

STRUMMING

■ Lippert Centre makes beautiful music

Page 7



COMMUNITY



Aaron Niles /// Observer

Marching for independence

Greektown celebrated the anniversary of Greece's independence from Turkey with the annual Greek Independence Day parade on March 24. Participants made their way along Danforth Avenue, proudly waving Greek and Canadian flags for passersbys to see.

Plan afoot to manage Lower Don

Trail corridor to be improved to accommodate new users

By AARON NILES
The Observer

The city is considering significant changes around the trail in the lower Don Valley, south of Pottery Road.

So on Tuesday night, a public meeting at St. Paul's Church on Bloor Street East was convened by Parks, Forestry and Recreation, along with Transportation Infrastructure Management and Toronto and Region Conservation, to review the proposed improvements.

"There are 80,000 new residents moving into the downtown around the Lower Don areas, if you include the West Don's lower Don lands, Portlands and Beaches," said Brent Raymond of DTAH, the firm in charge of the project.

"A large amount of people are going to want to have access to the natural environment and we need to manage that as best as possible. We want to provide the best possible access."

■ See GOAL, page 4



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Prestigious award goes to Redway

By ERIKA MARUCCI
The Observer

Every day is a good day to be kind and considerate.

For East York, March 24 is a day to celebrate a person who contributes significantly to the community with his or her volunteerism and spirit.

That's Agnes Macphail's birthday, and the day when the Agnes Macphail Award ceremony takes place at the East York Civic Centre.

This year, Alan Redway, lawyer and mayor of East York from 1977 to 1982, is the recipient of the community's highest accolade for civic activism.

The annual Macphail Award was established by East York borough council in 1994.

■ See FORMER, page 4



■ REDWAY

Leaside celebrates its 100th anniversary

Leafy residential neighbourhood was once home to a racetrack, ski jump

By THOMAS MORRISON
The Observer

Leaside, you've come a long way.

A century ago, it encompassed 1,025 acres of Canadian Northern Railway land — and all of 43 inhabitants.

Those were the specifications in Bill 55, passed by the Ontario legislature on April 23, 1913... officially incorporating the Town of Leaside.

With that April 23 centennial looming, the East York Historical Society honoured Leaside at its March 26 meeting. It was held at the S. Walter Stewart library branch.

"There are a lot of people that don't think about how this neighbourhood became this way," said Jane Pitfield, former city councillor for Don Valley

West, which includes Leaside, and now the president of the historical society.

"You have to know where you've come from to know where you're going."

And Pitfield knows where Leaside comes from. She wrote the definitive history of the community, a 1999 book appropriately titled *Leaside*.

It recounts Leaside's early railway roots, the Lea family and their circa-1850 octagonal house — thought to have been the first brick home in York County.

Later, the book covers the careful planning for a town blending homes and industry.

In Leaside's heyday, that industry included the manufacturers of Durant and Nash cars, as well as the huge Canada Wire and Cable plant.

For the workers' and other residents' amusement in summer, there was the Thorncliffe Race Track; in winter, there was a ski jump.

But those features eventually disappeared, and so did most of Leaside's autonomy with its



Thomas Morrison /// Observer

Jane Pitfield (right), president of the East York Historical Society and author of the definitive history of Leaside, distributes birthday cake at the society's meeting commemorating Leaside's centennial.

1967 absorption into East York (and then East York's absorption into the "mega-city" of Toronto in 1998).

Today, Leaside is thought of mainly as a leafy, highly desirable residential neighbourhood.

But considering its rich heritage, it was appropriate that

Pitfield, the community's chief chronicler, hosted the March 26 meeting of the historical society — and that she was joined by Beaches-East York MPP Michael Prue, the last mayor of the Borough of East York before amalgamation.

■ See CELEBRATING, page 4

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Love your park? It's time to talk

Come discuss proposed improvements with city parks staff regarding Gamble and Livingston parks. The meeting will take place this coming Wednesday, April 10 at Bethany Baptist Church, located at 1041 Pape Ave. (at Cosburn). The Livingston Park discussion begins at 7 p.m. and the Gamble Park discussion follows at 8.

Learn how to 'greenovate' your home

Beaches-East York MP Matthew Kellway is co-hosting an interactive panel and community discussion about how to renovate your home while reducing your carbon footprint. It will be held April 10 at 7 p.m. at the Ralph Thornton Centre, 765 Queen St. E.

Meeting features water features

This Thursday, April 11, the Leaside Garden Society will be hosting its next meeting. The meeting will take place at 7:30 p.m. in the community room at the Leaside library branch, 165 McRae Dr. Refreshments will be available at 7. The meeting will feature a presentation by Peter Gill on "Water Features." Visitors and new members are welcome to attend. Memberships are \$25 for a single membership and \$30 for a family.

Book appointment to give blood

Next Saturday, April 13, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., the Greek Community of Toronto will be hosting a blood donor clinic. The clinic will take place at 30 Thorncliffe Park Dr. in the main floor hall. You can book your appointment at www.blood.ca or at 1-888-2 DONATE.

