



Observer, Will Senn and Monique Plessas

**RALLY FOR POOLS:** More than 100 people braved the rain and cold to demonstrate in favour of retaining public school pools in East York and across Toronto.

# E. Y. pools getting short reprieve

By WILL SENN

Three East York-area swimming pools remain on the chopping block, but won't face the axe immediately, after scores of swimmers and their parents showed up at Toronto District School Board headquarters on Wednesday night in an effort to keep Toronto school pools open.

The protesters picketed at the board's Yonge Street office to protest the potential closure of at least seven and as many as 26 public school pools around Toronto.

Those include pools at Danforth

Collegiate and Technical Institute on Greenwood Avenue, Monarch Park Collegiate near Danforth and Coxwell avenues, and Earl Grey Senior Public School near Danforth and Pape.

The TDSB initially voted to close 39 pools in June 2007, but enlisted former Toronto mayor David Crombie to find alternative means of funding. This week, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty came forward with capital funding to keep the pools open, provided more money comes from other sectors.

So on Wednesday night, after the protests outside, TDSB trustees voted to defer a decision on 26 pools until the regular June meeting, granting them at least a temporary reprieve.

The 26 include seven pools that the Crombie group slated for closure — and that includes Danforth Tech. The 26 also includes 19 pools put on probation by Crombie — and those include both Monarch Park and Earl Grey. Another 13 pools appear safe. All of those are outside the East York area.

Laura Pratt is in charge of organizing meets for the Toronto Swim Club. She attended the Wednesday protest because she wants to make sure that she still has swim meets to manage this summer. She says that without funding, more than 400 kids won't have a place to swim come May 30.

"We have 230 members right now, and we'd have to shrink the club if we lost those pools," she said. "We're already turning kids away now, so we can't grow the club (without the pools)."



Observer, Meghan Housley

**STRIKING A POSE:** Atkinson Fellow Judy Steed visited Centennial College's East York campus on April 8 to discuss her year's worth of research on aging. Steed has practised yoga for the last 30 years and says exercise decreases the risk of disease.

## Steed's illness sheds light on seniors' issues

By STEVE DARLEY

A near-death experience brought a veteran journalist closer to her subject, opening her eyes to the idea that Ontario could be one of the best places in the world to grow old.

Judy Steed of the Toronto Star was awarded the prestigious 2008 Atkinson Fellowship to undertake a year-long research project focused on seniors and senior care. The fellowship provides grants to journalists taking on projects of social importance.

Steed had heard about a "demographic tsunami" on its way as a generation of boomers retired. Her piqued interest, and the fact she's survived a brain aneurysm, drove her deep into a world very new to her.

"The brain aneurysm was a gift, in a way. It brought me in touch with my subject in a way that I hadn't anticipated," Steed said during a recent visit to Centennial College's East York campus. "Suddenly I knew what it was to be totally physically vulnerable, completely lacking in energy, which happens to some old people and some people in nursing homes."

Steed spoke passionately about the state of senior care, its challenges and its opportunities. As the demographic mix changes and the proportion of seniors increases, she said the current system in Ontario will not be able to successfully cope.

Changes are afoot, however, and Steed spoke glowingly of former health minister George Smitherman.

"Ontario could be one of the best places in the world to grow old in terms of the policy directions," she said.

One of Smitherman's main changes was the division of Ontario into 14 Local Health Integration Networks, working alongside 14 Community Care Access Centres.

See **STEED**, page 2



**GIVE HER A HAND:** Laura Stanley's Observer photo placed third out of 17 entries in the OCNA's 'Student Photography' category.

## Student's future in hand

By ALEXANDRA KAZIA

A graduating student of Centennial College's East York campus is modest about her award for an Observer photograph depicting children getting their hands dirty.

Laura Stanley was awarded third place in the student photography category at the Ontario Community Newspaper Association's 2008 Better Newspaper Awards, held on April 17 in Toronto.

"It's flattering because I don't really see my work as great," she said. "It's just something I love to do."

Stanley focused on getting a unique shot that will reach out to people.

"I felt the hands reached out and grabbed the readers," she said of the picture, published in April, 2008.

The OCNA's top two prizes both went to students at Loyalist College in Belleville: a shot of a scarred man and his wife won first prize; a nude woman won second.

The first-prize winner was "a good shot filled with emotion," Stanley said. About the runner-up, she added, "Our paper may be student-run but it is published for the community, so I don't think we could publish something so racy."

Stanley plans to head to New York City in a few weeks for a photo-journalism internship, and said she is lucky to be doing what she loves.

"I try to remain humble about my work," she said. "When somebody sees something in it, that's amazing."

# Art, science fuse to focus on water

By ALEXANDRA KAZIA

Students and Ontario's environment minister descended on the Ontario Science Centre this week to prove how art and science can work together, inspiring research and drawing attention to issues concerning Earth's most vital natural resource — water.

The science centre celebrated Earth Week on April 20 with a focus on water by showcasing the release of the first-ever Water Quality of Ontario Report. Students from Denlow Public School and Don Mills Collegiate Institute gathered with volunteers for the report's release and to unveil their "Fishnet" project, making suggestions to improve fish habitats.

Lesley Lewis, the centre's CEO, said it's the perfect venue for such an event because of the surrounding E.T. Seton Park, one of the largest urban wetlands in North America.

"This marsh, which is part of the Don Watershed, is part of a wonderful habitat," Lewis said. "We value it as a beautiful location for nature walks, special programming and science camp activities, and are doing everything we can do protect it."

The Water Quality of Ontario Report examined levels of dangerous toxins in Ontario's water.



Observer, Alexandra Kazia

**CELEBRATING EARTH WEEK:** Students from Denlow Public School gather to learn about water and showcase their art at the Ontario Science Centre during the release of the first-ever Water Quality in Ontario Report.

It showed a decrease in PCBs and other contaminants in the Great Lakes, and lower phosphorus levels in Lake Simcoe.

Environment Minister John Gerretsen disagreed with one woman who spoke up at the re-

port's unveiling to say that any accomplishments belong to previous governments and that the recent government has not done enough. Gerretsen admitted more needs to be done.

"I think the work we are do-

ing around the Lake Simcoe Protection Act... [is] extremely important," he said. "You will see that plan being developed right now and will be revealed sometime in the very near future. A lot of work has been done."

## Steed feels seniors should not be overlooked

Cont'd. from page 1

Sustainability is one of the critical issues in long-term senior care development. The world leaders in senior care are the Scandinavian nations, led by Denmark.

They too are worried about sustainability, according to Margaret MacAdam, a Toronto gerontologist.

Although the Danes spend approximately twice as much per person in nursing home care, Steed believes positive steps could be made in Canada through philosophical changes.

She saw a marked difference in the public perception of seniors in Denmark versus Canada.

Steed's hospital experience for her surgery and subsequent recovery illustrated the problem of ageism.

"We look through old people," she said. "We don't see them."

Society and public policy are much more inclusive in Denmark.

The focus is on a full and active life either in a care facility or at home with structured help.

