



BYELECTION COVERAGE

More byelection coverage
and commentary on **Pages 5, 6**

Angela Kennedy cleared of charges

By LILIAN ASANTE
The Observer

Trustee Angela Kennedy, East York's representative to the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), has been cleared of conflict of interest charges almost two years after she was initially found guilty and briefly removed from the board.

The Ontario Divisional Court announced the unanimous decision on

March 5.

The original charge stemmed



Angela Kennedy

from a May 2008 school

board budget meeting, where Kennedy voted against staff layoffs.

In 2010, Justice Lois Roberts ruled Kennedy had a conflict of interest, on that occasion, because her son worked for the board. She ordered Kennedy off the TCDSB, but did not forbid her from running for the position again in the looming municipal election.

Despite veiled opposition from the Catholic archdiocese and outright opposition from the teachers' union, Kennedy ran that fall — and won.

She vowed to clear her name, and has now won her appeal, after the judges ruled that if there ever was a conflict, it was "insignificant."

Kennedy was first elected as Ward 11 trustee for the TCDSB in 2000, and has served in a variety of ways since — including chair. She's also a registered nurse recently recognized for her 40 years of employment at Toronto East General Hospital.

Published reports quote her as "vindicated" now that she's won her appeal.



Scott Barber // Observer

Amid special-effects smoke, Toronto-Danforth's new MP, Craig Scott, addresses supporters following his byelection win on Monday. Scott was joined on stage at the Opera House by (front left) MP Olivia Chow — the widow of the riding's former MP, Jack Layton. At right, interim NDP Leader Nycole Turmel, city councillor for Ward 30 Paula Fletcher and Toronto-Danforth's New Democrat MPP Peter Tabuns (l-r) clap their approval.

New MP carrying Layton's legacy

By CORIANDRÉ LAWRENCE
The Observer

Since Christmas, people in the southwestern corner of East York have listened to a growing number of candidates ask for their votes.

Whatever their appeals, pundits still predicted an NDP win in the Toronto-Danforth byelection on Monday — but few projected a landslide reminiscent of Jack Layton himself.

Layton, the MP and federal NDP leader who died of cancer in August, brought the party to new heights in last spring's general election, when Canadians elected a record-breaking 103

New Democrat MPs representing every part of the nation. Layton became leader of the largest official Opposition in 31 years. And he walked away with his home riding of Toronto-Danforth, garnering more than three times as many votes as his nearest rival.

But this past Monday, Osgoode Hall law professor Craig Scott won the Toronto-Danforth byelection in true Jack Layton style — capturing 59.4 per cent of the vote... compared to Layton's 60.8 per cent last May.

The rookie candidate was way in front of 10 other candidates, including Liberal Grant Gordon, who was considered

Election analysis

his strongest competition. Gordon and the Liberals took comfort in their 28.5 per cent, an 11-point gain over last year.

But there was little solace for the Conservative candidate. Andrew Keyes got 5.4 per cent of the vote, a sharp drop from last year, when Katrina von Koenig got 14.3 per cent without active campaigning.

And Green candidate Adriana Mugnatto-Hamu saw a further erosion in her party's support in Toronto-Danforth — support that has gone from 13.2 per cent

in 2008 to 6.5 per cent in 2011 to 4.7 per cent on Monday.

None of the seven fringe candidates could even crack the one per cent barrier.

Voter turnout was low: just 43 per cent — compared to 65 per cent last year.

So Toronto-Danforth stays left-of-centre on the political spectrum, with a liberal city councillor and New Democrats in Ottawa and at Queen's Park.

The last non-New Democrat to represent the riding either provincially or federally was Dennis Mills, who won the federal riding in 1988, and was MP for 16 years. Layton ended his reign in 2004.

Now, the hard part. New Democrats from across the country are converging on the Metro Toronto Convention Centre starting today, March 23, to select a leader. Scott will have to find his place amid this leadership transition. And he'll have to find his place in a House of Commons where the Opposition NDP faces a majority government whose policies are often anathema to them.

So while the optimism of Toronto-Danforth New Democrats was obvious at their Opera House celebration on Monday night, there is clearly work to do... and some space left in the boots of Layton.

Inside services strike a risk in East York

CUPE Local 79 could go on strike as early as this weekend if an agreement with the city is not made

By BRAYDON KEDDIE
The Observer

East Yorkers, along with the rest of the city, are again facing the prospect of a municipal workers' strike.

Following last month's last-minute settlement with its "outside" workers, and the walkout that began this week at Toronto libraries, the city and its "inside" workers are now at the brink. The employees could legally strike at a minute after midnight tomorrow, March 24, after their union, CUPE Local 79,

voted 85 per cent in favour of a strike mandate on Tuesday.

"Clearly our members understand what is at stake," local president Tim Maguire said in a news release, "and the bargaining committee is grateful for their support."

If a strike goes ahead, any services run by Local 79 members will be shut down for the duration of the strike.

The East York Civic Centre and its city services would be among those closed during a strike, along with welfare offices, child-care services and swimming pools

For one worker's view, see page 3

run by the city.

But Maguire also said he wants to avoid a weekend walkout.

"We are not going to walk off the job if there is no deal come Saturday," he said. "We are going to consider the option this mandate gives us, if the employer starts to gut our collective agreement and strip away basic rights and protections."

The main points of conten-

tion between the city and the union appear to be seniority scheduling rights, reduced hours at long-term care facilities and unpaid sick days.

Meanwhile, Toronto libraries are sitting vacant since a strike began on Sunday. The Toronto Public Library Workers' Union Local 4948 said they walked out over the allocation of shifts between part-time and full-time workers.

During the strike, books and other materials borrowed from Toronto libraries will not be considered overdue. There will also be no fines for

books and materials borrowed before the strike began.

In East York, resident Hawii Gudeta said that two children in her family miss their access to the Thorncliffe branch.

"It makes their homework and reading time a lot more difficult for them to do," she said. "They don't have a place to go because the librarians are on strike. They're also being deprived of using computers because of the strike."