Skate, don't discriminate

Students from Centennial College's East York campus have organized a skate for "You Can Play" — a charity promoting respect for athletes regardless of sexual orientation: April 14, 2-3 p.m. at Varsity Arena. Tickets are \$5, and include a Toronto Gay Hockey Association game afterward.

Happy anniversary, True Davidson

The True Davidson Long Term Care Facility, located at 200 Dawes Rd., is hosting its annual Spring Fling on Saturday, April 20, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Celebrating the facility's 40th anniversary, the volunteer board will be raising funds to build a deck and gazebo for residents and their families. Enjoy lunch or snacks at the barbecue or tea room, a giftware and craft sale, as well as home-baked goods.

The taxman cometh — get ready

With the deadline to file tax returns fast approaching, come and receive some free advice. A free tax clinic will take place on Saturday, April 20 at Bethany Baptist Church, 1041 Pape Ave., in its lower hall, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Be sure to bring your 2012 personalized tax return package and other important documents. Assistance will be given on a first-come, first-served basis.

~ Tarah Bleier

Exploring the seedy side of supplements

Nurse says whole foods best way to get nutrients

By NICOLETTE MENDOZA
The Observer

With so many highly processed foods available, it can be hard to consume the right nutrients from direct food sources and so many resort to supplements. But not all supplements are beneficial to your health.

On March 26, the S. Walter Stewart library branch played host to Nutrition and Cancer Screening, a free information session for East Yorkers presented by Wood-green Com-

munity Services. The session was held to answer questions about diet and its relation to cancer.

Diane Sanborn, a health promotion nurse from Wood-green, hosted the workshop. According to Sanborn, our bodies are always trying to form cancerous cells, but these cells can be combatted with the help of antibodies doing their job.

"You can find a 100-year-old man, fairly healthy, who passes away," she said, "and in an autopsy, somewhere they'll find a cancer... even though he was never diagnosed and had no symptoms."

Sanborn said that there are parts of our DNA that help to protect against cancer-formu-

lating cells. So by not taking care of your health, you can destroy that part of your DNA that protects you.

In order to protect your body, she continued, you should avoid using supplements as a substitute for fruits and vegetables.

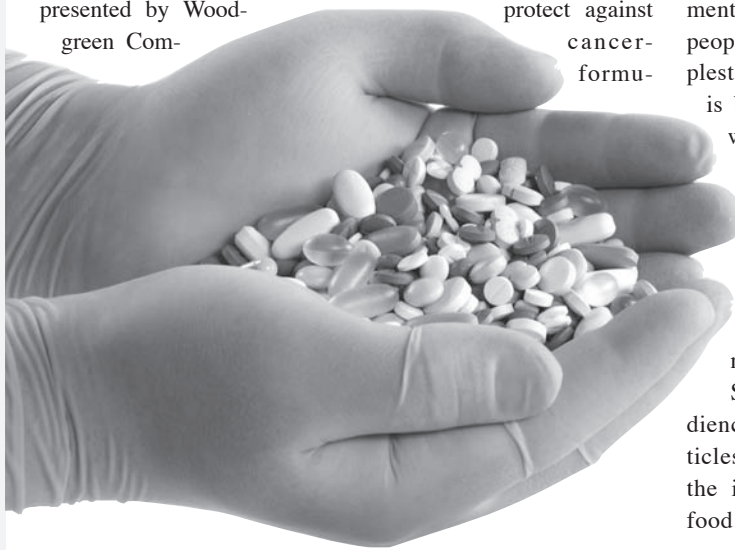
Sanborn said there's little proof that dietary supplements can reduce cancer anyway. In fact, some high-dosage supplements can increase cancer risks. An example is Vitamin A, which can impact skin cancer.

"It's very alluring to think that there is a quick... medicine or supplement that will cure or heal you," she said.

With all of the supplements available, she said, people forget that the simplest way to get nutrients is by eating straight from whole foods.

Sanborn said it is important to do your own research by looking for information related to research hospitals with university health networks in Canada.

She also advised her audience to be cautious of articles that appear related to the industry around health food.



Immigrants 'struggling' to find appropriate jobs

Some are losing hope as search for work becomes a fruitless endeavour

By HASAN ZAHID
The Observer

With neighbourhoods like Crescent Town, Thorncliffe and Flemingdon Park serving as gateways to Canada for many newcomers, the feeling of frustration among some of them is almost palpable.

That frustration comes from their sense that there are no jobs here, regardless of how qualified they are.

Skilled immigrants seeking appropriate jobs in Canada is not new. But some, unable to find work, have almost given up hope. Even odd jobs are hard to find, claim many who came to Canada hoping to land jobs similar to ones they left behind.

Delwar Hossain, 60, has been struggling since his arrival in

Canada as a landed immigrant in 2005. Holding a master's degree and being a banker back home, he also has a four-year Canadian college diploma in accounting.

He says he tried hard to get a job well-matched to his credentials and ability, but failed. Hossain is currently working as a tax and accounting consultant at a small, congested office on Danforth Avenue.

"I've been struggling since my coming to Canada. I've heard about the word 'networking,' but not everyone is a networking expert," he said.

