



Observer, Brittany Prince

EAST YORKERS PAY RESPECTS: On Monday, people gathered with Canadian flags in hand on the Spanbridge Road overpass overlooking the Don Valley Parkway in Flemingdon Park — to show respect for four soldiers killed in Afghanistan on March 20. The motorcade travelled from CFB Trenton along the Highway of Heroes to the Toronto coroner's office. **More photos, page 2.**

Crown seeks adult sentence

By MEGHAN HOUSLEY

A judge has ordered the teen convicted of the murder of Stefanie Rengel to undergo psychiatric assessment.

The 17-year-old, identified only as M.T. under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, is waiting while Superior Court Justice Ian Nordheimer decides if she is to be sentenced as a youth or as an adult.

A jury found her guilty last Friday of murder in the first degree for her part in the death of 14-year-old Stefanie Rengel of East York.

At a pre-sentencing hearing on Tuesday morning, the Crown and defence counsel offered different choices as to who would be best-suited to perform a mental health evaluation of the convicted killer.

Nordheimer said the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) is the appropriate organization to do the assessment.

Crown attorney Robin Flumerfelt suggested Dr. Phil Klassen of CAMH for the assessment, while M.T.'s attorney, Marshall Sack, would prefer to look at other options.

But Flumerfelt said he

was opposed to "psychiatrist shopping."

"I feel others are better-suited," Sack responded. "It's not a question of shopping for psychiatrists."

Nordheimer stated that he would like both sides to agree on a mental health professional, but in the end, he agreed to let the defence find its own psychiatrist in addition to Klassen.

The Crown is seeking an adult sentence for M.T. despite her being only 15 at the time of Stefanie's murder. An adult sentence would lift the publication ban on her name and give her life in prison, with eligibility for parole after five to seven years.

Flumerfelt made a statement outside the courthouse last Friday on behalf of Stefanie's family after the guilty verdict was announced.

"We hope that at sentencing there is some justice for Stefanie," he said, "and (we hope there is a) clear message sent that murder at any age has serious consequences."

Sack is asking for his client to be sentenced as a youth, in which case she would receive 10 years, with a maximum of six years in



Observer, Meghan Housley

JUSTICE FOR STEFANIE: Patricia Hung, Stefanie Rengel's mother, leaves the courthouse with her husband, James Hung, on March 20, after the verdict was read.

custody and another four to be served in the community.

M.T. did not stab Stefanie. But as her initial interrogator, Sgt. Steve Ryan, said, without M.T. there would have been no crime. She never met the victim, but perceived Stefanie as a rival for the affections of her boyfriend. So, in reams of Internet text messages introduced as evidence, she pestered her boyfriend to kill Stefanie and threatened to

withhold sex if he didn't.

The boyfriend, who can only be identified as D.B., goes on trial this fall.

Stefanie died of six stab wounds on New Year's Day, 2008. She was mere steps from her home, near the corner of Denvale Road and Northdale Boulevard.

Counsel is aiming for an April 21 sentencing hearing to decide M.T.'s fate.

East York turns out the lights

By MIKE CRISOLAGO

A gentle warning to all East Yorkers: don't say that you have nothing to do on Saturday night. Stretch, pray, meditate, explore the sky, burn some beeswax and join a march on city hall. Or, just sit in the dark.

Tomorrow (March 28), one billion people around the world will celebrate Earth Hour. The event, organized by the World Wildlife Fund, challenges people to turn off all of their lights for one hour, between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m., in a show of solidarity in the fight against global warming and climate change.

And some East Yorkers are rallying the community to get behind the cause.

"I think that everybody should try and do their part," said Joanne Lowe, owner of The Big Stretch Yoga Centre on Bayview Avenue.

"Even if it gets people to start thinking (about conserving energy), they might start to use less power instead of taking it for granted."

Lowe's centre offers yoga by candlelight during Earth Hour, while raising money for the World Wildlife Fund.

"I think people enjoyed doing something for the environment and for our planet and generating awareness," Lowe said of the previous year's event.

Jeffrey Caulfield agrees. Last year the 53-year-old organized an Earth Hour block party in the driveway of his home near Main and Danforth. This year, he plans to take it one step further by leading a march of East Yorkers to celebrate at City Hall.

"Maybe if you can feel the wave of something bigger than yourself, you can't help getting caught up in it," Caulfield said, "not just sitting in your own home by yourself going, 'It's so

See EAST YORK, page 8

Macphail winner gives back to her community

By FARRAH COLE

Tireless, fearless and relentless are just some of the adjectives used to describe the recipient of the 16th annual Agnes Macphail Award: community advocate Patricia Moore.

Moore was honoured at the East York Civic Centre on Tuesday night. The Macphail award is East York's top civic award — presented each year to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to community life.

The award is named after East Yorker Agnes Macphail, the first woman in the House of Commons when she was elected in 1921. She also represented

the riding then known as York East in the Ontario legislature in 1943. Macphail had a long career as an activist, particularly in the area of human rights. She died in 1954.

Satinder Sahota nominated Moore for the award after meeting her working on a political campaign three years ago — and said she couldn't think of anyone more deserving of the honour.

"All I've seen her do is give back to the community, whether it's housing, youth issues, ...corrections or political activity. I just constantly see her giving back to the community," Sahota said.

"I admire the dedication and the effort she puts in, and I really respect what she's been able to achieve."

Sahota said Moore's daily achievements include educating tenants about their rights, starting co-ops in buildings in the community and establishing tenant associations, including one within Moore's own building at 38 Thorncliffe Park Dr.

Fellow resident Elaine Feldman can attest to the relentless nature of Moore's advocacy.

"She's helped everybody in the community. If there's a problem in your building, call for Pat
See AWARD, page 8



Observer, Farrah Cole

PASSING THE TORCH: Last year's Agnes Macphail Award recipient, Geoff Kettel, presents 2009 winner Patricia Moore with her medal.

Police beat

Lost purse contains meds

A public alert has been issued following the loss of a purse containing prescription drugs at Danforth and Victoria Park avenues on Sunday, March 22.

Police said the medication included Clarazepam and 20 syringes of Fragmin blood thinners. They could be harmful if touched or ingested. If found, contact police or Crime Stoppers at 416-222-TIPS.

Three charged in shooting

Three men have been charged following a shooting in the Don Mills Road and Eglinton Avenue area that left one man in hospital with a bullet wound to the stomach. The victim was taken to hospital with serious, but non-life-threatening injuries.

Police say several men entered an apartment on St. Dennis Drive on Tuesday, March 17 at 10:30 p.m. and shot the victim in a robbery attempt. They fled the scene but arrests were made a short time later. Police recovered a loaded handgun at the time of the arrests.

Kush Walker-King, 20, Christopher Abbott, 33, and Lanri Watson, 25, all of Toronto, have been charged with attempted murder, robbery and possession of a dangerous weapon, among 32 charges in all.

Break and enter in Leaside

A burglary was reported at a home on Leaside Park Drive on Saturday, March 14. A door to the home was forced open between 6 and 9 p.m. Police say cash, jewelry, a cellphone and keys were stolen, among other items.

—VICTORIA WELLS

What's on

Better business workshops

The Woodgreen East York Employment Resource Centre is hosting a series of free workshops. The first, which runs on Monday, March 30, from 9:30 a.m. until noon, will teach participants how to create their own business cards and will send them home with 20 free printed cards. A basic understanding of MS Word 2007 is a prerequisite.

A second workshop, Transitions to Employment, will also be held on Monday from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. A group session, it will help job-seekers tap into services to help with the transition to work.