"The policy is that there's no separate staff to do cooking

or cleaning. If you can peel potatoes, you peel potatoes. If you can hold a broom, you sweep," Steed said.

A fun, loving warmth permeates care facilities in Scandinavia, she said.

Likening them to beautiful Muskoka cottages, Steed noted that the facilities are designed around the inhabitants' needs.

New dementia buildings are full of light, circular in design, with a central garden; they are safe and secure, but most importantly, they are home.

"Full of light, a feeling of

happiness, everybody has something to do, everybody belongs," she said. "You don't feel that there's a horrible plague of dementia because the world is built to take care of them."

Denmark is the gold standard in long-term care and Ontario will never spend twice as much per person to get there, she added.

Steed believes small changes in the perception of seniors, their abilities and their challenges could go a long way toward ensuring a higher quality of living for much later in life.

—Omar Mosleh

## What's on

### Spring time

The Insideout fitness studio is hosting the 4th annual Spring Into Action walk tomorrow (April 25) beginning at 10 a.m. Enjoy a party in the park, a live band, prizes and more. Proceeds go to the Canadian Diabetes Association and the Flemingdon food bank. Pledge forms are available from Insideout Studio, located at 860 Millwood Rd. Pre-registration is \$15 per person, \$30 per family or \$25 per person tomorrow. Bring a non-perishable food item and get \$3 off the registration fee.

### The Eh! List

The Toronto Public Library is presenting the Eh! List Author Series: 21 of the best Canadian fiction and non-fiction writers, visiting city libraries across Toronto. The S. Walter Stewart library, located at 170 Memorial Park Dr., will host *Rowboat in A Hurricane* author Julie Angus on May 6, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit [www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/ehlist/](http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/ehlist/)

### Garden sale

The Leaside Garden Society wants you to mark May 9 on your calendars — the date of its annual sale. This popular event runs from 9 a.m. until noon at TraceManes Community Centre, located at Millwood Road and McRae Drive. Arrive early to get the best pickings from the variety of annuals and perennials. For more information, visit [www.leasidegardensociety.org](http://www.leasidegardensociety.org)

—Jenna Conter

## Councillor organizes park cleanups

By JESSICKA LODUCA

The snow has disappeared, the weather is warming and East York parks are getting their own spring cleanings.

In anticipation of Wednesday's Earth Day observances, Beaches-East York councillor Janet Davis organized numerous community cleanups to help beautify East York recreational areas.

On April 19, members of the East York Garden Club paired up with Davis in Stan Wadlow Park Rockery Garden on Cosburn Avenue to help sparkle up the vicinity.

In 2004, Davis and Mayor David Miller announced a city-wide "Clean and Beautiful" campaign to keep Toronto tidy.

The plan entailed revitalizing public spaces with the participation of people in the neighbourhood.

Now, Davis hosts her own spring cleanups in order to benefit East York's gardens and parks.

"We now have one day every year where we engage our neighbourhoods in making them cleaner and more beautiful," she said. "It's grown every year and it's quite exciting that people have developed a much stronger sense of pride in their neighbourhood by making contribu-



Observer, Jessicka Loduca

**CLEAN SWEEP:** Councillor Janet Davis encourages Conner Waugh and Alexander Arriaza, both 12, to put their skateboards down and assist her in freshening up Stan Wadlow Park.

tions to keep things clean."

Donning gloves and hoisting a garbage bag, Davis encouraged local children skateboarding in the park to lend a hand.

"Residents' associations are cleaning our local parks; even

the kids of the skate park here are helping out," Davis said. "It helps residents feel a sense of real ownership for their neighbourhood by making an active contribution."

Veronica Callinan, president

of the garden club, also took part by weeding and planting new shrubs and flowers in Stan Wadlow Park.

"All of our plants are good for East York because they are low maintenance," Callinan said. "They're for our zone and they have all-year interest. This is what gardeners want. We can use it as an educational garden as well."

Davis said community cleanups help people connect, and give residents a sense of ownership and pride in their green spaces.

"When neighbours come together collectively to engage in their space... they have a much stronger sense of community," she said. "That sense of community engagement is a really important element for a healthy neighbourhood and a healthy city."

"The more we feel a sense of pride and commitment to our neighbourhoods, then more people are willing to be involved in building a stronger and better city."

Additional cleanups will be held April 25, along with Mayor David Miller's Community Clean-Up Day.

To see a list of parks, visit: [www.janetdavis.ca](http://www.janetdavis.ca)

# Urban gardens 'on the grow' in East York

By JASON WONG

While still perfecting the technique to make money grow on trees, the members of the East York Garden Club can at least use their green thumbs to save cash.

At their April 16 meeting, nearly all of the gardeners present talked about harvesting tomatoes, beans, broccoli and asparagus.

According to Paula Meaney, some of the plants could be grown in a remarkably small space.

"You probably need about 16 bean plants and you can grow them in a space about this big," she said holding her hands about a foot and a half apart.

Belinda Gallager was the guest speaker at the meeting, held at the Stan Wadlow Community Centre on Cedarvale Avenue. Gallager works for the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington, Ont. and advocates supplementing a diet with backyard vegetables.

"I think it's going to be a great year for gardening," she said. "With the economy the way it is, more and more people are staying at home. A lot of people are now looking at their garden for a solution and going 'What can I do?'"

Though the idea of urban vegetable gardens has been around for a long time, some say



Observer, Jason Wong

**ONIONS FOR GREEN THUMBS:** Small onions were offered to East York Garden Club members at their April 16 meeting — where the topic of discussion was growing edibles.

the activity has become much more common.

"We know there's been a whole new trend to do organic gardening, growing vegetables in home gardens again," Gallager said. "I think the best

suggestion is to start with simple plants. It's probably better to start with sprouted plants from a nursery. You get a jump start on the season."

Even if you live in an apartment, she says you can

still grow fresh tomatoes and other vegetables on a window sill year-round.

"You can grow patio tomatoes on a window sill and they give you a very good return on your investment," she said. "The other

things that are very successful on window sills are herbs."

Shannon, who has been gardening in East York for most of her life, has tried a variety of plants in her vegetable patch, and says the best thing to do is try as many things as possible.

"I've tried tomatoes, zucchini, peas, beans and potatoes so far," she said. "The potatoes grow really well here in East York because of the sandy soil. Tomatoes are really good because you get a lot of them from one plant. I end up giving them away or eating them until November."

Interestingly, one crop she says to avoid is a North American summer staple.

"Don't try to grow corn on the cob," she said. "The raccoons like it less ripe than we do."

As for peas, Shannon advises that "you have to plant really early in the season."

Veronica Callinan, the president of the garden club, said the most important thing a new gardener can do is join the club.

"I think anyone with a garden should join a garden club," she said. You get discounts at nurseries. Also, when we have sales, you get plants that were grown in your area and in your soil, so there's a pretty good chance they'll grow well in your own gardens."

## Former nursing home resurrected as housing to be completed in 2010

By JESSICKA LODUCA

Long-time plans to resurrect the empty rooms of the former Chester Village Nursing Home, at East York's southeast corner, will be a reality this summer.

The Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) has plans to renovate the building, located at 717 Broadview Ave., into an affordable housing complex for seniors. A \$4.3-million allowance from the government will help fund the development.

"We hope to start renovations this summer with an eye toward completion by late 2010," said Kyle Rooks, media consultant for TCHC. "We will keep the community updated with more information as things move along."

Both the federal and city governments cite what they say is their dedication to providing affordable housing to those who need it — including seniors in Toronto, who they say will have access to quality services to meet their specific needs while remaining close to family and friends in the community.

The TCHC expects to divide

the former chronic care facility into 60-70 independent living rental units that Rooks says will be affordable and safe.

Earlier plans to transform the facility into a shelter for street people were shelved.

"There were plans to turn the building into a homeless shelter, but the City of Toronto felt it was necessary to provide seniors with affordable housing," Rooks said. "It is a much-needed addition to the city."

The previous tenants of Chester Village Nursing Home were relocated to a new establishment at 3555 Danforth Ave. near Warden Avenue two years ago.

City councillor Paula Fletcher said she's in favour of the project along with residents in the neighbourhood.

"Seniors have a real need for affordable housing, so this is a win-win situation for them and the neighbourhood," Fletcher said. "It's really important this building is kept as seniors housing."

"The people of the community are welcoming this project with open arms," Rooks said.

## Kidding around



Observer, Will Senn

**ART TIME:** Grade 5 students from George Webster Public School toured Centennial College's East York campus on April 9. They visited the Observer newsroom and participated in creative activities such as finger painting. Left to right: Luna Nikolic, Samantha Cellupica-Singh, Carlie Zottich and Naomi Sullivan talk about their artwork.

## Lit City Classics showcases great Toronto stories

By DAVID NICHOLAS

There may be millions of stories in the naked city, but Toronto has its share to tell from its 175-year history. Last week, the S. Walter Stewart library celebrated some of them.

On April 14, a showcase of works focusing on the city of Toronto took place at the branch as part of Lit City Classics, a city program about writers who use the city as inspiration as

well as a setting in their works.

Ulana Baluk, curator of the Todmorden Mills Historical Museum and Arts Centre, hosted the event and picked the selections, which were performed by the East Side Players.

"They are very personal," she said. "I picked pieces that spoke to and of the city."

Baluk chose selections from books that had common themes, such as love, alienation and

premonitions of Toronto. The works presented included *The Origin of Waves* by Austin Clarke, *In The Skin of a Lion* by Michael Ondaatje, *The Brave Never Write Poetry* by Daniel Jones and *The Toronto You Are Leaving* by Gordon Stewart Anderson.

While the event celebrated the written word, the performances of the East Side Players brought the works to life.

Taking the stage were Deryn Dewalt, Robert Ouellette and Kelly Morrison.

Morrison's reading of *Basic Black with Pearls* by Helen Weinzwieg was one of the highlights. She spoke slowly and thoughtfully and delivered her lines with force when needed.

Ouellette literally moved the podium in front of him with his powerful delivery of *The Toronto You Are Leaving*. His use of

different voices and comic timing brought laughs to the event.

DeWalt's delivery of *Strange Fugitive* by Morley Callaghan took the tone of a grandfather talking to his grandson. DeWalt's slow and careful delivery was another high point.

Lit City continues until May with events taking place across the city. For a list of upcoming events visit <http://www.toronto.ca/litcity/>



Observer, CiaránThompson

**SPY IN TRAINING:** Aida Mortazavi looks at clues with Science Centre host Kulin Matchhar (left) and Sabrina Cheng at The Science of Spying exhibition. Visitors go through various training activities to become a "secret agent."

## Budding Bonds enjoy exhibition of espionage at Ontario Science Centre

By CIARAN THOMPSON

This season, kids can turn off their favourite James Bond or Jacques Clouseau movie and head over to the Ontario Science Centre.

As part of its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the centre is presenting an exhibition called The Science of Spying, where children and families can learn what it takes to be a 21<sup>st</sup> century spy.

Antonia Spanos is the head of the series of touring exhibits called "The Science of..."

"We try to kind of keep away from what you see in the movies," she said. "It's not about guns and fast cars. It's about being a scientist."

The exhibition consists of six stages that visitors must complete to become a secret agent: recruitment, training, technology, mission, future and an escape through a computer vision security system.

Organizers have tried to make the exhibition as real and accurate as possible.

"We spoke to a gentleman who was ex-MI6... and a lady who was ex-CIA and they spoke to us extensively about what it means to be a spy," Spanos said.

But to become a spy, agents must complete activities such as how to spot a liar, decoding hidden messages, disguising yourself and overcoming your fear of danger and the unknown.

Leslie Lewis is CEO of the Ontario Science Centre.

"At the science centre, we are always looking for subjects that we believe will really intrigue our visitors, which also have a real science and technology component to them," Lewis said. "Spying is a subject that has intrigued people for many years."

Aside from intense training and the mission visitors must complete, there are exhibits displaying real spy tools that have been used by agents, such as hidden cameras and face modification masks.

Spanos says The Science of Spying is a unique experience.

"It's the largest exhibition of its kind in the world," she said. "It's here in Canada for the first time."

For those who complete the mission of becoming an agent, the science centre has created an online mystery game to utilize the skills you have learned.

"We wanted to add something to the exhibition reflecting the fact it was here at the Ontario Science Centre," Lewis said.

"What we've developed is an online game where children and their families have to follow a series of new clues every week between now and Sept. 26," she said. "The challenge is to help a young girl called Jamie track down her grandfather, who is lost in cyberspace."

Clues can be found through the Internet or by visiting any of the science centre exhibitions and programs this year.

The exhibition opened on April 9 and runs until Sept. 7.

This classified document will self-destruct in five seconds.

## Pink-slip party brings people recently laid off together with recruiters

By TIM BURDEN

Out-of-work executives wore their colours on their sleeves at a pink-slip party held on April 14 at the Globe Bistro on Danforth.

Party organizer Jean Treadwell designed the event to get recruiters and employers together with recently laid off — or "pink-slipped" — workers from the mid- to high-level management and executive ranks. She modeled it after parties organized in New York for laid-off Wall Street brokers, victims of the current recession.

Party-goers wore colour-coded wristbands that indicated why they were there: the pink-slippers got pink, recruiters wore green and supporters and friends of pink-slippers had blue armbands on. Everyone sported business attire and had business cards at the ready.

"It's with mixed feelings that I say that tonight is a real success," Treadwell said in her introduction speech, referring to the fact most of the people there had been recently pink-slipped.

She expected "a few dozen people" to show up, but well over 200 crammed into the normally-staid dining areas of the swank Globe Bistro. It's a long and narrow space — it spent 47 years being a bowling alley — and that night

it was almost impossible to get from one end to the other. But that didn't stop Lynn McCready, who had a pink wristband, from mingling with recruiters and trying to drum up a new career.

