



Hospital security 'a top priority'

By LILIAN ASANTE
The Observer

Managers at Toronto East General Hospital say security remains a top priority.

TEGH has figured prominently on the police blotter since February, with a string of high-profile incidents.

Most dramatically, on Feb. 3, a man who had just been under psychiatric care at the hospital — and was still in his hospital gown — was shot and killed by police nearby.

Last week, there were two more developments in two days: On April 10, police identified a Toronto man as a suspect after TEGH security video captured images of someone entering empty rooms — where patients' personal items were stolen.

On April 11, a "skimmer" was found attached to an automatic teller machine at the hospital. That would allow the thieves who installed it to record bank-card information and PINs. They then use that information to manufacture their own illegal bank cards.

The police are using hospital security video to try to identify the skimming suspects, like they did in the case of 52-year-old Russell Gordon Scott of Toronto. Scott is wanted in connections with the March thefts from patients' rooms at both TEGH and Princess Margaret Hospital.

Angela Pappaianni is the co-ordinator of corporate communications at TEGH. She said the thief entered rooms when the patients were not around.

"When the patients and family members noticed their belongings were gone, they told security, who notified police," Pappaianni said.

Those thefts recalled an incident in 2010, when two men walked into the hospital, went into a dying patient's room and took her valuables. In that case as well, security video helped identify the pair of thieves responsible.

TEGH has a network of 250 security cameras, according to Clint Hodges, the manager of protection services at TEGH.

■ See SECURITY, page 3



Nicki Pulsone /// Observer

Spring into spring

With the sun shining on East York, many people are taking advantage of the spring weather. Here, shoppers enjoy the warmth on the Danforth as they purchase fresh fruits and vegetables.

COMMUNITY

Local charity boutique makes prom possible

New Circles removes economic barriers to attending the prom

By EVAN DE SOUSA
The Observer

Prom is a pinnacle moment in most high school students' lives. But between the perfect outfit, accessories, a limo and a ticket, prom night can cost hundreds of dollars, which is difficult for families who are struggling financially.

New Circles is a charity in the Flemingdon Park-Thorncliffe Park area running a prom boutique between April and June. The boutique provides gently used prom clothing and accessories to low-

income students.

"Most people have dresses in their closets maybe they only wore once, or suits that don't fit anymore," said Nita Saini, the volunteer program manager at New Circle.

"We thought this was a great place they could bring it so they could support young people attending their prom," Saini said.

The boutique has a wide variety of donated dresses, suits, shoes, jewelry and makeup.

"At New Circles, we believe that an economic barrier shouldn't allow someone not to attend their prom. They should be able to attend this milestone event in their life," Saini said.

April 28 is the official launch date of the boutique and there are already

140 appointments made.

The boutique is open Wednesday to Friday after school throughout May and the first week of June for appointments.

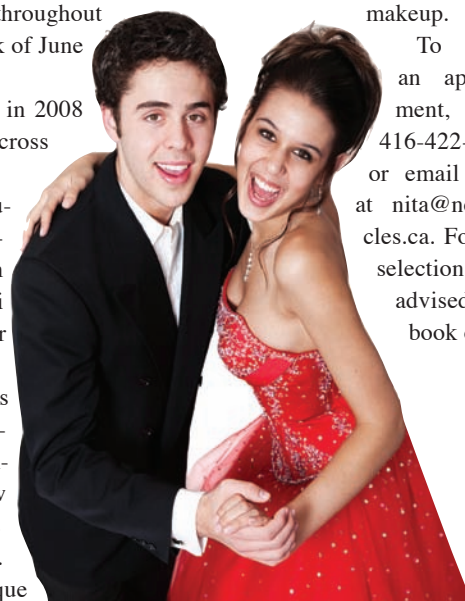
The program began in 2008 and benefits students across Toronto.

Last year, the boutique served 350 teenagers, 60 of whom were boys, and Saini predicts the number will increase this year.

Saini said she is "humbled by the generosity of the community," but that New Circles could always use more donations. Right now the boutique

needs more suits for males with a thinner physique and new, unused makeup.

To make an appointment, call 416-422-2591, or email Saini at nita@newcircles.ca. For best selection, it is advised to book early.



POLICE BRIEFS

Inquest called into shooting

The coroner's office announced last week that an inquest will be held into the death of Michael Eligon, a 29-year-old psychiatric patient at Toronto East General Hospital who police shot on Milverton Boulevard on Feb. 3. He left TEGH, roamed the neighbourhood and allegedly threatened officers with two pairs of scissors. The coroner, Dr. James Edwards, says the date and location of the inquest will be announced shortly.

Suspicious death probed

The body of a 55-year-old man was found on Friday outside an abandoned house on Taylor Drive, in the Coxwell Avenue and O'Connor Drive area. Police say the man had been dead for a couple of hours, and his body showed signs of serious trauma. The body was sent for an autopsy and the investigation is continuing. The death has been labeled suspicious.

~ Jabbari Weekes

Spring cleanup a success

By SUNNIE HUANG
The Observer

If the thought of cleaning up your yard makes you cringe, think nine hectares.

A dozen volunteers joined the Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve Committee on Saturday for the annual spring cleanup in the Don Valley. Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth councillor Mary Fragedakis and East York Historical Society president Jane Pitfield were among those in attendance.

Equipped with gloves and garbage bags, volunteers were divided into three groups to cover the preserve, passing animal trails, newly planted junipers and oaks along the way.

In less than half an hour, most of the garbage bags were full of "treasures" — some weighty, some trivial and some downright bizarre.

Coffee cups and plastic bags were among the most popular items that volunteers picked up. Many of them were blown from nearby roads, while others had just been dropped by passersby.

More noteworthy were a mattress-size Dairy Queen sign, a Volvo tire rim, an antique suitcase and a pair of plaid boxers.

Fragedakis said she was sur-



Sunnie Huang // Observer

Volunteers with the Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve Committee collected bags of garbage after the annual spring cleanup of the natural area in the Don Valley.

prised by how quickly the bags filled up.

"We certainly made a difference," she said. "It'd be a much more pleasant experience to be down there. It seems more natural and not littered."