The third workshop, on starting a small business, is aimed at anyone who has ever thought about becoming an entrepreneur. It will be held on Tuesday, 1:30 to 4 p.m. To sign up for a workshop, visit Woodgreen at 1450 O'Connor Dr., Unit 4 (at Victoria Park), or call 416-615-1515, ext. 0.

Explore East York's history

How does East York history fit into Toronto's 175th-year celebrations? Find out by attending a talk by Richard Finnes-Clinton of Muddy York Tours on Tuesday, March 31.

Presented by the East York Historical Society, the event will feature a slide show illustrating what Toronto was like before incorporation in 1834 — and highlights of the years since. Refreshments will be served at 7 p.m. and the presentation will follow at 7:30 p.m.

The free talk will be held at the S. Walter Stewart library, 170 Memorial Park Ave. (at Durant). For more information, call Margaret McRae at 416-429-7821 or go to www.eastyork.org.eyhs.html.

College art on display

Students in the fine arts studio program at Centennial College's East York campus are showcasing their work at two exhibits. The show XIV presents the work of 14 first-year students and is running now until April 18 at Wallace Studios, 258 Wallace Ave. (Lansdowne and Bloor).

The exhibition is open to everyone Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. — and weekends by appointment. The second show, Sui Generis, will display the work of graduating students and run from Tuesday, March 31, until April 4 at Hang Man Gallery, 756 Queen St. E. (at Broadview). The gallery is open Tuesday through Sunday from noon until 5 p.m.

For more information, contact David McClyment at 416-289-5000, ext. 8500, or dmcclyment@centennialcollege.ca.

Plants in a whole new light

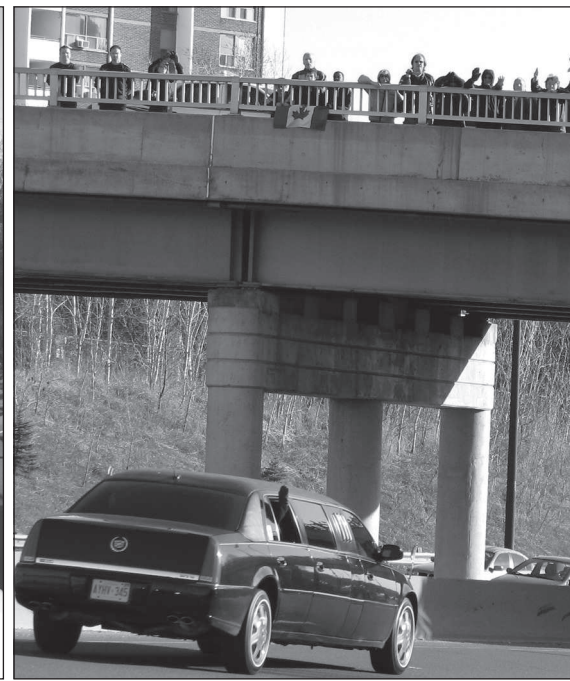
Learn how lights can change the night-time look of plants and increase your enjoyment of your garden at the April 9 meeting of the Leaside Garden Society.

Bob Tubby from Moonstruck Lighting will present his expertise on the increasingly popular topic of "Lighting Design In Your Garden." Gardeners of all skill levels are welcome to attend and refreshments will be served after the meeting.

It will be held at the Leaside library branch, 165 McCrae Dr. (at Millwood), from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Meetings are free to first-time visitors; afterward, membership is \$25 each or \$30 per family. For more information, call Nora Mular-Richards at 416-421-4184.

—MERI PERRA

Honouring fallen heroes



Observer, Brittany Prince

FALLEN, NOT FORGOTTEN: East Yorkers turned out on Monday afternoon to show their respect for Canada's latest casualties in the Afghanistan war. Four hearses, accompanied by limousines for families and a police escort, made the now-familiar trek over the East York stretch of the Don Valley Parkway on their way from CFB Trenton to the downtown Toronto coroner's office. The soldiers killed last Friday were: Master Corporal Scott Francis Vernelli, Corporal Tyler Crooks, Trooper Corey Joseph Hayes and Trooper Jack Bouthillier. That brings the total so far to 116.

Students' old-school debate celebrates city's 175th year

By **MARIEL GOMEZ**

There was name-calling, fist-pounding and even some wig-throwing. Add that to an enthusiastic crowd and some well-versed arguments and you've got the makings of a good, old-fashioned council meeting.

But this was no regular debate.

As part of Toronto's 175th anniversary celebrations this month, students from grades 7 and 8 at Gordon A. Brown and Cosburn middle schools in East York took their seats at Toronto city hall council chambers as "councillors" and "aldermen."

Dressed for their roles in vests and top hats, they re-enacted the first Toronto city council meeting from 1834.

Playing the part of Toronto's first mayor, William Lyon Mackenzie, was actor Eric Peterson. Town crier John Webster introduced him. Webster believes participating in this type of event helps young people better understand the city's past.

"History and time was a matter of learning about things and places and people that have long since passed away," Webster said. "This makes it come alive."

And come alive it did. Shouting, laughter and the stomping of feet filled the gallery as students tackled issues like the mayor's salary, raising taxes and replacing city sidewalks.

Jeremy Wang, a 13-year-old student from Gordon A. Brown Middle School, played Reformer Thomas D. Morrison. He said he and his classmates worked hard in preparation for the event.

"(We) did a lot of research on finding out about our roles, finding information about what to say and all of that," Wang said.

Webster said he was impressed by the students' knowledge of Toronto's first politicians.

"They understood what was going on and they jumped right into it," he said. "But they were talking about our history, and

that's more important than just having a script and following it."

Although students rehearsed their lines, Wang said that some things — like the shouting match between him and a Tory from Cosburn Middle School — weren't planned.

"Actually, most of the stuff was very improvised," he said.

The people who packed the gallery watched the debate, along with some of Toronto's current councillors, such as Adam Vaughan, Joe Pantalone and East York's Janet Davis.

Taking part in the debate was an interesting experience for Wang, who said he's considering a future in politics.

"I think I might," he said.

Webster said the students were enthusiastic and did a fantastic job.

"You know, (people) say that there's an energy crisis and what's the world coming to," he said. "But they should have been here to see these young people."



Observer, Mariel Gomez

GETTING POLITICAL: The argument gets heated between a "Reformer" and a "Tory" at Toronto city hall council chambers. Students from Gordon A. Brown and Cosburn middle schools were there to re-enact the first Toronto city council meeting. The debate was one of many events celebrating the city's 175th birthday this month.



Photo by Alex Pylyshyn

GOLD STANDARD: Thorncliffe Park Public School vice-principal Arif Nathoo (far right) has two head coach awards under his belt, winning this year after leading the York Lions women's volleyball team to victory at the Ontario University Athletics championship.

East York teacher served second coaching award

By CONOR O'BRIEN

It's the end of the school day and the main office of Thorncliffe Park Public School is packed.

Vice-principal Arif Nathoo weaves his way through students and teachers, stopping briefly to wipe chocolate from a student's face.

Despite his hectic professional pace, Nathoo finds the time to coach the York Lions women's volleyball team.

In the 2008-2009 season, he led them to the Ontario University Athletics (OUA) gold medal at the Canadian Interuniversity Sport Championship. The team beat the McMaster Marauders 3-0.

The team's success has now prompted the OUA to name Nathoo the east division Head Coach of the Year.

Nathoo insists on sharing the accolade with his team.

"The award is nice, but it's the team award that matters most," he said. "Ask any coach and they would trade it in for a championship."

Team captain and York University student Angela Frawley applauds coach Nathoo's talent.