"Ideally I'd like my old job back at Nortel," said McCready. "But it could also be a lot of fun to do something a little bit different. I'm here to have some fun and meet new people."

Treadwell heard about the New York parties on a CBC report and pulled the party together in less than a month.

She said the goal was to have fun and help people expand their networks. She had been laid off herself about a year ago, but found new opportunities through networking. She hoped for a more specific outcome too.

"I'd like to see 10 per cent of

the people here look back and say, 'I got my job because of this,'" Treadwell said.

Representatives from at least 15 companies that specialize in professional and financial sector recruiting showed up at the party. And the people wearing pink wristbands came from more than 150 different companies, Treadwell said.

Five uniformed recruitment officers representing various services of the Canadian Armed Forces also came to mingle and network with the other pink-slip party participants.

"People think if they join the Forces we'll put you in a uniform and ship you to Afghanistan," said Capt. Skip Sacco, who wore air force blue. "They don't realize we have our own doctors, lawyers, engineers and administrative officers. And the jobs some of these people here do are exactly the same as what some of our officers do."

He called these jobs the "purple trades," because they're not associated with one particular branch of the Forces.

"I guess someone thought purple is what you get if you mix army green and air force blue and navy white," said Sacco.

"We have 8,000 jobs to fill this year," said Lt.-Cmdr. Michael Wood, who was there from the navy. "If you're a Canadian citizen between the ages of 17 and 57 and have at least a Grade 10 education, we can probably find a place for you."

The education requirement was easily met by participants at the party, most of whom have degrees and years of experience.

Treadwell said the \$20 admission charge was to make sure people were serious about coming, without being a barrier.

"I know these are high-earning individuals," she said. "But by the same token these are people who have recently lost their jobs."

Proceeds from the event will go to Project Winter Survival, which hands out winter survival kits to people living on the streets. The kits contain items such as sleeping bags and blankets.



WOOD



TREADWELL

## Dan Hill talks about life, love and loss with East York students

By LUKE CHAMPION

Dan Hill feels more comfortable with a guitar in his hand. He explains that the instrument has been his conduit to the world for so long, it just seems natural to have it perched on his knee, occasionally plucking at the strings, while he speaks.

The singer-songwriter, perhaps best known for the song *Sometimes When We Touch*, visited Centennial College's East York campus on April 3. He spoke to journalism students about his career, his family and his recent memoir *I Am My Father's Son*.

The book explores his relationship with his late father, Daniel Grafton Hill III. It was a bond filled with moments of great struggle as well as sweetness, but ultimately it informed his songwriting right down to its very core.

"It's no coincidence my brother (Laurence Hill, *The Book of Negroes*) is one of the most successful authors to ever come out of this country and I'm one of the most successful songwriters to ever come out of this country," Hill said. "That would never have happened without the influence of my father."

Despite the strained relationship they often shared, or perhaps because of it, he was always driven to do better. Hill says his father was a complicated man; he was both inspiring and insightful, but he was also a bully.

For much of his life, Hill felt there was nothing he could do to gain his father's respect, but it only made him more determined.

As his songs gained more and more exposure, he revelled in calling home and bragging to his



DAN HILL  
His father's son

folks about the new heights he'd reached.

Hill's considerable talent for writing love songs can be traced back to the love story between his parents. Growing up, he witnessed the tenderness and

unwavering support his father had for his mother. Each night, arriving home from work, Dan Hill Sr. would ring the doorbell and wait for his wife to answer the door. When the door swung open he would shower her with kisses. She would grimace at the assault, but Hill speaks of these memories fondly.

"I was given the example through my parents of absolute, unconditional love," he said. "That could have been the reason I became such a romantic and so many of my songs are so romantic."

After his father's death, Hill found it impossible to write music. Without the insatiable need for his father's approval, the songwriting process became moot.

From the emptiness that followed, Hill began writing the memoir, *I Am My Father's Son*.

It became the therapy he needed to work through his loss.

"I didn't want to let him go, and writing the book brought him back to life," he said. "A big part of the reason I wrote it was because I wanted to be with my father and this was the closest way I could do it."

Now Daniel Grafton Hill III lives on through the lens of his son, as well as in his own accomplishments — he was the first director of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, among other things.

The book focuses on Hill's father, but ultimately it's a glimpse into a family and all the successes and failures that go along with it.

It's a unique look into the life of one of Canada's most successful songwriters, a confident yet grounded man coming to grips with loss.

# Rooftop gardens in bloom

By CAROLINE GEORGE

With the availability of green space decreasing downtown, creative gardeners are looking up.

Members of the Canadian Organic Growers Association (COG) discussed the merits of rooftop gardening with a crowded room of horticulture enthusiasts during the 'Small is Beautiful' workshop held on April 16 at the Pape-Danforth library.

Ryan Johnston, spokesperson for COG, said healthy eating and taking control of his diet allowed him to understand the resourcefulness of rooftop gardening.

"Finding what's available, whether it's old shipping pallets or reusing 16-litre food grade oil

buckets, can mitigate costs," he said. "It puts the capacity in the hands of the food grower."

A self-described "lazy gardener," Johnston noted the difficulty of maintaining a rooftop garden. After six years spent tending his own and other gardens, including one at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, he said it's hard work that reaps worthwhile benefits.

"I don't think it's easy," he said. "You have to do quite a bit of research and know what to look for, but knowing where my food comes from is the number one reward."

COG member and food producer Zora Ignjatovic agreed.

Last summer she started a

rooftop garden at The Big Carrot, a natural food store on Danforth Avenue.

"I look at that place as holistic," she said. "And I thought this community will need a green place where they can come and enjoy the plants and maybe use the plants that are produced."

Ignjatovic suggests consulting a structural engineer before starting a rooftop garden. He or she will help determine the weight-bearing capacity of your roof, which will allow you to determine the type of garden that best suits it.

Johnston and Ignjatovic also stressed the importance of using good-quality soils such as vermiculite and coconut husk fibres, which add bulk without destroying a plant's stability, when starting your garden.

Ignjatovic said the key to producing a good harvest lies in experimentation.

"You learn that you can sustain even if food is not available in the market," she said. "We usually learn how to buy, but not produce."

For more information, visit the COG at [www.cog.ca](http://www.cog.ca)

## How does your roof garden grow?

Here are some things to take into consideration when planning your very own rooftop garden.

- Is it appropriate? Terra cotta looks good, but it's too porous. Plastic containers do a better job. Look for 16- and 10-litre containers at restaurants and grocery stores.

- Size: Pots smaller than 20 cm (8 inches) in diameter are not ideal because there's not enough soil mass. The soil will not retain moisture.

- Soil: No matter what the container type, never fill it to the top with soil. This leaves room for mulch.



Observer, Saba Taye

**SOUND OF MUSIC:** Liya Armorer, an up-and-coming R&B artist, signed with Positivibes Productions along with her fiancé, the rapper Promise. Armorer's debut album, *I Am Liya*, will be in stores this spring.

