



■ FEDERAL ELECTION



Paula Last /// The Observer

### On the campaign trail

Liberal candidate Julie Dabrusin, campaigning in Toronto-Danforth, greets a voter at the Broadview TTC station. See pages 3-5 for our first instalment of coverage of the East York candidates running in the Oct. 19 federal election.

## Slow down, you move too fast...

Reduced speed limits coming soon to E.Y. streets

By **KELSEY CHENG**  
The Observer

New signs for reduced speed limits will not be posted on residential streets in East York until early next year, according to Toronto and East York Transportation Services.

The vote to reduce speed limits was approved unanimously by the Toronto and East York community council in early September. The speed limit on some residential roads in East York officially went from 40 kilometres per hour to 30 more than a week ago.

Toronto and East York Transportation Services supervisor Sandra Burk said the delay in posting the signs is because the process is complex.

Transportation Services first identifies all the local streets affected in a particular ward, she said. Then it prepares bylaw amendments to reduce the speed limit from 40 to 30 km/h.

When community council passes the new speed limit bylaw, the signs and markings department is notified, and it changes the signs.

“We are doing it ward by ward since we are aiming to change the signs as quickly as possible following the bylaw amendments,” Burk said in an interview.

However, community council meetings — the only place where these amendments can be passed — only take place once a month.

“So, depending on the scheduling, there are only so (many) bylaw amendments that we can get ready for each community council meeting,” Burk said.

The community council meeting on

Oct. 6 is scheduled to deal with Ward 31/Beaches-East York (north of Danforth Avenue to Sunrise Avenue in the Eglinton-O’Connor area) and Ward 32 (south of Danforth to the Beach).

The effort to reduce residential speed limits began when seven-year-old Georgia Walsh was struck and killed by a van in Leaside in July 2014.

Toronto city councillor Gord Perks, who helped promote the speed limit reduction, believes the move will bring additional benefits.

“By changing the speed limit you (bring about) better driver training, different expectation of what speed people drive at, different speed regulations and new street designs,” Perks said.

The reduced speed in residential areas also means that those driving 40 to 50 km/h will face stiffer fines. Giorgio Papadakis, who drives to work near Pape and Danforth avenues every day, sees the change in speed limit as an opportunity for the police to hand out more tickets.

“I think people are still going to continue the same speed they have been going,” he said. “To me, this is just a money grab.”

Papadakis agrees that the speed limit reduction will help save lives, but it does not necessarily solve the root of the problem. He believes education is more important.



● For more East York stories, please check us out online at [torontoobserver.ca](http://torontoobserver.ca)

■ EDUCATION

## Clashing over curriculum

Some parents disagree with revisions to sex education

By **TARA FORTUNE**  
The Observer

Two issues confronted East York families and educators upon their return to school this month: the ongoing labour dispute between the province and teachers — now settled in the case of separate schools and public high schools, but escalating in the case of public elementary schools; and the withdrawal of some students from classes over the new health curriculum.

The updated sex education component of the health curriculum prompted some parents to pull their children out of school — especially at Thorncliffe Park

Public School, where many of the 1,500 students come from immigrant families with conservative backgrounds. On the first day of school, Sept. 8, almost half of the students were missing. Some of them gathered at a nearby park for informal lessons taught by parents.

Within 24 hours, “Shame on you” was also spray-painted on the side of the school.

But on that second day, about 400 of the missing 700 students returned to school, and there have been steady upticks since. Still, according to Toronto District School Board spokesperson Shari Schwartz-Maltz, some Thorncliffe Park students remain out.

“We encourage parents to come in. We will meet with them and answer their questions,” she said.

“This often alleviates the situation and we can point them in the right direction.”

A grade-by-grade guide to the new curriculum is at [ontario.ca/](http://ontario.ca/)

[page/sex-education-ontario](http://page/sex-education-ontario).

It’s the first update of sex education in the province since 1998. It attempts to take into account a changing society — like legalized gay marriage and growing acceptance of transgender people — as well as other developments — like new social media’s potential for harm through sexual exploitation of young people.

Some of the new content in the curriculum covers the dangers of sexting, along with healthy relationships, and what “consent” means.

But some aspects of the curriculum have prompted concern that children are being exposed to some sexual concepts that are age-inappropriate. There have also been reports of flyers and other communication targeting certain ethnic communities that contains misinformation about the curriculum.

“We’ve always been teaching

■ See **SOME**, page 7



Alex Kamakaris /// The Observer

### Sugar, sugar

Jack Parsi, 6, enjoys cotton candy at the 22nd annual Leaside Rotary Club Community Corn Roast on Sept. 20.



## WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

### All-candidates night to be held at community centre

The Applegrove Community Centre at the south end of Toronto-Danforth will be the venue for an all-candidates night on Tuesday, Oct. 6. Voters will have the opportunity to ask questions of the local candidates and pick up information about their platforms. The event starts at 7 p.m. at the centre, located at 60 Woodfield Rd., near Greenwood Avenue and Queen Street.

### Mosaic unveiled at Todmorden

This Sunday, Sept. 27, at 2 p.m. will be the official unveiling of The Gathering of the Clans Mosaic at the Todmorden Mills Heritage Site on Pottery Road. The ceremony will include official opening remarks and an invitation for guests to enjoy some light refreshments. At the end of the event, a brief ceremonial parade honouring the mosaic and the First Nations Clans will begin.

### Are houseplants a myth?

The Leaside Garden Society presents "Houseplants are a Myth" with Ken Brown on Thursday, Oct. 8. Brown, a horticulture consultant, will illustrate what it takes to make a plant thrive, or at least survive, in our homes. The presentation will begin at 7:30 p.m., with refreshments available prior to meeting. The event will be held at the Leaside library branch, 165 McRae Dr.

### Check out local paintings at Riverdale Art Show

The Anglican Church of St. Barnabas on the Danforth will host the 27th annual Riverdale Art Show and Sale — showcasing all-new paintings from local artists. The event will be held on Friday, Oct. 16 from 6-8:30 p.m. with a reception and then it continues on Saturday from 10:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. The church, which is located at 361 Danforth Ave., is wheelchair accessible. Admission to the show is free.