"A successful coaching career is based on many areas including recruiting, the development of talent and the analysis of opponents," she said. "These are the... expectations of the job of a coaching staff."

Frawley said she believes the right decision was made in choosing Nathoo as head coach, because he worked exceptionally hard to lead the Lions to victory.

"In my opinion, Arif has worked tirelessly to provide York University's women's volleyball program with these essential qualities, and the result of our 18-1 season speaks for itself."

Frawley also speaks out against the idea that it is unfair for someone to win the award more than once.

"In my competitive opinion, fairness is based on merit. If someone deserves an accolade, then by all means they should receive it," she said.

"If a coach does his or her job to the best of their ability and the result is a successful program, then he or she should most definitely be rewarded."

Nathoo won the same title in the 1999-2000 season, coaching the Ryerson Rams.

\$37 million means reduced wait times for cancer patients

By SEAN SILLERS

Toronto East General Hospital's fundraising drive, which began last September, has raised \$37 million in private funds toward its \$55-million goal.

Among the improvements completed are the expansion of the oncology wing, which will reduce waiting times for cancer treatment by doubling available spaces, according to Justin Van Dette, manager of corporate and community relations at the hospital.

Other improvements include enhanced cardiology services through the establishment of the Stonehouse Cardiac Diagnostic Centre. The implementation of a digital echocardiography system is also now complete.

A significant expansion of the emergency department is underway and is expected to be completed shortly. TEGH's emergency department is one of the busiest in the province, serving 66,000 people annually.

The hospital's new minimally invasive surgery program, which is also part of the overhaul, will provide "shorter waiting times for small surgeries," Van Dette said, adding that the new facility will "attract new, highly trained surgeons to East General."

A donor to the fundraiser, William Waters, has set up a matching grant challenge where he will match private donations made to the minimally invasive surgery program.

Van Dette said TEGH currently performs 4,300 surgical procedures and 5,000 day-patient surgeries annually.

Other improvements planned include the construction of a multi-storey building to accommodate 280 new medical and surgical beds in units designed to respond to stricter infection control practices.

The construction of a two-storey podium to consolidate ambulatory service at the hospital is also planned.

Farming workshop sows ideas for buying organic

By SABA TAYE

Organic food could become a worldwide core food supply, according to the executive director of the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada, who adds that with resilient farming practices, organic food can be as sustainable and reliable as biotech crops.

Director Susan Walsh explained how to farm organically and effectively during a Food Farming and Climate Chaos workshop held at Grassroots on Danforth Avenue.

Walsh said 40 per cent of the world still lives on farms and she believes communities can build vibrant, sustainable food

sources by buying their fruits and vegetables from these small-scale farmers.

One way of doing this, she said, involves using small-scale farmers and crop protection through integration, a method of farming where two or more different crops are planted adjacently to control pest problems such as insects and weeds.

"Marigolds help to deal with insects because they don't like the smell," Walsh said.

"It could be planted beside another crop to protect it from bugs. That kind of intercropping is a part of being able to sustainably manage things without using chemicals."

Ice hockey program scores with students

By JASON WONG

Students at George Webster Public School on Cedarcrest Boulevard are getting a lesson in one of Canada's most beloved traditions: hockey.

Many of the students come from immigrant families, and the school's principal decided a new sports program would be a good way to let her students have fun, learn new skills and raise their self-esteem.

Nicknamed "head coach" by his colleagues, special education teacher Jason James was an integral part of getting the program started.

He convinced his contacts at the Air Canada Centre to donate approximately 25 sets of children's hockey equipment, enough for two teams.

"Sometime before Christmas, Nancy (Steinhauer, the school principal) approached me about this project, so I, over the break, called the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey organization," James said. "We worked it out and got close to 25 sets of hockey equipment, 50 hockey sticks and about 60 hockey pucks."

Ross Rideout, the school's gym teacher, was quite surprised at the generosity involved, and also credits the community with making the program possible.

"When this was first mentioned to me, I said to myself, 'It's going to be really, really expensive.' So then, the Boy's and Girl's Breakfast Club stepped up and donated the ice time," he said.

For Rideout, the best part of the program involves watching the improvement in the children he coaches.

"The kids that we have out, none of them have played hockey before. Most of them are from immigrant families, and some of them couldn't even skate," Rideout said.

"The improvement has just been amazing. Some of them can now skate backwards."

Hassib, in Grade 4, got involved in the program immediately after a teacher announced it.

"My friend encouraged me to watch hockey, and I got really interested," he said. "Learning to play on ice was a lot of fun."



Observer, Laura Godfrey

THE NEXT GENERATION: Jared Freeman (left), an Art and Design Foundations student at Centennial College's East York campus, was one of the volunteers who welcomed interested applicants and family members to a campus open house on Sunday. Celia Gibb (right), who attended the event with parents Lynn and Bill Gibb, has applied for the advertising program.

East York MPPs fall short in election

By RAHUL GUPTA

Political conventions, like war, are marked by long stretches of inactivity punctuated by short bursts of excitement.

That was the case during the provincial NDP leadership convention March 6 to 8. Much of the weekend passed without fanfare, but when a victorious Andrea Horwath took the podium late Saturday evening after three ballots of voting, the Hamilton Convention Centre turned into a raucous sea of orange.

Horwath, 46, defeated East York's Peter Tabuns in the final round of voting to become the party's first female leader after Gilles Bisson, eliminated in the second ballot, pledged his delegates' support to her. Another East York contender, Michael Prue, was eliminated after the first ballot and opted to back Bisson.

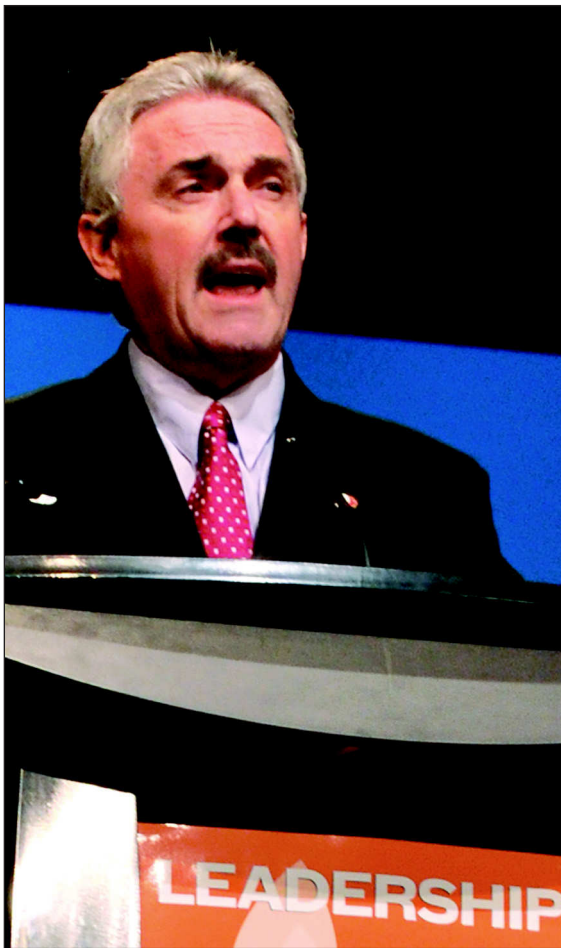
Earlier in the day, party delegates, union reps, advocacy groups and curious onlookers gathered in Hamilton to determine which contender would lead the NDP into the next provincial election.