## Musical fundraiser ends on a high note

By SABA TAYE

On April 15, students in the public relations program at Centennial College's East York campus joined with 97.3 FM EZ Rock, Virgin Radio, [eyecatchingprints.com](http://eyecatchingprints.com) and Steam Whistle at Myth Restaurant and Lounge to raise money for The Remix Project, a charity supporting young people launching careers in the "urban arts."

The result was The Great Canadian Mash Up. The event started with a concert from Toronto-based Christian R&B singer Liya and Promise, a local rapper whose music encourages a positive outlook on life. A DJ session by Jahmal Tonge from The Carps and a performance by Obie, a Remix project graduate and former Canadian Idol competitor, rounded out the evening.

Student organizers Teresa Tam, Shayla Ott and Yolanda Abraham were happy with the results of their hard work.

"I would have liked more people to show up," Ott said. "But for a Wednesday night during exam week, we had a good turnout."

Derek Jancar, The Remix Project co-founder, said Torontonians have helped

the program grow since its beginnings in 2005. The Remix Project started with \$100,000 and had only one recording arts program available for urban students. In the last four years the program's funding has increased to \$500,000. Remix Project has also added three new programs of study to its roster: creative arts, the art of business and a mentorship program. Jancar said it's because of fundraisers like the Great Canadian Mash Up.

"We've grown so much in the past few years with fundraisers," Jancar said. "We want to find a way where we can make money ourselves."

Ott was especially happy with the professionalism of the performers.

"They were on time and prepared," she said. "That was relieving."

Overall, Ott said the event was a success. She said that after the Great Canadian Mash Up she knew she didn't want to be involved in the event management aspect of PR.

"It's very unpredictable, you have very little control," she said.

The women say they raised \$800 and had an attendance of 80 people.



Observer, Jason Wong

**WALK FOR HOPE:** Participants set off from Sunnybrook Park on the 2009 MS Walk. The 10-km walk to benefit multiple sclerosis research spanned from Scarborough to East York and was one of 50 held across Ontario on April 19. Over \$52,000 was raised by the event, organizers say.

## Proposal to move Science Centre brings bad chemistry

By OMAR MOSLEH

A single line buried in an 82-page report on the future of tourism in Ontario could result in the loss of one of East York's most popular attractions.

A note on page 52 of *Discovering Ontario*, a study aimed at finding ways to improve tourism, suggests moving the Ontario Science Centre to Ontario Place. The Ontario Tourism Competitiveness Study, chaired by former provincial finance minister Greg Sorbara, prepared the report.

A section of the report advocating the revitalization of Ontario Place calls it a "prime example of an attraction not meeting its potential." A

proposed remedy is combining the Science Centre and Ontario Place to create one mega-tourism attraction.

But some East York politicians and residents have questioned the idea. Michael Prue, MPP for Beaches-East York and former mayor of East York, said the move could have negative consequences for the neighbourhood.

"It would be a pretty sad day for the community if it were to lose one of its premier attractions," Prue said. "It would hurt businesses there...I don't know if this has been well thought out."

Area resident Theresa Davidson said the proposal

would cost the community a very distinct and important piece of its identity.

"It is something that belongs to the neighbourhood and puts it on the map," she said. "And for people who may not be as mobile, it removes one more place to take their kids and educate them."

Others, such as Angelina Haviaras, expressed concern about the difficulty of getting the full experience from such a large, combined facility.

"Both places take a long time to visit, so if you put them together, people are less likely to see everything," she said.

For councillor John Parker, who has the Science Centre in

his jurisdiction, the proposal simply doesn't make sense.

"East York residents would be justified in questioning the sanity of the people running the show if something like that were to be implemented," he said.

He said moving the Science Centre would be a tremendous challenge due to the size. According to him, it would be more beneficial to move only some of the exhibits at the Science Centre to Ontario Place.

Monique Smith, Ontario's minister of tourism, said that while she supports a revitalization of Ontario Place, the approach has yet to be set in stone.

"I think the recommendation that Greg Sorbara made does indicate that it needs to be revitalized, and I think there's a lot of people that would agree with that," she said.

Smith added that the province continues to measure its options, and will take into account issues surrounding cost and infrastructure.

"We're going to talk to a lot of different people, garnering a lot of different ideas on how to revitalize (Ontario Place)," she said. "Whether or not that includes the Science Centre remains to be seen."

Officials at the Ontario Science Centre said they would not yet comment on the report.

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## Adult sentences for adult acts — like murder

The murder of Stefanie Rengel on New Year's Day in 2008 shocked the East York community. Violent crimes are always traumatic, but the ripples of shock become tidal waves of emotion when those involved represent the future generation of the community. They also raise the question: At what age should young offenders be forced to take adult responsibility for their actions?

Rengel was 14 years old when she was lured to her death as the result of a conspiracy between two other teenagers, M.T. and D.B. A jury found M.T. guilty of first-degree murder for her role as a conspirator and D.B. pleaded guilty to the same charge for his role in stabbing Rengel. Neither of Rengel's killers can be named to protect their identity — a blessing that is no longer deserved.

The Youth Criminal Justice Act has protected M.T. and D.B. adequately already. Is a murderous plot with a tragic conclusion not evidence enough of the transition into adulthood? The court now has the opportunity to answer yes, by responding in favour of the Crown's request to sentence the two as adults.

Part of the logic behind the 2002 move from the Young Offenders Act to the Youth Criminal Justice Act was to assist in adult sentencing decisions for minors — and a number of clauses are applicable to this case. Young people must be held accountable in a way that is proportionate and fair in relation to the offence. As well, the presumptive age of adult responsibility is lowered to 14. The act states that the test for adult sentencing is whether youth sentencing creates enough accountability for the offence.

The 30,000 pages of text messages, online and MSN conversations between M.T. and D.B. is not the common modus operandi of mischievous children up to some silly caper or misdemeanour.

Rather, the actions of M.T. and D.B. seem to reflect the decision-making and rationale (albeit horribly flawed) of adults — and there are consequences for that.

Adult sentencing provides the justice system with the opportunity to make a number of statements. Personal responsibility and accountability must be a higher priority in Canadian society. With adult sentencing, this East York tragedy could be the catalyst for significant change in the way our culture deals with youth crime.

—Steve Darley

## Nicknames remind us of life's best, worst moments

I was watching television while my boyfriend was tapping on his laptop. Suddenly, he let out a roar — one that I recognize as his reaction to something hilarious.

"What's so funny?" I asked him, temporarily distracted from a *Friends* rerun.

"Wario wrote a hilarious response to something I posted on Facebook," he said, still chuckling.

"Who?"

I have to admit, I was curious.

"You know, Wario."

He looked at me like I was crazy for not knowing who Wario was.

Slightly disgruntled that Ross and Rachel would have to wait, I peered over his shoulder to see what he was talking about.

"Oh, you mean Mike."

And just like that, I was reminded of something I've known for years: we all have nicknames.

I started going through the mental Rolodex of friends. I have a friend named Susan; we call her Suzie and she got her nickname "Boozie" from a

**Farrah  
Cole**



co-worker. While she got this nickname when she was 19 — and has long since stopped drinking to excess — whenever she has a drink, someone inevitably says, "Oh, there goes Boozie." Her reaction: "Cheers to that!"

