



CLASS CLOWNS

■ These teachers act up outside of school **Page 8**



Dennis Gonzales /// Observer

Standing on guard

Goalie Jonathan Bernier awaits the next barrage of pucks during the Toronto Maple Leafs open practice at Greenwood Park on Feb. 21. The outdoor practice was held on the same day as the U.S. vs. Canada men's hockey game at the Sochi Olympics — but attendees were given enough time to rush home to catch the semi-final game.

Focus on cities, Kellway urges

By WILL KOBLENSKY
The Observer

If Matt Kellway had his way, the federal government would have an urban agenda that would better develop areas such as Crescent Town.

The New Democrat MP for Beaches-East York has been appointed as the party's urban affairs critic. Crescent Town, the complex of highrise apartment buildings at the southeast corner of East York, is a big part of his riding. It also remains one of the "neighbourhood improvement areas" designated by the city in a revised list issued this week.

Those areas used to be called "priority neighbourhoods" and are defined by the city and the United Way as needing additional social services. The new list reflects refined criteria, but Crescent Town remains on it, as it has been since the list was first unveiled nine years ago.

In an interview following his appointment to Opposition Leader Thomas Mulcair's shadow cabinet, Kellway said the Conservative government has a blind spot when it comes to urban socio-economics. He said the Harper Tories insist natural resource extraction, which occurs in rural areas, should lead Canada's economic future.

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Thorncliffe gets boost

'Priority' label has some wincing, but it means funding

By MARIA SHIPULINA
The Observer

The city's new system for ranking neighbourhoods will bring extra funding and resources to the Thorncliffe Park neighbourhood.

On Monday, city staff revealed a new system for designating "neighbourhood improvement areas" (formerly "priority neighbourhoods"). Each of the city's 140 neighbourhoods was given an "equity score" based on economics, education, political participation, health and other criteria. Areas that scored less than 42.89 points were declared improvement areas.

Thorncliffe's neighbour to the east, Flemington Park, remains on the priority list where it's been since 2005,

but until now, Thorncliffe hasn't met the criteria. Now the neighbourhood's needs have been recognized, according to city councillor John Parker.

Parker, whose Ward 26/Don Valley West includes both Thorncliffe and Flemingdon, expects the new criteria will better measure what neighbourhoods require government financial support. "At least we know the need would be recognized now," he said.

The Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office (TNO), a community-based agency, has been providing residents with services, information and support for more than 25 years. Ahmed Hussein, the interim executive director of TNO, says becoming a Neighbour-

hood Improvement Area is good news for Thorncliffe.

"I think it's a good thing. I hope that will bring more resources to our neighbourhood, open new opportunities for young people and improve the quality of living," he said.

Thorncliffe Park has issues previously not recognized because they are quite specific and unique, Parker said. The former system looked at indicators such as education levels of the residents and the number of households with single parents, he explained.

"In Thorncliffe, we have unusual circumstances: a large amount of our residents are highly educated, but in spite of high levels of education, the individuals are not employed at the same level," he said.

"A lot of residents face the issue of translating their diplomas, earned outside Canada, into well-paying jobs."

There are also many sin-

gle-parent homes — but Parker said that some two-parent homes pose challenges too.

"There are many households with a husband, wife and children who live under the same roof with their grandparents, uncles and other relatives. All in a tiny unit."

"It is too early to say now" what practical effect Thorncliffe's new designation will have, Hussein said. "There will be discussions. We are not sure, but the process has started and it's a good thing." He added that issues such as underemployment and lack of resources for young people should be considered most important.

"Organizing activities for young people is vital so they become involved in their communities," he said.

Thorncliffe has faced challenges for a long time, but because of the new system, Parker said he hopes they will now be addressed.



■ PARKER

Seniors nailed by fake roofers

By SAMANTHA TURCHAN
The Observer

East York seniors and their homes are being targeted by scam artists, according to Toronto Police.

It has been reported that one to two males have been approaching homes occupied by seniors and convincing them that their roofs are in need of repair, when in reality they are in working condition.

“They climb up onto the roof, bang around and a little bit later they come down and say everything is fixed,” Const. Victor Kwong said.

After the men allegedly complete the repairs, they take the victim to a nearby bank machine to withdraw payment for work that has not actually taken place.

“For any scams like this where they are approaching you, these companies should be researched. You never accept what a salesman coming to your door says. You can take down their company information, do some research and find out from references whether or not this is a reputable company,” Kwong said.

It’s important to be cautious when being approached by sales people, he advised, as you never know who is coming to your door and with whom you are dealing.

“Seniors tend to be victims of fraudulent schemes on a regular basis since they are the most vulnerable,” said Paul Indrigo, an East York realtor.

The first suspect is described as white, 5’10”, 170 lbs., 35-40, with a black do-rag on his head.

The second man is white, 5’7”, with a very heavy build.

If you have any information, please contact the police at 416-808-4100.

POLITICS



Will Koblenzky // Observer



Premier gets the nod in Don Valley West

Kathleen Wynne speaks during her riding association’s nomination meeting at Leaside Gardens on March 1. The incumbent MPP — and provincial premier — was unopposed. But her supporters still asked why she didn’t raise the minimum wage to \$14 per hour and why she hasn’t courted more foreign business.

Put cities on agenda: Kellway

Cont’d. from page 1

communities suffer from “structural levels of unemployment” created by the immigration system and lack of federal money for affordable housing in cities. While he partly attributed this to global factors, he blamed the government for not playing a bigger role.