### Sock it to me, monsters!

Young people between the ages of 11 and 18 are invited to the S. Walter Stewart branch of the library to attend the Get Inspired Workshop: Sock Monster on Friday, Oct. 16 from 4-5 p.m. Learn how to repurpose socks into monsters. Demonstrations will be held and materials will be provided. Free admission. Call 416-396-3975 to register.

~ Melvin Gomez



Sanjeev Wignarajah// The Observer

Firefighters and police were at the scene of a house fire on Torrens Avenue early on Sept. 15. One resident and one firefighter were treated at Toronto East General Hospital.

## Fire engulfs East York residence

Official says blaze appears to have been accidental, but investigation continues

By ARIFA RATTANSI  
The Observer

Firefighters were called to the scene of a house that was engulfed in flames at Pape and Cosburn avenues early in the morning of Sept. 8.

The fire originated in the basement of a

house on Torrens Avenue at around 7:45 a.m.

"One occupant of the residence (and one firefighter have) been sent to East General as a precaution, for smoke inhalation," said Acting Platoon Chief Mike Swift.

Neighbours woke up that Tuesday morning to the chaos of fire trucks and officials rushing them out of their homes.

Shannon Dilbasi was evacuated from her home so quickly that she didn't even have a chance to get dressed.

"I looked out of my kitchen window and

there were flames coming out — almost to our house," she said.

Neighbours were gathered together and taken down the street to William Burgess Public School, where teachers provided children with the chance to eat breakfast and get dressed.

Swift said the fire seemed to be accidental in nature.

After extinguishing the main blaze by about 9 a.m., the fire department stayed on-scene to look for hot spots and continue their investigation.

## Residents concerned after string of arsons

By JASON SUTCLIFFE  
and SUZANNA SHEETAL DUTT  
The Observer

A series of fires in East York has residents in the community resting not so peacefully lately.

Six fires were set in the area of Coxwell and Danforth avenues just after 3 a.m. on Sept. 6. Firefighters first responded to two calls on Oakdene Crescent. Shortly after, they received a call about a car in flames on Strathmore Boulevard, which was immediately followed by three more calls on Coxwell Avenue.

The worst of the six was on Strathmore Boulevard, where the fire destroyed an SUV

and caused minor damage to two homes. Neighbour Orval Rice described the scene when he awoke just after 3 a.m.

"We could smell the burning plastic.... Then we could hear the horn of the car go and then an explosion.... The flames were quite high coming out of the automobile," he said.

"It is a bit of a shock.... What goes through my mind is, 'God, I'm glad there is nobody in that thing and I'm glad there is nobody hurt.'"

Although there were no injuries, Toronto Police and Toronto Fire are urging people to be vigilant.

Sgt. Mike Strapko of Toronto Fire recommends that people keep their yard waste, garbage and recycling locked up, along with all combustibles.

Also, anything flammable that is out in the open should be kept away from homes, garages and cars.

For many long-time residents of the neighbourhood, like Beena Rajendra, the incidents have left them feeling a bit insecure.

"I am very concerned about it," Rajendra said. "I never expected this to happen in Toronto, let alone East York."

Toronto Police Staff Sgt. Hunter Smith of 54 Division said there are currently no suspects, and he asks anyone with video surveillance to check it for suspicious behaviour between 3 and 4 a.m.

If anyone has any information, they are urged to contact 54 and 55 divisions, or Crime Stoppers.

## Police and fire briefs: Apartments evacuated

By OBSERVER STAFF

About 75 people had to leave their apartments in the building at 500 Dawes Rd. early Wednesday after a fire broke out in a fourth floor unit.

The Toronto Fire Service said several people were treated for smoke inhalation, but their injuries were minor, and the fire was out by 8 a.m.

Meanwhile, two men are recovering from injuries sustained in separate, serious assaults:

Police say that on Sept. 15 at about 4:40 p.m., a Centennial College student was threatened with a gun, beaten and robbed near Pape and Fullerton avenues, a few blocks from the East York campus of the college.

The suspect is described as a black male,

approximately six feet tall, wearing black pants and a black zip-up hoodie.

This past Tuesday afternoon, a 35-year-old man was hospitalized with non-life-threatening injuries after being stabbed on Keystone Avenue, in the Woodbine-Danforth neighbourhood. Police are looking for two men and a woman in connection with the attack.

~ With files from Connor Atkinson



# Oliphant wants immediate action on refugees

By LATAEVIA CEIANNA-KEMP  
The Observer

When the baseball great Yogi Berra died this past Tuesday at the age of 90, voters in the East York riding of Don Valley West may have been reminded of that famous quote attributed to him: “It’s déjà vu all over again.”

That’s because Liberal Rob Oliphant and Conservative John Carmichael are once again battling for the riding and its seat in the House of Commons.

In 2008, Oliphant won. In 2011 Carmichael won. Now the two rivals are in yet another rematch.

Since the election four years ago that sent Oliphant home and Carmichael to Ottawa, Oliphant has been on the outside looking in. But that doesn’t mean he hasn’t been politically involved.

He’s been working especially in the field of human rights. It’s in keeping with his previous calling, as a minister in the United Church. Before his first election, he presided at St. George’s United on Eglinton Avenue — and worked on things like housing programs for seniors who suffered from dementia.

“The other thing I think that I would be proud of that has integrated me into the community would be refugee settlements,”



Lataevia Cianna-Kemp /// The Observer

**Don Valley West Liberal candidate Rob Oliphant (right) talks with his team about his campaign.**

Oliphant told the Observer in an interview. “My congregation had two particular ones that were significant. Both families were sponsored by the church, but settled in Thorncliffe.”

There are a high number of immigrants residing in the southeastern portion of the riding. As a result, the Don Valley West area is in need of immigrant resettlement and other programs.

Oliphant said he hopes that the new plans the Liberals have in their campaign platform to improve the process of immigration into Canada move quickly.