—With files from
Clarisa Pessoa

POLICE BRIEFS

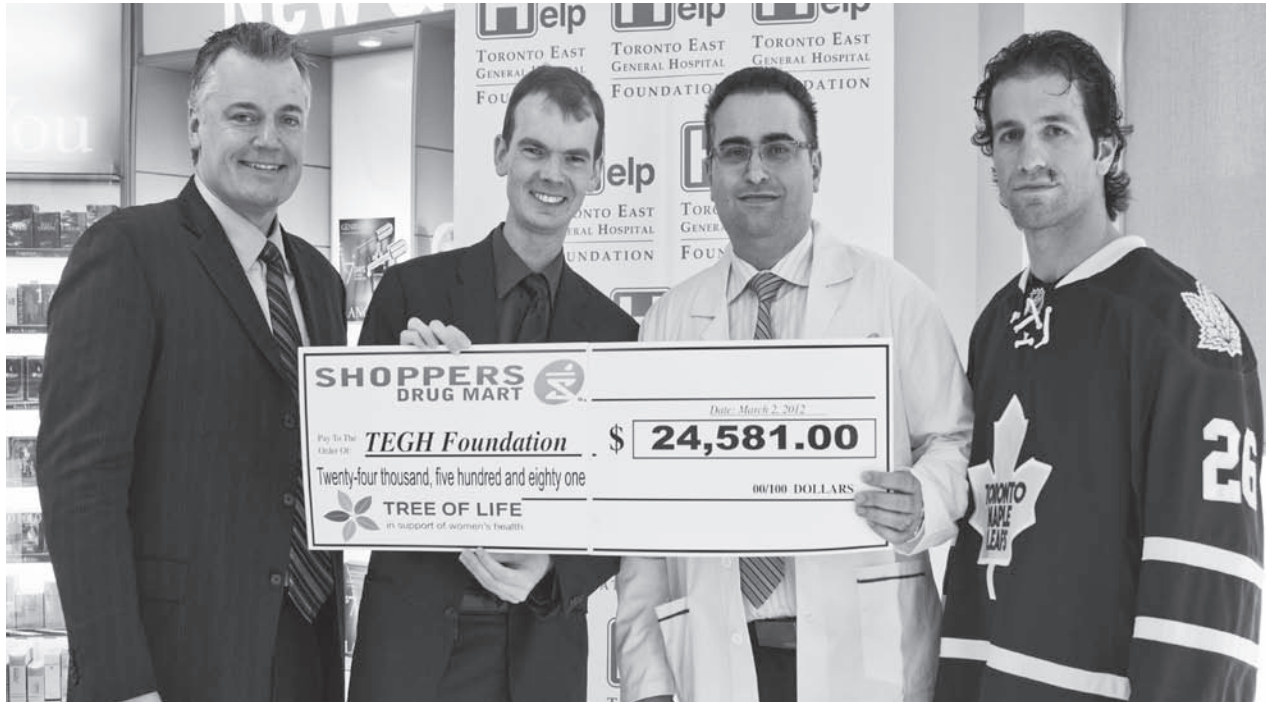
SIU clears officers in shooting

The provincial Special Investigations Unit (SIU) announced on Monday that it has found no wrongdoing in the police slaying of a mentally ill man near Toronto East General Hospital on Feb. 3. The man, Michael Eligon, apparently escaped from psychiatric care at the hospital and was wielding two pairs of scissors when police confronted him on Milverton Boulevard near Coxwell Avenue. Eligon allegedly told them, "One of you is going to die," just before police shot and killed him. But while there will be no charges, the SIU acknowledged that police may need more stun guns and better training in dealing with mentally ill people.

Four males rob teen, 18, of cellphone

Police are looking for four males after an 18-year-old female was robbed of her cellphone on March 17. The incident took place near Danforth Avenue and Linsmore Crescent. Police say the victim sustained minor injuries after being pushed to the ground when the muggers tried to take her purse. The four suspects then fled to a waiting vehicle on Lamb Avenue.

~ Sarah Dayal



Zenaira Ali // Observer

Tree of life bears fruit

City News anchor Roger Petersen, TEGH's Justin Van Dette, Shoppers Drug Mart associate-owner John Papastergiou and Toronto Marlboro player Mike Zigomanis (l-r) gathered at the Shoppers located at 1630 Danforth Ave. on March 2 to announce the result of the Tree of Life Campaign fundraiser held for Toronto East General Hospital by 11 of the chain's stores.

LABOUR

Takeover worries workers

American retail giant Target to take over two East York Zellers locations that will close this summer

By TICHAONA TAPAMBWA
The Observer

Zellers employees are counting down the days. Starting this Monday, March 26, the two Zellers stores located in East York will begin liquidation sales in anticipation of their replacement by outlets of the U.S. discount department store, Target.

"It's heartbreaking because we have given so much of our years at this store and this might be how it ends," said Bibi Nandal, an employee at the East York Town Centre Zellers, located on Overlea Boulevard in Thorncliffe Park.

Nandal's thoughts were echoed throughout the store as other employees worried about their future once the stores are taken over. There are currently two Zellers stores in East York: one in Thorncliffe Park and the other at Shoppers World Danforth, near Victoria Park Avenue.

These locations are among the ones being converted, now that Target is acquiring most Zellers outlets from Hudson's Bay Company.

Some consumers are excited about the change, but for employees, the rebranding is about their livelihoods. There is no guarantee that they will

be hired again once the stores turn over. They'll have to re-apply online for their old jobs.

"All our years at Zellers do not get transferred over and we are pretty much starting over," said Nandal.

Renovations for the coming Target are slated to begin by summer — with an opening late in 2012. For Nandal and her colleagues, however, it's about starting from scratch and worrying about upcoming bills in the meantime.

Luckily for her, Zellers was not Nandal's only job. But the same isn't true of all of her co-workers, and she said it's especially stressful for them

as they think about what the future holds.

"They all have started to look for new jobs because it's almost closing time and they are not sure if they will be re-hired," said Nandal.

All employees at the store will be given severance pay based on the number of years they have worked there.

"There's nothing you can really do about it; just deal with the hand that you are dealt," said Ayesha Musgrave, a regular shopper at the Thorncliffe Park Zellers.

June 2 is the date set for the closure of the two East York Zellers stores.

Running wild in the Sahara Desert

By JANE IGHARO
The Observer

For Alison Simpson, walking on the wild side meant a six-day journey of determination and fortitude across the Sahara Desert.

On Oct. 2, 2011, Alison Simpson, the executive vice-president of Maritz Canada and 29-time marathoner, began her journey of endurance through the blazing heat of the Sahara.

This month, Simpson trekked to East York to share the story with students at Centennial College's Carlaw Avenue campus.

"I never regretted my decision because I know that going into something like this, there would be times in the six days where I wanted to

stop," Simpson explained.

"That's part of the challenge, forcing yourself to get past that point and to keep going."

Simpson's decision to run across the desert was driven by her desire to raise funds for the National Advertising Benevolent Society (NABS), a charity to help people in the advertising industry suffering from illness or struggling.

In spite of the health threats that might have fazed most people, Simpson was determined to finish the race.

The first four days was a 40-km race, the fifth day was 80 km and the last day was a 10-km race. Temperatures ranged between 40 and 50 C.

On day four, she became extremely dehydrated and was uncertain of the outcome of her journey.

It was only through the encouragement of her teammates and a divine revelation that Simpson was able to continue.