Mujibor Rahman, a 49-year-old landed immigrant, came to Canada as a skilled worker in 2007. He too has struggled to find a job befitting his education, experience and skills.

Ann Evans, senior manager and employment adviser at



■ HOSSAIN ■ RAHMAN

Neighbourhood Link support services on Danforth Avenue, agrees that skilled immigrants face challenges in the labour market.

She says that before and after coming to Canada, immigrants should be prepared to deal with the reality of the situation.

"Careful monitoring of local labour trends is essential. Don't move to Toronto if you are a mining engineer," she said. "Canada is a vast country. Certain areas of the country are better able to absorb individuals with specific skill sets than others."

POLICE BRIEFS

Bracebridge break-ins have E.Y. connection

Police have issued a warrant for the arrest of an East York man in connection with a series of break-ins in Bracebridge, Ont. The man, whom police did not name in their news release, faces numerous charges, including break and enter, theft and possession of stolen property.

Fugitive squad arrests suspect

East York's 54 Division reports that Mohammad Masroor, 50, has been located and arrested locally by the Toronto police fugitive squad. Masroor is wanted by authorities in Michigan and Florida in connection with accusations of criminal sexual contact with a person under 13 that allegedly occurred between 2000 and 2006. Masroor is being held in custody for extradition proceedings.

Man charged with making pornography

Police at East York's 54 Division report that they have arrested 38-year-old Desmond Patterson and charged him with two counts of making child pornography, possession of child pornography and two counts of voyeurism for a sexual purpose. Police are asking anyone with any information to call them at 416-808-8500, or Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-8477.

~ Dillon Hiles

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

Councillor promotes tree canopy

More shade will create a cooler and cleaner East York

By **JABBARI WEEKES**
The Observer

Councillor Mary Fragedakis put it best: “A seed hidden in the heart of an apple is an orchard... and this meeting is that seed.”

Last week, Fragedakis set those seeds in place by reaching out to concerned Ward 29 Toronto-Danforth residents at the East York Civic Centre, talking about ways to promote planting more trees.

“Trees cool our homes in the summer, protecting us from the sun rays, provide clean air and over the last couple years people have voiced about a lack of them so I decided to hold a meeting so we could talk about how to address these issues,” Fragedakis said.

Factors hindering tree canopies in Toronto include increased building developments, which restricts root



Jabbari Weekes /// Observer

This is a model layout showing where current trees have been planted and where they could be placed by Coxwell Avenue in East York.

growth. Canopies in residential neighbourhoods then suffer from insufficient water absorption. Another issue Fragedakis emphasized is the rapid

shift between cold and warm weather in the spring that damages older trees.

“On one hand we’re trying to find places in East York to

plant and on the other the areas where we do have a tree canopy. It’s aging and being damaged by rapid climate change,” Fragedakis said. “So we need

to replace those and work on making those changes.”

According to the City of Toronto’s Parks, Forestry and Recreation department, there

is a lack of tree canopies in not just East York, but Toronto in general. With the assistance of the city’s urban forestry group, Fragedakis is spearheading a tree canopy campaign in the Toronto-Danforth area spanning Pape, Donlands and Coxwell avenues.

In addition, she’s creating a community-working group to spread awareness of the importance of canopy coverage. However, not everyone is keen on the program, including area resident Tommi Saltza.

“I’m all for the value of nature but I really don’t need another plant or tree to tend to over my lawn space,” he said.

Fragedakis is no stranger to these types of comments.

“Some people for various reasons don’t want trees planted on their property and others feel it’s imposing on them, so we prefer not to plant on those places with resistance,” she said. “I’m interested in fighting climate change and expanding on the tree canopy campaign and not leaving an insurmountable debt for future generations.”

Putting daycare on the agenda

Documentary on feminism sparks discussion about childcare issues in Canada

By **THERESA SPOHN**
The Observer

Feminism took a decidedly domestic bent when a small but engaged group gathered to view the documentary, Status Quo? The Unfinished Business of Feminism in Canada.

Matthew Kellway, MP for Beaches-East York, hosted the evening at the S. Walter library branch on March 22. The movie covered violence against women, abortion and daycare. The issue of daycare hit close to home, as Kellway drew upon his own experience.

Having gone through parenthood and some of the experiences talked about in the film himself, he said, “It gives you a very personal perspective on the challenges Canadian women and Canadian families generally face.”

At \$3,500 a month for two children, Kellway said the cost of daycare exceeds what 90 to 95 per cent of the population can afford. He noted a recent United Way-McMaster study stating that 50 per cent of the workforce in the GTA and Hamilton has precarious employment.

Kellway stated the care burden for many families also extends to caring for aging parents.

“When I was canvassing, what I heard so frequently at the door was that it is not just childhood issues, it is seniors as well with the increasing presence of mental health issues for



Theresa Spohn /// Observer

Matthew Kellway, MP for Beaches-East York, leads a discussion about feminism at a community meeting.

seniors and dementia,” he said.

Audience member Boyd Reimer was curious why Ontario, with its close proximity to Quebec, has not created a similar universal daycare program.

“We have Quebec right beside Ontario, which is a huge example. They started in 1997,” he said.