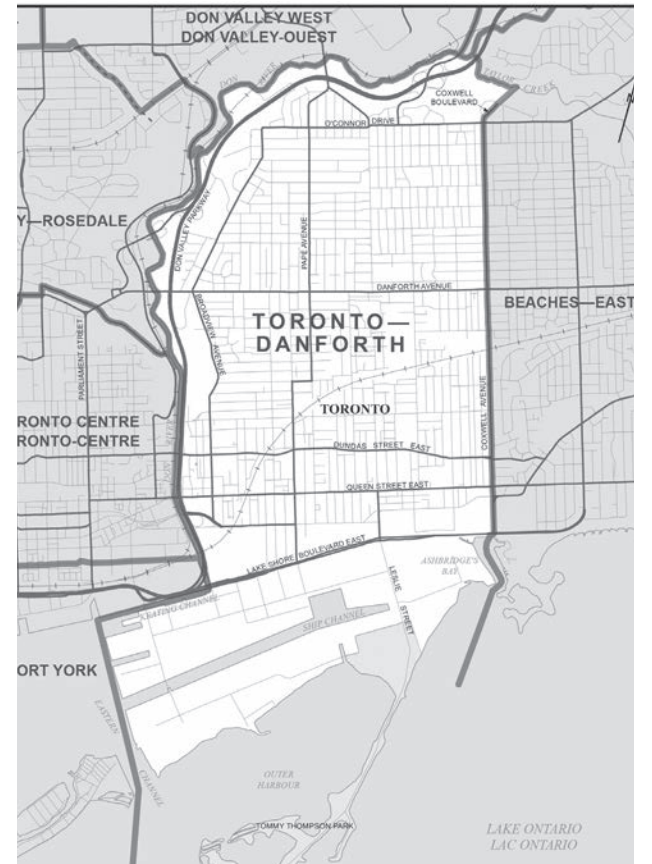
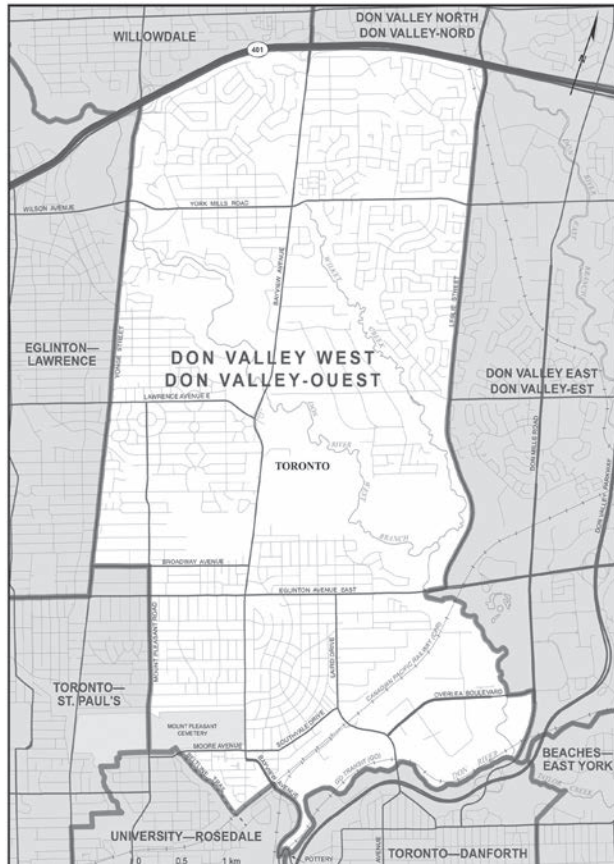
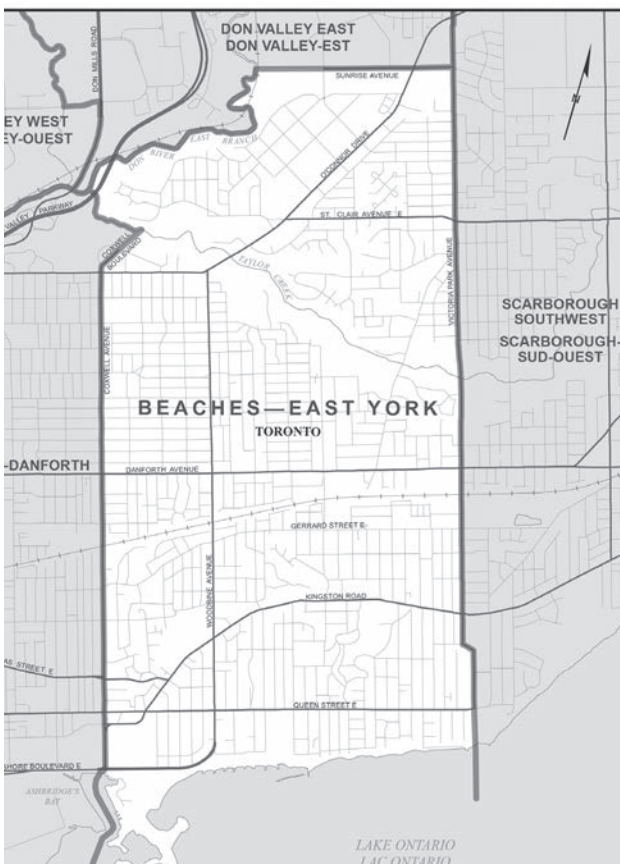
“We need to reassess,” he said. “With that, there also is the need to start to restore some of the spending that got cut on immigrant resettlement issues — and so that is language training, economics, housing and employment opportunities.”

“All of that stuff is what makes an immigrant succeed or a refugee succeed in Canada,” he added.

With the Syrian refugee crisis having resonated worldwide, Oliphant said that Canadians, including those in the Don Valley West area, are calling for immediate, meaningful action to ease the suffering.

Oliphant said that change is crucial in order for Canada to flourish — and the Conservatives’ modest refugee programs aren’t going to cut it.

“I think that Mr. Harper is attempting to bring fear into this, and what I am hearing all through the riding is that we are going to want to protect Canadian identity; we are going to want to hold up things like the Charter of Rights and Freedoms — things that make Canada, Canada. And we are going to bring people in, and 25,000 is a minimum for me.”