With the vote scheduled to begin late in the afternoon, party delegates were faced with hours of waiting. To fill the downtime, they perused merchandise booths, smoked cigarettes in the rain or gathered in the cafeteria. With nothing to report, journalists sat together in the convention centre auditorium passing the time with jokes.

"I hope that our careers are going better, so when we meet again, it won't be for another NDP convention," one reporter said to a colleague.

Howard Hampton's farewell speech after nearly 13 years as party leader was one of the interesting moments in the hours leading up to the vote.

The MPP for Kenora-Rainy River thanked the party faithful for their support, and took one last shot at Ontario's Liberal



FIRST OUT... AND LAST: Beaches-East York MPP Michael Prue (left) was the first candidate to be eliminated from the running during the NDP leadership convention on March 7 in Hamilton. Peter Tabuns, MPP for Toronto-Danforth, survived the first... and second ballot. But Andrea Horwath of Hamilton Centre went on to win the third ballot, with over 60 per cent of the delegates' votes.

premier, Dalton McGuinty.

"What's McGuinty's economic vision for the future?" he asked. "Only the NDP will answer real questions about what's going to happen to the people of Ontario."

Prior to the vote, candidates could be seen walking the aisles of the convention floor receiving good wishes from their orange-clad supporters, signing autographs and posing for pictures.

Prue, the 60-year-old former mayor of the borough of East York — and now MPP for the provincial riding of Beaches-East York — smiled without pause; Tabuns, the MPP for

Toronto-Danforth, sat with his supporters at the rear of the convention; Timmins-James Bay MPP Bisson consulted with his campaign advisors; hometown hero Horwath radiated confidence.

After lunch, the main event finally kicked off.

Bisson, 52, reminded the audience of his fundraising prowess; Prue promised to attract new voters to the party; Tabuns warned of a dire manufacturing future for Ontario and stressed the necessity of cultivating green technologies; Horwath paid tribute to her father's union background.

"I went to university because

my dad had a well-playing job in the auto sector," Horwath said.

Each candidate's speech was accompanied by loud music and visceral shows of support from their delegates. But it was Horwath who stole the show. She crossed the convention floor accompanied by a conga line of drum-playing, whistle-toting devotees. The spectacle made Prue's thunder-stick-toting loyalists look quaint by comparison.

When the smoke dissipated, delegates at last lined up to vote. But they weren't the only ones choosing the leader. For the first time in the party's history, every member had one vote —

even people who weren't at the Hamilton Convention Centre. Votes came in from across Ontario by phone. Individual support counted for 75 per cent of the total vote, with union votes counting for 25 per cent.

Some 24 hours into the convention, the preliminary results were in and the first casualty was Prue.

Bisson made his exit in the second round and for the first time all day, there was real drama. Bisson could back either Horwath or Tabuns and he had enough delegates that his choice would decide the heir-apparent.

He didn't waste time making his decision.

As cameras clicked and screams of jubilation rang out, Bisson crossed the convention floor and embraced Horwath. The last to enter the race, Horwath became the last contender standing.

But there was one last vote for delegates, even if the results were already a foregone conclusion. For another 40 minutes, the presumptive leader passed the time doing television interviews and receiving congratulations.

Finally, party president Sandra Clifford walked on stage and made it official. In the final ballot, Horwath's 6,713 votes were more than the required 50 per cent vote total.

Horwath's win came one day after provincial Conservative Leader John Tory resigned his post following his failure to win a byelection for the Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock seat.

With the Tories in disarray, New Democrats are eyeing the benches of the opposition at Queen's Park — and hoping that Horwath will lead them there, kick-starting the NDP's government aspirations.

At any rate, the NDP's long wait for a leader is over. And there may be more exciting days to come if Horwath can boost her party's fortunes.

Student-produced magazine springs to the Danforth

By CIARAN THOMPSON

Inside the Myth Restaurant and Lounge on Danforth Avenue, students, teachers, family and friends have gathered together to welcome spring — and summer.

The weather outside isn't quite conducive, but the front cover of the new spring and summer issues of *On the Danforth* magazine reflect change and new beginnings.

"Spring was about how young people and old people work together in this neighbourhood in a really interesting way," publisher Stan Byrne said. "(Summer) has kind of like an entrepreneurial spirit of the Danforth — people coming to the Danforth, like artists and new businesses."

On the Danforth magazine is biannually produced by the book and magazine publishing students at Centennial College's East York campus.

The magazine, now in its sixth year, allows students from the program to create, design and sell their own magazine with little or no faculty involvement.

Denise Schon is the co-ordinator for the one-year post-graduate program.

"The faculty is barely involved at all," Schon said. "We try to keep students out of trouble and

we exercise some guidance to them in how the money flows."

Besides selling ad space, students begin the process of creating the magazine in October of each year.

"First of all, they come up with what they want the overarching theme of the magazine to be," Schon said. "Then they come up with stories within that theme, they write all the stories, they edit all the stories, they do all the design and they sell all the advertising."

The amount of time producing the magazine and the effort put forth by the students is something similar to what will be expected of them after graduation.

"It can demonstrate they have had experience," Schon said. "They just have to go out and show the magazine to a prospective employer and it's a very impressive calling card."

Applying for the various editorial and staff positions within the magazine helps give students a chance to see how a real magazine works.

Hesitant at first, Byrne chose to be the publisher for both issues.

"When I first got into the program, I thought I would take a small role in the magazine," Byrne said. "After...I realized that it was supposed to be about



UNVEILED AT LAST: Publisher Stan Byrne (centre) stands between editors-in-chief Nicole Chaplin (left) and Jason Rhyno at the 2009 launch celebration of *On the Danforth* magazine, held at Myth Restaurant and Lounge on March 18.

putting yourself forward and learning something and wasn't supposed to be about taking the easy route."

Fellow student Lindsay Benjamin felt the uneasiness that comes with writing for a different kind of audience.

"It was kind of overwhelming for me at first," Benjamin said. "Once I got past the intimidation factor I guess that was probably

it — just trying to write something that people would find interesting."

Benjamin, who wrote a story about the history of the Bloor Street Viaduct for the spring issue, enjoyed seeing her story in the magazine — and now on the street.

Now that the magazine has been released, the publisher said she is pleased with the suc-

cess of the project.

"I'm really happy with how it turned out," Byrne said. "We are only here for a year and we just get to do it once, so in some ways it kind of reinvents itself each year."

Copies of *On the Danforth* are distributed free to some households in the East York area and at the annual Taste of the Danforth food festival.

Observer, Ciarán Thompson



Observer, Lara Willis

CHERRY BLOSSOM DANCER: Ayaka Tazumi, 5, performs a traditional children's dance at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre on March 8. Tazumi and other members of the Sakura Kai performed as part of the Japanese Spring Festival, Haru Matsuri.

Recommendation by board may sink local school pools

By **BRAD PRITCHARD**

A study group is recommending the closure of one school swimming pool in East York and questioning the viability of another.

The group names pools at Earl Grey Sr. Public School on Strathcona Avenue and Danforth Collegiate and Technical Institute on Greenwood Avenue.

Headed by former Toronto mayor David Crombie, the Aquatic Working Group, was created by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) to find solutions to keep 39 pools across the board operational.

The group has put those 39 into three different categories: those that should be closed; ones that can be salvaged; and those that can be maintained.

Danforth Tech has landed in the first group — among those recommended for closure. The pool at Earl Grey is in the middle — potentially salvageable.

Cathy Dandy, TDSB trustee for Ward 15/Toronto-Danforth, says closing either pool would directly affect East Yorkers.

"These pools serve a lot of high school students," she said. "In the broader community, there are a lot of immigrant families who have never formally learned to swim. They (the pools) help establish basic water survival skills."