Many in the audience agreed that Ontario could be doing better, while others noted the Quebec program has run into problems, with some politicians there wanting the program ended.

In 2006, the federal Conservatives ended the National Childhood

program. They created the Universal Childcare Choice program that has cost the government \$14 billion to date by sending out \$100 a month to eligible Canadian families.

Diane Gordon summed up the audience’s appreciation for watching the film and discussing issues related to feminism.

“I think it is significant that Matthew has chosen to make this available to our community because not very many MPs go forward and say come and see a film about feminism,” she said. “To me, that’s special.”

Aboriginal visitors bring First Nations history to college

Goal of roundtable talks is to introduce culture to students

By **JOSH GENEREUX**
The Observer

Two members of the Aboriginal community are hoping to dispel some of the myths around their culture through a series of roundtable talks with local college students.

Edward Ellison and Jacquie Lavally visited Centennial College’s East York campus on March 20 to give the students a lively lesson in First Nations history.

Ellison, the campus elder, provided a variety of songs, roundtable talks and arts and crafts.

“Basically, what we are doing is what we call round talks, or round stories,” he explained.

“We are going to each different campus of Centennial College and introducing the Native culture to the students.”

Besides the Carlaw Avenue building, home to Centennial’s communications programs, the college has several campuses in Scarborough

and Pickering.

Ellison believes most students know little about First Nations peoples, aside from what they’ve read in books.

“So this gives the students a chance to see who and what we are really about,” he said. “History has basically painted us as savages and things like that, but we are like everybody else. We laugh, sing and enjoy things like every other human being.”

Ellison believes that students needed to be immersed in the culture to understand it.

“The students need to learn about our history from us, from the people,” he said. “You can’t learn about another culture unless you indulge in it or open your mind and look at it in a good way.”

One person who took Ellison’s words to heart was first-year journalism student Marcus Duncan.

“It’s an eye-opener,” he said. “The more students learn about these matters and other cultures, the better. I’ve been seeing a lot of these types of events growing up. It definitely opens my mind every time I see it and it gets more interesting as I get older.”

Celebrating 'small town' in a big city

Cont'd. from page 1

"It's important to know our roots," said Prue, who was referred to as "Mr. Mayor" by many at the event.

Geoff Kettel, of the Leaside Property Owners' Association and the 2008 recipient of the Agnes Macphail award for civic activism, also attended.

He spoke of the importance of organizations like the historical society.

"It allows people to get engaged in the community, and gets people concerned about where we live," he said.

In his remarks to the gathering, Kettel broke the community's history down into layers, including Leaside's contribution during the Second World War, producing munitions and maintaining an airfield where bombing simulations were carried out.

But, in a way, Pitfield concluded, Leaside's post-war evolution into a primarily residential neighbourhood simply brings it full-circle.

"It's still a small town within a big city," Pitfield said. "Some things have changed, but others haven't."



Thomas Morrison /// Observer

Jane Pitfield cuts the cake to mark Leasides' 100th anniversary, at the East York Historical Society's March 26 meeting.



Jabbari Weekes /// Observer

Former journalist and novelist Sharon A. Crawford prepares for her lecture about her new novel, *Beyond the Tripping Point*. It's her first mystery novel.

Show, don't tell, author says

By JABBARI WEEKES
The Observer

Never judge a book by its cover. However, critiquing its content is another story.

Last week, Sharon A. Crawford, a former journalist and novelist, shared with attendees at the Leaside library branch her first mystery novel, *Beyond the Tripping Point*, as well as the formula behind creating a good story.

"Basically, it's a collection of short stories about people going over the edge to deal with a situation in the past or present and have to do something about it," she said.

Crawford previewed excerpts from recent short stories like *Gone Missing* and *Digging up the Dirt*, which follows female private investigator Dana Bowman, who finds missing children, for an appreciative audience. She then shifted gears to focus on issues she regularly sees in writing today.

"One thing I see a lot of is that writers have problems with writing (different) points of view. That's why the rule of thumb is one point of view and character per scene," she said.

As a freelance book editor, she sees issues like this all the time even after something

is published. For example, a detective could be chasing after a suspect and then, mid-paragraph, the point of view switches to the criminal without warning or reason.

According to Crawford, not only does this confuse readers but it's also a case of poor writing and bad pacing.

"You have to know when it's going to be slow and when it's going to be fast in some scenes, monitor how many tangents you go on and ensure they tie up nicely in with the story," she said.

Brenda Haileman, a part-time writer who attended Crawford's discussion, be-

lieves learning these important but often overlooked details is valuable for anyone wanting to start writing.

"I think it's important that we take these tools, whether we do it for friends or a big-time publisher," she said.

However, Crawford emphasizes that the most important skill for any type of writing is simple: show, don't tell.

"Don't have a long narrative where you're telling the reader what the subject is doing. Show them what the (characters) see," she said.

"Use dialogue a lot and bring out the characters along with the plot."

Former MP wins Macphail award

Cont'd. from page 1

In 1984, Redway was elected as the Progressive Conservative Member of Parliament for Don Valley East, and in 1989 was appointed Minister of State for Housing. After a long career in politics, he became involved in charity work with the Daily Bread Food Bank.