Images courtesy of Elections Canada

With this issue of the East York Observer, we preview the Oct. 19 federal election with the first instalment in a two-edition set of profiles of the various major party candidates in East York’s three ridings: Beaches-East York, Don Valley West and Toronto-Danforth. Not all of the candidates have responded to Observer requests for interviews, but most have — and we present those profiles across these pages, 3-5 (Don Valley West on this page, Toronto-Danforth on page 4 and Beaches-East York on page 5). In our next edition, published Oct. 9, we’ll wrap up our pre-election coverage with more profiles, as well as coverage of all-candidates’ nights and other campaign events — and we’ll state our preferences in candidate endorsements on our editorial page. Then, on Oct. 19, our reporters will be fanning out across East York to report the results that night on [torontoobserver.ca](http://torontoobserver.ca)

## NDP dark horse aims to ‘make an impact’ in Don Valley West

By BRIA JOHN  
The Observer

She’d planned to go to law school next fall, but the federal election changed Syeda Riaz’s mind.

“My blood is orange,” said Riaz, now the NDP candidate in Don Valley West.

Riaz, 23, stepped into her candidacy late this summer and as she told the Observer, even though she hopes to win, that is not her only objective.

“I’m not going in this race to win; I’m going to make an impact in this riding — and that’s the most important thing,” Riaz said.

But she has an uphill fight

in a riding where almost everyone expects the real race to be between the two recent, repeat contenders: Liberal Rob Oliphant and Conservative John Carmichael.

But that doesn’t mean that when Riaz knocks on doors in Thorncliffe, Leaside and Mount Pleasant, the people who answer aren’t glad that they have another electoral option.

“I’m a breath of fresh air. People are glad there’s finally an NDP candidate in their riding; they say it’s their first time seeing one,” Riaz said.

Riaz has lived in Thorncliffe Park since her family immigrated to Canada from Dubai 10 years ago. She and

her mother, Tasleem Riaz, have been NDP supporters ever since. Their grassroots campaign, run out of a friend’s apartment, is actually a family affair.

“My mom, she’s my CFO; my brother is my campaign manager and I’ve got my NDP family in Toronto-Danforth,” she said.

In fact, her mother was close to Jack Layton. Riaz remembers Layton attending her grandmother’s funeral.

“They had like a brother-sister relationship, but we were still surprised when he came, because he was out of town,” remembered Riaz.

“We felt so much stronger when we saw him. My mom

read a passage from the Quran for his funeral to honor him.”

For the Pakistani-Canadian, repealing the Conservatives’ security legislation, Bill C-51, is an issue that hits close to home.

“As a dual citizen, I’m considered a second-tier Canadian. And that’s not right,” Riaz said.

She’s also passionate about veteran rights.

“I visited some local veterans and I realized they need to be taken care of. They gave so much to this country, they deserve better,” she said.

“I want to protect the middle class — so until Oct. 20, I’ll be knocking on doors.”



Bria John /// The Observer

**Former federal NDP candidate David Sparrow stopped by to give Riaz some advice and encouragement. They stood outside Riaz’s Thorncliffe Park office, talking shop.**



# Liberal wants people 'back at the table'

By PAULA LAST  
The Observer

Income inequality and the economy prompted community organizer Julie Dabrusin to make the leap to politics and her new role as Liberal candidate in Toronto-Danforth.

But underlying those concerns is her intention to work more closely with local politicians.

"What we've had with Stephen Harper is a government that has been unwilling to work with our premiers and our cities," she said.

"We need to get people back at the table again."

The 44-year-old lawyer and married mother of two has lived in the Toronto-Danforth riding since 1998.

For the past four years she has spearheaded a number of community initiatives, like founding the Danforth Hunger Squad for Second Harvest and saving community pools.

Right now she is campaigning in support of the Liberal party's mandate to buffer the middle class.

One expense that pinches the budgets of middle-class Canadian families is child care. Dabrusin spoke about her own challenges in



■ JULIE DABRUSIN

securing a daycare space for her daughters at the Sept. 15 Toronto-Danforth all-candidates meeting.

"We need to come up with a viable option that attacks three issues: affordability, availability and quality," she said when interviewed at a meet-and-greet outside the Broadview subway station the next morning.

Dabrusin commented recently on Twitter about the cancellation of the Liberal National Child Care program.

"The National Child Care Program had been a plan that had been individually negotiated with each of the provinces... to respond to those three issues," she said.

But the Liberal party is providing funds rather than subsidized daycare spots. Dabrusin says there's more to see from the Liberal party on its child-care policy. She did not have the specific dates for those releases.

She also emphasized that the Liberal party wants a program that works with subsidized daycare spots that already exist.

On housing, Dabrusin supports a full-spectrum investment.

"We need to build supportive housing," she said. "We need to work with developers to ensure that we can have more rental units available."

Dabrusin said the Liberal plan is to make funds available immediately for repairs and new units to address a wait list of 90,000 families.

When asked what she would say to people concerned about the impact of social housing on property values, she replied, "We all are stronger when everyone is feeling safe and secure in their environment."

On transit, Dabrusin said, "Our plan... is to

make the largest new investment in infrastructure in history. A portion of that is specifically targeted toward public transit."

Justin Trudeau has stated that amount will be \$20 million.

But how will those funds apply to the city of Toronto?

"It's a matter of making the money available to the city and to the province in a reliable stream," Dabrusin said.

This funding model intends to support ongoing planning, rather than allocating funds on a project-by-project basis.

When pressed on Toronto investments like a downtown relief line, Dabrusin deferred those decisions to local politicians.

"Mayor Tory was elected on the basis of building a 'SmartTrack' rail transit system, she said. "Going forward, how that money is used is going to be decided by local decision-makers."

Why vote for Julie Dabrusin?

"I have been an active community advocate in Toronto-Danforth for many years," she said. "I will be a constant and strong advocate for our community to make Toronto-Danforth better."

## NDP candidate puts child care at top of list

By MATT GREEN  
The Observer

There are a lot of issues for a sitting member of Parliament to contend with — but one that's especially near and dear to incumbent Toronto-Danforth New Democrat Craig Scott is child care.