“Canada has failed at the economic integration of newcomers to this country,” Kellway said, criticizing the lack of recognition for foreign education and work experience.

Next door to Kellway is Don Valley West Conservative MP John Carmichael, whose riding has neighbourhood improvement areas of its own: Victoria Village, Flemingdon

Park, and now, Thorncliffe Park.

“When you deal with Canada’s immigration process, we’re probably recognized as one of the most generous nations on the earth,” Carmichael said. “We’ve got to bring new Canadians and new immigrants into this country and find a way they can become engaged.”

Carmichael defended the government’s role in cities, citing the New Building Canada Plan.

“We have identified \$53 billion in a 10-year program. It’s the single largest program in the history of our country,” he said.

Only \$900 million per year will be spent on cities from the New Building Canada Plan,

according to the Federation of Canadian Municipality’s website. It does not include housing. The three-stop Scarborough subway will receive \$660 million from that plan.

Carmichael said \$4.2 billion has been delivered into the GTA and Don Valley West “has seen our share of that.”

Twenty of Canada’s big-city mayors were recently in Ottawa, lobbying the government for more cash. Their biggest concerns were transit, affordable housing and the end of Canada Post’s home delivery.

“Providing affordable housing to people living in Canadian cities is essential,” Kellway said. Almost half of Crescent Town residents pay 30 per cent or more of their income on rent or a mortgage.

The NDP wants a national housing and transit plan to create what Kellway calls “a broader coherent plan” for urban regions.

But Carmichael says they’re “already dealing with those issues. The CNIB bridge on Bayview Avenue, a smaller project, is a community initiative where the federal government stepped in getting that bridge rebuilt.”

The New Democrats and Kellway want to frame the debate around cities.

“With 80 per cent of Canadians living in cities, Canada is an urban nation,” Kellway said.

So Kellway said his party wants to put cities and neighbourhoods like Crescent Town on the national agenda.

Parishioner stabbed in random assault

By SAMANTHA FREEMAN
The Observer

A 25-year-old man suffered stab wounds to the torso after what police are calling an unprovoked attack during a service at Calvary Church on March 9.

The attack happened shortly before 4:30 p.m. during a service held by the Ethiopian

Evangelical Church, which sometimes shares space with Calvary Church at its 746 Pape Ave. location.

The victim was rushed to hospital with life-threatening injuries, but is now in stable condition.

Toronto Police Det. Rich Baker said more than 400 people watched in horror as the victim was suddenly attacked

by another man.

“It was towards the end of the service. A man walked to the front of the church and stabbed one of the other parishioners who was seated near the front,” Baker said.

Police say the assault was stopped by parishioners, who held the suspect until police arrived.

“There were no known con-

nections between the accused and the victim other than that they attended the same church,” Baker said.

Tonatan Tesfaldet, 18, of Brampton, is charged with attempted murder, aggravated assault and possession of a weapon dangerous to public peace.

He was scheduled to attend a bail hearing at College Park court on Thursday.

WHAT’S UP IN E.Y.

Discovering Indian culture

Relax during March Break and discover the traditions of Mehndi Henna on today (March 14) from 2-4 p.m. Demonstrations and supplies are provided for free. The event is for teens aged 11-18 and takes place in the auditorium of the S. Walter Stewart library branch, 170 Memorial Park Ave. Call 416-396-3975 to register.

Talk to focus on local bridge

The East York Historical Society will meet Wednesday, March 19 at 2 p.m. at the Leaside library. Gordon Sherk will discuss the history of Governor’s Bridge.

Game on!

The S. Walter Stewart library branch will host a game night for teens on Friday, March 21 at 170 Memorial Park Ave. from 4-5 p.m. Teens between the ages of 11 and 18 are welcome to come out for some friendly competition. Free Wii, Xbox 360 and Kinect systems are available to play.

Free fantasy flick for teens

Teens between the ages of 13 and 19 can watch *Mortal Instruments: The City of Bones* for free on Friday, March 28 from 5-7 p.m. The free flick will be shown in the auditorium of the S. Walter Stewart library, 170 Memorial Park Ave. Call 416-396-3975 for more information.

~ Deidra Barton

E.Y. candidate gets down to business

Local business owner aims to boost health care and immigration

By **BRAD GARCIA**
The Observer

The next federal election is still 19 months away — long after this spring, when a provincial election is expected by many... and this October, when the municipal election will be held.

But while political junkies' eyes may be elsewhere, a newcomer to East York politics is already focused on trying to become the Liberal candidate in Beaches-East York for the fall 2015 federal election.

He's Tom McGee, a small business-owner and resident of the Beach. He's hoping to win the local Liberal riding association's nomination so he can carry the Grit flag into the general election and unseat the New Democrat MP, Matthew Kellway.

That would return the riding to the Liberal fold after Liberal incumbent Maria Minna's loss to Kellway in 2011.

McGee already has a campaign website and is making public appearances, like a March meet and greet at Crescent Town two weeks ago and a "Pints and Politics Pub Night" last week at the My Place bar on Queen Street

East.

He's a husband and father of two, as well as an independent business-owner. He's lived in the Beach for over a decade.

He does not have a background in politics; instead, he says, he has felt the sting of issues created or ignored by the Conservative government. So, with the support of his family, he decided to run to become a candidate for the Liberals.