My friends from school all have cute nicknames for each other. "One-Up" always has things finished before he's asked to do them. "Benchmark" always sets the bar for everyone. Even I have a nickname: "Cole Train," because my last name is Cole and I have my own vehicle.

While these nicknames are mostly humorous and honour admirable traits, I'm sure we all have nicknames we would love to forget.

That's the odd thing with nicknames. In their own way, they are a reminder of how other people view us. Some nicknames

make us smile while others make us sad, frustrated or even angry.

Celebrities are probably the only people who create nicknames for themselves. The classic example is Sean Combs, also known as "Puff Daddy," "Puffy," and "P. Diddy." He changes his nickname to stay in the spotlight and it works.

But not all celebrities seek out nicknames. Michael Jackson went from being dubbed "The King of Pop" to "Wacko Jacko" in the media.

Nicknames based on appearance or behaviour can be the most hurtful. No one enjoys being called "Fatty," especially on a recurring basis and by more than one person. But I'm sure Wayne Gretzky has no problem being called "The Great One."

Dwayne Johnson, a.k.a. "The Rock," has been trying to lose his former stage name for years as he pursues his career as an actor.

As for Mike, a.k.a. "Wario," my boyfriend will always see him as the guy who looks like Super Mario's evil doppelganger. And for the record, he really does.

## This do's a learning experience

Mom, plus scissors, equals a very, very bad idea.

You see, I get bored with my hair quite often and in order to keep things exciting I change it a lot. I've dyed it at least 15 times and I get it cut every few months. It never makes it past my shoulders.

So about a week ago, I noticed my bangs were too long and I wanted to change my look without cutting too much off.

I first contemplated doing it myself. I even watched YouTube videos on how to cut your own hair — but when I couldn't find the scissors I decided it was a sign... and that I probably would have destroyed my hair... which would have been a bad, bad thing.

Hair is important. It's one of the things people see first when they look at you. Why else would people spend huge amounts of money making sure it's perfect?

A hairdresser needs to be reliable. They need to know what you like and know what looks good. Most importantly, you

**Brittany  
Prince**



need to be able to trust them.

Lucky for me I don't have to book an appointment at a salon or pay \$100 for a haircut.

My mom is a hairdresser. She went to beauty school and has her licence and everything. And who better to trust than your own mother?

She doesn't do it for a living anymore. She hates it. That probably should have been enough for me to know not to ask. I've been burned by her before — both literally (curling iron) and metaphorically.

I just never seem to learn. So I grabbed my laptop, Googled side bangs, and showed my mom a photo of Ashley Olsen of the Olsen twins.

"These are the bangs I want, Mom. Make sure you don't cut

them too short. I want them at least to touch the bottom of my eyebrows," I told her.

I have no idea why I thought she would do what I asked. She always screws it up and then tries to convince me that she did what I wanted. But I sat down anyway and let her do her thing. When she finished, I cried. Yes, I cried like a baby.

She cut them way too short, so short there was nothing I could do to fix it. My once-nice hair was ruined. My dad and brother didn't help. They each had a good laugh.

Destined to wear a hat for the next two weeks, I threw a fit and told her I'd never let her cut it again.

So I've decided that regardless of what you want to do to your hair, even if it's as simple as cutting your bangs, always make sure you go to a reliable hairdresser who has the passion for it.

Don't get your mom, who'd rather be watching Oprah to do it.

## Door-to-door begging humanizes poverty in East York

One afternoon in late March, a homeless man calmly made his way through an East York neighbourhood near Pape and Danforth Avenues. He caught some residents off-guard when he appeared on their front porches, ringing their doorbells and asking for spare change. Some no doubt obliged the man. Others perhaps turned him away. But what a strange sight: a homeless man making house calls. Without warning, the face of poverty had planted itself directly on people's doorsteps.

Newspapers landing on those same doorsteps a few weeks later announced the theft of a safe containing almost \$10,000 from a Habitat for Humanity outlet based in East York — the cost of two homes the charity could have built. On the heels of that news came the city's plan

to dispatch 1,000 volunteers to conduct Toronto's latest survey of homeless people.

The survey provides some impressive information for media outlets to report: numbers fashioned into percentages and pie charts and front-page spreads and eight-second soundbites for the six o'clock news. Unfortunately, numbers don't tell the human side of the story. To most people, they will appear as just another colour-coded graph — another easy-to-read, faceless statistical representation of a desperate social problem for which no one seems to have a solution.

Leave the numbers to the statisticians to decipher. East York's wandering homeless man serves as a reminder that no area of the city is immune to the chronic issue of poverty. People in

tidy residential neighbourhoods may not be accustomed to seeing as much evidence of poverty on their streets as on others, but there it is. Job losses and a poor economy only serve to exacerbate the crisis.

So what greater call to action exists than another human being so humbled as to stand on a stranger's front step, hand

outstretched, asking for help — the stark reality of these desperate times finding only a thin screen door separating him from someone just a little luckier.

People don't need statistics to tell them that those affected by poverty need assistance. Everybody knows. And for many communities, East York

included, the issue continues to creep closer to home. Regardless of the financial turmoil many find themselves in, the human obligation to help the less fortunate does not subside. The only question remaining is whether or not to answer the door when the next homeless man makes his rounds.

—Mike Crisolago

## See you in September

This is the last edition of East York's Observer for the 2008-2009 academic year. Centennial College journalism students produce the newspaper and are now approaching the end of the semester. But we look forward to returning in September to provide East York residents with news and commentary on community events and issues. Have a great summer!

# COMMENT

## A bad economy means 'nada' when you can't be any poorer

I'm a student. When it comes to finances, I'm worth nothing more than the measly \$7,000 I have idling in my bank account and the \$2.75 subway fare I have tucked in my pocket. My family doesn't rely on my \$650 bi-weekly paycheque to survive.

I don't own a struggling independent business and my investments are limited at best. If it weren't for the daily media reminders plastered across newspapers and CNN, I wouldn't have a clue that something bad was sweeping over our country's economy.

Over the last few months, families and individuals alike have felt the repercussions of a suffering Canadian economy. Men and women have lost dream jobs they've held onto for years, lost thousands of dollars invested in crashing stock markets and even declared bankruptcy.

Yet somehow Canadians maintain a steady desire to vacation. My parents recently traveled to Mexico, my boss just left for the Dominican Republic on a "business trip" and my roommate leaves tomorrow for two weeks in Cuba.

I have to wonder: is this really what a financial crisis looks like?

Economists have questioned whether or not our generation would ever witness a depression; some have said that it was inevitable.

Allison

Werbowsky



We are a generation of spenders. Period.

It has been estimated that when our grandparents were in their 20s and 30s, they saved 20 per cent of their paycheques, putting money away monthly for retirement and their kids' college funds; our parents (the baby boomers) put away 10 per cent; we, on the other hand, save negative one per cent.

