoralize them. And considering the tension that's already in the work environment — with many TTC staff feeling like they're besieged by riders ready to whip out their cellphone cameras at the slightest hint of misconduct — the removal of their right to strike may incline them to feel more aggravated... Affecting their job performance.

Michael Prue, the MPP for Beaches-East York, says that although he's not inclined to vote for the essential service bill currently before the provincial legislature, it's important that the public's opinion be heard. What he and his fellow NDP caucus members want is not to stop the legislation necessarily, but to get one or two days of sessions for public input so that various constituencies get an opportunity to be heard. That way, he says, if there are to be changes, they're more likely to changes that at least have broad-based support.

Prue says that if most Torontonians are really ready to take away the workers' right to strike, it's going to happen whether he and the provincial New Democrats support it or not. But he wants East Yorkers to know that this is going to cost them millions of dollars in higher wage settlements. Better to be informed than to simply march off blindly in the direction of "convenience."

The legislation calls for an automatic review after five years to see whether it's having the desired effect. So it seems that even the bill's Liberal sponsors realize that it could backfire.

But for now, the Liberals and the Conservatives at Queen's Park have both indicated their intention to vote for the legislation. Considering their overwhelming majority in the legislature, it seems passage is a done-deal. But those who think that making the TTC an essential service will put the public in the driver's seat should think again.

—Britney Brady-Maginley

Hungry for coverage

In a matter of weeks, spring will be upon us. The changing of the season boosts our overall mood and morale. But where is our spirit of giving? It seems to be reserved for Thanksgiving and Christmas. People seem more inclined to give back to those in need when helping out is the theme of the season.

Or so it may seem; not all people forget the ones in need when the temperature rises.

Pastor Bob Patterson-Watt is the presiding minister at Woodbine Heights Baptist Church, located at 1171 Woodbine Ave. The church is one of the affiliated Daily Bread Food Banks in East York and serves a large area. They're open every Thursday, supplying 110 households per week.

Despite the fact that food banks aren't featured in the news as much this time of year, Patterson-Watt says the amount of volunteering is consistent.

Sarah Anderson is the senior manager of communications and marketing for the Daily Bread Food Bank. She says that volunteers are very important for running the charity. One of the reasons people assume there's a decline in giving to those in need is the lack of media coverage compared to during the holidays. However, it's not just the media reminding you to do your part. Large companies do their part too. But once Christmas is over, you aren't aware of their donations. You stop hearing about it on the news.

Anderson says there's an ebb and flow in news coverage. She says there are three campaigns every spring, fall and winter and the one in April tends to be quieter than the others.

Many people say they don't watch or read the news because it's depressing. If the news covered more of the charitable campaigns with as much emphasis surrounding the holidays, perhaps more people would pay attention. If more people were aware of the ongoing good in their communities, then the number of volunteers might increase. Soon many of the people you know would be volunteering and donating regularly, and hunger in Toronto could be dramatically reduced.

Maybe not, but it's a nice thought.

—Shannon Keller

'Air Red Rocket' ride makes commute fly by

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. Our departure time is 9:30 p.m. Our approximate arrival time is 10:04 p.m.... Our in-flight entertainment tonight is *Snakes on a Plane* starring Samuel L. Jackson... Please enjoy your flight. Thank you for flying Air Red Rocket."

The bus route from Don Mills station to Pape station is a long one. I had just enjoyed an evening at a bar with friends and I was not looking forward to being on a bus without any company.

But as I heard the "captain" speak, I knew this wasn't going to be an ordinary night riding the TTC. The typical ride includes apparently disgruntled men and women who look like they just can't wait to get home after a long day at school or work.

After the driver made his special announcement, I noticed a significant change in body language: people were sitting straighter and paying attention. They appeared to be amused by what our driver had to say.

When he started telling us the flight itinerary, a smile came across some faces, including mine. People burst out laughing when he mentioned that the in-flight

**Matilda
Miranda**



movie was *Snakes on a Plane*.

In recent years, it seems that a lot of news regarding the TTC has been negative.

We've heard about the bus driver texting while operating his vehicle. We've heard about the other employee being charged for allegedly assaulting a passenger aboard a bus.