Torontonians upset about the prospect of losing these pools

have banded into a group called Let's Make Waves. The group has received hundreds of testimonials from members of the community who value the importance of the pools.

Amanda Ironside grew up in East York and taught synchronized swimming in the area.

She says swimming programs "cater to East York's health, swimming skills, and community."

"Where would people have to go to be a part of these programs?" Ironside asked.

"Shutting down the pools is not a solution to money issues and will hurt many aspects of many lives for future generations."

Dandy said the TDSB has to meet certain physical education standards and that "swimming helps the TDSB meet that mandate."

For a fee, parents can enrol their kids in swimming classes run by the city at other locations, but Ironside doesn't think this is an accessible option.

"Not every family has the ability to put their kids in swimming lessons and if the pools are closed many won't ever learn, which is tragic and dangerous," Ironside said.

The Aquatic Working Group is expected to announce more conclusive findings in April, but Dandy said she suspects they may take more time.

'Visual petition' launched to help stop sealers

By **LAURA GODFREY**

East Yorkers united on the weekend of March 14-15 hoping to put an end to the controversial Canadian seal hunt.

They converged on the headquarters of the Animal Alliance of Canada — on Broadview Avenue at East York's southeast corner — to participate in a "visual save the seals petition," designed to convince the European Parliament to approve a ban on the import of Canadian seal products. The resulting DVD, called 500 Canadians, is being sent by the AAC to European officials in advance of an April 2 vote on banning imported seal

products, including pelts, meat and oil — a vote that could seriously dent the sealing industry's market.

Filming for the DVD took place at the AAC office at 221 Broadview Ave. The organization invited anyone protesting the hunt to sit in front of a camera and make a statement appealing to the European Parliament. Supporters were also free to send in their own short videos online. Liz White, co-director of the AAC, said she thinks this video could push the vote over the edge in their favour.

"The idea of a visual petition is having real Canadians talk

directly to real parliamentarians, saying 'I'm a Canadian, I'm opposed to the seal hunt, and I want you to do everything in your power to stop it,'" White said.

Penny Parmenter of Richmond Hill visited the AAC office on March 15 to be one of the 500 Canadians. She said that the killing of the animals is inhumane and unnecessary.

"So many people cry out that these are necessary jobs for the seal killers.... That seems to be an outcry these days: 'You're taking away jobs!'" Parmenter said. "But for these creatures to be tortured in such a way is

unnecessary, and so the European politicians should listen to the Canadians and stop the seal hunt."

Meanwhile, Canadian politicians, including federal Fisheries Minister Gail Shea, have been meeting with members of the European Parliament to fight the proposed ban on imported seal products. The department of fisheries says the Atlantic Canadian seal hunt is a humane industry and information given by animal rights groups is often exaggerated.

Phil Jenkins, a spokesperson for the ministry, said a lot of anti-sealing information is "just

plain wrong."

Protestors of the seal hunt, including the AAC's White, have said the profit from the seal hunt is marginal and not worth the slaughter of animals. But according to Jenkins, sealing is a "well-managed, professional hunt" and a vital source of income for fishermen in coastal communities.

"It seems that the real measure of whether it's worth it is to ask a sealer," Jenkins said. "Because sealers are fisherman; they're independent businesspeople. If an activity's not worth doing, they're not going to do it."

Plant expert touts hard-to-find veggies for gardens

By **VICTORIA WELLS**

Gardeners in East York should grow unusual vegetables this year as a way to add colour and new flavours to their yards and salad plates.

That was the message of horticulturist Inge Poot at the March 19 meeting of the East York Garden Club, held at the Stan Wadlow Clubhouse.

Poot is a consultant with Richters, a well-known nursery in Goodwood, Ont. specializing in herbs and hard-to-find vegetables.

In her talk, she said gardeners should look beyond the usual varieties of beets, lettuce and spinach.

Among her recommendations were the Chioggia beet, which contains white and red rings when sliced open; Butterhead

lettuce, which is slow to go to seed in the summer heat; and amaranth, a vegetable that tastes like spinach, but contains more calcium and iron.

"The Green amaranth is very pretty with a burgundy colour and gets very tall," she said. "It makes a wonderful centerpiece in the raised vegetable garden. It's very attractive."

Poot recommends all vegetables be planted in raised beds and not sown directly at ground level.

"Make raised beds, and you'll find that when you don't have to stomp through the mud to do your weeding, you will do more weeding," she said, "and some vegetables need to be weeded or else they'll wither away. Some can't take any competition at all."

East York Garden Club president Veronica Callinan said she grows vegetables in her garden and finds the experience easy and rewarding. She recommends using containers for vegetables to prevent slug damage and for other benefits.

"I'm a lazy gardener," she said. "(In containers) the tomatoes shield the lettuce and keeps it from bolting in the heat."

Callinan said vegetable gardening is very popular among garden club members. It's a satisfying process because gardeners can eat what they grow.

And for Poot, that's why vegetable growing makes so much sense.

"Now is the time to grow vegetables with the down-turning economy," she said.



Observer, Victoria Wells

EXCITED FOR SPRING: Horticulturist Inge Poot says East York gardeners should not be afraid to grow unusual vegetables.

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Tabuns', Prue's losses: our gains

Earlier this month, it looked like East York could have had a lock on party leadership in both Ottawa and at Queen's Park. With four contenders campaigning for the leadership of Ontario's New Democrats, the fact that Michael Prue and Peter Tabuns, two East York MPPs, were in the running for the job raised the hopeful spectre that this community could take centre-stage in Canadian politics, considering that we already have the federal NDP leader, Toronto-Danforth MP Jack Layton.

Layton's success in influencing the Paul Martin Liberals' last federal budget and more recently, the prospect of a cabinet post for Layton in an anti-Conservative coalition government, made East Yorkers feel like they have a bigger voice through a party leader.

Sadly, this simply isn't the case. It shows a misunderstanding of the job of party leader — no matter the party or level of government.

A party leader must, out of political necessity, put the interests of his or her party as a whole at the forefront and try to stand for all Canadians of all regions of the country. A leader must consider the interests of the constituents of every riding. That is how parties grow support and eventually win elections.

Inevitably, the immediate interests of the constituents of the leader's riding can, and often do, become de-prioritized. But this is not necessarily the failing of the leader. In fact, a good test of one's leadership of a party may well be the extent to which he or she successfully prioritizes the party's interests over those of his or her constituents when these two things come into conflict.

So for those East Yorkers who rejoiced at the prospect of Peter Tabuns or Michael Prue helming the Ontario NDP, your enthusiasm and expectations may have been misplaced. And to those East Yorkers who were disappointed that their MPPs lost to Hamilton's Andrea Horwath, take comfort: with somebody else assuming the mantle of leadership, East York still has two MPPs who are dedicated primarily to serving their constituents.

—Geoff Small

A new medium's dirty little secret

Marshall McLuhan coined the phrase, "The medium is the message," four decades ago. Obscure, yes. And still debated.

Consider the trial of M.T., the teenaged girl now convicted of first-degree murder in the stabbing death of her perceived romantic rival, Stefanie Rengel of East York. (Yes, we still have to identify the young murderess and her alleged "hitboy" by initials.)

The court found that M.T. procured the murder of Stefanie almost solely via text messages.

M.T.'s defence counsel argued that the comments she wrote to her boyfriend, D.B., should not have been taken literally.

Well, no, they shouldn't have. They should have been taken virtually — but that is often even more persuasive than in person. Think about sexual predators luring children over the Internet to meet them... or people falling in love with each other simply through e-mail or messenger chats. The power of the virtual world can be stronger than the physical world.