"I've always been passionate about politics, but when the discussions start to affect you in a very real way, it's like a trigger goes off," McGee said in an interview, "and after three or four triggers go off, it was like 'Alright, enough.'"

Having used his BA in literature for communications, the 44 year-old McGill University graduate hopes to apply those skills in connecting with the community.

"One of the reasons I joined the party initially was because I felt the Liberals had lost," he said. "The party had strong ideas, but it was like the party had lost touch with people, and you know, I took it personally."

When he and his wife Georgia learned that they were having their first child, they made a conscious decision that he was to work freelance, and she wouldn't go on maternity leave, because her job was 100 per cent commission sales.

"It was motivated by the



Brad Garcia /// The Observer

Tom McGee is running to become the next Liberal candidate for the Beaches-East York riding.

way [employment insurance] and maternity benefits are structured," McGee said. "It's not a choice people should have to make."

Because of this, child-care funding seems to be at the top of McGee's priority list.

"Child care was a personal thing for us," he said. "Univer-

sal access to affordable child care is critical."

He's also raising questions about Canada's health care system, and about immigration laws.

"Why isn't there a national body involving all the different provinces, that makes sure that there's consistent health

care across the country, or that facilitates the movement of people across the country?" McGee said.

"Why isn't there a national program that recognizes the need for physicians in other parts of the country? It hasn't been addressed, hasn't been dealt with."

Win or lose, McGee said his goal is to grow the Liberal party in Beaches-East York, and that's why he's out campaigning already.

"I don't care if it's three people showing up to a Saturday afternoon or 30," he said. "My campaign is based on engagement."

Civil engineer wants to build opportunity



Courtesy of Andre campaign

Council candidate Dave Andre speaks to supporters at the S. Walter Stewart library.

Candidate hoping to oust Fragedakis in riding of Toronto-Danforth

By **VERA EL-TIMANY**
The Observer

It was a family affair when Dave Andre officially launched his campaign for the Toronto-Danforth seat on city council.

"I think that he's a fresh face. He has a lot of new ideas and he's willing to work with a lot of people," said his wife, Rebecca. "I think that he's not entrenched in any specific areas so that he can meet people where they're at and he's not coming in as part of this group here or that group there but he really wants to bring people together."

And his mother, Jessie, added: "I feel the way the politics is going right now, people say one thing, they do something else... That's the only thing that worries me about him, because he doesn't believe in lying. That's my son, and I'm not saying it because he is my son. I'm telling you the truth and if you give him a chance you'll see that's how he is."

As for the candidate himself, Andre told his initial rally at the S. Walter Stewart library branch on Feb. 21 that "change in our city is going to be slow

and sometimes it's not going to look like we're making change, but what I can promise you is if that we're all willing to work together, that we can accomplish the change that we see in our community."

Andre hopes to unseat incumbent Mary Fragedakis in Ward 29 when the municipal election rolls around on Oct. 27. He also faces a challenge from John Papadakis, who won an East York council seat in the early 1990s, but who hasn't won elective office since, despite tries both in East York and in Fort Erie, Ont., where Papadakis lived for a time.

Other candidates have until September to come forward.

When it comes to the specific planks in Andre's campaign platform, the candidate told the group gathered at the library that he wants to help build a transit system that is "the envy of New York and Chicago." He said he also wants to find efficiencies at city hall and support seniors so that they can live in their homes in dignity.

But most of all, he said, he believes in working together and uniting people of different political views under a common city council that can represent all views, not just his own.

Andre currently lives in East York with his wife and two children, after growing up in Scarborough. He gradu-

ated from the University of Toronto with a degree in applied science and now works as a civil engineer.

"I believe that people in this city are tired of politics and the divisions that have led to no real progress in the past four years," he said.

"I believe that the issues that we face — we can do better together than by ourselves. I believe that the challenges we face in the city also offer us opportunities to build new possibilities in our community."

He added: "Change takes time. Sometimes change is slow and sometimes it doesn't seem like things are changing at all. I'll give you a great example: My son Moses is five years old. He's a very tall boy for his age. He is growing so fast. The thing about how fast he's growing is that if I just sit and watch him, you can't see him grow. All I can do is I can care for him. I can feed him. I can make sure he gets to bed on time. I can make sure he gets rest and then eventually one day, I bring out his winter pajamas and I put them back on him and I realize he's grown a foot."

But whatever change comes about in the long term in Ward 29 and Toronto generally, he said that what he is actively focused on right now is engaging with people in the community and addressing their concerns.

Film takes religion to new heights

By PAOLO MAQUIRAYA
The Observer

For three of the world's major religions, the city of Jerusalem has been both their centre of faith and conflict for over 5,000 years.

For director and writer Daniel Ferguson, the city is the subject of his latest documentary, which aims to give audiences a new perspective on what was once the centre of the civilized world.

Unlike previous documentaries that covered Jerusalem, Ferguson's film offers up a few new and unique perspectives.

First, he makes the conscious decision to remove politics from the film and instead chooses to focus on three young women (Revital Zacharie, Nadia Tadros and Farrah Ammouri), who each come from the three major faiths that inhabit the city: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Together they offer a refreshing perspective on their faiths, their relationship with each other and to the holy city as well.

From their family histories to personal stories tying in their faith with the city, Ferguson's message through his documentary is one of connections; the connection each faith has to each other, the connection they share with the city and what these can mean moving forward.