Scott says that he and the NDP are committed to designing a universal national child care program that would be much more affordable for parents.

"There would be a cap on the fees so the parents would not have to pay more than \$15 a day per child," he said.

This is "vastly less than what parents are finding they have to pay in many, many places in Canada where it's actually not uncommon for parents to be paying \$1,500-\$2,000 a month per child."

Scott said an NDP government would also be committed to creating 100,000 child-care spaces in

the first year — and eventually, one million.

Scott was elected as Toronto-Danforth's representative in the House of Commons in a federal byelection in Toronto-Danforth on March 19, 2012. The riding was formerly represented by former NDP leader Jack Layton, who died of cancer in August 2011.

Scott brings a considerable background to his new political role, having taught law at York University and the University of Toronto.

When he's not in Ottawa, he lives in the neighbourhood around Pape and Mortimer avenues.

The determination he has put into his campaign is a reflection of Layton's views on strength and hard work.

"You have to step back and say, 'The broader project is to get things done,'" Scott said. "That's the Jack philosophy — actually get things done. But also do it in a way that tries to draw the best out of those you're working with."



Melvin Gomez /// The Observer

Toronto-Danforth Green Party candidate Chris Tolley speaks with residents at the Ralph Thornton Centre.

## Green candidate hoping to build a cleaner future

By MELVIN GOMEZ  
The Observer

Two years ago, Chris Tolley, the Green Party's Toronto-Danforth candidate, decided it was time to make a leap into politics after a dramatic change in his life.

It was after the birth of his first daughter when he realized it was his obligation to make a difference.

"That's what really helped me to put my name forward to run as the candidate," Tolley said. "It wasn't about me. It was about my daughter's future. I'm a father first, and that's what changed my perspective on everything."

Tolley, 44, has been living in the Toronto-Danforth area for over 20

years and has seen the area change throughout the years — especially the air quality.

He says Toronto-Danforth has the highest rate of asthma in Toronto. After his wife moved in with him, she suddenly developed asthma and respiratory problems.

After some investigating, he attributes her emerging health issues to the presence of the Don Valley Parkway, which runs through the riding.

"We have a national transportation policy focusing on green modes of transportation including public transport that would have a huge impact on our riding," he said.

"The Green Party has incredibly bold initiatives and policies that would make a big difference when

it comes to transportation and quality of life and health."

Tolley is looking to build a smarter, modern, cleaner economy to help serve Canadians. The focus would be on putting people first and being conscious of quality of life.

Even though the Green Party was only able to obtain one seat in the House of Commons in the previous election, Tolley says the party is growing despite — or perhaps because of — having creative and radical ideas that are different from the more mainstream parties.

"At the end of the day, you have to be bold, you have to be brave to be able to support our party. If people are brave enough to join us, they can have a real impact on everyone's quality of life."



File Photo /// The Observer

NDP Candidate Craig Scott on election night 2011, with Jack Layton's widow, Olivia Chow.



## Burrows wants more jobs for E.Y. community

By ALEX KAMAKARIS  
The Observer

The Conservative candidate in Beaches-East York wants to stimulate the local economy and create jobs.

Bill Burrows, 47, a resident of East York since the late 1990s, is campaigning for the Conservative Party in the Oct. 19 federal election. He also ran in 2011, and came in third.

His priority is the community's economic welfare. "Stephen Harper and the Conservatives are a lot more closely aligned with their concerns about the economy," he said.

Burrows believes it's time for a replacement for the NDP incumbent Nathaniel Erskine-Smith in the Beaches-East York riding. He also believes many voters are interested in changing their voting habits.

"I see it as an opportunity for me to reach out to a lot of people, who share conservative values (and who) just don't feel that they're being represented," he said.

Burrows indicated in an interview that he'll work hard for constituents.

"I will work at all the different levels, fight for federal funding and all the federal issues that matter to them," he said. "When they need me and they call me, I will guarantee them that I will always get back to them."

Burrows said he has been an active member in the community. Even though his surname doesn't appear to be of Greek origin, he is fluent in Greek, speaking as well as reading and writing.

Currently, Burrows works in telecommunications and technology, consulting with electronics and telecom firms. He said the field is evolving and he plans to keep the ward in step with the latest developments.

"There (are) a lot of technology improvements and enhancements that are making us a lot more competitive," he said.

Burrows said he has support in his campaign from such federal politicians as Joe Oliver, Jason Kenney, Kellie Leitch and Lisa Raitt.



File Photo // The Observer

**Bill Burrows (right) is reprising his 2011 run for the Tories in Beaches-East York.**

## A voice for Beaches-East York

By DAN GOLDSMITH  
The Observer

Liberal candidate Nathaniel Erskine-Smith wants to be clear: he is not running to be Justin Trudeau's voice in Beaches-East York; he is running to be the voice of Beaches-East York to Trudeau.

"I got involved because of Trudeau," Erskine-Smith said in an interview with the Observer. "Trudeau is the only leader of a major party who has committed to bottom-up democracy, not telling candidates what to say or think, but really encouraging us to be strong advocates for our communities."

Erskine-Smith added that he believes governing that way is smarter and fairer.

Erskine-Smith, 31, earned degrees in politics and law at Queen's University before moving to England to study civic law at Oxford University. Since finishing his studies at Oxford, Erskine-Smith has worked as an associate for Toronto law firm Kramer Simaan



File Photo // The Observer

**Nathaniel Erskine-Smith addresses Beaches-East York Liberals at their spring nomination meeting, held at the Ted Reeve Community Arena.**

Dhillon. He said his education and legal experience make him ready for public office.

"This is a serious effort after studying politics and law for a long time (and) after practising law for a few years," Erskine-Smith said.

While he is a rookie on the national stage, this isn't Erskine-Smith's first run at public

office. As a politics student at Queen's University, he unsuccessfully ran for Kingston city council.

Erskine-Smith is only the second candidate to win the Liberal nomination in the riding's most recent incarnation, as Beaches-East York.