While suffering from dehydration, Simpson hallucinated about having a conversation with her father, who died of Alzheimer's eight years ago.

"That was one of the best moments of the race — which is odd," she said, and added that she remembers thinking: "I might end up not finishing the race. I might end up in a hospital in Cairo."

At the end of Simpson's trip, she had raised over \$17,000 for NABS.

Despite the long trek through the smothering heat while suffering from dehydration and having numerous blood blisters, Simpson wants to run another race across the desert, saying that the experience has brought a lot of joy to her life.



● To see pictures of Simpson's desert run, visit her Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/alisonkaysimpson>

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Spring into action for diabetes

The seventh annual Leaside "Spring Into Action" Fundraiser for the Canadian Diabetes Association will take place on Saturday, April 21. Participants will walk, run or cycle along a two, five or 10 km circuit. Registration is \$35 per person or \$60 for a family of four. Registration includes event admission, breakfast, lunch and a donation to help fight diabetes. Call 416-849-4765 or visit www.inside-outstudio.ca/action for more information or to register.

Vying for a kid-sized Stanley Cup

Saturday, March 31, is the East York Hockey Association's "Little Stanley Cup" day at the East York Memorial Arena, 888 Cosburn Ave. Between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., the top-place teams in all divisions will play for their year-end trophies. At noon, the peewee division teams (ages 11 and 12) will play their final game and the winner will be awarded the "Little Stanley Cup." The cup is a three-foot replica of the real Stanley Cup and it was actually authorized by NHL president Clarence Campbell during the 1954-'55 season. For more information, contact Connie Mitchell at 416-918-9469.

~ Michael Baghel

Wage decrease riles worker

By KRISTOFER MORRISON
The Observer

Toronto's part-time park, forestry and recreation workers are among those "inside" municipal workers poised to strike in the coming days if their union and the city can't settle their contract differences.

"I wouldn't be surprised if we all end up on strike," says Norma Campbell, a fitness consultant at the East York Community Centre.

But if and when her union and the Ford administration come to

terms, Campbell says there may well continue to be fundamental

unfairness in the way the city treats some of its workers — tracing back to the 1998 amalgamation of East York and the other former municipalities of "Metro Toronto."

Wage scales in departments such as parks and recreation differed from one former municipality to the next, and the amalgamated "megacity" and its workers have been trying to reach an agreed fair pay scale for workers.

But the final harmonization agreement, known as the Kaplan Award, has failed to satisfy many part-time workers.

For Campbell, a fitness consultant for 33 years, harmonization has meant a drop in her pay from \$35.02 per hour to \$24.12 per hour.

Campbell says it's "demoralizing" for senior staff — but despite the appeals of her union, CUPE Local 79, the Kaplan Award takes effect this month.

Campbell, now nearing retirement, insists that this is "something the public should be aware of," despite what she says is the risk to her job for speaking out.



Nicholas Prospero // Observer

Tackling youthful dreams

Denver Bronco offensive tackle Orlando Franklin (third from right, back row) hangs out with a few students at St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School on March 16. Franklin visited the school to speak with students about following their dreams.

Meals on Wheels delivers independence to East York

Agency serves up nutritious food, social interaction

By LILIAN ASANTE
The Observer

The East York Meals on Wheels program does more than just provide warm meals to clients. It also helps deliver independence to hundreds of seniors each day.

Founded in 1969, East York Meals on Wheels is a not-for-profit community service agency that provides nutritious meals and social support to residents.

Anne MacNeill is the executive director. She says that a common misconception people have about the agency is that only low-income people qualify.

"It is a service for anybody who just needs a little bit of help to stay comfortable in their homes," she said in an interview. "We deliver meals to people who have trouble cooking for themselves."

MacNeill said this includes seniors, people with disabilities, or people coming home from surgery.

The agency's services are co-ordinated by paid staff, but food is delivered by volunteers. They pick up the meals and drop them off to the clients once a day, between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

MacNeill said that because many of their volunteers have

worked with the agency for several years, they are able to build a relationship with the clients.

"I think that it keeps people better connected with their community when they have regular visits from the volunteers," she said.

"They get to know each other and it builds a better social fabric when there is that kind of community connection.

Mervin Withey, 67, works as a self-employed general contractor. He has volunteered with the agency for four years. He said he enjoys volunteering because it gives him a chance to help his neighbours.

"Most of the people are elderly or incapacitated, so I go and put a smile on their face — I am a happy spirit," Withey said. "We need to help each other, especially the elderly, when they get there."

The volunteers also make regular calls to the clients' homes to ensure they are doing well.

MacNeill said that if a volunteer has a concern about a client, then they inform the agency's staff social worker, who follows up to see if they can help.

"If we see that someone is having trouble shovelling their snow, raking their leaves or whatever they are dealing with at home," she said, "then our social worker will connect them with other services to look after those needs."



Lilian Asante // Observer

Tegan Salonia (centre) and volunteers Norten Ozkiliic (left) and her daughter, Zeynep, package meals for lunch deliveries to East York residents.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

- Meals on Wheels is funded by client fees, donations, memberships, grants and the Ontario Ministry of Health.
- The vast majority of clients pay for their meals, which generally cost \$5.25 each. Financial assistance is offered to those who are unable to pay.
- The agency also provides meals for those with special dietary needs, such as diabetic or low-sodium food.
- Last year more than 700 residents were served by the East York Meals on Wheels agency.



Evan De Souza /// Observer

St. Anselm Catholic School students take a break from playing to pose with friends at the Northern Spirit Games at St. Patrick Secondary School.

Kids spear healthy learning

Elementary school students experience native culture through fun physical activities

By EVAN DE SOUZA
The Observer

St. Anselm Catholic School student Caryn Ramos had the time of her life cheering on Grade 6 friends as they participated in a friendly spear-throwing competition at the Northern Spirit Games at St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School on Feb. 27.

Students from 10 local elementary schools gathered at St. Patrick to participate in the games, which were designed to promote awareness of aboriginal culture.

"It's a way to integrate na-

tive studies to elementary students," said Nelli Trevisan Domingues, co-ordinator of the event and a health and physical education resource teacher at the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

This is the eighth year the games have been held. Besides St. Patrick, there are four high schools where the Northern Spirit Games have been taking place. Each has 10 elementary schools participating.

Trevisan Domingues spent months organizing the event and hopes kids benefit from the exercise.

"It is a way to promote physical activity while doing native activities," she said.

The day began with an opening assembly, before students split up into groups. Activities included the sea crawl, a kick-ball game and the spear-throw — where students threw a foam spear through a hoop.

Trevisan Domingues ensured that activities were based on aboriginal games that were easy to reproduce and explain to students.