The result is a more hopeful outlook for the holy city.

But, that isn't all Ferguson has to offer with his film.

For the first time, Ferguson brings the holy city to an IMAX screen, taking audiences through Jerusalem in a way never before seen.

Granted permission to take aerial shots over the city and nearby religious sites, Ferguson takes audiences for a breathtaking ride through and around the city.

The cinematography is top-notch, though there is the possibility of experiencing vertigo during the film.

Ferguson's Jerusalem is now playing at the Ontario Science Centre's OMNIMAX theatre in conjunction with its Sultans of Science exhibition.

SCIENCE CENTRE



Sana Fatani /// Observer

March Break is for kids, and what better place for them than the Ontario Science Centre? (Top) Kase Bird, 5, intently watches a rock climbing demonstration. (Right) Carter Kline, left, and Bethany Taylor demonstrate the effects of static electricity.



Sana Fatani /// Observer

Science Centre celebrates the 'Sultans of Science'

Contributions and influence of Muslim scholars honoured at this 'must-see' museum exhibit

By DONSTON WILSON
The Observer

From now until June 7, visitors to the Ontario Science Centre can span time and cultures by viewing a new exhibit that has stopped at the museum on its world tour.

'The Sultans of Science' celebrates the contribution of Muslim scholars in science and technology during the golden age of the Islamic world — and the influence that they have had around the

world ever since.

MTE Studios, an overseas firm specializing in the development of interactive learning experiences, developed the exhibition. It features functional large-scale models, interactive maps, puzzles and videos.

The Science Centre opened the exhibit on March 7.

"In the western world, many cultural institutions are perceived to be white middle class, and at the Ontario Science Centre we are not just

committed to diversity, we live that diversity," said Lesley, Lewis, the centre's CEO.

The strategic communications director, Anna Reylea, added that an earlier version of the exhibition ran at the Science Centre five years ago. But this time, its focus has shifted and some unique features have been added — including more video and interactivity.

"The hope is to increase visitors," Reylea said. "It is a must-see."



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Ludo Verheyen, the head of MTE and its offices in Cape Town, Dubai and Bahrain, is also the lead researcher behind the exhibit. He reiterated Lewis's point that it's important to be reminded that not all inventions came from the west — but also from Greek times, the Chinese and the Islamic world among others. One of

the unique results of his work is the 'elephant clock' — an ancient, water-powered, robotic sculpture that tells time.

"It is awesome and fascinating from day one because every time research is done, you learn something new, something that we didn't cover in our history books," Verheyen said.

Masked East Yorkers have a ball



Dillon Hiles // Observer

Mio Reynolds, 12 (left) dances with Ella Concannon, 10 (centre) and Veena Yamano, 10 to Yoshi Yamano and Chie Yamano's live music.

Dancing to a different tune

LucSculpture's School and Studios masquerade ball provides unique entertainment

By HASSAN MOHAMUD
The Observer

People came to LucSculpture's School and Studios masquerade ball in February dressed in costumes to have fun and dance. But unexpectedly for some, the music they were dancing to was provided by a sitar and didgeridoo.

"When Chie and I made our group, I started playing the sitar and Chie started taking lessons on the didgeridoo in Australia," said Yoshi Yamano, one half of Kaminari, the Japanese musical duo playing at the ball, which was held at the LucSculpture art school on Greenwood Avenue, in the Danforth-Donlands neigh-

bourhood.

"The didgeridoo makes a deeper sound and the sitar makes a high frequency," said Yoshi, "so it really opens the chakras."

The sounds made by these instruments, which originate from India (the sitar) and Australia (the didgeridoo), are something that Yoshi and his partner, who is also his wife, pride themselves on. And those attending the ball seemed equally as excited by the music, which had them moving across the dance floor in unison at one point.

According to Yoshi, he and Chie were both born in Osaka and ended up moving to Vancouver after the band's travels

around the world. They appeared at many house parties and small gatherings, like this masquerade ball, in order to showcase their talents and music to wider audience.

Meanwhile, the ball was about more than just music. Sculptures and artwork of all shapes and sizes adorned the walls at every turn, something that the creator and owner of LucSculpture School & Studios, Luc Bihan, clearly had in mind when he set up shop at 663 Greenwood Ave.

"It was difficult at the beginning seven years ago, especially financially," he said. "We spread it through word of mouth and it took a long time to kick in. But for the last three

years it became more stable."

Bihan, 57, has had a lengthy career as a budding sculptor and artist. He left his parents at the age of 16 in France to move to Toronto.

Once here, he became an animation director at the Canadian entertainment company Nelvana and directed two acclaimed television series, Babar and Redwall, during the early 2000s.

"The type of students that come to my art school are not traditional people. They try to fit into the system in creative and different ways," Bihan said. "Events like this masquerade aren't something we particularly focus on, but we do hold all kinds of events."

Midwinter masquerade delights Jane Austen fans

By BRITTANY ROGERS
The Observer

For romance enthusiasts, the tale of Elizabeth and Darcy not only represents a love story, but also a time of rich history and tradition. With its regal clothing and majestic balls, there's no wonder many Torontonians are flocking to Regency-themed events for a chance to recreate that special period in time.

The JaneAustenDancing company hosted its sixth annual Midwinter Masquerade Ball last month at St. Barnabas Anglican Church on Danforth Avenue.