There is certainly something to be said about the boost of courage people tend to get when chatting online, rather than in person. An awkward, lonely-looking man in a crowded bar sticks out like a sore thumb, while online he could be Mr. Smooth, his confidence increased in the privacy of his home.

Could this have been the case with M.T. and her drive to have Stefanie Rengel murdered? Would she have had the guts to demand Stefanie's death so bluntly and persistently if she had been face-to-face with D.B.?

We wonder. Clearly, this is a depraved individual. But we wonder if a 15-year-old girl would have found it so easy to launch something so utterly horrendous in person — if she would have had the nerve to tell her boyfriend face-to-face to kill another young girl. Fortunately, few people could bring themselves to utter those words under any circumstances. But does the virtual world make it easier for a wretched minority?

Does this mean that online chatting and a decline of face-to-face interaction is breeding generations with faux-confidence? Is their means of communication a go-ahead to be creepy — or worse? Does the phrase, "The medium is the message," translate into a dangerous disregard for basic decency among some communicating on the World Wide Web?

Evidently so.

—Kinga Jakab

Everything is bigger in Texas, except the hospital wait times

Once upon a time, Toronto declared a crisis in emergency departments, as people were lying on stretchers in hospital hallways waiting for beds and, in some cases, dying for them.

Five-year-old Kyle Martyn was one such victim. In the wake of his death in February 1998, the province of Ontario instituted new measures to prevent such a tragedy from happening again.

One of the significant changes was the introduction of the triage nurse — a registered nurse whose sole responsibility is to assess every patient within 15 minutes of their arrival.

For my family, news stories of Martyn — and several other victims of hospital wait times — are a reminder of my father's own brush with death. The same year Martyn died of a streptococcus infection in the waiting room at Mississauga's Credit Valley Hospital, my dad's appendix ruptured. He was rushed to his local emergency department and, within 45 minutes of his arrival, was wheeled into the operating room where surgeons removed the infected organ and saved his life.

"If I'd been in Canada, there's no question I'd be dead now," he mused. "I'd have been slumped over the emergency room. I'd have been front-page news."

The near-death experience

Lara

Willis



happened 3,000 miles away from his then-East York home, in a small Midwest-Texas town. He'd been there for less than a week when the illness first struck. As an older adult in his 60s, his symptoms differed from the usual signs of appendicitis — an ailment that generally occurs before people reach their 40s.

"I was sick for a day or two," my father recalled. "I thought I ate some bad pizza or something."

After spending a week recovering from surgery, he was released from the hospital. Travel insurance paid the hefty \$25,000 hospital bill.

Changes to prevent deaths from occurring in Ontario's hospital waiting rooms probably wouldn't have made a difference.

He experienced no classic symptoms of appendicitis and even the emergency room doctor initially thought it was a mild case of food poisoning. A diagnosis wasn't made until X-rays showed the infection in his abdomen.

Even if he'd seen a triage nurse, he still would have waited hours to see a doctor, and even longer for an X-ray.

Initiatives over the past decade have focused on the flow of patients through the hospital. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has previously increased funding to accommodate long-term care patients who spend needless time in acute care hospitals because there is nowhere else for them to go.

Telehealth Ontario provides medical advice over the phone and nurse practitioners have been given expanding roles in health care.

The most recent initiative is Health Care Connect — a referral service and directory of family health providers that strives to find a family doctor for more than half a million Ontarians who don't have one.

And there are local initiatives, like the fundraising to expand and improve facilities at Toronto East General Hospital — including its emergency room, which sees 66,000 people every year.

All of these strategies have the same goal in mind: to reduce hospital wait-times. While many are hopeful that these measures will improve health care in this province, we remain skeptical.

Mom-and-Pop type shops might make a comeback

When my laptop abruptly refused to function during a recent visit to my mother, I couldn't just take it to some guy in town. My warranty agreement with a brand-name dealer forced me to go through company channels.

A scared-sounding youngster at the company's call centre advised me to wait for couriers to deliver a shipping box.

I would then use it to mail my computer to some distant, unheard-of facility to languish for weeks.

I can deal with arm's-length, impersonal service if things at least get done. But for three weeks, I saw no trace of a shipping box.

During that time I dealt with zombie-like staffers who were apparently not gifted enough to correct my address, which they had screwed up since the day I first ordered my machine.

The box finally arrived and off went my laptop to some place in Newmarket. I pray the unit makes it back.

I cringe when business pundits go on about the virtues of so-called "economies of

Stephen

Humphrey



scale" in defence of buyouts, monopolies and other strains of corporate gigantism.

Capitalist thinker Adam Smith first proposed that bigger operations would spend less on each unit produced, allowing them to better serve consumers.

Since Smith's status is close to biblical in business circles, arguments using his vocabulary tend to win.

But while I'm sure the makers of my computer are pleased with the great deals they get on Chinese tungsten and silicon wafers, you won't catch me smiling at their automated answering service, which mainly proposes options to pay up-front, along with a choice of ways to spend the next 30-60 minutes on hold downtown. I can do simple repairs and upgrades myself, like installing a CD-ROM drive.

Anything harder I take to a guy named Thor, who runs a one-man shop out of his apartment. I tell him the problem, he tells me the solution.

In short, he provides the kind of in-person, hands-on service that mega-companies make you feel childish to expect.

Lately, I've wondered whether the much-discussed economic downturn will inspire a return of the corner repair shop and a decline in strange, dysfunctional service agreements and just-replace-it, disposable products.

As finances shrink, maybe people will seek professionals close at hand to repair things they can't afford to replace. Maybe folks who are short on work and good with tools will start repairing things on spec.

Maybe a renewed cottage industry of fixers will force big companies to rethink sluggish, indifferent service agreements.

Maybe, while politicians and analysts debate how to fix the economy, people can get actual stuff fixed for once.

We welcome your input

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COMMENT

The jump from paper to pixels still a challenge for newspapers

Try as hard as you might — make the most leak-proof containers, use the strongest pumps — you will not create a perfect vacuum. Something, anything, will rush in to fill the void. It's a result of fundamental physical laws and the structure of the universe.

When ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle said nature abhors a vacuum, he might just as well have been talking about the World Wide Web. It has a fundamental structure, too.

"The WWW world consists of documents and links," wrote web inventor Tim Berners-Lee in 1992. Documents are linked together into a web by hyperlinks. Links are the essence of the thing, the feature without which the web would not be a web.

Any activity — or policy or habit or standard or behaviour — which discourages linking is abhorrent in such a universe, just as vacuums are abhorrent in our physical universe. Any activity that has the effect of discouraging or reducing the number of links on the web is, by definition, anti-web. And it is my thesis that any business model built on hostility toward linking is bound to fail.

Yet newspaper companies and their owners, managers and website developers continue to espouse and implement strategies that cut against the grain of what the web is all about. And that's not good, because the future of journalism is at stake and with it, the traditional watchdog function of journalists.

As more and more readers abandon print newspapers in favour of news websites, newspaper companies are losing their traditional source of revenue, print advertising. If news organizations can't reach readers where the readers are, then it's hard to see how quality journalism will be funded.

I recently read three more examples of how newspaper companies fail to "get" the web. These anti-web modes of thought keep popping up and keep refusing to die.

First up: the tired old pay wall debate. Stanford University journalism professor Joel Brinkley suggested in a San Francisco Chronicle opinion piece that newspapers can save them-

Tim Burden



selves by ganging up on the rest of us with pay walls. Under his plan, you will have to pay subscription fees to read the news on any newspaper website.