The event's success was largely due to the time and dedication of St. Patrick stu-

dent volunteers, who helped oversee younger children and organize activities.

"The kids have a great experience working with the high school students," Trevisan Domingues said.

Grade 12 student Hazel Zulueta described the day as "fun" and said she liked the "free-spirited games."

All of the volunteer students' and Trevisan Domingues' hard work paid off, as teachers told her that the kids all left feeling happy.

Ramos agreed, saying the spear-throw was her favourite event.

Contra dancing their way right into your heart

By DYLAN C. ROBERTSON
The Observer

A woman in a country dress calls out dance moves next to a fiddler and a banjo player. Below the stage, three lines of couples dance on a thumping wood floor, laughing and cheering. It's just like a barn dance, but it's happening two minutes from the subway.

"I love contra dancing," said Kat Cosburn, a Torontonian in her 20s who discovered the dance while studying in North Carolina.

"It's really fun. It's kinda hippy-ish," she laughs.

For 29 years, the Toronto Country Dancers have been meeting in church halls across the city. Their current home is St. Barnabas Anglican

Church, on the Danforth at Chester Avenue, where they meet every second, fourth and fifth Saturday from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.

"It's pretty fun," said first-timer Kelsey Archambault, wiping sweat from her brow. "It's a little complicated, but because it repeats so much, by the time you get to the end you've done it a bunch of times, so you get used to it."

Contra dancing is a form of folk dancing that originated in New England and was popularized between the two World Wars. It's a mix between line and square dancing, where partners start by facing each other in straight lines and form a quartet with another couple.

The couples dance a rou-

tine by following 10 or fewer call-outs from the stage. The partners finish a sequence and rotate on to another couple in under a minute.

"It's not square dancing. It's a lot more flowing," Cosburn said.

While the steps, twirls and swings remain the same, the groups rotate. By the end, it's almost guaranteed everyone has danced with everyone else in the room.

"It's very human. You look into each others' eyes so you don't get dizzy," said 71-year-old Marianne Ells. "Young and old people get together. You meet everyone."

About 90 people show up for dances, with newcomers arriving half an hour early for training sessions.



Dylan Robertson /// Observer
Contra dancers meet at St. Barnabas every other Saturday.

Learning how to level the playing field

By SARAH DAYAL
The Observer

Constant partying, failing grades and an inability to wake up on time for school are just a few things some parents have to tolerate with their teenagers.

St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School hosted a seminar featuring registered clinical psychologist Dr. Alex Russell last month to address those issues and others.

The Feb. 21 meeting was designed to help educate parents on how to raise responsible and independent teenagers. As a public forum, attendees shared stories of their stressful uphill battles with their children's habits. One mother of three said her 16-year-old stepdaughter used to have good grades, but this year, things have been declining drastically.

"She always shows me the respect enough to listen to my opinion, but regardless, she doesn't follow up with it right now because her friends and partying are more of a priority to her," the woman said.

Russell explained that there are stages when it comes to youngsters' reactions to failure. In the first stage, from birth to age six, children feel shame and guilt if they don't perform, because they look to their parents for approval.

It is only once children feel pressure from external figures such as police, teachers and coaches that they enter the next stage,

when shame recedes.

But Russell said it's important for parents to not overreact when their teens start approaching things more casually.

"Kids don't like failing grades and they certainly aren't missing that part of their brain that allows them to be worried for themselves," Russell said. "You as a parent have to put down the worry ball for them to pick it up.... It won't kick in if you're doing it for them."

Once children enter their teen years, it's only natural for parents to worry about issues such as sex, drugs, pregnancy and criminality. But Russell said it takes painful, non-catastrophic errors for children to learn to avoid major pitfalls.

If a child fails a math test, he suggested, parents should be sympathetic instead of patronizing or scolding. Parents were also advised to praise their children in appropriate doses.

"Validating your child's success is different from praise, because it's recognizing what they are feeling," Russell said. "When you constantly praise them, it loses its value and cheapens the currency."

Russell reiterated the importance of giving children time to figure things out for themselves.

"The number one thing you should be concerned about is that they develop a relationship with school and achievement and with their own source of motivation," Russell said.

"However, burnt hands learn best."



Sarah Dayal /// Observer

Clinical psychologist Dr. Alex Russell talks about the issues behind parenting teens.

Wave of orange washes over riding

By **SCOTT BARBER**
The Observer

Monday's byelection in Toronto-Danforth held special significance for the NDP. The importance of the race in the riding was illustrated by an impressive gathering at Craig Scott's election night victory celebration — which included a who's who of the party.

Just days before the federal leadership convention, candidates Brian Topp, Thomas Mulcair, Paul Dewar, Peggy Nash and interim party leader

Nycole Turmel joined an enthusiastic crowd at the Opera House on Queen Street East near Broadview Avenue.

Nash described the value of the riding for the NDP.

"People very badly want to maintain this seat for the NDP," the MP said. "It's part of Jack Layton's legacy and we want to build on our success here."

Scott, a social justice advocate and law professor at York University's Osgoode Hall, won nearly 60 per cent of the vote, just shy of the mark set

by Layton in the 2011 federal election.

Liberal candidate Grant Gordon polled second with 29 per cent, followed by the Conservative and Green parties, which each received about five per cent.

In his victory speech, Scott evoked the memory of Layton, quoting the letter that the Toronto-Danforth MP and NDP party leader wrote to



■ **Craig Scott**

Canadians shortly before his death last August.

"Tonight Toronto-Danforth has spoken," he said. "As a good friend of ours would say, we've chosen love, we've chosen hope, we've chosen optimism."

Scott also looked ahead to the future of Canadian politics.

"This is just one step in the longer campaign to build a better Canada," he said. Referring to the leadership convention, which starts today, March 23, at the Metro

Toronto Convention Centre, he added: "The next step is... when we choose a new party leader who will keep moving this party and this country forward."

During the campaign, critics argued that Scott's lack of political experience could hinder his ability to fill the House of Commons seat of the charismatic Layton.

But Brian Topp challenged that assumption.

"Nobody was born an MP," he said. "This is what we need in the House of Commons —

fresh blood and new ideas."

MP Thomas Mulcair echoed Topp's sentiment.

"These things you either have naturally or you don't, and this guy's got them in spades," he said.

"Craig is such a superlative candidate and he's going to bring a lot to Ottawa."

MP Olivia Chow — Layton's widow — also voiced her support for Scott.

"Voters know Craig Scott will do a good job and that Jack will be proud of him," she said.

Liberals gain support, despite losing byelection

By **ALDIS BRENNAN**
The Observer

When New Democrat Craig Scott won a landslide victory in Toronto-Danforth's byelection on Monday, someone forgot to tell the Liberals.