The theme was an 18th-century masquerade, and attendees did not disappoint. Many came clad in long gloves, ruffled collars, trousers and, of course, decorative masks.

The event kicked off with a workshop in English country dance with Karen Millyard, the organizer of the ball, leading the lessons. Here, ball attendees were taught simple dances authentic to Jane Austen's time.

"We do have a thriving modern English country dancing community in Toronto; it's a living art form," Millyard said. "It almost died away in the Victorian period and then it made a comeback and now it's being done all over the world."

After the lesson, guests were given a short break to transform

themselves into their alter egos for the night. For some, this was the highlight of the evening.

Marianne Mageau has been attending the ball for four years. "I'm interested in costumes, and this is a costumed event," she said. "I love making costumes and I always look for an opportunity to wear a costume."

When asked her favourite part of the night, she said it's "when everybody arrives, the first dance... to see everybody. By now I know most of the people who are here and it's interesting to see what they came up with to dress up as."

Finally, after a full day of dance lessons and makeovers, the ball began. The guests formed two lines, with partners facing each other. The men bowed to the women and the women curtsied to the men, and then music started.

From there, it was a magical night of dance, refreshments and a chance to catch up with old friends and make new ones.

While the Midwinter Masquerade Ball won't come around again for another year, Millyard hosts 18th-century themed events throughout the year and encourages all to come experience a taste of the past.



Brittany Rogers
// Observer



Brandon Bernard // Observer

Derek Gunda (left) and Ryan Lafuente hold their regional championship flags after winning the finals.

E.Y. school's own March Madness

By BRANDON BERNARD
The Observer

A bit of March Madness descended — a couple of weeks early — on a high school at East York's southern border, as St. Patrick Catholic Secondary hosted two rounds of the Toronto separate elementary schools basketball tournament Feb. 18-19.

The team from Blessed John XXIII on Grenoble Drive in Flemingdon Park even advanced to the quarter-finals before being knocked out of the tournament. No other East York-area teams made it to the semi-finals, which took place at the Hoopdome in Downsview Park on Feb. 26.

At St. Patrick's, the voices of elementary school children playing in the tourna-

ment could be heard through the walls.

Ryan Lafuente, 13, was one of the players in the gym that played a leadership role on his team, helping to guide his fellow players to victory against Sherbourne Street's Our Lady of Lourdes school.

"It feels great to go on" in the tournament, said Lafuente. "We encouraged each other; we didn't discourage one another... I've been playing basketball for a long time and I'm used to the pressure so I just kept it cool, and just tried to keep the ball away from them so they couldn't score again."

Lafuente said he has been playing basketball since he was six years old. An important assist to his talents on the court derives from his experience playing on multiple rep teams outside of Blessed

John XXIII, like teams in the OBA (Ontario Basketball Association), as well as the NABA (National American Basketball Association).

What made Lafuente a sight to watch was his leadership on the court, as well as his ability to cooperate with his entire team. Lafuente said that his favourite player to watch is Kyle Lowry of the Toronto Raptors.

"Kyle Lowry is my favourite player because he's a really good team leader," said Lafuente. "I try to watch him and learn off him."

Lafuente said he hopes to play basketball for his high school team next year. He'll be going to Senator O'Connor Secondary on Rowena Drive.

■ EDITORIALS

Tired, not hired

Many students leave high school with hopes of pursuing degrees and then moving on to land their dream jobs. But there are a few problems: the dream jobs they had in mind are either being occupied by older workers who refuse to retire or their undergrad degree is sometimes just not enough to attain the position.

This is a common problem seen by Sipho Kwaku, a youth and employment expert who works at WoodGreen, the umbrella social service agency headquartered at 815 Danforth Ave., between Pape and Donlands avenues. The community centre offers a program funded by United Way, which works closely to help people in the East York area find not only employment, but also stability.

"It really needs to start before you start school, because people are staying in their jobs longer, which means that there is no real room for the labor markets to absorb new employees," Kwaku says.

Data released by Statistics Canada last year indicated that the unemployment rate for those aged 15 to 24 had reached 16.4 per cent, compared to Ontario's overall rate of 7.5 per cent.

A possible solution to this problem would be to implement more effective programs in high schools that would not only educate students on post-secondary degree choices that would allow them to find work, but also help students be more conscious of what to expect once they enter the "real world."

Within these implemented high school programs, students should be educated on what the employment rates are in particular industries within the province and country. This is usually information that is only shared with students once they are close to graduation from college or university — when they are already carrying thousands of dollars in debt... and desperation for a job. These issues should be brought to the attention of the high school students before they choose their post-secondary program, not after.

The result could be fewer students with university degrees working temporary jobs that have no relevance to their studies. This new system if implemented in high schools would not only save students and their parents headaches, but it could also possibly benefit the government as well. From a business standpoint it would be more beneficial for the government to grant loans to students who would be choosing subject areas in which they could get jobs.

Until then students are still stuck with the frustration of achieving degrees, but still having a difficult time finding jobs.

~ Shanice Waite

Belieb it or not

Everyone is entitled to privacy — even those who inject themselves into the public eye. Whether or not celebrities court media attention, they, like the rest of us, deserve some privacy... even when they get arrested, like Justin Bieber did a few weeks ago in Florida.

After Bieber was arrested for allegedly driving under the influence, he was taken to Miami's county jail. Since that time, various media outlets have shown clips of Bieber in jail. A couple of weeks ago, a video was making the rounds of Bieber doing pushups and taking a sobriety test.