And that's just in the last few weeks. It looks as if commuters and TTC employees are pitted against each other in a never-ending battle.

TTC personnel feel that the public is unfairly targeting them. Commuters, on the other hand, feel that it's the public's right to know what the employees are up to.

This particular "flight" on the Red Rocket helped me see the human side of TTC employees.

At the end of the day they are people, just like you and I. They have a job to do. They have good days and they have bad days. This particular driver was clearly having a really good day. The fact that

he felt the need to put a smile on his passengers' faces was a bonus. We don't see this side of the TTC often enough.

His enthusiasm got people excited and made them forget that they were on a bus. The TTC should take a page out of his book and try to make their rides more interactive. I was once on a bus where the driver sung out the stops. Although we might not see stories like these in the newspaper, people still talk about their experiences with their friends.

If the TTC put a little effort into connecting with its riders, maybe people's positive to negative ratio would be different.

There is a lack of human contact between the TTC and its ridership, and I think this hurts both parties.

There will always be issues pertaining to the TTC, but if its employees take a more positive approach when it comes to dealing with riders, they might not lash out in the hostile way they do now. Too often I've witnessed a "thank you" go without a "you're welcome."

All the driver has to do is take a second or two to think, "Hey, that could be my daughter, wife, husband..." and make a conscious effort in the way they interact with commuters.

Express line to selfishness: Attitude check in Aisle One

With most stores closed for Family Day, there was a run on the supermarkets over the preceding weekend. Everyone's shopping carts were full and the lineups at the cash registers were insane.

As I approached the 15-minute mark in line, I noticed that some people who were having their items scanned were running back to fetch more items from the shelves.

Now it's my understanding that if you go to a grocery store, you go with some idea in mind of what you will be purchasing.

Normally, lists are made for this. But apparently not everyone cares about 'grocery line etiquette.'

It's not hard to follow: Always be ready when you go through the checkout. Have your coupons out for the cashier. Leave room in between your cart and the person behind you. And never, ever, go back for more items.

Holding up a line only frustrates everyone else behind you. People begin getting antsy — and when they start tapping their foot and crossing their arms, you know you've overstayed your welcome with the cashier.

Another faux pas: taking 20 items to the express line, when

**Janet
Piercey**



the sign above it clearly states 1-10 items (or whatever).

My problem on this occasion was that I exceeded the limit with my items, but I didn't have nearly enough to warrant waiting behind all of my fellow shoppers with mountains of goods in their carts... especially the one in front of me who kept running back to grab more items off the shelves and add them to her already huge pile of groceries.

Not only did I and the other customers have to suffer but the poor cashier was getting irritated too. The line was getting bigger, more people were getting aggravated by the masses of added items, and a whispering campaign actually started up.

The final straw was when we thought the cashier had finally finished ringing up the order... and the customer proceeded to pull out a stack of coupons for her purchases. That only took another 10 minutes or so — at

which point people in line were actually abandoning their carts and walking out.

So after this debacle, I resolved to try my grocery shopping at night. I anticipated the feeling of joy when I got to the checkout and there would be no waiting, no one to hold up the line.

But to my surprise, another nighthawk who got to the cashier just before me then began running back and forth, checking the sale prices, and grabbing more items for the cashier to scan and bag.

Once again, the feeling of frustration for me and other customers (who had the same smart idea to come at night) began to surface.

The kicker in this case was not only did she go back to get items but she actually enlisted the poor cashier to help her....

Twenty minutes later, I finally was able to fit my items on the conveyor belt, cash out and go home.

The customer apologized with a weak smile and the red face of embarrassment. But I'd have much rather she'd gone ahead and just followed grocery line etiquette.

I wonder if things will be any better at the self-checkout?

We welcome your input

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Locomotive shop to get a fresh look

By **ANDRE WIDJAJA**

The Canadian Northern Railway Eastern Lines Locomotive Shop has been a part of East York for almost 100 years.

It was built in 1919 by the Canadian Northern Railway to service its trains on the eastern lines passing through the Leaside community.