Recipients of the Agnes

Macphail Award receive \$2,000 to donate to the charity of their choice. For Redway, that choice was easy.

"I'm donating to the Daily Bread Food Bank, since I served on the board of Daily Bread for four years," he said. "My commitment to Daily Bread goes back to the days of my great-grandfather. He started a very successful business with his brother, and then it

went bankrupt. He went from being very wealthy to living in what has been described as 'abject poverty.'"

Redway has maintained that call to service through the food bank.

"People think that the ones who don't have food and who don't have the money and are going to food banks are just living off society," he said. "Most of them, though, just

had a bad break or are disabled; those are the ones we want to support."

Many past recipients took part in the ceremony, including Edna Beange, the first winner of the award in 1994.

"I thought the ceremony was great. It was very well put together," she said.

"And Alan is a very good speaker. After all, he's a lawyer."

Goal is to provide the 'best possible access' to Don trails

Cont'd. from page 1

The public meeting was held to gather concerns and suggestions to improve the Don trail system. Kim Statham, a natural environment specialist with the urban forestry department, talked about the need to involve the community in planning.

"The community is what makes this place what it already is. Everyone depends on it for a variety of

reasons," Statham said.

"We know it's a huge community route. It's a very important green space to use, to recreate, to enjoy nature. There's a huge opportunity to improve public art. These lands would not be the way they are today if it wasn't for the community."

According to Raymond, residents can expect to see new artwork around the Don trails soon.

"Some art pieces are a proposal that has been in the works for a

while. So there are some components that could come online quite quickly," he said.

"One of the advantages of having temporary installations is that they don't require the same amount of materials because they don't have to hold up for the winter.

"I think there are some temporary installations that can be up within a year, and if you want to get really ambitious they can hap-



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pen this summer."

Statham talked about when the plan will be put into action.

"We are planning to wrap up at the end of May with this part of the master plan. We will have an action plan in terms of priorities, both budget-wise as some things

are already in the works."

The overall plan will take time to complete and implement.

"We know by the nature of the project that it will take some 20 years to do," Statham said.

"It's just the nature of these projects."

■ HOW TO...

Make your own COMET



The first step in building a comet is to begin with dry ice and topsoil to simulate the basic components. Of course, real comets are much bigger: up to several hundred metres across. Their long, trailing tail is called a “coma.”



The lights went out across East York on March 23, as Earth Hour commenced at 8:30 p.m. At the Ontario Science Centre, this year’s celebrations included a “star party” where visitors had a chance to view the stars through high-powered telescopes. Visitors were also entertained by the Samba Squad drum group — and had the chance to partake in this comet-building workshop:



Mix in water and Windex to simulate “volatiles” like ammonia, which are common on comets. This helps to mimic some of the substances found in the ice of comets. This material gets ejected from the comet to form the tail.



Next, you need to add corn syrup, which simulates amino acids or the binary compounds of life. (Many scientists theorize that comets are responsible for delivering water and the building blocks of life to planets.)



Now that the ingredients are all there, you need to compress them with your hands and watch the natural forces start to “cook” them. (Make sure to wear mitts; otherwise your hands may get cooked too.)



Voila: You have your very own piece of simulated outer space. (Be careful. It’s cold.)

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY CHRISTIAN BOYER
The Observer

■ EDITORIALS

Let Ford drive on

Time to set mayor's foibles aside for bigger issues

Mayor Rob Ford continues to make news. And most of it is bad news. The most recent published reports accuse the mayor of being intoxicated at the Garrison Ball, an annual dinner attended by members of the Armed Forces.

And that's just the latest. The charges during the mayor's tenure (so far) have included a conflict of interest case — that initially looked like it would result in his expulsion — as well as an investigation into reported overspending during Ford's 2010 campaign for mayor, photos of him reading while driving and even an allegation of intoxicated groping by Ford made by Sarah Thomson, a former candidate for mayor herself.

Not to mention all of the jabs over his waistline.

The latest story — about Ford being asked to leave the Garrison Ball and aides wanting him to go into rehab — comes from multiple “unnamed sources.” That, by itself, is a red flag. But more important is this: There are issues before city hall that need discussion. But whether it's casinos, homelessness or anything in between, they all seem to take a back seat to the mayor's social life.

Jane Pitfield, the former councillor for Don Valley West who ran against David Miller in 2006 and who is now president of the East York Historical Society, had an interesting take on this — on what she thinks is gridlock at city hall.

“It's a tough job,” she said of governing North America's fourth-largest city. But she added that the people doing that governing need to focus more actively on the issues affecting day-to-day life here.

“The people there are debating things that we were talking about almost seven years ago,” Pitfield said, recounting her time on council.

One hot-button issue is gambling — if the anti-casino signs on East York lawns are any indication. But while Toronto dithers, other municipalities are chomping at the bit, hoping for a big investment from MGM or another gaming giant. And sooner or later, companies like MGM will take their sights off the big smoke and look to construct elsewhere.