While many argue that if you choose to be in the public eye you lose the right to a live a private life, others who consider these kinds of issues believe otherwise. Ted Fairhurst is a journalism professor at Centennial College's East York campus on Carlaw Avenue, and he specializes in legal and ethical issues — and he says that none of the footage of Bieber should be released unless it serves a public purpose.

"I think using such a segment is justifiable if Bieber has made public statements, suggesting for example that he was not really drunk, or very drunk. The video then becomes a sort of reality check," Fairhurst says.

But since his arrest, Bieber has not publicly spoken about his alleged offence. So it is unfair to release footage of him in jail. The images are incomplete, and the inference in them is unfair.

Whether "ordinary" or famous, we should all be treated equally. It's one thing to report the arrest of Bieber, but it's another to release a video of him in a space that's meant to be private. Being famous does not justify violating the privacy of this individual.

"If Bieber had said nothing about his actual condition upon arrest, I would be inclined not to run the video, but instead just to describe what it shows," Fairhurst said. "But contrary to what most of my colleagues would probably say, I would err on the side of privacy in cases like this."

Let's just be honest and acknowledge that there's a sad inclination among us and among our media to see the high and mighty laid low. The real purpose of the Bieber jailhouse video is to stoke the enjoyment of watching someone fail.

No matter how "different" celebrities may seem from us, we share a commonality: We are all human, so we should all be treated the same. Ultimately, there is no overriding reason why a video like the one of Bieber in jail should be used. It's merely sensational — and unjust.

~ Virginia Mashingaidze

■ COLUMNS

Spring-forward style

Like everyone else in Toronto, I have been finding it difficult to function at full capacity this winter.

All I dream of is a waterfront sunset as it fades from orange to pink to peach to a beautiful shade of red, like a smoothie in the sky.

But in reality, I've had to snap out of my daydreaming and find a way of turning this ugly face of winter into a pleasant fashion adventure.

So whether they help you this year, as our endless winter finally winds down, or next year, here are my tips to help shake off the winter blues:

First, embrace the season. Next, change your wardrobe. Finally, inject some colour.

Reorganizing your closet might seem like a simple trick, but it could help dust off some of this temporary insanity. Think about your closet for a minute.

Visualize the colours

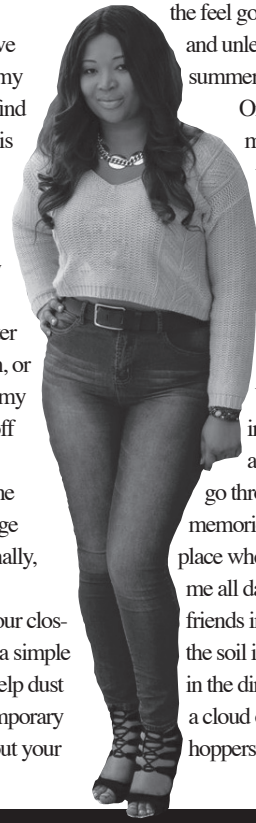
you've been wearing lately. Have you thought about how they are affecting your inner and outer being?

Just because the weather is dull, that doesn't mean that your style has to be as well. Perhaps your winter ensemble will boost the feel good part of the brain and unleash the invincible summer that is inside.

On a positive note, this might just be the stylish way to enjoy the rest of the winter season and a perfect transition into spring.

Quite frankly, I've grown tired of the winter complaints that became a rhythm back in November. Think about what I have to go through: My childhood memories are engraved in a place where the sun glared at me all day. I played with my friends in dusty fields where the soil is red. We ran around in the dirty gravel bringing up a cloud of dust, chasing grasshoppers without a care in the world.

I am no Anna Wintour; neither am I Twiggy.



Nina Raynars

In fact, I am an African girl who misses the African sunshine and here I am offering you a little fashion inspiration to distract you from the winter chills.

Think of Carrie Bradshaw, Sarah Jessica Parker's character in *Sex and the City* who graced our screens with some daring fashion choices a decade ago. You and I might not have a daredevil designer like Bradshaw, but drawing inspiration for your closet from a favourite celebrity style icon can be a great way to excite you about looking and feeling good.

Serious research into the psychology of colours suggests they have the ability to instantly trigger a mood or an emotion. Think mint green, which the colour chart associates with freshness. Orange is said to be inviting and joyful, invoking feelings of sociability, while yellow symbolizes happiness.

So select pastel colours that you can mix and match — and also consider that floral scarf.

This is probably the best time of the year to reorganize your closet, adding both practical and versatile colours that define your personal style. Imagine what a pop of colour can do for your confidence.

Oscar snubs, not flubs

The 86th annual Academy Awards a couple of weeks ago featured by far one of the deepest fields of competition in recent years. Each of the Oscars' major categories was filled to the brim with a strong group of candidates, from the best picture category all the way to sound editing.

Because the field of contenders from last year's crop of movies was so strong, a high number of snubs was to be expected when the nominees were announced back on Jan. 16. Films such as Ryan Coogler's *Fruitvale Station*, Lee Daniel's *The Butler*, Denis Villeneuve's *Prisoners* and Ron Howard's *Rush* were completely shut out from any Oscar nominations, despite their critical successes.

Each faced differing circumstances around why they failed to garner nominations, but the simple answer is that 2013 was a great year for cinema. It featured some of the most unforgettable and powerful films in recent memory, and while the Academy rewarded the best of the bunch on March 2, the ones that weren't recognized

shouldn't be ignored either.