In other words, most of us spend money we don't even have. And any money we do have kicking around on our Visas or in our savings accounts we blow on week-long benders in tropical paradises or on shiny new Mazda 6s — or whatever your toy of choice may be.

Is it our greed that keeps us wanting more? What is it about lying on a beach that makes it worth maxing out all five of our high-limit credit cards to get it?

Wanting warmth is no excuse to splurge on a trip we can't afford. Welcome to Canada!

We get snow in winter and yes, our spring has been chilly. We should be used to it by now, right?

However, if going on vacation

means being completely relaxed and stress-free for a few days, I suppose I can understand the allure.

I just can't help but wonder if our minds wouldn't be continuously burdened by the overdue notices stuffed in the back of our nightstand drawers awaiting us when we returned home.

Sure, ignorance is bliss, but it's also irresponsible.

A television newscast did a special a few weeks ago on ways to financially outlast the economic downturn.

One tip is to make your vacations work for you. Taking day trips, as opposed to expensive rendezvous down south, can be very productive in troubled times.

Spend quality time with your family, rather than waste a week lounging on a poolside beach chair and you will be able to rationalize your spending.

Makes getting more out of your holidays than an itchy sunburn or bad case of malaria almost vital to your financial — and emotional — survival, doesn't it?

But I digress. I think I'll just stick my hand in my pocket, fish around for that toonie and three quarters and continue to trudge blindly through the unfamiliar world of financial stability, happy that I don't have millions to lose on Wall Street.

## Newspaper 'demise' a non-issue as technology itself has proven

Has the current recession expedited the inevitable decline of the print newspaper?

Many observers predicted, some time ago, that with the advent and availability of the Internet, newspapers' days were numbered.

Given that people now have easy access to pretty much any piece of information they may want online, why would they still rely on newspapers?

After all, newspapers tell you what happened yesterday.

Why read stale news when you can boot up your laptop and find out what's going on now, in the present?

The recent demise and bankruptcy filings of several major daily papers in the U.S. makes me wonder if this represents a harbinger of things to come for other daily print publications.

Just as March was closing out, the Chicago Sun-Times asked the courts to protect it from its creditors. Shortly before that, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer printed its last edition. It will remain as a small online publication with a skeleton staff.

In Denver, the venerable Rocky Mountain News published its last edition on Feb. 27, with no plans to continue its online site.

Both the P-I and the News were almost 150 years old — but their managements could

Sean

Sillers



find no buyers to keep the papers alive. Given that both were losing millions of dollars a year, why would anyone be interested in buying?

If daily news is moving online, can print editions continue to exist? Perhaps a comparison can be made here to the effect of photography on the world of art.

In the early 20th century, art observers — presumably critics — believed the camera would supplant painting and sculpture much the same way media observers now see the Internet as the death knell for the newspaper. After all, both are essentially the art of expression, one visual and the other through drawing a story with words.

Well, there are still a lot of art galleries around, many filled with both fine paintings and photography.

Photography has done the opposite. It actually expanded the art world by prompting a new expressionism through abstract and modern creations, perhaps in an attempt to go beneath the limitations of a photograph.

Other examples exist, such as the popularity of digital music replacing music radio.

Observers suggested that people, particularly youth, would rather listen to their favourite songs on their iPods than listen to music on the radio.

This phenomenon did reduce the number of music stations on the dial, but also forced those who kept programming music to adapt to new niche formats, which provided more variety for listeners.

In a sense, digital music forced the democratization of music radio as old stale formats were forced to update for listeners demanding new, inventive programming.

The same type of transformation must be made by newspapers. They cannot continue to simply tell yesterday's news.

Given their dated format, more emphasis has to be placed on context, explaining not just what happened but showing why and how it happened.

News websites should be viewed by the traditional media as a complement, not a threat.

While the adjustment period may take some time and sacrifice, the two mediums should go together like a picture painting.



Observer, Lara Willis

**PET ME, PLEASE:** Basil is a frisky one-year-old kitten rescued by Toronto Animal Services and available for adoption. PetSmart, located in East York at Eglinton and Laird, provides space for non-profit rescue organizations to operate an adoption clinic.

## Cat seeks family: Must be friendly and like to play

By LARA WILLIS

For Marie Hunt, the warm weather and sunshine of spring comes at a price — the influx of stray kittens on her doorstep.

Hunt operates the Animal Rescue Krew (ARK), a Peterborough-based rescue organization that aids abandoned and stray cats.

She spends two weeks every month at the PetSmart adoption centre finding East York homes for cats rescued from across the Greater Toronto Area and beyond.

The spring mating season is traditionally a busy time of year for Hunt.

"There are over 100 kittens already in foster homes," she said. "Some were born just last night or the night before."

ARK, a registered charity, was founded in 1999. Operating expenses are funded entirely by donations and the modest adoption fees that cover expenses for the animals.

Cats available for adoption have up-to-date vaccinations and are spayed or neutered.

ARK found homes for 1,400 cats last year — double the number adopted out by both Toronto Animal Services and the Toronto Humane Society — and does not euthanize cats who aren't adopted.

Shawn Macintosh lives conveniently close to the PetSmart store at Eglinton and Laird and has been to the adoption centre twice in the past year.

He suspects his first adoption, Marbles, had been a feral cat before being rescued by ARK.

"He was nervous when I got him," Macintosh said. "I saw him and it looked like he wanted a home."

Macintosh said Marbles has become a "perfect" cat. However, not all new homes work out as well.

Hunt noted problems sometimes arise after adoption.

The new owner may have unnoticed allergies to a particular type of pet.

Another issue is the possibility that new pets are incompatible with other animals already in the home.

ARK has a 60-day return policy to ensure that cats adopted out aren't abandoned or surrendered to other agencies.

PetSmart donates space in its stores for local rescue organizations to be able to operate adoption centres.

It's partnered with over 3,400 animal welfare agencies in Canada and the U.S. — organizations like ARK — and facilitates co-ordinated events such as the upcoming Spring National Adoption Weekend.

The stores do not sell cats or dogs.

Instead, they provide coupons and products to those who take home a pet from the adoption centre.

PetSmart manager Casey Kennedy is a proponent of the company's efforts, and has adopted two animals from ARK.

"I'm glad I work for PetSmart," she said. "I agree with their philosophy that all pets deserve to have a home."

Kennedy said PetSmart takes an active role in promoting the adoption centres.

Their efforts to spread awareness of the issue include print and radio advertising to increase public awareness about the rescued cats and kittens.

Kennedy said Toronto Animal Services (TAS) will join ARK for the weekend-long spring adoption-a-thon on May 1.

In addition to the cats normally available at the adoption centre, TAS will also be looking for new homes for dogs, rabbits and other small animals.

# Team Canada hockey hero scores an arena with her name on it

By **FARRAH COLE**

The Flemingdon Park Arena on Grenoble Drive is getting a new name, following a unanimous vote at North York Community Council.

It will be called the Angela James Arena, after the woman who grew up playing hockey in the area, who went on to play hockey for Team Canada for 10 years — and who, last May, was one of the first three women to be inducted into the International Hockey Hall of Fame.