The shop closed its bay doors in the 1930s when the railway company began opening more servicing shops in the Toronto area. The shop that is located in Leaside has remained vacant for the last 10 years.

Today, planks of wood cover the tall windows, the interior walls are covered in graffiti and it is occasionally used as an illegal skate park.

On Feb. 16, North York Community Council adopted a proposal to clean up the historic building and re-open its doors.

But this time, there will be no trains passing through.

Instead, council will allow a 10,930-square-metre redevelopment project, which could potentially turn the locomotive shop and its surrounding buildings into a commercial/office plaza. There is a proposal in place to have the locomotive shop itself transformed into a Longo's grocery store.



Courtesy of Olena Sullivan/Photolena

CHOO-CHOO: The walls of the abandoned Canadian Northern Railway Eastern Lines Locomotive Shop could soon house a Longo's grocery store.

The initial idea was brought to council back in 2006. Recommendations were made by council to make changes to the proposal in order to preserve the heritage building.

The new proposal was sufficient for community members that wanted to maintain the historic significance of the locomotive shop.

Geoff Kettel, chair of the

North York Community Preservation Panel, is happy with the final proposal.

"We feel that it's a reasonable way of preserving the property," he said. "It's a major vestige of Leaside's industrial past."

He's pleased to see that developers made an effort to renew the area, while maintaining its heritage.

The large brick building will

keep its distinctive exterior, including the windows, masonry and doors.

"Conversion of a heritage property the city wants to preserve and finding another use for that building is often very difficult," Kettel said. "In this case it's been successful." The idea of a new retail zone in the community has generally been welcomed.

Ward 26 Don Valley West Councillor John Parker said that no concerns have been expressed to his office.

He said that there were minor concerns with the first proposal about traffic congestion and parking spaces, but that these concerns have been addressed in the revised version.

Parker also said the community will benefit economically from the redevelopment.

"The space has been there for ten years and it supported zero jobs," he said.

"Leasiders are ready to take it in stride."

But Brian Athey, president of the Leaside Property Owner's Association, opposes the redevelopment plans. He said the city has transformed the community into a commercial zone.

"The city and developers are progressively turning industrial buildings into retail buildings," Athey said.

Although the final proposal addressed traffic concerns, he said that people are still approaching him about traffic issues.

Athey also said in a letter to North York Community Council members that there was not enough "community consultation regarding the proposal."



Observer, Farhana Uddin

FOLK POWER: Indie musicians Aaron McGill, right, and Dan Shantz perform for families as part of the ninth annual Winterfolk music festival held in the Danforth-Broadview neighbourhood on Family Day weekend.

Gentle touch for all walks of life

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Proprietor Marilyn Murray started the business at 930 Pape Ave. just over a year ago, after establishing herself as an expert in guinea pigs — running a local group that rescued the animals, and writing a book on their care.

When it comes to pet reiki, Murray says, "It's nice to see people are getting into something that is going to relax their pets, or help enhance the medical conditions that they have, rather than just relying on pharmaceutical medicine."

Peacock says reiki "is a gentle healing that channels positive energy as well as universal energy. The energy comes through my hands, which feels like a nice warm sensation."

The process allows positive energy to break through and heal in a natural, relaxing way.

"This method is beneficial for animals; it creates relaxation and better sleep," Peacock says.

"My cats are always coming to me and putting their body right under my hands and



Observer, Michelle Grace

GUINEA PIG: Eight-year-old Timmy the guinea pig receives the benefits of energy healing.

showing me where they want to feel the energy."

Peacock has partnered up with Murray for sessions from 1 until 4 p.m. tomorrow, March 5, and later this month, on March 19. The treatments are free, but are by appointment only.

"Really, all animals want to give is unconditional love. They only ask for shelter, food

and water," Peacock says. "So anything I can do to give back to these animals I'm more than happy to."

To arrange an appointment for your pet, call 416-522-0922 or e-mail leisa.peacock@gmail.com.

For more information, visit her website at www.essentialinspirations.com

Apartment residents remain displaced two weeks after fire

Tenants still out of homes due to electrical and wiring problems

By **LESLIE MARCINIAK**

Residents who were forced to evacuate from their apartments at 80 Cosburn Ave. on Feb. 15 are still unable to return home.