Paula Davies, chair of the committee, said many people don't realize the benefits of volunteering for nature-focused organizations.

"A lot of people do volunteer work for other purposes,

not a lot of people go for the natural areas," she said. "Not only do you help the natural area, but you also get some exercise and you are outdoors."

The preserve has attracted environmental studies students from York University who want to learn more about the challenges and opportunities of natural areas.

In addition to the annual spring cleanup, volunteers also help out with weekly

restoration activities, such as plant maintenance, weed removal and trail improvement, which usually take place on Saturday mornings.

"[The hours] are not very long, but you really feel like you did something good," Davies said, adding that she hopes to see more youth volunteers.

"It's their future place too," she said, tossing yet another Tim Horton's coffee cup into her almost-full garbage bag.

FOOD FESTIVAL

Block party sold out in hours

By JOSHUA SPENCE
The Observer

The upcoming Street Food Block Party will be the largest food festival to take place at the Evergreen Brick Works, according to an event organizer.

"It's going to be bigger; twice the size of our normal monthly events," said Kate Clegg, a partner with the Toronto Underground Market. "We're going to be in a way bigger space, which is outdoors."

Hosting the event in an expanded space also allows more food vendors to

participate.

"We're going to have both food trucks and vendors, whereas for Toronto Underground Market events we only have vendors," she said.

Founder Hassel Aviles said tickets for the event sold out in a matter of hours.

Toronto Underground Market usually hosts monthly events at the Evergreen Brick Works, where vendors get the opportunity to show off their skills.

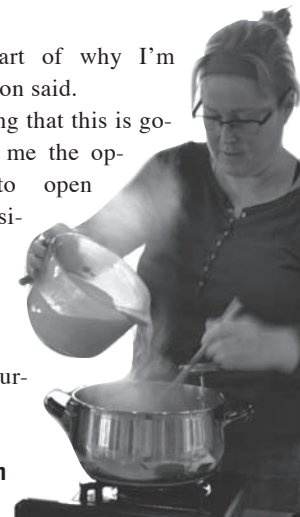
Shannon Hitchon runs All Mine Caramels and took part in the April 7 market. She sees participating as a direct avenue to running her own business.

"That's part of why I'm here," Hitchon said.

"I'm hoping that this is going to give me the opportunity to open my own business."

The Street Food Block Party takes place on Saturday, May 5.

■ Shannon Hitchon



WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Fitness for a good cause

A Leaside fitness studio is sponsoring its seventh annual fundraising event for the Canadian Diabetes Association tomorrow, April 21. All are welcome to walk, run or cycle through Sunnybrook Park. Funds will go to the association's research, programs and education. On-site registration begins at 9 a.m. at Northlea United Church, 125 Brentcliffe Rd. Participants can choose from the 2K, 5K or 10K routes. For more information, visit the website of "Spring Into Action" at insideout-studio.ca/action

New play to premiere in E.Y.

The East Side Players are presenting a version of Moliere's *The Hypochondriac*, premiering May 24 and running until June 9 at the Papermill Theatre, 67 Pottery Rd. The show starts at 8 p.m. Wednesdays to Saturdays, and at 2 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students. They're available online at www.eastsideplayers.ca, or 416-425-0917.

~ Jiyeon Ellie Kim

East York tenants told to document problems

By SCOTT BARBER
The Observer

Having problems with your landlord?

"Document, document, document," says Anna Rosenbluth, lawyer for Flemingdon Community Legal Services.

When faced with poor living conditions and rent disputes, thorough documentation is critical when seeking remedy.

"A lot of people try to deal with their issues informally," Rosenbluth said.

"If something isn't working, take a picture, or have a neighbour come witness the problem. Make sure to do written maintenance requests because that record can become very important

down the road."

Laws and regulations governing landlord-tenant relations are as vast as they are complicated. To the layperson, understanding tenants' rights is a daunting task. In order to overcome the issue, the East York Tenants Group held a legal information session on Wednesday.

Parkdale Community Legal Services hosted the "know your rights" meeting, seeking to empower East York renters with knowledge necessary for building effective relationships with landlords.

The meeting gave community members the opportunity to join together in their efforts for better living conditions.

According to Rosenbluth, the biggest issue

facing East York tenants is rental costs.

"Rent is really high in Toronto these days and they are outside what many families and individuals can afford," she said. "As a result, a lot of people aren't able to keep up and they fall into rental arrears."

Rosenbluth said that tenants often argue in court that they shouldn't have to pay full rent because of poor living conditions.

"It's an uphill battle for tenants because it's difficult to prove the maintenance issues and document all of the problems," she said.

In order to successfully dispute unpaid rent, tenants must also show that their landlord was aware of the maintenance problems in question, which requires proper documentation.

Documentation truly was the keyword as lawyers stressed the importance of keeping dated records of problems at the tenants' group meeting.

Rosenbluth also recommended that tenants contact the City of Toronto through its umbrella phone number, 311.

"City inspectors can take a look at your issues and order your landlord to do the necessary repairs," she said. "They can also apply fines against your landlord if they fail to take appropriate action."

East York tenants are also welcome to contact Flemingdon Community Legal Services, which offers free legal aid to citizens living within their East Toronto jurisdiction.

Hitting all the right notes

There's strength in numbers for local barbershoppers

By **JODEE BROWN**
The Observer

In today's talent show era, when the X-Factors and American Idols of the world are supposed to detect who North America's next mainstream superstar will be, one East York group has showcased impeccable singing quality to much less fanfare.

The East York Barbershoppers are a somewhat unique chorus. A group that's existed for over 60 years, it consists of 45 men, mostly seniors, who sing and harmonize for the love of music. The group is one of 30 barbershoppers chapters in Ontario, all derived from a concept that became popular in the 1930s, when men convened at barbershops to sing songs they heard on the radio before practising on their own.

Pat Hannon, music direc-

tor for the Barbershoppers, is a fourth-generation barber-shopper. For him, establishing chemistry is the most important factor, given the myriad voices trying to sing in harmony.