In fact, the atmosphere bordered on jubilant inside Whistler's Grille at 995 Broadview Ave., where the Liberals held a festive party, despite the loss.

Sarah Thomson, no stranger herself to election night events — having run in both the 2010 mayoral election and the 2011 provincial election — was excited.

"We really had people think about what their vote was going to be, rather than just say 'Oh, I'm this colour or that colour,'" Thomson said. "I'm hopeful for tonight. I really think that there might be a change."

Gordon increased the Liberals' share of the Toronto-Danforth vote substantially compared to what they garnered in the 2011 federal election, when candidate Andrew Lang took 17.6 per cent of the votes. This time, under Gordon, the Liberal vote came in at 28.5 per cent.

So an attitude of a spirited first attempt, rather than failure, prevailed at Whistler's on Monday night. Interim Liberal Leader Bob Rae alluded to it as well.

"When Grant Gordon came forward and said that he would like to be a candidate in the byelection, it was a statement on his part about his feeling for the constituency, his feeling for the riding and a sense of what he would like to see in the future," Rae said.

For his part, Gordon speculated that the Liberals were handicapped by a short campaign. The party didn't even have a candidate until Feb. 9, a month after the New Democrats selected Scott to carry the orange banner in Toronto-Danforth.

"We were very late out of the gate, so that made it hard," Gordon said. "But I think we were gaining every single day, according to our research. We just needed more time."

Time was not the only elusive element in play during this byelection; another was the memory of Jack Layton.

"I guess there was a huge amount of nostalgia," Gordon



Rebecca Steckham // Observer

Interim Liberal Leader Bob Rae (left) watches as candidate Grant Gordon delivers his concession speech at Whistler's Grille after falling short in Monday's byelection.

said. "I thought it was dissipating and I thought people were really looking to the future and who was going to help them most in the riding. But evidently

I was wrong. It's pretty tough to run against a legacy like that."

But Gordon isn't discouraged. He called this campaign his apprenticeship, a test-run

for 2015. And, in typical Gordon fashion, he made the announcement couched in a hockey metaphor.

"It really is just like losing

a hockey game," Gordon said. "We're all going to be OK. We played great. We held our heads up high. But this is just the first game of the series."



Trisha Lanceta // Observer

Green party candidate Adriana Mugnatto-Hamu is all smiles at her post-election gathering as she is congratulated by one of her supporters.

Enthusiasts party with the Greens

By **TRISHA LANCETA**
The Observer

The count may not have gone their way, but the mood among those gathered at the T&M Sidewalk Café on Danforth Avenue Monday night was still one of celebration.

Party platters of fruits and vegetables waited at the bar. Glasses of sparkling wine disappeared quickly as conversations were drowned out by music and competing chatter.

Off to the side, Green party candidate Adriana Mugnatto-Hamu separated herself from the festivities to watch election coverage on television. Specifically, she wanted to see the winner in Toronto-Danforth's byelection, New Democrat Craig Scott, give his

victory speech.

"I am curious about what kind of parliamentarian he will be," Mugnatto-Hamu said. "Maybe his speech won't give it away, but we'll have to see over time."

Mugnatto-Hamu admitted that she was disappointed by her fourth-place finish on election night, especially since, she said, so many people told her they would vote for her if she had a chance to win.

That's not to say that the Greens didn't fight during the byelection campaign. According to Jim Harris, the former leader of the Green Party, \$25,000 was spent on the riding — the same amount spent by the entire party in 2001.

He also said that although election results across the coun-

try continue to show the Greens have between three and 10 per cent of the vote, their voter pool is closer to 35 per cent of all Canadians. These are people, he explained, who are either thinking of voting Green or have them as a second choice.

"For the Green Party to have gone from very small party that never ran in more than a third of the ridings to being on the agenda for a third of all Canadians is a substantial change," he said.

Harris added that one of the party's key strategies has been to run a candidate in every riding so citizens can know the Greens a little better.

Mugnatto-Hamu came out of Monday's byelection with 1,517 votes or 4.7 per cent. That's down from the 6.5 per

cent she garnered in last May's election, and it continues a slide from the Greens' peak in 2008, when they won 13.2 per cent of votes in Toronto-Danforth.

To current party leader Mike Schreiner, the obstacle lies in the electoral system. While canvassing, he said people were very receptive to the platform.

"I think one of the biggest challenges we face is that a lot of people who want to vote Green feel it is difficult for us to get elected. They're concerned about voting strategically," Schreiner said. "I tell people, 'Vote for your heart, vote for what you believe in. Otherwise, you're not going get the government that you want.'"

EDITORIALS

MP Craig Scott

Toronto-Danforth has a new MP, and you guessed it: he's a New Democrat. In his debut in electoral politics, Craig Scott won the byelection on Monday. As a former professor at the Osgoode Hall Law School of York University, Scott should have no problem with the workload.

Much has been made of the fact that Scott got almost 60 per cent of the vote — more than twice as many votes as his nearest rival — and that's very close to what Jack Layton got in Toronto-Danforth 11 months ago. But it should also be noted that voter turnout was a paltry 43 per cent this time, compared to 65 per cent last May.

So while it's certainly a mandate, it's unclear just how much of a mandate. In any case, the late Jack Layton's shoes are big ones to fill. And although Scott has said he is committed to both pursuing and protecting Layton's legacy, it will be interesting to see how he handles the spotlight and whether he can come out from the shadow of the charismatic MP he's succeeded.

If Scott makes a bold move, will people in Toronto-Danforth imagine Layton hovering over his shoulder? If he messes up, will they ask, 'WWJD?' (What Would Jack Do?) Certainly there will be a honeymoon period in this left-of-centre riding for the incoming member of Parliament, who even campaigned with Layton's widow at his side. But by the time the next election rolls around, it's going to be important for Scott to have made his own mark in the riding and in the House of Commons.

Scott ran a strong campaign, focusing on holding government accountable, protecting our environment and boosting social services. He put in the time and effort necessary to sweep the polls — and the predictions are that he'll be a strong voice in Parliament. But in order to accomplish all that he sets out to do, he will have to work hard to establish relationships in Toronto-Danforth and in Ottawa. This means becoming more than just Layton's successor.

As a viable start, it may be time for residents to let Layton go. Not to forget the man or his legacy — but to stand behind Scott as he makes his own difference.

~ Tatiana Herman

Pick your fights

Whether it's the Occupy campaign or the G20 summit protests, residents of East York and beyond have shown an undeniable passion for important issues that impact their community and the rest of the world. However, the latest movement to sweep the pop culture landscape might be taking things a step too far.