An electrical fire caused the evacuation of the apartment building, and crews are still

busy restoring the building's damaged areas.

A website for residents has been set up by Hanard Investments Ltd. at www.80cosburn.com. According to the website, residents have been able to return to their suites at allotted times in order to retrieve pets, medication and any other belongings they need.

Since the electricity was shut off, all contents have been removed from each unit's refrigerators. It was announced a week ago that all refrigerators will be replaced with new ones and that a cleaning company,

escorted by security, is cleaning each suite at no charge to residents.

The website also reports that renters will not be charged rent for the month of March and will receive a cheque for half of what they paid in rent in February. Mail service has also been redirected to 685 Danforth Ave. — with pickup from 8:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. on weekdays only.

As for the whereabouts of the displaced residents, the city of Toronto's senior communication advisor, Rob Andrusevich, said that most have found their

own temporary shelter.

"The city is helping a few families with interim shelter, but most residents have found places to stay," he said.

At press time, it was unclear when residents will be able to move back into their homes. Restoration of electrical systems and common areas continue and individual units continue to be cleaned.

Besides the website, residents looking for more information can follow developments on Twitter at www.twitter.com/80Cosburn or call the hotline at 416-467-1889.



Observer, Leslie Marciniak

POST-BLAZE: Residents of 80 Cosburn are still not home.

E-books boom spurs traffic to local libraries

By MIKE BEAUVAIS

The Toronto Public Library (TPL) has a pretty good idea as to what gift people received this past holiday season. The explosion in popularity of the e-reader continued to be felt at the TPL, and the post-Christmas boom in 2010 was a big one.

Anne Marie Aikins, the TPL's manager of corporate communications, said that demand for downloadable e-books saw a spike in the midst of the holidays. Even after an over 80 per cent increase in popularity in 2009 and another jump of over 70 per cent in 2010, the desire for e-books during the holiday season was stunning.

"We even saw, between Christmas and New Year's, there was a 30-to-50 per cent huge jump in the number of downloads from the library," Aikins said. "So you could tell when people opened their e-readers."

While the e-book has risen to prominence over the past few years thanks to devices like Amazon's Kindle and Chapters/Indigo's Kobo, the TPL has been offering digital content for almost 10 years now.

"People have been using e-books faithfully since 2002 as soon as we started to get e-resources," explained Aikins. "When I say 'e-resources,' we have e-books, e-audiobooks. We have research material available for download. We have all kinds of resources and not just e-books."

The surge in popularity hasn't gone unnoticed at East York's Pape and Danforth branch of the TPL. Branch head Suk Yin Ng said that interest in the format is obvious.

"We're seeing greatly increased interest in e-books and e-readers at Pape," Ng said. "We have two book clubs attended mostly by seniors and they're asking advice as to what kind of e-reader they should buy."

Ng noted that the curiosity comes from across the board.

"There's increased interest not from just adults, but from

all ages, from young adults to seniors," stated Ng.

Ng said that patrons at Pape have the opportunity to find out first hand from the staff about the ins and outs of e-readers and how to download e-books.

"At the information desk, we're always able to offer information on availability and where people can pick (e-books) up," Ng said.

"If people require further assistance, we offer training, sometimes one-on-one."

Still, even with the rise of the e-book, Aikins said that the death of the traditional library book has been greatly exaggerated.

"A lot of people have speculated that (the e-book) is going to be the end of the book or you won't need libraries anymore," Aikins said.

"But what we have experienced is that e-resources and e-books have increased the popularity of libraries and hardcover books."

In fact, Aikins believes that the rise of the e-reader is a main catalyst in increased patron presence at library branches.

"Even though our e-books have increased at an amazing rate, so has the interest in hardcover books. Our visitors at libraries have increased," Aikins said. "I think it's just that the more accessible we make literacy, the more people will be interested in it. I think it's perhaps a good way to introduce (the library) to the non-reader."

Aikins said that the number of visitors at TPL branches rose to an all-time high of 18 million in 2010, up 500,000 from the previous year.

While e-readers may have played some part in the upturn, they haven't won everybody over yet.