"When you're singing with a group of 20 guys, 30 guys or 100 guys, you're trying to get everyone the same kind of sound at the same time," he said. "You create a sound that is 10 times more powerful than one voice or a number of individual voices."

The group rehearses every Tuesday at Harmony Hall Centre for Seniors, at 2 Gower St. in the Dawes Road-Victoria Park Avenue area. The Barbershoppers donate proceeds from their performances toward Harmony Hall's funding, as well as to other charitable organizations. These include Harmonized for Speech, an effort dedicated toward helping young people with speech impediments.

In addition to catering to special needs, the Barbershoppers unveiled a Learn To Sing

program this past Tuesday, April 17. According to Hannon, the program will educate people on the fundamentals on singing, whether or not they have experience.

"Regardless of what you do, it's all very mechanical on how sound is produced, so if we can work these mechanics the same way, any voice will improve," he said.

Jerry Beckerle, former president and current member of the Barbershoppers, insists that such ventures underline the group's unity.

"We have a lot of fun. As with any group, there are some issues and so forth, but for the most parts, the guys are focused on learning to sing better and wanting to perform in public so we can raise some money for charity," he said.

Hannon echoes that sentiment, saying the group's main focus is helping people achieve happiness through music.

"If we can pass the word on and get people to enjoy singing, then that's the goal."



Jane Igharo /// Observer

The East York Barbershoppers sing in perfect harmony during their Tuesday night rehearsal at Harmony Hall.



Coriandre Lawrence /// Observer

Members of the North Leaside Women's Group stop to smell the flowers with local business owner Richard Van Nes (centre). He spoke to them at Northlea United Church on April 3.

Discussion blooms when florist visits

Northlea group talks tulips with Richard Van Nes

By **CORIANDRE LAWRENCE**
The Observer

Every Tuesday morning, Kathryn Whaley heads to Northlea United Church to meet with her women's group.

They discuss various serious topics, from relationships and technology, to health and medical issues.

On April 3, the women gathered their chairs around Richard Van Nes.

Standing more than six feet tall, his charisma and his knowledge of flow-

ers was engaging. He discussed elements of line, form and space when arranging tulips, carnations and daisies — a combination he is fond of and the women agreed.

Whaley is a member of the North Leaside Women's Group (NLWG), a non-denominational organization that caters to women of all ages and walks of life, providing social activities for its members.

The group's president, Paddy Duncan, said representatives from a wide range of local businesses are always willing to speak with members of the organization, but recently they have received more attention.

"We had Alison Sym-

ington recently talking to us about cancer research. We've had comedians," she said.

"We get some pretty interesting people and we welcome guests."

Van Nes, owner of Van Nes Flowers, volunteered time to share his knowledge of all things floral with the group.

"I haven't done one of these (visits) for a while. I enjoy it, but in small businesses it's tough to make time," he said.

"This is my passion, this is my work and this is what I do," he added. "Whether I am showing people a floral arrangement or I'm waiting on a customer in my store, I put everything into it."

Security procedures a priority for TEGH

Cameras, guards keep watch over hospital patients

Continued from page 1

He has worked in hospital security for over 14 years.

Hodges said the cameras supplement a team of four security guards who rotate to ensure that the facility is monitored at all times.

One guard is on duty in the emergency department, and the others roam the rest of the facilities.

"We have a patrol system that records their location, where they patrol and when the patrol," Hodges said.

Hodges declined to discuss specifics around the most critical incident at TEGH recently: the February death of Michael Eligon, 29 — a mentally ill man who walked out of TEGH and into the adjacent neighbourhood wearing a hospital gown, toque and socks.

When police found him, he was wielding two pairs of scissors. After a standoff with 12

Toronto police officers, Eligon was fatally shot on Milverton Boulevard near Coxwell Avenue.

Regional coroner Dr. James Edwards announced last week that an inquest will be held into the death, but he didn't say when or where. TEGH has only said that it is conducting an internal review around its handling of Eligon.

While not commenting on the Eligon case specifically, Hodges said TEGH initiates a security procedure called "Code Yellow" when they notice a patient is missing.

"The Code Yellow is initiated by the nursing staff when they notice that a patient is not where they are supposed to be," he said.

Hodges said the second step is to announce on the hospital PA system for the patient to return to their unit.

If the patient can't be found, then staff conduct a thorough search of the hospital. Security records a description of the individual on an internal telephone number that is accessible by all staff members so they may assist in the search.

"Depending on the seriousness of the situation or the medical status of that patient, we may involve the Toronto Police Service," Hodges said.

Although it is not uncommon for patients to leave the hospital, depending on their medical status, some are permitted to do so, while others are returned to the facility, Hodges explained.

"They may walk out on their own accord or they may decide that they would like to go to another facility, or leave our facility. It is difficult for us to prevent that," he said.

"We are not a jail, so we do not have those types of security systems. So we rely on people typically to stay in the hospital when they know they are required to do so."

Hodges said the hospital's security procedures are reassessed annually and after critical incidents. He said hospital security also does regular drills of all of their procedures.

"We use those drills to determine areas for improvement and to ensure we are conducting our emergency procedures properly," he said.



For more stories about East York events and issues, check out torontoobserver.ca

2012



Jodee Brown /// Observer

1937



Photo courtesy /// Scotiabank Group

Banking on 100 years of history

By **JODEE BROWN**
The Observer

A landmark institution in the heart of the Danforth community is using its centennial observance to help launch a revamp of its facilities.

Scotiabank celebrated the 100th anniversary of its Danforth-Pape branch's location at 649 Danforth Ave. a few weeks ago with a commemorative event attended by customers and even some city

dignitaries.

But while looking to the past, branch management is also looking to the future, with renovation plans to improve the banking experience for customers. Part of those plans is a merger with the neighbouring branch at 661 Danforth, formerly known as the National Bank of Greece until Scotiabank purchased the property in 2006.

According to the branch's customer service manager, Toula Kiritsis, Scotiabank's evolution has not

only been physical over the years. She says staff have created an atmosphere that clients feel comfortable in, including developing personal relationships with them.

"The essence of banking has changed over the years," she said. "We're now taking care of the customers, not only for their day-to-day transactions, but to help them achieve their financial goals."