By now, everyone is conversant with the viral Kony 2012 campaign, which was made famous by Invisible Children in an effort to nab notorious Ugandan war criminal Joseph Kony. Their YouTube video, unveiled on March 5, was an effort to outline Kony's crimes against thousands of African children. Forget director Jason Russell's public meltdown last week; his video has still garnered close to 100 million YouTube views and motivated civilians worldwide to join efforts created towards finally bringing Kony to justice.

On April 20, East Yorkers and others from Toronto's east end plan to join the movement in a concrete way by holding a cover night to raise awareness regarding the Kony movement. Participants look to blanket this end of the city with hundreds, perhaps thousands of Kony 2012 posters, in keeping with Invisible Children's mantra to make him "famous" in order to make him an example of international justice.

Though this does seem a noteworthy and commendable cause, the measures by which supporters of Kony 2012 are bringing attention to this sadistic fugitive could set a dangerous precedent. In the tradition of 'there's no such thing as bad publicity,' plastering posters of Kony's face in an attempt to make him a household name could backfire. The worldwide attention suddenly focused on this man could actually help him strengthen his Lord's Resistance Army and continue his 25-year-long reign of terror — by encouraging and emboldening its ranks in their view of 'you and me against the world.' It might even prove to be a recruiting tool.

Recently, Ugandan human rights groups, such as Human Rights Watch, noted that Kony hasn't operated in their country for several years. Furthermore, Canadian author Mark Kersten notes, Invisible Children's 30-minute video never spoke of the fact that Uganda has been at peace for six years, or that there have been no major LRA attacks during that timespan.

With unemployment and rising transportation costs becoming fast-rising issues in the GTA, fighting for a cause without being fully educated on its source probably should be lower on the agenda. While G20 and the Occupy protests addressed economic and political issues that alter the shape of Canadian society, Kony 2012 events such as these may truly amount to nothing — given this campaign's somewhat misguided aura.

~ Jodee Brown

COLUMNS

Believe in privacy, not porn

Terror and disbelief fill my body whenever I hear Public Safety Minister Vic Toews speak. He says those trepidations are signs that I'm a child molester. I think the phrase he's looking for is "citizen concerned about privacy issues," but then again, isn't that exactly what a child molester would say?

Toews' bill, C-30, better known as the Protecting Children from Internet Predators Act, would allow the government to collect all forms of private information about the Internet identities and online habits of innocent Canadians; I use the term "innocent" to emphasize the forgotten concept of due process.

What was originally called the Lawful Access Act, a name that failed to incite sufficient hysteria, C-30 would require Internet providers to collect and retain personal information about their users, such as emails, IP addresses and essentially our surfing habits.

With the online world quickly becoming the exclusive platform for letter-writing, phone calls, banking, entertainment and research, are you comfortable with your cyber identity becoming public record?

In today's digital age, it's no

different than presenting identification and a copy of your letter to the police before going to the mailbox and having the recipient followed by authorities until convinced that they are not a pederast.

Recently, hackers managed to tap the phone system of the FBI and record phone conversations between bureau agents and Scotland Yard.

How then can we expect a Canadian police agency to protect what would be a gold mine of information from hackers worldwide?

"We are proposing measures to bring our laws into the 21st century and to provide the police with the lawful tools that they need," Toews says.

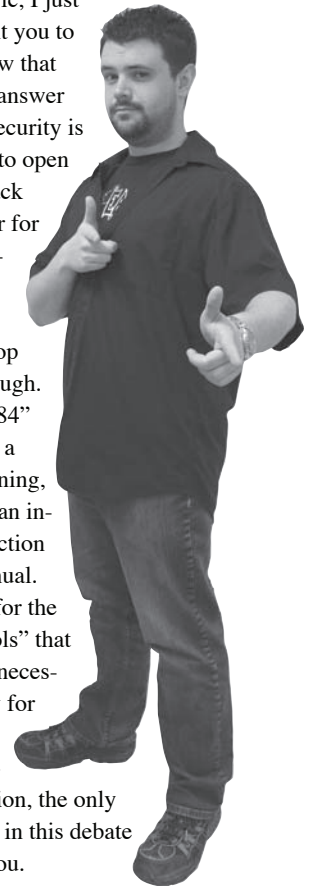
The "tools" he speaks of is full removal of freedom to privacy. With no oversight committee, police would be able to sift through all of your personal online data without the pesky inconvenience of getting a warrant.

Before you start to question the "wisdom" of our government, consider Toews' statement in open debate: "Either stand with us or with the child pornographers."

Perhaps Toews is out of touch

with the realities of the digital world, imagining a chaotic ethereal netherworld that must be controlled lest it doom us all.

Vic, I just want you to know that the answer to security is not to open a back door for anyone to snoop through. "1984" was a warning, not an instruction manual. As for the "tools" that are necessary for our protection, the only tool in this debate is you.



Kristopher Morrison

YouTube pays the bills

When YouTube first rolled around, no one really thought it could make money. And that included Shay Carl Butler — until he began uploading videos. Just a regular 29 year-old guy, he uploaded a video saying he always thought he would be successful by the age of 30.

"I'm turning 29 on Thursday, which gives me one year to become 'successful,'" he said. Then he posted a video to YouTube every day of the next year. Little did he know he would exceed his own expectations.

Shay Carl (known as Shay for short) already had some followers on his personal YouTube channel, "Shaycarl," so when he decided to do the daily video blogs (vlogs), he knew people would be watching. He created a new YouTube channel called "Shaytards." That name came from his early YouTube days when he uploaded a video of himself playing with his kids and dancing around in his wife's maternity unitard.

He combined that with his first name, and it just stuck. Now, each of the family members has a "tard" name: Mommytard (also known as Katilette and Colette), Sontard,

Princessard, Babytard, Rocktard and of course Shay Carl (also known as Daddytard).

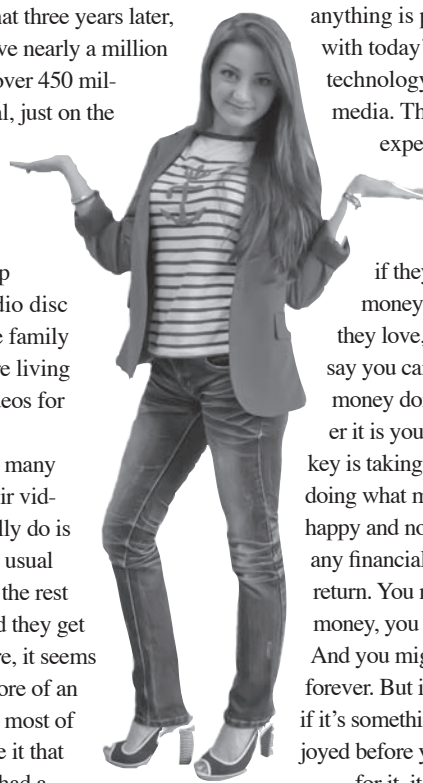
At first, he was mostly vlogging himself talking, but later he began to film more of his family. With four adorable kids and a hot wife, it's no surprise that three years later, the Shaytards have nearly a million subscribers and over 450 million views in total, just on the "Shaytards" channel alone.