Now, in the first federal election since the NDP turned the

ward orange, Erskine-Smith is confident he will win back Beaches-East York.

"Thomas Mulcair is no Jack Layton and voters here know that. The charisma that Jack brought, Trudeau brings in many respects," Erskine-Smith said. "If we keep working as hard as we are... I think we'll be in very good shape."

## Giving carbon emissions the 'Sach'

By SHELBY MORTON  
The Observer

A decade ago, Randall Sach worked with a support unit for the Canadian International Development Agency in Hanoi, Vietnam. During a staff meeting, he learned about Canada's newly elected government — and what he heard concerned him.

"I heard that the new Conservative government wasn't as interested in environmental or gender issues as they should be," he said.

His assessment of the incoming Stephen Harper administration eventually sparked an interest in running for the Green Party in the Beaches-East York riding in the Oct. 19 federal election.

Sach, 58, grew up in Scarborough and received a master's degree from the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs at Carleton

University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto.

He recently moved back to the Beaches neighbourhood after 30 years of working in the international development field. He has worked in the Philippines, Afghanistan and Vietnam for the former CIDA (now merged with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development) and various other non-profit organizations, helping to improve housing, agriculture and education overseas.

He said his work in international development has focused his concern for marginalized citizens and the poor in Canada.

"Putting those plans in place like the Guaranteed Livable Income plan, moving towards a housing-first solution is what we need to help those low income, or no income, citizens," he said. The



■ RANDALL SACH

plan would replace separate and provincial programs with a single, federal-mandated cash benefit given through the tax system.

Sach said he and the Green Party also have ideas to help Canada become a greener nation.

"Stopping subsidies for oil and gas extracted industries and repurposing the economy towards renewable energy sources will benefit everybody," he said.

He also applauded the Green Party's "Carbon Fee and Dividend" plan to lower

taxes for income and employment, and raise taxes and fees for carbon emissions and pollution. The funds will then be divided equally among Canadians as a part of the carbon dividend.

Another green initiative, Sach said, involves retrofitting older buildings to become more energy efficient.

"There's a lot of older, leaky buildings in the (Beaches-East York) area and retrofits would help with emissions and lowering housing costs, like hydro," he said.

He said his plan would move Canada toward using 100-per-cent renewable resources.

Sach hopes Beaches-East York constituents will vote with their conscience.

"It is bold for people to move away from the traditional three-party paradigm and pick outside of that," he said.

## New Democrat looking to paint the riding orange

By MARCUS MEDFORD  
The Observer

"He's a hearty looking guy," remarked Peter Tabuns of his fellow New Democratic Party member, Matthew Kellway. Tabuns, the MPP in neighbouring Toronto-Danforth, added: "He's the kind of guy who wants to make history."

Kellway, 50, is the incumbent MP in the Beaches-East York riding after ending Liberal MP Maria Minna's six-term run in the 2011 federal election. In that last vote, Kellway received 41.6 per cent of the ballots.

The Beaches has been home to Kellway for nearly 20 years, after growing up in Kingston. He's married to Donna Kellway, a Crown attorney, and the couple have three children. Kellway said he could not do the work he does in Ottawa without the support of his family, who, he said, "bring him the most joy."

Kellway served as the military procurement critic under Jack Layton and is currently the NDP's urban affairs and infrastructure critic.

At Kellway's official campaign office opening party, he acknowl-



■ MATTHEW KELLWAY

edged the accomplishments of his campaign team and the NDP — but said that more work is needed.

"Canada won't go orange if

Beaches-East York doesn't go orange," Kellway said.

In the 2011 federal election, the NDP won 103 seats. Kellway sees that rise in popularity as proof Canadians are eager for change.

He criticized Stephen Harper and the Conservatives for the security legislation that he said is too draconian, and for the citizenship law that he thinks is discriminatory. He said they show that the Tories are an "alien government."

"They (voters) don't see themselves reflected in this govern-

ment," he said.

Kellway listed the missions in Iraq and Syria, refugees, supplemental income for seniors and affordable child care as his top priorities.

It takes a lot of passion and leadership to fight for change, according to Kellway, and he believes the NDP has that.

"Each and every one of us running under the NDP banner has great ambitions — but these are ambitions for others and not for themselves," he said.



EDITORIALS

# Welcome to the now

Canada has a reputation for being one of the most progressive countries in the world. People flock here from all over the globe to enjoy the quality of life and education that Canada has to offer.

However, because of some recent changes in the Ontario sex education curriculum, some parents are up in arms over what's being taught in our schools' health classes. In recent days, protests have even kept some young students out of school in the GTA — most notably in Thorncliffe Park.

These protests are misguided. The importance of realistic sex ed as part of a modern health education is undeniable.

The new curriculum replaces one that was introduced in 1998: "Active Living, Movement Competence and Health Living." It included sections on healthy eating, growth and development, personal safety and injury prevention, movement skills, physical fitness, living skills and safety. All laudable. And all almost two decades old now.

Since 1998, understanding of human health and sexuality has improved dramatically. So in 2010, the curriculum was first updated with the addition of information on personal and interpersonal skills, creative thinking, movement strategies and an expanded section on substance abuse issues. Although these updates were needed, they did not push the improvements of the curriculum far enough. Much of it remained unchanged.

The new curriculum is more complete — with new, realistic information that has come to the fore in the past 17 years, as society has evolved (through things like the digital revolution and greater acceptance of differing sexual orientations). Mental health, gender association, gender identity and sexual orientation have been updated in the curriculum, so kids can be gradually exposed to the reality of these aspects of human health.

Sure, this information may be uncomfortable to some parents, but this information is provided to help children take their eventual place in an increasingly inclusive and understanding environment.

Our children's education is an important foundation of our country. Children are the future, and to stifle the future's education based on personal discomfort instead of the clear-cut benefits to our young people is ridiculous.

So first, if you disapprove of what you think is being taught in sex ed classes, then actually acquaint yourself with the reality of the curriculum — as opposed to superficial media reports, inaccurate leaflets being handed out in some quarters and the neighbourhood rumour mill.