Among them, I felt that Ryan Coogler's *Fruitvale Station* was perhaps the biggest snub. The film broke on to the scene with its debut at the Sundance Film Festival in January of last year. A huge critical success, the film was quickly picked up by The Weinstein Company and distributed for a limited release beginning on July 26.

For those unfamiliar with the film, it centres on the last day of Oscar Julius Grant III's life, prior to him being fatally shot by transit police in Oakland, California, on New Year's Eve, 2009. The case of Oscar initially gained notoriety because it was caught on video and those

images went viral.

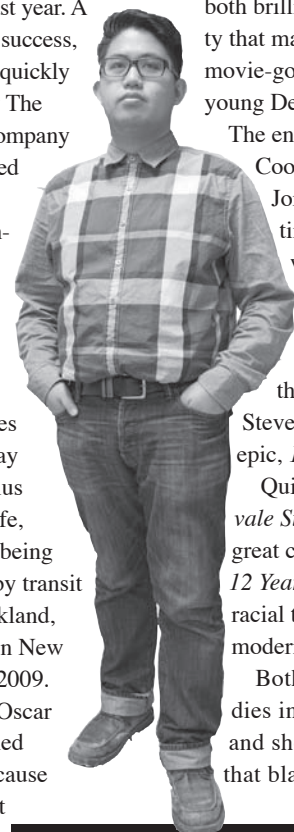
Best-known to date for his role in Josh Trank's *Chronicle*,

Michael B. Jordan showcases his acting chops in *Fruitvale Station*. He flashes both brilliance and subtlety that may remind many movie-going audiences of a young Denzel Washington.

The end result for Ryan Coogler and Michael B. Jordan is that their ultimate accomplishment with the film is, in my opinion, the second-most powerful film of the year, behind only Steve McQueen's slavery epic, *12 Years a Slave*.

Quite simply, *Fruitvale Station* serves as a great companion piece to *12 Years*, as it highlights racial tensions still felt in modern-day America.

Both films are tragedies in their own right and show the injustices that black people have faced in different eras... 150 years apart.



Paolo Maquiraya

East York wasn't built in a day

With this issue, the Observer inaugurates a series of historic photos drawn from the City of Toronto Archives



On the left, a photo circa 1925 shows Don Mills Road, opposite the farm of R. J. Fleming, in what was then East York Township. On the right, crewmen dig deep during the construction of the trunk sewer line along the East Don River in 1961.



File photo from Fotolia

'OPP'osed to distracted driving

By BRITTANY DEMPSTER
The Observer

A local driving instructor says increased fines for distracted driving, which come into effect next week, don't go far enough.

"I think it's a very good step and they (the courts) should have done it a long time ago," said Sabir Ghulam, owner of Leaside Driving Academy in East York.

However, he believes distracted drivers should also lose demerit points as well.

"People care about their record more than their money," he said.

As of March 18, Ontario drivers will have to pay a \$280 fine for distracted driving, according to the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) website. The current fine is \$155.

According to the OPP, the \$280 fine includes a \$225 fine, a \$50 victim fine surcharge and a \$5 court cost. A news release on the website says distracted driving is "the number one killer on roads."

Kerry Gomez, an East York elementary school bus driver, said he agrees with the decision to increase the fine.

"It will make people more aware, because it doesn't seem to bother (drivers)," he said, adding that sometimes "the young crowd, and even the older people, have their phone right up to their ear (while) they're driving."

The Insurance Bureau of Canada website says the average driver needs to keep track of 3,000 different things during rush hour, including signs, traffic lights, other vehicles, passengers, pedestrians, road and weather conditions.

TOP DRIVING DISTRACTIONS

- Outside people, objects or events
- Adjusting the stereo
- Passengers in the car
- Something moving within the car
- Using other devices or objects
- Adjusting the car's climate control
- Eating or drinking
- Cellphones

New seeds from the old country

By HENRY CHANG LI
The Observer

Donna Fenice loves Italy, especially its gardens.

This appreciation first blossomed during a trip to Europe, including Italy, during her university days. Upon her return to Toronto, she taught Italian at York University and now frequently visits Italy and France.

Last month, the Leaside Garden Society was treated to a presentation of Fenice's latest trip to the gardens of Tuscany, a region in central Italy, during a meeting at the Leaside library. Members seemed eager to forget about the harsh cold and heavy snowfalls experienced this winter and spend an evening in the warm Tuscan sun.

"This (Tuscany) is where the renaissance garden first started," Fenice said.

For centuries, Tuscan gardens were a political theatre. The elite used gardens to display their wealth and status. Statues depicting the triumphs of Greek mythological heroes such as Hercules served as allegories to an elite member of society's triumph over his rivals.

Fenice approaches horticulture through a historical context.

"I like to talk about the garden and what it meant and why it was made the way it was made," she said.

"It's a perfect thing for this winter when we had so much snow and ice and cold weather; to go to Tuscany and see the beautiful garden," said Marilyn Sanders, who has been a member of the society for five years.



■ SANDERS



Maria Shipulina // Observer

Toronto Catholic District School Board teachers Robert Coutts (left), Jennifer Roe-Doiron (centre) and Megan Slater took the stage as characters in Fred Carmichael's play, "Surprise."