The renovations, which are beginning this spring, include the installation of new ATMs, an outlet

for wheelchair accessibility and a customer lounge with televisions and other accessories to create a relaxing environment.

"The most modern amenities will be offered. We'll have a nice lounge area for our customers to sit in. They'll have a nice viewpoint of Pape and Danforth," Kiritsis said. "But mostly it will be for customer convenience and customer service."

Kiritsis said Scotiabank aims to represent East York's Greek community by having employees who

can relate to their customers. With half of the 14 staff members having Greek ancestry, it makes life easier for clients who may be uncomfortable speaking English.

"The fact that we have a portion of the staff that can speak Greek, and they can service our customers in Greek, they can get service in a language that's familiar to them... is invaluable," she said. "Scotiabank understands that when the community grows, everyone benefits."

Bird population heading south

By **CORTNEY COOK**
The Observer

It seems counter-intuitive that a man trying to rebuild endangered bird populations would support hunting.

But Joseph Duff, the co-founder of non-profit organization Open Migration, does, and in a visit to East York he tried to explain.

Many would associate Duff, one of Canada's leading commercial photographers, with the movie he and Bill Lishman inspired, *Fly Away Home*.

For the past decade, Duff's work has involved resolving issues with the migration patterns of cranes and Canada geese. Because of issues such as overhunting, environmental encroachment and domestication, those patterns have been seriously disturbed.

"We've influenced everything in nature, so we can't just leave and say 'Fix it yourselves,'" Duff told students at Centennial College's Carlaw Avenue campus. "It's our fault. We have an obligation to step in."

According to Duff, during the Depression and Second



Photo courtesy /// Open Migration

Joseph Duff, co-founder of Open Migration, leads a flock of whooping cranes south for the winter in his ultra-light aircraft.

World War, Canada geese were overhunted because it was free food.

"When I was kid, it was rare to see Canadian geese. That was something you reported at dinner-time," he said. "They were almost endangered."

Duff explained that the government turned the population decline around by restocking lakes with geese. Because of the promotion of population and the removal of predators controlling their numbers, there was something of a population boom. Now cities are annoyed with birds that defecate every-

where.

"They used to be a harbinger of changing seasons and the call of the wild and now people see them as flying rats," he said.

So traditional geese-hunting took hold. The problem has been that the "nuisance" birds in the parks aren't hunted. Instead, the migratory birds are the ones being pelted out of the sky.

"The wild population has dropped 75 per cent and the resident population has exploded," Duff said. "Everyone hates Canadian geese, but it's our own fault."

Duff's proposal is to

cull geese if we have to, as long as there are no natural predators near them. It's either do that or place more emphasis on regulated hunting, he said.

"Hunters are paying for 80 per cent of the conservation that is being done," he said, comparing ammunition taxes with naturalists who don't pay such taxes.

Duff remains passionate about rebuilding endangered populations like cranes. Though he doesn't like interfering with wildlife, he said some sort of managed cull of Canada geese is the "lesser of two evils."

E.Y. patios open until midnight

By **BRAYDON KEDDIE**
The Observer

Danforth bar and restaurant patios will get to keep their midnight closing times, after Toronto-East York Community Council voted on Tuesday to continue the patio pilot project — and consider making midnight closings permanent.

Before the pilot project, patios closed at 11. But two years ago, experimental midnight closings began under city observation.

There have been complaints, and some cafes have been charged with staying open past 12. Those bylaw cases have yet to be heard.

But the community councilors agreed on Tuesday that, overall, midnight closings have balanced business and resident interests.

Felix O'Callaghan, who lives near Danforth and Carlaw avenues, said some of the businesses around his home haven't had much control over their volume levels. But he thinks it's the responsibility of the customers to keep it down, not the busi-

ness owners.

"You wouldn't hear music or noise... but you might hear guys that were on their way out of the bar," he said.

"It comes down to personal responsibility and realizing, 'The sun's down, it's 12 o'clock, yeah we're still on the patio but we shouldn't be shouting and there's people that have to sleep in the area too.'"

With homes so close to some of the cafes, some business owners have been proactive.

John Klianis, manager of Pappas Grill on the corner of Danforth and Arundel Avenue, said he believes in being considerate of the residents around his restaurant.

He hasn't found any problems with keeping it open late, and in his 20 years with the restaurant, he said he's never received a noise complaint.

"I don't play loud, boisterous music here," Klianis said. "I don't create unwanted, unneeded noise because there's 20 feet away from me houses and families. For me it wouldn't be a smart thing to make loud music in the late nights."

CBC's beloved traffic guru switches lanes

Former East Yorker helped drivers plan routes for 40 years

By MICHAEL BAGHEL
The Observer

Jim Curran retired last month after 40 years of reporting on Toronto's rush-hour traffic for CBC Radio. But he can trace the root of his career back much farther than that, back to his childhood growing up in post-war East York.

Curran was born at Toronto East General Hospital. He attended George Webster Elementary School and St. Clair Junior High School, now known as Gordon A. Brown Middle School, before moving to North York as a teen.

Three broadcasters lived on Curran's street in East York: a man Curran knew only as Mr. Cook, who worked at CRFB; Hal Kelly, a baseball and hockey announcer; and Eddie Luther, who coincidentally was a traffic reporter.

"I was always fascinated with Mr. Kelly. He was one of those men with a deep, deep,

resonant voice," Curran said, "and when you're eight years old, it's just awesome, especially when you've heard (his voice) on the radio. So maybe that was a subconscious thing."

From a young age, Curran was also intrigued by radio itself.

"I used to have the shortwave on, close my eyes, put my hand on the dial of the shortwave radio and just turn the dial slowly and hear the voices," Curran said, "and I would just be fascinated that these voices were coming from all around the world."

Curran never expected to make traffic reporting his career. When he graduated from Ryerson with a diploma in radio-television arts and took a job reporting traffic for CBC, he saw it as a stepping stone in his career.

"I thought, 'Well, there's my opportunity to get in the door to become a radio producer,'" Curran said. "Forty years later, well, I was still doing traffic!"