Check this website: [ontario.ca/page/sex-education-ontario](http://ontario.ca/page/sex-education-ontario)

If, afterward, you still object (and we would respectfully suggest that fairminded people won't) then you can still remove your child from those specific sex ed classes. But don't take away education from those who need it.

~ Ethan Manninen

# Profiles of integrity?

The Conservative candidate in East York's Toronto-Danforth riding was Tim Dutaud. Until Sept. 7, that is, when it came to light that he was in some YouTube videos making distasteful prank phone calls. That same day, the Tories dropped another Toronto candidate, Scarborough-Rouge Park's Jerry Bance, when it was revealed that, as a home repairman, he'd been caught on a hidden camera peeing into a homeowner's coffee mug.

Draw what inferences you may; these two sorry states of affairs also beg the larger question of what the vetting process is for candidates, and whether it's thorough enough.

How was this missed? Some say that the oversight stemmed from the fact that Bance was only referred to as "Jerry" on the 2012 episode of CBC's Marketplace that caught his bad behaviour.

"There's an expectation that candidates are truthful and complete when going through the candidate-screening process, and that wasn't the case," said Conservative party campaign spokesperson Kory Teneycke.

Teneycke also provided insight about the typical screening process for a candidate. The process includes a question that specifically asks if there is anything that might surface that would be embarrassing either to the candidate or to the party as a whole.

So Teneycke seems to allocate some fault to the candidates, but the major political parties have to accept some responsibility too for accepting candidates with this kind of thing in their past.

"These were fairly easily traceable on the web," columnist Christie Blatchford said during a radio segment regarding the ousted candidates.

Her comment, along with these incidents, point to the need for some social-media savvy people to be included in the parties' screening process.

Around the same time were two other, separate incidents that highlight the trouble posed by politicians' (and would-be politicians') use of social media. Shawn Dearn, before he was an NDP communications director, tweeted offensive remarks about the Pope and the Catholic Church, and a Conservative riding association director, Sue MacDonell, wrote nasty comments about Canada's First Nations.

In light of these incidents, it is imperative that fact-checkers and background-checkers not only go through a standard Google search, but a thorough search of every strand of social media there is.

~ Stephanie Hinds

COLUMNS

# A healthy dose of reality

By now, we have all heard about the province's controversial new health curriculum — and especially its sex ed component. It's been causing a commotion since a first attempt to introduce it in 2010, under the then-premier, Dalton McGuinty.

His successor, Kathleen Wynne, and her education minister, Liz Sandals, are sticking to their guns this time. The new curriculum has been met with protest, denunciations and even plain denial. But now that school is back in session, there is no denying that this is happening. For students across the province, a new, fresh take on traditional sex ed awaits them this school year. We're past the point of yes or no. But a new problem is emerging.

My brother, who is in Grade 8, was in health class the other day, and the class discussed gender identities. Curious, my brother asked a question about hot-topic Caitlyn Jenner: If Jenner identifies as a woman, and she engages in a relationship with another woman, would she be considered to be a lesbian? Or because she has not (as of yet) had the actual gender reassignment surgery,

is she still considered a biological male — therefore making any relationship with a woman heterosexual?

I was pretty proud of my kid brother for asking a tough question like that. So tough, in fact, that I couldn't answer it. And neither could my parents.

And, interestingly, neither could the teacher.

That's disappointing. And it raises an interesting issue.

Let me hasten to say that I am all for this update of sex education. I think it is necessary to provide students with the information and resources to learn about the birds, the bees (and everything in between) in a safe and comfortable atmosphere. Talking about sex openly and responsibly does not have to be so taboo and off-limits. (If only this had been the case when I was at school...)

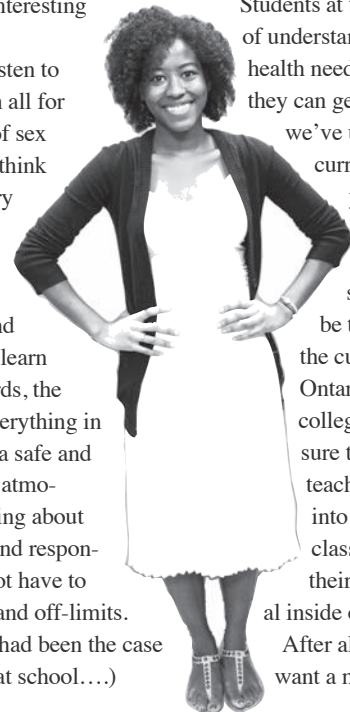
My problem comes with

teachers who may not have a background in sex education teaching a classroom of curious pupils and trying to cover complex topics like sexual expression and gender identities.

For one, it is not fair for students to be given almost-answers or, 'I do not know.' Second, it is a lot to expect of the teachers themselves.

Students at the pivotal age of understanding sexual health need all the help they can get. So now that we've updated the curriculum for young people in elementary and high school, it may be time to update the curriculum at Ontario's teachers colleges — to make sure that the health teachers graduating into the province's classrooms know their subject material inside out.

After all, you wouldn't want a math teacher teaching French, right?



Ashleen Grange

# Giving a leg up in dance

Ballet is one of the more highly praised genres of dance. It is well-known worldwide for its elegance, technical formation and movement. Since the 15th century, ballet has been known to primarily reside in popularity in Italy, France, Russia — and, more recently, all across Europe and the United States. For those not in-tune with the ballet world, a preconceived notion that ballet is a dying art has surrounded the genre for quite some time. However, contrary to that belief, it is very much still alive... and growing with ethnicity!

Just last month, the American Ballet Theatre Company located in New York City selected Misty Copeland, author and then soloist ballerina within the company, to become the first female

African-American principle dancer. Her story is one that resonates with not only children of colour but also children living in disadvantaged economic circumstances. Copeland started ballet training at the age of 13, which in the ballet community is believed to be too old to become a professional dancer.