If this reminds you of protection rackets run by thugs, it should. He wants publishers to go to the U.S. Justice Department and ask for "an antitrust exemption that would allow publishers to collaborate on a decision to begin charging for their websites."

This won't work. Not just because it's a knuckle-dragging, club-'em-on-the-head solution, nor because it's old and tired, nor even because there's em-

There may come a time when the web is all there is and we will try to adapt... and if we don't, well, hey, we had a great run.'

—Dan Jacobson
Publisher, triCityNews

pirical evidence it won't work. The reason is both simpler and deeper: pay walls, because they discourage linking, are bad business strategy for the web. Like a business based on a perpetual motion machine, it cannot work, even in principle.

These publishers would collude to create an information vacuum on the web. And the first little leak — such as an entrepreneur deciding to put advertising-supported news on the web for free — will blow that vacuum wide open. It will instantly destroy the consortium and its business plan.

All this would be self-evident to a company that "got" the web. But newspapers don't — and neither, apparently, do their academic elites represented here by Brinkley — because what works on the web is the complete opposite of what newspapers used to

do in the good old print monopoly days.

The next business strategy to rear its ugly head during my recent readings was the old "you can't link to me without my permission" argument, in which a news organization tries to control how others link to its stories. GateHouse Media, which runs several Boston-area local news sites, is suing the New York Times Co. because some local NYT-run sites have audaciously linked to stories on GateHouse sites. The latter objected, complaining NYT is making money on the back of GateHouse-controlled content.

That is an awful and laughably obtuse misinterpretation of what the web is about. It should be obvious by now: if you discourage linking — and suing someone for linking must certainly be seen as a discouragement — then you're creating a vacuum, which will leak, burst and be filled by someone else.

Look at the next example in our litany of backward strategies for the web. Dan Jacobson, the publisher and owner of the triCityNews in Monmouth County, N.J., claims that by keeping his newspaper off the web altogether, he is saving his business.

But Jacobson is leaving his business on the table for someone else to take. He says, "There may come a time when the web is all there is and we will try to adapt..." (But they will not adapt, because they will be steamrolled by web-savvy companies ready for when the web is all there is.) "...And if we don't, well, hey, we had a great run."

Which means: 'I am a short-term thinker in a privately held company and I obviously answer to no one. Ride with me as I guide my company through short-term profits; walk away with me after I've squeezed it dry.'

I wish for progress in online newspaper strategies in 2009. I hope that news websites will learn to venerate the humble link to quality, original journalism on competing sites; cultivate and encourage incoming links and play the web game as hard as they can, experimenting, tinkering and innovating to find the winning combination.



Observer, Luke Champion

HOMEcoming: Toronto Maple Leaf Jamal Mayers presents a jersey to Mrs. Owen, the secretary at Holy Name Catholic School.

Leaf scores big with fans at his former school

By LUKE CHAMPION

It was a trip down memory lane for one Toronto Maple Leaf.

Rightwinger Jamal Mayers returned to his former elementary school, Holy Name Catholic School at Carlaw and Danforth, on March 11. Along with teammate Mike Van Ryn, the two were in the neighbourhood on a mission of Maple Leaf goodwill through the Leafs@School program.

The initiative is an online educational tool that helps teach kids about everything from responsibility and nutrition to mathematics — and allows the schools an opportunity to win a visit from a Toronto Maple Leaf.

"I like coming back and seeing the kids," Mayers said. "It helps them believe that anything is possible."

Mayers attended Holy Name in Grades 1 and 2 before moving out of the area. This is the first opportunity he's had to come back to the school and reflect.

"It looks a lot smaller than I remember it. It's definitely different," he said. "It's changed, but not that much."

The event began with an entrance by Leafs mascot Carleton the Bear. His arrival prompted the gymnasium to erupt in a

high-pitched roar. The children, decked out in Maple Leaf attire, waved flags and held up banners dedicated to their favourite team.

Once the hysteria dissipated, Mayers and Van Ryn fielded questions. These ranged from queries about the players' favourite foods (Italian) to their favourite school subjects.

Van Ryn's favourite subject was art and he initially went to Michigan for an arts degree — while sharpening his hockey skills.

Mayers, who spent most of his career playing for St. Louis, returned to Toronto — the team he worshipped as a child — last season.

"Growing up, it was always a dream to play for the Leafs," he said. "(After) playing for St. Louis for 12 years, it was a shock to be traded, but coming home is really special."

Mayers presented the school with a signed jersey to commemorate his history with Holy Name, as well as his success as a player.

The Leafs@School program is available online at www.leafsatschool.ca and educators can participate for an opportunity to have a player come visit their school.

Thieves beware as fraud prevention month wraps up

By JASON WONG

March is Fraud Prevention Month. But even without a special month, some East York-area shopkeepers are already well aware of the impact that dishonesty can have on a business's balance sheet.

Debbie Lupo, an employee at Princess Perfect Furniture on Pape Avenue, knows first-hand about fraud. Even Fraud Prevention Month has brought its share of scammers.

"We had one woman who wrote a \$1,200 cheque to have a couch upholstered and the cheque

bounced," she said.

According to Lupo, the woman calls the store continually. Each time she offers a new excuse and a promise to pay up for materials and labour.

"After the cheque bounced, she came back, apologized, and bought a \$100 pair of throw pillows, but the cheque for that bounced too. If she ever does pay, we might forgive her," Lupo said.

But Audrey Landers, who works just up the street at Bill's Garden Centre, says her store is secure from con artists and at-

tributes this to the way her company does business.

"Customers pay through cash or credit card and we only buy from suppliers we know. All of our stock is bought from people we've done business with for years," she said.

At home, Landers has one simple method for avoiding scams.

"I have a good spam filter. That pretty much takes care of everything," she said.

Sgt. John White, a detective with the Toronto Fraud Squad, handles Internet fraud cases daily. He has a few tips for those

shopping online.

"If you don't know the seller, or the reputation of the seller, just don't buy anything from them," White said. "Many companies are verified by Visa, so if you get burned on a purchase, the credit card company will compensate you for your loss if you have been defrauded."

When purchasing something online, there are ways to reduce the risk to yourself and your bank account.

"Credit card companies are a little more secure than simply sending money through Western

Union. Also, you want to look at the price point; many scam artists try to attract attention by selling something ridiculously cheap," White said. "If it's too good to be true, don't buy it."

According to the detective, people continue to be duped by a few old schemes.

"The Nigerian lottery scam is still around. So is the 'secret shopper' ploy," he said. "Usually these are spread through mass e-mails and newspaper advertisements. I've seen everything from tractor-trailers to livestock to Corvettes being advertised."



Observer, Meri Perra

HELP'S IN THE BAG: Crystal Herdrie embarks on her third week of volunteer duty for the True Davidson Meals on Wheels shopping service. Herdrie, who has a two-year-old daughter of her own, is also the daughter of project co-ordinator Teresa Sanderson. The program co-ordinates home delivery of groceries to seniors and people with disabilities.

Keeping seniors independent

By MERI PERRA

Kay Bonner is a tall, slender woman with bright white hair and an even brighter smile. Living with increasing vision loss in her senior years, she is enthusiastic about East York and the services available to help her maintain her independence.

"East York is a very caring community," she said. "I think they do more here than in other places I've lived."

One of the services Bonner relies on is the True Davidson Meals on Wheels shopping service. In partnership with Valu-Mart, the program arranges for seniors and people with disabilities to have groceries delivered to their homes for a reduced cost of \$4.99.