Teachers acting up out of class

Catholic school board mounts engaging play starring teachers

By MARIA SHIPULINA
The Observer

Surprise! That actor up on stage is your teacher.

Each year, East Yorkers and other Torontonians are treated to colourful and engaging performances produced by the Toronto Catholic District School Board, and the most recent offering was

no exception.

Fred Carmichael wrote the comedy *Surprise*, which brought joy and laughter to the theatre in St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School on Felstead Avenue last month.

The cast was made up of teachers with the board and featured Megan Slater, Jennifer Roe-Doiron, John Zachar and Julia Brake, among others. Nicole Toogood directed the performance.

Surprise investigates what happens when the Seven Maples Inn opens in a small town in Vermont,

providing a whole new stage to retired actress Ella Wimsley (Slater).

Long after her acting career has ended, Ella decides to run her own business. The actress never expected running an inn would be her most successful and adventurous role ever.

Caught in the net of complicated and yet most amusing circumstances, Ella manages to play her part perfectly.

She gives out instructions to her staff, saves a marriage, helps her best friend Margot (Roe-Doiron) avoid embarrassment in

front of her fiancé and even offers insightful moral advice to her granddaughter – and all in one day.

Good always comes back to the one who gives, and Ella Wimsley is rewarded by the most successful opening she could ever imagine.

A brilliant performance left the audience laughing out loud and applauding cheerfully, admiring the great talents hidden in one of the drawers of the teachers' desks.

For information and tickets for the future shows, go to www.tcdsb.org/staffarts

Unraveling the mystery of the teenager 'code'

By DOMENIC NUNZIATA
The Observer

As a parent, talking to your teenager can sometimes seem like an impossible feat, especially if he or she barely talks, breaks the rules and does poorly in school.

Parents may assume it's their fault that their teenagers fail to communicate, but in reality it's related to the process of becoming adults in a misunderstood world, experts say. Teenagers are changing and parents need to change along with them.

Getting your teenagers to better communicate was the basis of *Cracking the Teenage Code*, a presentation held Feb. 20 at Danforth Collegiate and Technical Institute. The presenter was Michael Eisen, motivational speaker, author, social entrepreneur and founder of the Youth Wellness Network.

"Cracking the teenage code is about understanding the part of our lives that is the most complicated and misunderstood years," he said. "Not only do they misunderstand themselves, but everyone misunderstands them. So, cracking the code is about providing more of a blueprint for parents, adults, educators and teachers, and understanding where teenagers are coming from, to better communicate with them more effectively."

Eisen has taken his message to many schools throughout Canada. His goal is to help people better understand what today's youth are going through.

Kyle Duncan, a mother and member of the school council for Danforth Tech, found the presentation helpful.

"Michael's talk was not about communicating with your teenagers about their education, it was about having meaningful communication with your teenager," she said. "And I thought that was very relevant to what we as parents want to understand about how to have successful relationships with our children."

"What was particularly interesting for me was the idea of 'self-esteem', because I think as parents we would want our children to have self-esteem and his message today was you should begin with your own self-esteem and that will help your children have self-esteem."

Eisen's book, *Empowered YOUTH: A Father and Son's Journey to Conscious Living*, tells the story of Eisen and his father's experiences chronologically through two perspectives. In fact, his father, Jeffrey Eisen, co-wrote the book.

What the book really does is "create a blueprint for parents and kids to bridge the gap amongst themselves," Eisen said.



EISEN

Singing the praises of Toronto East General

By DONSTON WILSON
The Observer

Toronto singer and songwriter Joseph Neale is giving back to the hospital that saved his life.

Neale, who was diagnosed with lung cancer two years ago, was among the celebrants to appear at the launch of the final lap of the Toronto East General Hospital's Capital Redevelopment Campaign last Tuesday.

The campaign is raising money for a new addition to the hospital, located at Coxwell and Sammon avenues. The new eight-storey building will house the Ken and Marilyn Thomson Patient Care Centre, named after the Thomson family, which donated \$5 million to the project.

"Our gift reflects our commitment to seeing the new patient care centre become a reality and we hope it will inspire others to step forward," Peter Thomson, son of family patriarch Ken Thomson, said.

The event kicked off with Neale's live performance of his new single, *Open Up*.

Neale, 22, not only conquered cancer, he has been able to continue his journey as a singer. He



Donston Wilson // Observer

Joseph Neale — singer, songwriter, and cancer survivor — performs for Toronto East General Hospital's Capital Redevelopment Campaign.

started singing at the age of 5 and draws inspiration from his cousin, Haydain Neale, a Juno award-winning artist and lead singer of Canadian group Jack SOUL.

"It is such an amazing story," Rob Devitt,

president and CEO of Toronto East General Hospital, said.

Neale was "very grateful and pleased" with his treatment and "wanted to do something for the hospital," Devitt said.

For his part, Neale was singing the praises of the TGEH's Dr. Carmine Simone and his thoracic surgery team, who, he said, "treated me like a son. I am forever grateful."

Foundation chair Michael Burns said this is the final 100 days of the fundraising campaign to help transform health care in this part of the city. The hospital also helps new immigrants and refugees settling in the East York community, he added.

"For all of those who are interested in this hospital, we are setting a new standard for community health care services," Burns said.

The new centre will feature advanced medical technology, increased comfort for patients and families, superior privacy and high standards of infection control.

The hospital expects to raise \$60 million during the stretch run of the \$211-million campaign.