Still, Curran is glad he kept the same role for almost his entire career. He credits his

co-workers at CBC with making his time there so enjoyable. He said leaving the people he worked with was one of the toughest things about retirement.

He's also grateful for the opportunities he had at the CBC outside of traffic coverage.

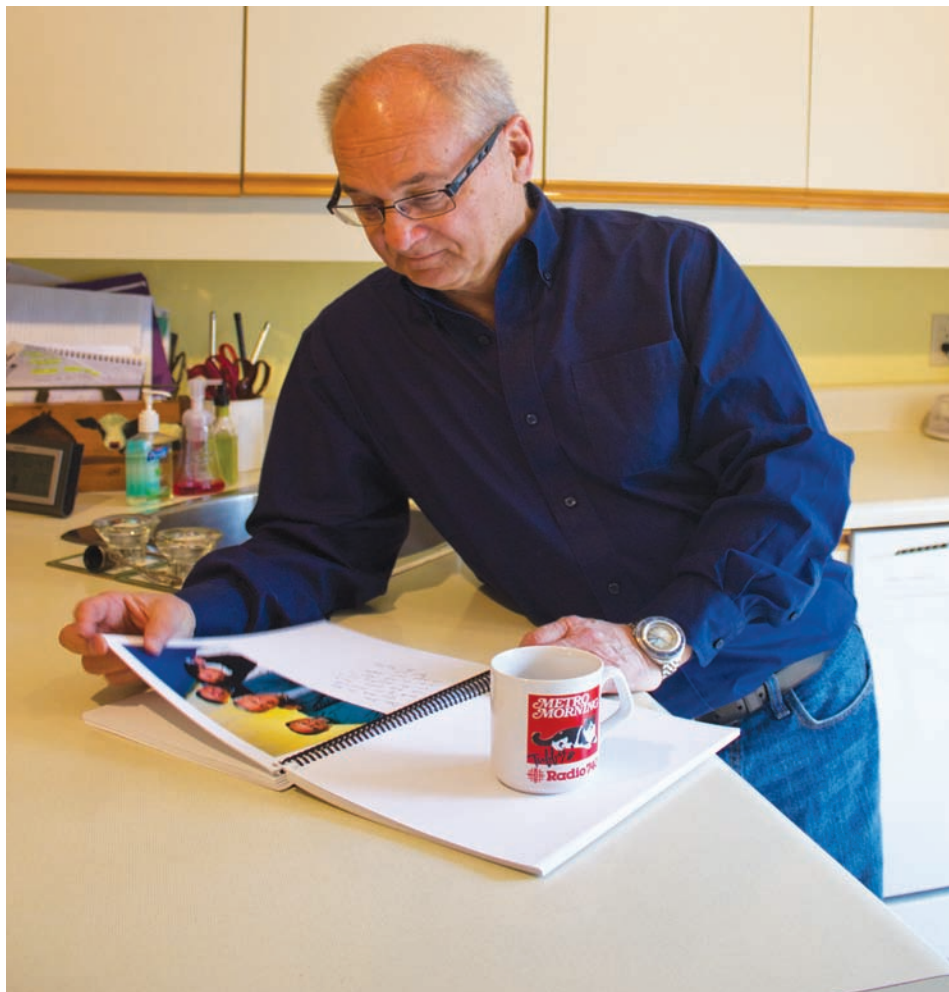
"For about eight years I did a music quiz in the afternoon (and) I hosted a travel show for three summers," Curran said.

His freelance work also extended beyond the CBC, thanks to his decision to continue learning new skills throughout his career.

"Ten years ago I realized there should be life after CBC," Curran said. "I started doing video work, took some courses at Ryerson and actually got a job shooting video for a travel show for three years."

Curran has independently produced a number of video projects for different clients and plans to continue doing so.

First, however, he plans to travel with his wife, Wendy, who is also retiring at the end of the month.



Michael Baghel // Observer

Newly retired Jim Curran reflects on a photo in his CBC scrapbook. Colleagues and well-wishers wrote messages for Curran in the scrapbook at a retirement celebration after his final shift on Metro Morning on March 29.

Paying the price for being late

Students can 'buy out' of detentions by forking out \$2

By ALDIS BRENNAN

To the staff, it's a fundraiser. To some students, it's a fine — and an unfair one at that.

Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute on Overlea Boulevard began a new policy this month after a surprise March 30 announcement by principal Ricky Goldenberg.

"It was first explained that starting on the following Monday, students caught arriving late for first period class would be charged two dollars," said Tommy Donnelly, who works for the school's student-run newspaper, The Reckoner.

By that following Monday, Donnelly said, the policy was clarified.

"Any student who arrived late for the first period was given a detention which they could 'buy out of' by paying the two dollars," he explained.

Money raised from the policy will support a fundraising project for the school across the street, Valley Park Middle School.

The sister school is in the middle of a 'Go Green' campaign, raising money



Aldis Brennan // Observer

Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute has introduced a new late policy. Students may donate \$2 for the Go Green Cricket Field at Valley Park.

for a new, environmentally-sustainable cricket field.

Shari Schwartz-Maltz, a spokesperson for the Toronto District School Board, spoke on her behalf.

"When students are late, they receive a detention, which is common practice in all our schools," Schwartz-Maltz said.

"If they want to instead contribute a toonie towards that particular charity, then their detention is lifted."

Administration at Marc

Garneau decided to institute the policy in an attempt to curb lateness.

"Principals have their own ways of reinforcing discipline in their schools," Schwartz-Maltz said.

"The principal felt that this was an innovative way of encouraging students not to be late to class."

According to Schwartz-Maltz, there has been no negative public reaction to the policy.

But some students at Marc Garneau don't like it.

Student council attempted to have the rule changed, but to no avail.

"When people are able to 'buy out' of a punishment, I feel it turns the rule book into a menu, with a price written in beside everything we aren't supposed to do," Donnelly said.

"Someone with a lot of money is then able to do whatever they want without worrying about the consequences. Someone with less money would not have this freedom."

COMMUNITY

E.Y. Strategy has the right plans for local youth

By JIYOUN ELLIE KIM
The Observer

A group of churches, community agencies and businesses in the Pape-Danforth area are working together to make East York a safer community.