Andrew Fairbairn, a childhood friend of James, came to witness the council vote. He said he started his campaign to get the arena renamed for James on Facebook because he was hoping she would get the appreciation she deserves.

"I thought this would really be great for people to recognize from the Flemingdon Park area to know where she came from, where her roots began and pay homage to one of the great heroes who pioneered hockey," Fairbairn said.

He hopes the name change will inspire some of the people in the community to recognize what they can achieve and said it was the perfect homage to James' legacy as not only a female hockey player, but also as a black woman who loves the sport.

"It's the cherry on top which really finishes that whole ca-

reer," Fairbairn said. "That legacy will be there for a very long time."

Fairbairn said James was very humble when he approached her with the idea and she acknowledged the honour of recognition from her childhood community.

"You never forget where you come from, you never forget your roots, your friends and your family," she said outside the North York Civic Centre, where council voted for the renaming on March 26.

"That's where we were born, raised. We all moved on in different directions but it all comes back to the time at Flemingdon Park."

James said the recognition is one of the nicest things to ever happen to her and she hopes the name change will bring attention to the need for more leagues.

"We recognize in the city of Toronto there's not enough ice (rinks) and definitely not enough ice for women's hockey," James said. "It would be nice if there was a plan to bring back the house-league in Flemingdon Park."

Don Valley West councillor John Parker said it was easy to support the idea to rename the arena after someone who is a positive role model in the area.

"Flemingdon as a community should celebrate its heroes," he said. "It's entitled to the same respect of knowing that it has some pretty special people that have emerged from that area."

A ceremony for the name change will be held sometime in the summer.



**JAMES**



Observer, Mallory Hendry

**OUNCE OF PREVENTION:** Violet Costello, Lena Tanner, and Dorris Lang attend the April 8 fall prevention presentation at St. Clair O'Connor Community. They shared their own advice too.

## Nursing students offer words of wisdom for fall prevention

By **MALLORY HENDRY**

The crowd for a "fall prevention workshop" at St. Clair O'Connor Community was a spirited one. One woman "misunderstood" the purpose of the April 8 lecture on fall prevention — announcing that she already knows how to fall; she needs to know how to get back up.

Centennial College nursing students Adele Williams and Wenchao Shao did their best to help her out. With the help of a PowerPoint presentation, a demonstration on how to properly use a walker and a living room "set" that needed all the fall hazards pointed out. Williams and Shao educated the elderly audience on preventive measures, as well as what steps to take if they do happen to fall. When asked how many had fallen in the last year, every hand in the room went up.

Falls can cause serious problems for elderly people, especially if they live alone. Angel Black, who works at an adult day program at the centre, says call 911 immediately. Otherwise the fallen could be waiting for help and the situation could worsen. Black gestured to the woman she is pushing in a wheelchair.

"She used to live alone and fell one time. She lay there for over an hour. Her dog ended up

getting out. He took off and got help," Black said.

Since not every elderly person has their own Lassie to watch out for them, Williams Shao and Black are all supporters of emergency buttons that hang on a lanyard around the person's neck. And if they fall, or otherwise require assistance, they press the button and are connected to emergency services.

As people age, their chances of falling increase significantly, mostly due to a decrease of bone mass, changing centre of gravity, medications or health issues. If you've fallen before it could happen again.

"According to the registered nurses association, 16 to 17 per cent of people are more likely to have a fall once they've had previous falls," Williams said. "Since a lot of people in the audience have had previous falls, we want to make sure that the awareness is there and the education is there to help prevent future falls."

In the pamphlet handed out to the residents, people are advised to be prepared. It's suggested you practise getting up before you actually have a fall, keep your phone easily accessible from the floor, or even find a daily telephone buddy so somebody will know if you might be in trouble.

If you do fall, the best way

to get back up is to crawl to a chair, toilet, bed or other form of stable furniture and use that to help you get back on your feet. If you're injured, the pamphlet advises you get to a phone if at all possible, keep yourself warm, and move your limbs to help with circulation.

The audience found the presentation generally useful. One woman wondered what she could do about her cat, since the advice was never to bend all the way to the floor.

"How do I clean my cat litter if I can't bend down?" she asked, "and don't tell me to get rid of my cat, because I won't do it."

While some problems could not be solved in the half-hour session, Violet Costello said Williams and Shao did a good job explaining dangers, preventions and remedies. "It was helpful because falling is a big worry," Costello said.

Some of the audience members have their own advice. Lena Tanner, 90, said her son-in-law has told her to count to five before standing up so that she has her balance. Tanner said her centre of gravity feels different, and that's the biggest concern for her. Dorris Lang, 93, had the answer for Tanner. "Count to five before standing," Lang said to her friend. "Remember your lesson!"



Observer, Monique Plessas

**MIDNIGHT CANDLES SHINE:** The Greek Orthodox community gathered to celebrate Easter last weekend at Metamorphosis Greek Orthodox Church, located at 40 Donlands Ave.

## Radio legend gives audience the perfect mixture

By **DAVID NICHOLAS**

He has sat down with music legends like Bono from U2, Joe Strummer of The Clash and Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails. He is a walking encyclopedia of musical knowledge and has turned his enthusiasm for music into a career.

Radio personality Alan Cross visited Centennial College's East York campus on April 3 to discuss his views on the industry that he has been immersed in for over a decade. Cross, the host of the long-running radio documentary program *The Ongoing History of New Music*, has covered everything from record releases to the deaths of musicians and everything in between. Yet it is the shift in

recording technology (and the differing fans of each medium) that Cross spoke passionately about with his college audience.

"There is a certain segment of music fan who feels that it's become far too easy to obtain music," Cross said. "With an iPhone or any wireless device, you can get whatever song you want, whenever you want it, wherever you are and you can get it for a very, very low price or for free. So the value of music has dropped, the disposability of music has dropped."

Cross discussed the divide among music fans and in their approaches to obtaining their music.

In the past, you had to go to your local record store and

sift through bins of releases, hoping that they had what you wanted. Today, with the shift to digital technology and high-speed Internet, a tangible music collection may become a thing of the past.

"There are people who don't even acquire music anymore," Cross said. "They don't bother buying records or CDs or MP3s. Why would I want that cluttering up my hard-drive and my shelf? I just listen to music through (online) streams."

Yet with this shift to digital, there are those who still prefer vinyl records to the latest technology. For those music fans, the medium is as important as the music itself.

"The vinyl person is the one

who likes two things," Cross said. "First of all, they love full-fidelity analog sound. If you put a CD next to a good turntable with a great record on it through two super-sounding speakers, you will tell the difference. The vinyl will sound better."

Cross concluded that some fans listen to music on vinyl because it provides them with a sense of musical superiority. Through the hassle of finding a record, buying a turntable and attaching the appropriate speakers, it suggests that they are more committed to their music than their peers.

"The sheer inconvenience of listening to music on vinyl demonstrates that I love music more than you," Cross said.



**ALAN CROSS**

Continues to educate fans