Shay once worked as a bus driver, countertop intaller, and radio disc jockey. Now, the family makes their entire living from making videos for YouTube.

So, why do so many people watch their videos? All they really do is live their lives as usual and share it with the rest of the world. And they get paid for that! Sure, it seems like they have more of an exciting life than most of us, but they make it that way. Once, they had a "turkey bowling tournament" in the aisles

of Wal-Mart, using juice bottles as pins and frozen turkeys as the ball. But really, would they be doing that if they weren't trying to get views?

One of the things I learned from watching their videos is that life is what you make it and anything is possible with today's advanced technology and media. They didn't expect to make money this way. But if they can make money doing what they love, who's to say you can't make money doing whatever it is you love? The key is taking that risk, doing what makes you happy and not expecting any financial success in return. You might make money, you might not. And you might not do it forever. But in the end, if it's something you enjoyed before you got paid for it, it'll never be something you regret.



Elita Tsilo

Curling a 'second job' for brothers

By **JYUON ELLIE KIM**
The Observer

The East York Curling Club's mixed team of men and women is aiming high.

The team earned a ticket to the regional round of the 2012 Ontario Curling Association Mixed tournament, happening tomorrow and Sunday, March 24 and 25, after they won a consolation match in their Zone 7 on Feb. 5.

True, this latest success doesn't necessarily compare to some of the larger triumphs in the 52-year life of the club — like when it hosted the World Junior Curling Championship in 1974.

But members say the mixed team's recent success has once again focused attention on the club, its headquarters at 901 Cosburn Ave., and two of the team's members: Michael and Matthew Shepherd.

Their parents established the brothers' close ties with curling and East York. The avid curling couple began their marriage in East York, and together enjoyed the club's social atmosphere. They later moved to Newmarket, where the brothers grew up and began their junior curl-

ing career, returning often to East York for competition.

The older son, Michael Shepherd, started curling at the age of eight, and after a pause during high school, resumed his competitive curling career as a skip in East York. He now curls three nights a week and weekends, visiting clubs throughout southern Ontario.

"It is definitely a big part of my life. I almost see it as my second job, as I have to put much time into it," he said. "I do have goals I want to achieve as a curler: to make it to the men's provincial championships."

Curling also helps him take a break from regular life.

"Curling is a good, social game, although it sometimes can get stressful when preparing for competitive games. You feel good, especially as you socialize with whom you've played with after the games," he added. "Not a rule, but it's expected that the winning team buys the losing team a round of drinks. Next round, the losing one does it back."

The people he's met through games are not curling's only benefit. He also enjoyed the time he spent curling with his family. Although it was quite a distance from their



Jiyoon Ellie Kim // Observer

The East York Curling Club's 'Team Shepherd' is off to the regional round of the 2012 OCA mixed tournament this weekend. The club is open for recreational play to all East Yorkers.

home, good times with his parents inspired him to return to East York and develop his curling career.

Three years of playing with his brother and teammate, Matthew Shepherd, have been a joy for him.

"Because there's a seven-year

gap between us, we didn't get along when we were little. But we do a lot better now," he said. "On the ice we have this comfort level, with my brother and close friends Heather and Laurie in my team. We've played together for years so that

we listen well and take each others' opinions."

Shepherd added that he's confident his team has a chance to go to the Canadian championships this time, since they nearly made the provincial championships two years ago.



Teona Baetu // Observer

Marcus Westbury, founder of Renew Newcastle, met East York-area residents to discuss a facelift for local vacant stores.

Reinventing the Danforth

By **TEONA BAETU**
The Observer

Some people interested in the southeast corner of East York are hoping to revitalize the eastern stretch of the Danforth and the area around Gerrard Street and Coxwell Avenue.

"We need to encourage people to rent their space because that's what creates a vibrant community," said Mary Fragedakis, the councillor for Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth. "It doesn't help anybody on a commercial street like Danforth if there are pockets of empty buildings."

So earlier this month, local residents and their city councillors got together to listen to Marcus Westbury, who said he has a solution.

Westbury is the founder

of Renew Newcastle, a successful non-profit organization that mediates between landlords of vacant buildings and local residents who could fill them with a business venture.

Westbury flew in from Australia to deliver a presentation on how he transformed the downtown core of Newcastle, a town an hour north of Sydney, from empty and abandoned to vibrant. He discussed how areas of Toronto can be uplifted too.

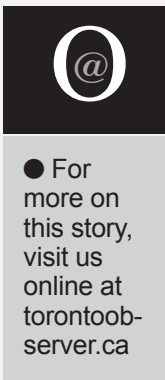
"Sometimes your

problems are your opportunities," he said. "No one ever walked down the main streets of Newcastle before, marvelling at the glorious amount of empty space that's there and what a great opportunity it was."

In Newcastle, Westbury got landowners of vacant stores to lease out their space to local artists for free.

Westbury said the landlords can reclaim their place at any time if they have someone willing to rent the space. But in the meantime, the spaces are cleaned up, maintained and used — rather than sitting empty and abandoned.

"It's a very exciting project that they've done," Fragedakis said, "and it's something that we're definitely very interested in replicating here."



Thorncliffe residents welcome renewal plan

Program aims to improve apartment buildings, inside and out

By **SARAH DAYAL**
The Observer

The City of Toronto's Tower Renewal Program continues its joint effort alongside the United Way to try to revitalize one of the highest-density residential neighbourhoods in the East York area: the Thorncliffe Park apartment buildings.

A forum was held last month at the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office Youth Centre, with a representative from the Greater Toronto Apartments Rental Association in attendance.

Former mayor David Miller launched the Toronto Tower Renewal program in 2008. After researching potential pilot sites where decades-old concrete towers are showing their age and inefficiency, the program set out to combine green technology with neighbourhood revitalization projects — all to improve the buildings and the areas surrounding them.

The program has successfully worked at 175 Shaughnessy Blvd., an 18-floor building near Leslie Street and Sheppard Avenue East, as well as other concrete buildings around the city.

The Thorncliffe Park initiative is a new one, and the February meeting was held to inform residents about it, and

canvass their input for it.

Ten-year Thorncliffe Park resident Dave Sutherland says the lack of open recreational space is a major concern for him because of his three children.

"I chose Thorncliffe Park in 2003 because there were a lot of kids in the area," he said. "I thought my kids would have a great time growing up and interacting with other kids from around the world, but then realized that despite the majority being children, the building wasn't made for them."