The standard delivery charge at Valu-Mart is "anywhere from \$7.99 to \$15.99, depending on the size of the order," said Hasina Quader, executive director of True Davidson. "Not all seniors are well off. If their delivery charge is \$40 a month because they get delivery every

week, then some seniors are really out."

Teresa Sanderson, the service's newly hired project co-ordinator, said she is eager to see the program expand and acquire more clients.

"The shopping program is also good for those who can get out, but (have a hard time carrying) groceries," she said, "especially when you're limited to what you can get if you have to carry it home."

The service began in 2004, without any funding, after True Davidson recognized the need for a low-cost grocery delivery service in the community. The agency developed a partnership with Valu-Mart, sending volunteers there each week with orders from clients. The volunteers assemble and check out the groceries and Valu-Mart delivers them.

"We just started and the program got going," Quader said. "It was an additional task for us, but we thought if we can meet the needs of the seniors,

why not?"

The service now has funding in place for three years.

One of the funding contingencies is that the program be entirely volunteer-run by the end of the three-year period.

"(The co-ordinator's) goal is to expand and promote the program," Quader said. "On the second year of the program, we would like to open for two days."

Bonner said the grocery-delivery program is flexible. She uses the service to fill in what she needs between receiving Meals on Wheels from True Davidson and dinners provided at her seniors' building.

Without the services provided by True Davidson, Bonner said her life would be very different.

"I'd be really handicapped," she said. "I no longer have any family living in Toronto."

"I'm lucky I've got several young friends, but they've got their own lives. But anyway I want to be independent."

Group wants improvements for E.I.

By MATTHEW COHEN

The Good Jobs For All Coalition, in affiliation with the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, brought its series of town hall meetings to East York on Monday, to discuss fixing the Employment Insurance program, an equal pay for equal work initiative, and the protection of temporary workers under Bill 139.

The Workers' Rights in Troubled Times meeting was held at the Thorncliffe Neighborhood Office in East York. Parkdale-High Park MPP Cheri DiNovo was in attendance and said her office, along with the Workers Action Centre, is bringing forth an amendment asking for equal pay for equal work and a limit to temporary (work) assignment.

"If you're working part-time you should be getting the same hourly rate as someone working full-time... and if you're working for a year, you should be (employed) permanent automatically," said DiNovo.

Karen Dick, community organizer for the Workers Action Centre, concurred with DiNovo that Bill 139 — a package

of proposed changes to the Ontario Employment Standards Act regarding temporary employment agencies — is a step in the right direction, but stressed that in order for the bill to be fully effective it still needs further revision.

She explained how Bill 139 fails to properly address the issue of termination and severance pay for workers employed through agencies. Currently, there's a 17-week waiting period for severance pay for full-time workers who lose their jobs. For temp workers, the waiting period is more than double.

"Under Bill 139, a temp agency worker would have to wait 36 weeks before they're eligible for termination and severance pay," she said. "That would mean they would be out of work for nine months without finance before they receive any payment that every other worker (in Ontario) is entitled to."

Guest speaker Julius Deutsch, executive assistant of the Toronto/York Region Labour Council, said that under Ontario law, an applicant in Toronto needs 665 hours to be considered eligible for Employment

Insurance. He suggested lowering the qualifying period to 360 hours in every part of the country, which would cover 78 per cent of the jobless in Ontario currently ineligible for E.I.

"The unemployment rate in Toronto now is 8.3 per cent and in the GTA it's now at 9 per cent," Deutsch said. "These numbers give you the sense of the magnitude of what's happening in the unemployment levels. In order to deal with the deficit and cuts to social programs some harsh measures were put into effect. One of the things they did was raising the required amount of hours... in order to secure Employment Insurance."

According to Deutsch, Ottawa has done very little to deal with this particular problem.

"In this recent federal budget the only thing the feds did was increase the duration of benefits by only five weeks. There should be an additional 13 weeks at the least," he said.

There have been 560,000 recipients of E.I. payments as of January, and Ottawa has announced \$60 million to help streamline the application process.

Award-winner plans to tackle race issues

Cont'd. from page 1

to help figure out (a solution)," Feldman said. "She's very effective."

But Sahota and Feldman aren't the only ones singing Moore's praises. Brook Physick, a lawyer with Flemington Community Legal Services, met Moore almost 20 years ago thanks to a mutual interest in housing issues. He said Moore's inability to say no when it comes to serving the community is one of the reasons she deserves the award.

"I'm not sure if people here realize that Pat Moore is employed on a full-time basis," Physick said. "She's someone who works full-time for the bank, is a full-time mother and does all this magnificent work for the community in her spare time. I think that in itself is remarkable."

He said her ability to commit to community issues is what makes her stand out.

"I never cease to be amazed by Pat's boundless energy, a

trait that has served her well in confronting so many social issues," Physick said, "whether it's housing, safety, crime, peace, human rights, healthy communities or any other issue in which she immerses herself."

Moore said she has decided that the next issue she will tackle in her community is the elimination of racism and violence — something she wants done by the year 2010.

She said her ability to help people is based on the beliefs her mother instilled in her.

"When I see, or when I help people, I don't look at (their skin) colour," Moore said. "My mother brought us up to accept people for where they are and what they are. We do not bleed black blood or red blood, we bleed one blood. And we treat everyone the same."

Moore received an Agnes Macphail Award medal for her work, as well as a \$2,000 donation to the charity of her choice: the Canadian Diabetes Association.

East York schools observe many Earth Hour activities

Cont'd. from page 1

overwhelming, what can I do?"

Caulfield stresses the importance of getting kids involved in the activities too.

While many schools in the area are celebrating Earth Hour today, Caulfield believes that the community needs to better promote what he calls "the defining issue of our generation."

"If I can get them downtown and they see a bit of the larger picture, maybe they'll come back here and plant it," Caulfield said of his Earth Hour mission.

If yoga and marching don't appeal to your tastes, the Ontario Science Centre has telescopes to take advantage of the darkness by peering at everything from Saturn to the moon to the Little Dipper. Advance observances of Earth Hour at schools today include turning off the lights and enjoying activities such as storytelling, candlelight vigils and outdoor games.

So whether it's marching, stargazing or a quiet night at home, many East Yorkers are expected to show their support of Earth Hour.

Earth Hour in East York

Here are a few activities to consider when the lights go out:

Candlelight yoga at The Big Stretch Yoga Centre

1560 Bayview Ave.

Call 416-486-4448 to reserve a spot (space is limited to 30 people)

www.bigstretchyoga.ca

8:15-9:30 p.m.

\$15 admission (all proceeds go to the World Wildlife Fund)

Earth Hour march to Nathan Phillips Square

Contact Jeffrey Caulfield at jeff@ibringyouhome.ca for information or to join the walk

The Ontario Science Centre has issued the following itinerary:

Star Party from 8 to 10 p.m. (lights out 8:30-9:30)

Observe the moon and stars through high-powered telescopes

Enjoy storytelling, with Ojibway storyteller Aaron Bell

Contribute data to a North America-wide StarWatch experiment on light pollution levels (www.redshiftnow.ca/starwatch)

Participate in a drumming circle

Explore ways to reduce climate change through engaging demonstrations and activities

St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church candlelight meditations

"A service of reconciliation with the Earth through prayer, reflection and music"

8:30-9:30 p.m.

1399 Bayview Ave.

416-485-0329

Grassroots Environmental Products

all beeswax candles 10 per cent off until the lights go out

372 Danforth Ave. (just west of Chester Avenue)

416-466-2841

Open until 8 p.m.

—MIKE CRISOLAGO