Why is there still such a strong backlash against Ford? His election was three years ago and counting. And those still holding a grudge should remember that he's been working hard to cut city spending — and their taxes — just like he said he would. What if the city had elected another free-spending mayor in these hard economic times? What could the budget look like by 2015, when the city is to host the Pan Am Games?

Let's be grown-up about this. If you don't like Rob Ford's policies or deportment, then just don't vote for him next time around. But do consider that the mayor is still only one vote on a 44-member council. So when it comes to the real business of the City of Toronto, let's apportion credit and blame for the goings-on there a little more fairly. It may well be that some of our other elected representatives have interests contrary to the continued growth of the city.

As for the mayor's personal behaviour — the good, the bad and the ugly — the man still has more than a year left in office.... So just get over it.

~ Thomas Morrison

East-end transit pains

Imagine for a moment that it's the early-morning rush, and you're among the commuters who have taken the GO train in to Main and Danforth and now you're transferring to the TTC. Every morning you have to deal with the lack of one integrated station. Same thing on the way home.

Regardless of the weather, time of day or physical ability, commuters have to trudge on over from either station and walk 200-300 metres up an overpass to switch between them. Even Beaches-East York MPP Michael Prue has commented on it: “I used to stand out front of Main station during election time and talk to commuters who would say, ‘Yeah I'm coming in from Oshawa or Stouffville’ — and I kept getting asked why these stations weren't connected.”

In 2008, under “The Big Move,” Metrolinx dubbed the GO Danforth station a “Gateway Hub,” a crucial point of transition between the GO and TTC, with connections to multiple streetcar lines, buses and the subway. But so far, the term remains just that: A term.

Metrolinx and the TTC have not taken sufficient initiative to solve this problem. You would think that with Presto being integrated into the TTC a light bulb would go off somewhere. Congestion could be eased along the Bloor-Danforth line by letting some commuters transfer over to the GO Danforth to go straight to Union. All Metrolinx has to offer is the current relief subway line proposed by the TTC, which would see King station linked to Pape station.

Many of the other stations along the Danforth stretch are being upgraded, so why not Main Street?

~ Christian Boyer

■ COLUMNS

Bearing witness

I remember the details of the stories as if I had been there. The mere thought of them gives me chills.

I was born here and I'm honoured and proud to be a Canadian citizen, but I am also ethnically Armenian. Some of my ancestors died during — and others survived — the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1918. This coming April 24 marks the 98th anniversary of the origin of that horrific event in history.

Modern-day Turkey is where approximately 1.8 million Armenians lived and prospered for hundreds of years before the Ottoman government committed the first genocide of the 20th century, massacring more than 1.5 million Armenians during the First World War. Some were executed. Others died from starvation or disease during their deportation.

My maternal great-great-grandfather, Nahabet, was burned alive, leaving my pregnant great-great-grandmother, Sourpig, to be deported through the Syrian desert, Deir ez-Zor, with my three-year-old great-grandfather, Mihran. Sourpig Yaya (the mother), left Mihran Dede (the son) in the care of her Turkish neighbours. She told them she'd try to come back for him and if she did, she wanted him back. They

agreed and she left.

She gave birth to twin boys during the deportation and made the heart-wrenching decision to leave them on the road, later finding out that her babies had been eaten by birds.

Sourpig thought death was inevitable until one day, a wealthy Turkish woman draped her skirt over her to hide her from the authorities, saving her life.

For the next seven years, Sourpig payed her debt, working as a maid in a Turkish harem. There, she met and married an Armenian man, Hagop, who was looking for his daughter.

After being released, Sourpig immediately went to her neighbour's door to take back her son. But Mihran didn't recognize her. He didn't want to go back to his mother and they didn't let him. For days, she sat on their doorstep screaming for her son and eventually, mother and son were reunited.

Next,

Sourpig, Hagop and Mihran travelled to Caesarea where Hagop's daughter was in an orphanage. They found out that she had died — and soon after, so did he.

Sourpig and Mihran settled in Caesarea to rebuild their lives after the tragedy. Mihran married and had four sons; the second oldest is my grandfather Krikor.

Sourpig Yaya took care of the family until her death in 1959 at approximately 85 years of age.

Mihran Dede died in 1975 at the age of 67.

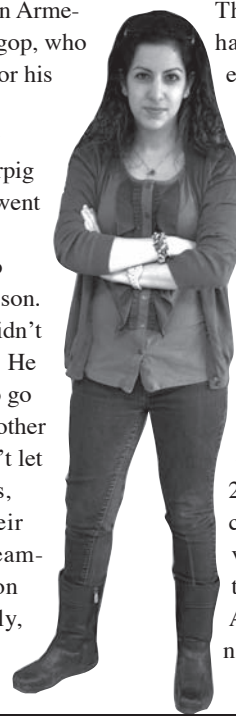
The Armenian Genocide had run its course by the end of 1918.

The perpetrators are all dead. But almost a century later, much of the world is still in denial about it.

In Turkey itself, you can get thrown in jail — or worse — for even talking about this.

But this is Canada — one of only about 20 countries that officially refer to what was visited upon my ancestors and their fellow Armenians by its proper name: genocide.

And where their descendant is free to tell their stories.