The East York Strategy offers a positive space for local youth with support from police, schools, businesses and politicians.

After five years of persistent effort, the headquarters at Bethany Baptist Church on Pape Avenue at Cosburn now hosts about 200 youth in its sports and social programs on weekday evenings.

The program took its cue from the original Etobicoke Strategy. Bethany's pastor, Jim Parker, said the disconnection between some youth and the rest of the community drove him to take the initiative.

It mainly revolves around multiple leagues and drop-in sports sessions supported by the dozen or so sponsoring churches, and about 20 other community leaders, organizations and businesses.

But the program has also invited people like city councillor Mary Fragedakis and po-

lice officers from 54 Division to speak to the youth.

Parker explained how such small events make change.

"When the police officers come in to speak, kids in grades 3-5 get so excited that they raise their hands to their sockets," he said.

Some of the teens in middle and high school are skeptical at first, the pastor said, but even they gradually open up.

They're initially suspicious of the police, for instance, but then a sense of personal acquaintance helps them see the officers more fairly and think twice before engaging in reckless action.

And the reverse is true too, Parker said; the program has also helped the officers better understand the teens without preconceived notions.

Parker said the community as a whole has a responsibility to guide local youth to evaluate different options in front of them.

"Kids don't grow up dreaming to be bad. They all want to be good," he said. "If they are exposed to positive models who make constructive choices, many of them tend to make the best decision."

EDITORIALS

Give and receive

Your community is what you make it. With a realization of the needs of the people around you, and with work on their behalf, you can make your community stronger. Those who do it say that helping others is its own reward. And that anyone can make a difference.

But for others, public service volunteerism is just too hard — or too personally unrewarding. After all, we have jobs and personal lives to attend to.

Perhaps these folks just need a reminder that, much like in a family, the community 'chain' is only as strong as its weakest link and can falter when just one link is failing. Sometimes, the stronger links have to share their strength to shore up those weaker ones.

A person doesn't fall on hard times without a reason; pay cuts, work layoffs and medical issues are just some of the causes that can leave a hard-working person at rock-bottom.

Giving of our 'time, talent and treasure' is a great way to help. And besides supporting your community, it's a great way to have fun and experience new things.

On April 14, Uber Swap, an East York-area fundraiser going into its sixth year, had its spring clothing swap at the Queen Street East Presbyterian Church located at 947 Queen St. E. near Carlaw Avenue. Uber Swap is held four times per year and is a seasonal event.

It's a charity fundraiser with a bit of a twist. Anyone can participate but everyone has to bring at least one bag of good-quality items for trading. Everyone leaves with the satisfaction of helping the unfortunate and finding something unique and of good value.

It's a fundraiser that reaches out to those along the southern border of East York who love vintage items. The door entry price is only \$10. And the best thing about Uber Swap is that it donates leftover items to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, as well as a portion of the admission fee to help the underwear drive of the Red Door Shelter.

Community public service events like Uber Swap help strengthen our community while giving back to contributors. They're fun and personal ways of helping out those in need. They're quick and can be a great choice for a family outing.

They can work into personal schedules and help you and your children have a better understanding of teamwork and community involvement. There are always fundraisers and other events like Uber Swap that need extra helping hands, so get out and get involved.

Public service, through donations, volunteerism, or both, teaches a great life-lesson to those of any age... that we all need each other to get through hard times.

~ Jessica Vella

The rewards of art

Ps3s, Nintendos, Wiis, Xboxes and computers generally are redefining the word "fun" for today's kids. They have become glued to these shiny screens and have forgotten that their brains are capable of more than being reduced to a daze by an animated world.

Whatever happened to emotions, thoughts and other artistic impulses that could be expressed by big, inky markers or small, fragile crayons or wet, glossy paint? Today's kids have forgotten that they can conjure up their own world of adventure and excitement through art. And some parents seem to forget that their children need mental and physical stimulation that goes beyond contemplating how to defeat a dragon or aggressively pressing fingers against buttons. Some parents also seem to forget that art is less expensive than technological gadgets.

In many ways, art and other non-digital pursuits can accomplish what video games can't. Art promotes creativity and open-mindedness among individuals, which will benefit them in their professional and private lives. Kids who participate in art often have a willingness and a curiosity to learn new things and it allows them to think strategically. Art also opens the mind and the heart to creative expression. So while art awakens the senses and stimulates the mind, video games seem limiting by comparison.

James Okore, an East York student, put it well. Okore is in the fine arts program at the Carlaw Avenue campus of Centennial College. He says he never had an obsession with video games. He took up art at a young age and is thankful for the confidence it provided him.

"I was a bit shy when growing up and a bit anti-social, but after doing my artwork... people started to come by and ask me how I do what I do or they commented on my work. It made me more social and I gave myself forward and I talked.... It helped me to build relationships with people," said Okore — who hopes to pursue art as a career.

Thankfully for young people in East York, our community centres offer diverse art programs through the city's parks and recreation department, like arts and crafts, painting, drawing and pottery that will challenge a kid's mind and allow them to discover their potential, just like James Okore did.

Perhaps it's time for a gentle reminder to those youngsters' parents that art is the oil that lubricates our soul, our mind and our life.

~ Jane Igharo

COLUMN



Matthew Wocks // Observer

The outgoing Observer staff says goodbye and thanks to the East York community.

So long, farewell East York

By LUCY QI and CLARISA PESSOA
The Observer

The East York Observer is published by the journalism students of Centennial College — whose academic year is now winding down.

So this will be the last edition of the Observer until the fall, and on behalf of our colleagues in the Carlaw Avenue newsroom, we'd like to wish everyone an amazing summer filled with refreshment and relaxation.

When school resumes in September, we'll be working on the Observer's sister publications — the Toronto Observer news website and the Scarborough Observer magazine. So these are our last days of coverage of the East York community.

A new student staff is waiting in the wings and will take over from us as the leaves get ready to turn colour.

Although we've only been reporting on East York for a few months, we think we still made a connection with this community on a close and personal level. We have been out and about in East York — at the local schools and churches, at community and cultural

events. And it has been a pleasure.