Library patron Agnes Keenan, for one, doesn't understand the fuss.

"I don't even know what those are," the senior citizen said with a laugh.

"I've never even been on the internet. I will stick to regular old books, thank you very much."



Observer, Sian Davies

SHORE SAFETY: Melting ice and snow are creating potentially dangerous conditions around the Don River and other waterways. On Monday, the city advised local residents to exercise caution around all bodies of water in the coming weeks, as warmer temperatures cause unstable shorelines and rapidly rising water levels.

Rising water levels prompt advisory from city officials

By SIAN DAVIES

East York residents are urged to exercise caution near all bodies of water over the coming weeks.

The city is warning the public of the dangers caused by changing weather conditions during the spring melt period, which could lead to unstable stream banks and rapidly rising water levels.

Laurian Farrell, chief flood duty officer at the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), said that despite lighter snowfall than usual this winter, earlier than normal ice breakup and above average flows within watersheds are causing hazardous conditions.

"As melting ice and snow runs

into our rivers and streams, the water is extremely powerful," she said.

Moreover, the water is "very cold, making it difficult to recover if you fall in."

Farrell said that anyone enjoying the outdoors this spring should pay particular attention to children and pets venturing close to shorelines, because precipitation and freezing overnight temperatures may cause slippery and unstable surfaces along the water's edge. Layers of thinning ice on many ponds can be deceptive, she said.

"It's important to not assume that just because an area was covered in seemingly solid ice yesterday, it's stable to walk on

today," Farrell said.

The TRCA advises people to stay at least three metres from the edge of a waterway during rainy weather. It is also recommended that anyone going for a walk near a river, pond, lake or creek notify a friend or family member of their route and the time they expect to be home.

People should not attempt to rescue a person or animal who has fallen into a waterway as they too could be overcome by powerful currents and extremely cold temperatures. The TRCA advises that, instead, people should call 911 immediately.

For more safety tips, visit www.trca.on.ca

Residents looking for answers

Cont'd. from page 1

Strathmore Donlands Action Group.

"There were too many constraints with the plan, so essentially we want to meet the TTC safety needs while mitigating the impact on the community," she said.

The TTC had arranged for a

public meeting to take place last night at Danforth Collegiate and Technical Institute to update residents on the second Donlands exit project, but the meeting was cancelled.

According to a release from the transit commission, "once the TTC capital budget has sufficient funding in place, a

public meeting will be convened with the community about this project."

Dymond said she wishes last night's meeting had gone ahead.

"We're still looking for answers to questions and clarity on the path forward," she said.



Observer, Andre Widjaja

CROSSING GUARD: Jack Aldred helps a pedestrian cross the intersection of Carlaw and Mortimer avenues. Aldred created a petition for a crosswalk at the intersection, which is used heavily by students.

Roadblock for crosswalk, but council will vote on it anyway

By ANDRE WIDJAJA

Councillor Mary Fragedakis says that a petition to install a crosswalk at the intersection of Carlaw and Mortimer avenues does not meet the requirements of the city's transportation department.

Fragedakis, the councillor for Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth, says that in order to merit a crosswalk, the city requires at least 200 pedestrians to be crossing during busy periods, and 130 pedestrians waiting to cross for more than 10 seconds.

That could frustrate a petition drive run by Jack Aldred, who has been a crossing guard at the intersection for 22 years. He created the petition to express his concern for the safety of pedestrians, especially when there's no one to help people to cross the road.

The intersection is heavily used by students at Centennial College's adjacent campus and at Chester Elementary

School just down the street, Aldred said.

"Mothers have complained to me that when I'm not there, they point their hand out and no one stops," Aldred said.

He added that the intersection used to have a crosswalk, but it was taken down when the city installed a traffic light nearby.

He submitted the petition to Fragedakis' office last week with 203 signatures.

But while it does not meet the technical requirements, Fragedakis says that she is still willing to advocate for a crosswalk, because residents have expressed the need for one.

"I have asked Transportation Services to prepare a report for the next Toronto-East York Community Council so that the item may be considered and voted on at that time," she said.

The next council meeting is scheduled for March 22.