Tamar Atik

Targeting higher prices

Let's face it: We've been excited about Target coming to Canada.

And I don't mean the kind of excitement that accompanies an event like the star-studded opening of the store at Shoppers World Danforth last weekend.

The East York Town Centre location opened earlier and without the help of any celebrities, but the anticipation of that opening was still intense.

Stepping through those doors and actually taking a look around, some of us who have been to Target in the

U.S. got excited just see-

ing those signature red and white colours... and inhaling the aroma of the familiar Starbucks at the entrance.

But I have to confess that, as I stepped further inside the town centre Target a few days after its March 19 debut, I was somewhat disappointed.

I've been to quite a few Target stores in Ohio, New York and Michigan and they've all impressed me.

But when I scanned this local location, I noticed that there was not the variety of merchandise that I expected.

Not only that, but I didn't see some of the brands that I'm used to seeing at Target.

For instance, being a makeup junkie, I made my way to the makeup aisle (notice the lack of plurals) in the beauty department, only to discover that the brands that I was hoping to see were not there.

The same applied to the clothing departments, accessories and even the books and magazines.

Not to mention the prices.

I knew the pricing would be higher compared to the States, but I didn't expect them to be higher than Wal-Mart's in some cases.

So overall, a disappointment. But the trip wasn't a total loss. They have a very cool escalator.



Paulina Pestryakov

Keeping the beat... for 56 years



Above: Simeon Abbott jams out on his guitar at the school where he teaches.

Right: Charleen Beard, owner and administrator of Lippert Music Centre, tickles the ivories.



Christian Boyer // Observer

By **CHRISTIAN BOYER**
The Observer

Aside from the sign out front, you could easily mistake 970 Pape Ave. as just a small house between a sandwich shop and a thrift store.

But this place is a lot more than what you might think from the curb.

In the basement of the quaint bungalow, Lippert Music Centre has been teaching music for more than 56 years — and so can be considered one of Pape Village’s oldest running businesses.

The family enterprise was started by Joseph Lippert Jr. in 1957 and was then passed down to his daughter Charleen in 1996. She now both operates and teaches there.

Charleen Beard’s passion for music arose early, but it wasn’t until her senior years of high school that she decided that teaching music was her path. For her, the most rewarding part of the job is giving kids the chance to explore and grow their musical talents.

“I’m very proud to be a small part of their lives,” she said. “We have the chance to work with kids as young as four and all the way up 16 or 17, so we build a unique relationship with them.”

The TDSB curriculum includes music education at both the elementary and high school levels, but what sets Lippert apart is the approach to how it is taught.

“Through individual attention, we can hone in on the skills that the children already have and we can find weak spots and work on them,” Beard said. “Music can help you with so many things. It helps you with math, with English, stage presence and how you present yourself, performance and working on a team.”

Beard is also involved in the broader community, as a board member of the Pape Village B.I.A. She has helped to include musical talent in both the Pape Village Winterfest and Summerfest.

“It’s a great way to showcase the talent that is here,” she said. “For Summerfest, we’ve had performers right out front in our driveway. We’ve encouraged some of our teachers to perform as well. Same kind of idea for Winterfest. We actually had one of our teachers perform at the Wine Rack, which was a nice way to connect. We’re very much about bringing everyone in the community together.”

Many of the teachers at Lippert Music Centre are musicians in their own right; many juggle their own indie-music careers while still finding time to teach.

Simeon Abbott is just one of those teachers. Just recently, his independent music career had taken him on tour in Alberta. He felt the juggling act was a bit of a learned skill.

“It’s a bit of taking one hat off and putting another hat on,” Abbott said. “It might be a little more anecdotal and personal to me as a musician who also teaches, but I find that they are very different processes and you can’t just switch on a dime. You need to be able to adjust to that and focus differently.”

Abbott developed a deep musical history, learning to play piano at age five and performing publicly not long after that. Pulling from his extensive independent music career, he learned early on that improvisation was something he loved about music — so much so, he feels it’s rubbed off on his teaching style.

“That’s where you can really learn to explore your language as a musician,” he said.

Don’t be manipulated, organic advocate warns

Speaker advises consumers to be more skeptical

By **KENYA BRUCE**
The Observer

The word “organic” on a food label immediately conjures up a synonym: “expensive.”

But the science behind organic food can be confusing, even unknown to many — so getting to know the facts around it is important.

Jodi Koberinski is a member of the Organic

Council of Ontario (OCO). She gives speeches and presentations all over the province about organic food and health issues and spoke to an audience at the Carrot Common on Danforth Avenue on March 21.

Her goal is to teach and unite other organic enthusiasts to develop healthier agriculture and food in Ontario.

“Organic is a new way of thinking about food production, resource management, human and ecological health and community in a multi-disciplinary context,” Koberinski said.

She explained that genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and pesticides are becoming part of our diet without us really knowing.

Koberinski stressed that many studies and findings do not show the real results of what might happen to us in the long run.

She said that a typical shopper is led to believe that organic food is no better or different than regular food and produce, due to lack of background knowledge.