After spending time gathering information in the neighborhoods of East York, we have realized the true spirit of the community.

In an urban setting, East York still maintains a small-town charm, despite its location so close to downtown Toronto.

And there's been plenty of news that's been fun to cover: East York has gone through an election, threats of municipal workers' strikes, upset among apartment-dwellers, the derailing of a merger between Toronto East General Hospital and the Scarborough Hospital, and announcements of austerity at various levels of government that will echo for months or years to come (especially at the school level, where residents may well soon see the closure of neighbourhood schools).

We have experienced an eerily warm winter together — one which we won't soon forget but are collectively happy to put behind us.

Now that our team will be passing on the responsibilities of the Observer to another group, we want to leave you with a little something special to remember us by....

'Tis the day of the last issue, when all through the room,
Everyone is cheering, even the broom.
The papers are stacked by the wall with care,
Hoping someone will read them, somewhere out there.
The editors are smiling, and nodding their heads,
The reporters, finally sleeping, are snug in their beds.
Flashbacks are creeping into their dreams,
For the term's been much harder than what it had seemed.
There were children doing backflips, all through the gym,
And a group of men who sang harmonized hymns.
There were cellphones being stolen at night on the streets,
And old couples in love, offering marriage tip sheets.
There were politics, politics, politicians, and fights,
All claiming to be the best, and claiming to be right.
There were fashion shows, accidents, library strikes and more,
Some good, some bad, all memorable, for sure!
Then all of a sudden, the clock struck one,
The year is now over, and summer's begun.
The reporters woke up, with sleep in their eyes,
Glanced at the time, and let out a sigh.
Through thick and thin, and unanswered calls,
We've made it through with iron balls.
We hope East York enjoyed our paper,
Have a great summer, and see you later!



Zenaira Ali // Observer

Team Philadelphia won the mini-Stanley Cup after defeating Team Detroit 4-2 in the East York Hockey Association's peewee division final. The boys celebrate next to their prize, along with their coaching staff, at East York Memorial Arena.

Hockey club hoists mini-Stanley Cup in victory

By ZENAIRA ALI
The Observer

The atmosphere was tense at East York Memorial Arena as hockey players and spectators awaited the puck drop for the final game of the season. The Stanley Cup was up for grabs.

The East York Hockey Association's (EYHA) 67th annual Little Stanley Cup Day was March 31.

In its final day of the season, champions of the peewee division were awarded a three-foot-NHL-authorized replica of the Stanley Cup.

It was a matchup between "Philadelphia" and "Detroit" in a game that could have gone either way, given how well players performed at both ends of the ice.

Although Detroit scored an early goal, Philadelphia tied it

up before the end of the first period and went on to score two more goals as the game continued.

Team Detroit managed to close Philadelphia's lead to one goal over the next period and pulled their goalie in a last-minute attempt to tie the game.

But an empty-netter from Philadelphia's Jacob Hannah, his second goal of the game, sealed the deal. The final score

was 4-2 Philadelphia.

Passersby approached Hannah outside the locker room, asking about his big game.

"It feels good," he said with a shy smile.

Team Philadelphia goalie Sam Swift stopped many close shots to keep his team in the game.

"It's amazing," Swift said afterwards.

He has been a goalie since he

was six years old.

"I decided to play goal just one year and I really liked it," Swift said. "I've been playing goal ever since."

Detroit goalie Noah Lawless also had a standout performance and was awarded the Don Murray Award for top EYHA peewee goalie of the season after the game.

Team Philadelphia Coach Jeff Seccull was thrilled for his

players.

"It's really exciting for the boys," he said. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for them so I'm really excited for them."

But he added that his first Cup win was gratifying for him as well.

"It was nice to see them come back," Seccull said. "It's rewarding for me because I see it through the boys."

NHL legends pass the puck for MS research

By ZENAIRA ALI
The Observer

NHL alumni and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 113 All-Stars took to an area ice rink late last month to raise money for a good cause.

Proceeds from the March 24 fundraiser at Ted Reeve Arena went to the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute at Mount Sinai Hospital.

The institute's senior investigator, Dr. John Roder, said the funds are valuable to the researchers.

"It's a wonderful relationship that we have with the Amalgamated Transit Union," Roder said.

"This ongoing support is critical to help further our work."

This year's tournament consisted of a game and skills competition at the Main Street arena between NHL alumni and the transit workers

ATU Local 113's Stan Rossell was part of the team that initiated the event 26 years ago.

"We played the first game at Varsity Arena with a United

Way function the TTC was putting on," he said. "Then the union took over the program."

The local later switched charities to multiple sclerosis (MS) to show solidarity with another union in the United States.

"We had a president that had that disease out of Los Angeles," Rossell said. "So Toronto tied in to raise money for that cause as well."

Rossell estimates they've raised \$800,000 from various fundraisers to date and credits the neighbourhood for its support.

"The game is really a community event," he said. "We have a lot of fun and it goes towards a good cause."

Attending this year was Wayne Gretzky's father, Walter Gretzky.

"He was great," Rossell said. "He must've signed autographs for two and a half hours."

The NHL old-timers ended up winning the game.

"I think we've only beaten them twice in 26 years, but it's not about winning," joked Rossell.



Kaitlin Clubley // Observer

Walter Gretzky waves at the crowd at Ted Reeve Arena during the NHL Alumni and ATU Local 113 fundraising game, which benefited multiple sclerosis research.



Nikki Pulsone // Observer

Bridal designer Leanne Belter shows off some pieces of her spring-summer collection. This East Yorker recently moved her flagship store to Broadview and Dundas, a location closer to home.

Entrepreneur is proud to call East York home

By **REBECCA STECKHAM**
The Observer

The area around East York's southwest corner recently received a breath of fresh air when East Yorker Leanne Belter decided to move the flagship store of her chain of designer bridal salons.

Although the new outlet — at Broadview Avenue and Dundas Street — is a few blocks outside East York's borders, Belter still considers her shop to be part of the East York community.

She's called East York home for over 25 years — which is part of the reason she wanted to relocate her store from its previous location, in the Queen East area.