Sutherland said Thorncliffe Park green spaces are used against tenants' wishes, making them less kid-friendly.

"The green spaces are decorative with bushels and flowers that you're not supposed to step on," he said, "and children go crazy stepping on them — which ruins the building's vision of the green space and also takes away what the kids can have too because of the restrictions."

There is a courtyard between 35, 43 and 47 Thorncliffe Park where hundreds of residents gather during summer months, but signs prohibiting many recreational activities

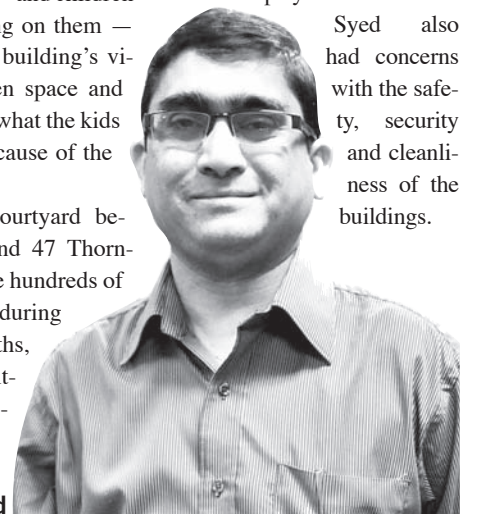
have led to improper use of the space.

"When it is warm, people have picnics, play soccer and ride their bikes — but there are also signs that say no ball-playing, picnics or bike-riding," Sutherland said. "The building is not structuring the places accordingly, so people are structuring it in non-ideal places."

Another tenant who has lived at 43, 49 and 85 Thorncliffe Park, Yousuf Syed, agreed that buildings should focus more on children.

"The kids have the right to play during the winter months, but they can't play inside building hallways," he said. "Every building should have a recreational facility like a small swimming pool or an indoor play area."

Syed also had concerns with the safety, security and cleanliness of the buildings.



Yousuf Syed

Hollywood blooms in Leaside

By **DYLAN C. ROBERTSON**
The Observer

A bit of Hollywood glamour gripped the streets of Leaside recently. A scene in this year's Valentine's Day hit *The Vow* was filmed at Savory Thymes, a florist and specialty store on Bayview Avenue just north of Millwood Road.

The film follows the story of a man



(played by Channing Tatum) who has to win back the love of his wife (played by Rachel McAdams) after a car accident and subsequent coma erases all memory of their life together.

It's based on the true story of a New Mexico couple who had a similar thing happen in 1993.

Although the movie is set in Chicago, the Toronto Film and Television Office says multiple parts were filmed across Toronto, including at the AGO and Liberty Village.

A pivotal scene in the plot takes place at the Leaside florist, when an encounter with an old friend triggers traumatic memories for McAdams' character.

"It's neat to be in a movie," said Savory Thymes employee Annie Liu, "though you can't really tell they filmed here."

The store closed for a day last fall to facilitate filming.



Leigh Cavanaugh // Observer

Savory Thymes on Bayview Avenue features a variety of goods — and has doubled as a movie set. A scene filmed in the shop last fall is one of the more vital moments in the current Hollywood release, *The Vow*.



Leigh Cavanaugh // Observer

Annie Liu, one of Savory Thymes' employees, stands surrounded by fruits, vegetables and flowers in the room where a pivotal scene for the movie *The Vow* was filmed.

Community 'catalyst' wins Macphail award

By **NIKKI PULSONE**
The Observer

The community's highest award for volunteerism will be presented at the East York Civic Centre tomorrow night, March 24.

And the winner is... Alice Carriman.

Carriman will collect the 20th annual Agnes Macphail Award for spearheading a variety of public initiatives in East York.

She's a native of the Caribbean island nation of Carriacou. Carriman now lives in Thorncliffe Park and is a trained nurse.

In a news release, her nominator, Amy Sutherland said Carriman "has catalyzed programs that have become permanent institutions throughout East York."

Carriman helped create the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office, an after-school program used by

Moorelands Community Service and the East York Spelling Bee by Mogueard Residential. She is also an avid gardener and wants to further gardening projects in her neighbourhood.



■ **Alice Carriman**

Another upcoming project for Carriman is repairing stairs linking Thorncliffe Park, Flemingdon Park and the Don Valley.

Donations in honour of Carriman's chosen charity can be sent to the East York Foundation, 50 Merritt Road, East York, M4B 3K6. A receipt will be issued for income tax purposes.

The award ceremony starts at 7 p.m. tomorrow, March 24, at the civic centre, 850 Coxwell Ave.

Sierra Club aims to restore health to the environment

Organization uses advocacy, action to spread the word

By **VALENTINA KRGOVIC**
The Observer

One of the world's oldest and largest environmental protection organizations maintains its provincial headquarters right here in East York, at the Evergreen Brick Works campus on Bayview Avenue.

The Sierra Club is a grassroots environmental protection organization, with most of its work accomplished by member-volunteers.

Their objective is to protect and restore the health of the natural environment by empowering the public through education, advocacy and action.

John Muir, who lived from 1838 until 1914, was a fa-

mous naturalist and conservationist, and founded the Sierra Club in California in 1892 to protect communities, wild places and the planet.

It is considered one of the most influential environmental organizations in North America.

Sierra Club Canada is the national body that works on national and international environmental issues. Its headquarters is in Ottawa. The provincial chapters focus on regional issues that are of a high priority.

The work of Sierra Club Ontario, based at Evergreen, mainly focuses on the Great Lakes ecosystem, the Greenbelt and green energy.

Dan McDermott, director of Sierra Club Ontario, said they are working to protect the natural areas of southern Ontario by adding more land to the protected Greenbelt area the province has established around the Golden

Horseshoe and northward to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula. "This is of critical importance," he said.

"There are so few natural areas left in southern Ontario."

McDermott explained that the Sierra Club has an ongoing dialogue with the Ontario government and is encouraged by some of Queen's Park's environmental protection initiatives.

"It's good to be working with a government that actually cares about these issues," he said.

McDermott added that the Ontario government is on the right track when it comes to its commitment to protect the Great Lakes.

"The Great Lakes Protec-

tion Act that they introduced during the last election was a good decision," he said.

"It's good to see the government focusing on the largest freshwater system in the world."

But McDermott's praise for the McGuinty Liberals' environmental initiatives is not unqualified.

For instance, he is critical of the government's electricity subsidy program.

"If people don't pay full price for the electricity they use, they will use more," he said

"This program does not promote conservation."

McDermott added that he feels the province should follow up with a broader conservation initiative.



● For more East York stories, please visit us online at torontoobserver.ca