“We’re being manipulated. Our press is being manipulated by people with

a whole bunch of money, who make a whole bunch of money off of you eating this way,” Koberinski said.

“If people were as skeptical about their conventional food system as they are about the organic food system, we would be in great shape.”

She believes that health is about more than just the individual.

“Your personal health should be your gateway drug to a bigger life, because it is not all about you,” she said.

“Health is really an integrated thing.”



Kenya Bruce // Observer

Jodi Koberinski speaks talks about organic food at the Carrot Common on March 21.

It's a sign for 'Nu'-born babies in East York



By **KENYA BRUCE**
The Observer

Even though your baby can't talk yet, communicating with each other doesn't have to be a hassle.

That's the word from NuBaby, an East York-area company offering early child development classes to babies and parents.

One of the classes is in sign language, which teaches parents and their babies to communicate with each other before the little ones have learned to speak.

Cherrie Tam, one of the instructors working for NuBaby in various spaces in and around East York, said baby sign language helps promote language development.

"(Babies) are always hearing different words, so babies who are signed to at a young age are shown to have a larger vocabulary because they get to hear lots of different words and they get to have lots of different conversations," she said.

Between the ages of six and eight months, babies' fine motor skills start to develop and they are able to move their hands and gesture in a certain way, Tam said. Their memory is also developed at this age. That means babies are able to remember a sign and what each sign means.

And that, Tam added, can help reduce frustration.

"Having the visual so they can actually see it as opposed to just hearing the word" makes a big difference, she said. "It helps with different learning styles too because there is a lot of movement involved and... you get to learn different ways."

NuBaby participants learn American Sign Language (ASL). They also practise vocabulary songs and language development strategies that make it easier and faster to communicate with their babies.

Parents can sign up for baby sign language classes at www.nubabytoronto.com

Kenya Bruce // Observer

Cherrie Tam of NuBaby Toronto was at Treasure Island Toys on Danforth Ave. on March 19 to teach sign language to parents and their babies.



Paulina Pestryakov // Observer

Leasiders enjoy some "active fun" at the new Sky Zone Indoor Trampoline Park. The Esandar Drive facility opened its doors on March 1.

Visitors are jumping for joy about new trampoline park

By **PAULINA PESTRYAKOV**
The Observer

The warmer weather means more than just a spring in the step of the people behind the walls 45 Esandar Dr., in the Eglinton-Laird area.

At the new Sky Zone Indoor Trampoline Park, people are positively bouncing into the sunny season.

On March 1, Sky Zone launched its first Toronto location. The Leaside neighbourhood was chosen for its highway access and the availability of the big Esandar Drive building.

The motto at Sky Zone is "active fun," and according to

manager Dominic Buttiglieri, they mean it.

"We want to make it an experience for everyone, but we want to make it active fun," Buttiglieri said. "It's the alternative to playing video games."

The U.S.-based franchise says its goal is to help people become more active by offering the recreational use of trampolines — as opposed to restricting their use to gymnastics and training-oriented activities.

The trampoline even hosts a competitive dodgeball league that plays monthly tournaments.

"We're active fun," Butti-

glieri said.

"We're active fun for any size, age and ability. We have different programs for all demographics, whether it's toddler time, daytime summer camps, or our birthday programs, which are 'open jump.'

"We also have our aerobics classes for men and women, where you can achieve your goal weight. One of the main reasons we have been successful is because we cater to everyone."

Sky Zone has been open in Mississauga since November 2011, and it plans to expand to Ottawa and Winnipeg in the near future.

Bennington Heights once called 'finest site' in city

By **KRISTIN ELIASON**
The Observer

One of the sons of Bennington Heights' early residents delighted listeners at a spring show and tell for adults interested in local history.

The lecture, put on by the East York Historical Society, took place on March 20 at the S. Walter Stewart library branch — with about 30 people in attendance.

Peter Weatherhead was the guest speaker. As the son of the late Thomas Weatherhead, one of first residents of the area, Peter Weatherhead is more than familiar with the history of Bennington Heights — the neighbourhood just northwest of the Don Valley, between Bayview Avenue and Mt. Pleasant Road.

Weatherhead brought with him maps, old photographs and familial memories to share with the crowd.

At times, he read directly from his father's old notes, which dated back to his discovery of the land... and his plans for marriage.

"Upon learning of my engagement," Weatherhead quoted his father as saying, "(a former colleague) volunteered to show me the finest building site in the



Kristin Eliason // Observer

Peter Weatherhead talks to his audience during a 'show and tell' discussion on Bennington Heights.

Toronto district."

The site turned out to be what would one day become Bennington Heights.

And that community, just as the school that sits in its midst, would be named after Thomas Weatherhead's fiancée. So Bennington was Peter Weatherhead's mother's maiden name.

Weatherhead's talk explored many aspects of the region, which sits between the two cliffs of the Don River and south of the Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

And while the neighbourhood is now one of the city's most sought-after residential neighbourhoods, Weatherhead explained that it went through some hard times before its population began to grow.

"We built sites here and then gradually other people came, but people came finally when there were any kinds of services (in 1931)," he said. "The only problem was, we were in the middle of a depression, and then we had the war."