"I really like the east end," she said. "I like the

neighbourhood. I've lived here a long time. I really love it."

Belter, who studied fashion at Toronto's International Academy of Merchandising and Design, always knew she had a knack for creativity and design.

When she designed and created her brother's fiancée's wedding gown after she graduated, it became clear where her passion lay.

Today, 22 years later, she has bridal stores on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, including six in Canada, 50 in the U.S., five in the U.K. and one in Mexico.

"I have to do a line twice a year and show it at Bridal Fashion Week in New York," she said.

Belter said it's not only her romantic and natural style that distinguishes her as a designer.

It's also the fact that all her gowns are designed and manufactured in her own store.

She chose the new flagship location specifically in the hope of giving back a little to the community she considers home.

The designer said that trends this spring and summer are moving toward longer sleeves and away from strapless, but lace is always in style.

Each design is meticulously created and manufactured over a long period of time, with Belter spending months with the gowns.

Instead of calling gowns by their style code, designs are given names such as Allison and Kaitlin.

"They're all my creations. It's almost like they're my children," Belter said. "They all get names."

EYCI remembers coaches through documentary

Movie brings back memories of earlier days at high school

By **BRAYDON KEDDIE**
The Observer

The stories of three East York coaches and their school have been captured in a documentary called Working Class Heroes.

The movie recounts the history of East York Collegiate Institute (EYCI) through the memories of former faculty and students from the 1950s.

Former EYCI coaches Mirk Hager, Harry Hull and Bruce Miller are the heroes of the film as they are remembered for shaping the school's football team, the Goliaths.

EYCI alumni Norman Dyson showed the film at the March 27 meeting of the East York Historical Society.

"(The documentary) enunciates how people from a working-class neighbourhood could come together and produce people that be-



Braydon Keddie // Observer

Norman Dyson, former Superior Court judge, hosts a documentary screening.

come leaders in their field," Dyson said.

"There are many doctors, lawyers and businessmen who have come out of the soil of East York and that's a story that should be told."

Being under the wings of these coaches inspired Dyson

and other former students to put together a scholarship in their name.

"We're not selling the documentary," Dyson said.

"But to get a copy you can make a donation of \$50 or more to the Hager-Hull-Miller Scholarship Fund Association."

The film, produced by Dyson's son, includes archival footage and audio of students and faculty from the 1950s, as well as interviews with EYCI graduates and reunions with their former classmates.

It also goes into some of detail of how East York and its neighbourhoods were built from the ground up.

Margaret McRae of the East York Historical Society said it was a good idea to have the film shown to members for its connection to their past.

"It's about East York and all of our members are passionate East Yorkers," McRae said.

"Many of them did go to the school. It brought back memories for them."

Will Bayview, Eglinton repeat as 'worst roads'?

By **NICHOLAS PROSPERO**
The Observer

The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) has again launched its "Worst Roads" campaign, set on finding the 20 most abysmal thoroughfares in the province.

Ontarians are being asked to vote for the roads they find most dangerous and in need of upgrades. After the most recent poll, two East York roads made the list: Bayview and Eglinton avenues, ranked 16th and 17th overall.

Dan Petersen is an East

York mechanic and believes this year, not many local roads will make the list.

"Nobody has come in from this area saying any of the roads are bad this year," he said. "When the roads freeze and defrost, that's when cracks and potholes happen. But there was no deep freeze this year, so I think we got pretty lucky with no potholes this year."

As for the CAA campaign, Petersen believes it is doing its job. Petersen said in his commute, he has noticed roads in poor condition being mended.

"Eglinton was really bad a couple years ago, but now the section of it I travel is perfect," he said.

"I would have to say the roads are in fairly good condition in this area."

Potholes can grow the longer they are left unfixed, due to continued abuse from the elements and vehicles.

Potholes can also cause serious damage to cars, with the most common damage being punctured tires, crushed rims and suspension issues. Some problems can cost over \$500 to repair.

City takes sport field fees off the table – for now

Some councillors are in favour of reinstating waived fees next year

By **TEONA BAETU**
The Observer

The city's decision to waive permit fees for usage of sport fields is a popular one.

"We're all ecstatic that the situation got rectified because it put us in a bad spot," said Andrew Pace, president of the East York Baseball Association.

The proposed fees caused an uproar in sports leagues because when they were announced, many leagues already registered and charged players.

But while Ward 26/Don Valley West councillor John Parker acknowledges that the timing may have been off, he thinks the fees are necessary.

"I think we did the right thing," Parker said. "We just did the right thing a little later than we should have."

The decision to waive the fees for 2012 was clear to city council on April 9, when councillors unanimously voted 41-0 in support. But the road ahead is not as clear.

Some councillors favour reinstating the fees in 2013 after consultation with various sports leagues, while others think added costs are a bad idea altogether. Parker maintains that the fees are necessary.

"Right now we do not have the



Photo courtesy // Andrew Pace

revenues to finance the expenses that we've got and we are doing the best we can to keep the expenses as low as possible," Parker said.

But Ward 31/Beaches-East York

councillor Janet Davis is concerned that fees may make sport leagues too costly.

"For many leagues, the new fees will make their programs unaffordable for families," she said.

Pace said he wouldn't mind paying the fee for 2013, even though it is more like a tax. The difference between a fee and a tax is that a fee's proceeds could be allocated to the fields, whereas taxes are for general revenues.

"The funds were not going to go toward hiring any additional staff or improving the quality of the fields whatsoever," Davis said. But Parker compared the fees to TTC fares.

"We all contribute to the overall

cost of running the bus, but the particular person who rides the bus pays the ticket to get on," he said.

Pace said he would be unwilling to pay the fee unless there is an actual benefit to teams attached. He added that municipalities who charge fees also keep them "immaculate," whereas his team does a lot of maintenance.

Parker said he is grateful for the extra work leagues do to maintain fields, but the city can't afford to maintain its fields at a professional level.

"We have a number of leagues that play at a competitive level and they require a field that is maintained to a professional standard," Parker said. "Those organizations take responsibility for upgrading the fields."