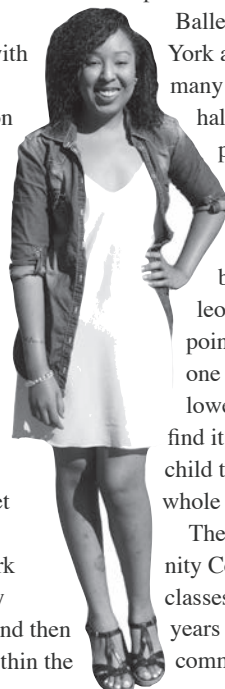
Ballet classes in the East York area range in price but many aren't affordable for half of the children and parents residing there. Ballet is one of the most expensive forms of dance to be involved in. With leotards, ballet slippers, pointe shoes, tutus, etc., one who falls within the lower-income bracket can find it hard to fund their child through dance their whole lives.

The East York Community Centre provides ballet classes for children 6-8 years old. Classes at the community centre are being offered for as little as \$42.

Programs can be hard to find in Toronto, let alone East York, to teach the younger generation about the beauty behind technique and the history of ballet. But the National Ballet Of Canada on Jarvis Street offers various programs to do just that. For over 40 years, "The National," alongside Scotiabank, has been instilling ballet education into the minds of students who belong to various socio-economic backgrounds and cultures.

The turnout program at The National aids young adults with the opportunity to learn more about dance and the arts, as well as to create a community where one can network and assist with the future development of The National Ballet Of Canada.

Programs for teenagers and young adults who live in disadvantaged circumstances in East York still need to be able to access programs — and with the help of the highly prestigious ballet companies in Toronto, hope for more programs will be provided in the future.



LC Kemp





Courtesy of City of Toronto Archives

## A walk down memory lane

The Observer resumes its look back on East York history through photographs from the City of Toronto Archives. This pair of pictures reflects both drama and everyday life in East York in the first half of the 20th century. On the left is a photo of the aftermath of what is thought to have been the first crash of an airplane in Toronto. Toronto archivists say the aircraft was “a biplane with a seven-cylinder Gnome rotary engine, flown by J.A.D. McCurdy... (at) the Aviation Meet, Donlands Farm, Todmorden Mills, August 3-5, 1911.” Other sources indicate that McCurdy, a pioneer aviator and later the lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia, was unhurt. On the right, something more routine: fruits, vegetables and their prices crowding an unidentified grocery stand on Coxwell Avenue in 1940.

# Families unhappy with portables' condition

By DEIDRA BARTON  
The Observer

After almost a year, the families of Secord Public School are still dealing with the condition of some portable classrooms.

The 20-year-old portables were the targets of complaints last fall, when some parents said the structures smelled like mould and had water damage on the ceiling and roofs.

Some parents even staged a protest, pulling their children out of class, to bring attention to the school's problems.

This fall, the public school trustee for Beaches-East York, Sheila Cary-Meagher, says there has been some improvement — but only some, because the board has been unable to obtain the proper funding from the province.

“We cannot build, add or do anything on the property on a capital budget without the permission of the ministry,” she said. “But they oversee every single part of the process. They scrutinize it, they cut things. Even if we had the money to build it, we couldn't build it without their permission.”

Cary-Meagher said that the province is aware

of the problem, but does not want to spend the money to really address it. So some of the problems with mould and water damage have been fixed by replacing roofs and drywall that was affected.

“It was really an extensive process to explain it all to the community and it unfolded unreasonably well,” she said.

But Cary-Meagher and some Secord families want a more permanent solution through more permanent construction.

“They're angry because nothing is moving,” she said, “and they want to know why.”



■ CARY-MEAGHER

## Some kids pulled out of school

Cont'd. from page 1

it (sexual education); it's just updated,” Schwartz-Maltz said. “There are misconceptions about what is taught in what grade.”

She said sexual education is only a minor focus in the new health curriculum overall. Content that has also been updated includes advice on avoiding illegal substances and sustaining an overall active lifestyle.

At Valley Park Middle School, where most children attend after graduating Thomcliffe Park, there have been few reports of protest — despite the fact that the curriculum for Grades 7 and 8 starts to explore more serious sexually related issues.

Meanwhile, at Thorncliffe, some parents have apparently begun to homeschool their children, seemingly reluctant to return to the public education system. Technically, if a child is away from class for more than 10 days, he or she is referred to a social-worker/attendance counsellor.

# Fall show brings out the inner artist in visitors

By KEI LAM  
The Observer

Two partly completed paintings sit on a pair of easels at the back of the gallery. Together the canvases depict a “mandala” — a geometric spiritual symbol representing the universe.

A few minutes ago, Jean McGrady spotted the easels. She also noticed the brushes and a palette of a variety of acrylic paints sitting in front of the canvases. She was given the chance to add to the mandala.

“I'm quite thrilled,” McGrady said. “(But) I do wish I could paint.”

The fall show, put on by the Beach Guild of Fine Arts at the gallery at Todmorden Mills Heritage Site on Pottery Road, runs until this Sunday, Sept. 27. Since the middle of the month, it has brought together local artists and art enthusiasts with its new interactive art project.

Guild member Jordana Heney, who prepared the project, encouraged guests, including Jean McGrady, to take



Kei Lam /// The Observer

**A gallery visitor (right) and Jordana Heney, an exhibiting artist at the Beach Guild of Fine Arts fall show, collaborate on the newly introduced interactive community painting project.**

part in the activity.

“Part of (the mandala) was already painted, so people will be less shy,” Heney said.

She explained that she teaches adult art classes and

that most people are afraid to approach the piece if the subject is too detailed because they're afraid of ruining it.

Some of Grethe Jensen's work hangs in the gallery. She

helped organize the interactive painting exhibit and said that guild members readily approved the idea. “We really wanted to do something that would engage and involve the

people who come,” Jensen said. “People can put on a shirt and be an artist.”

This year's interactive painting segment was a first for the guild. Guests were invited to collaborate on an art piece that would be auctioned later. Proceeds from the sale of the art will be donated to Pegasus, an organization that provides services for adults with developmental disabilities.

The mandala painting continued to evolve throughout the evening as guests took turns working on it. Jensen said the evolution of the painting helps to show that art is never stagnant.

“I'll put it back on the easel, work on it some more and keep adding to it. It keeps changing,” she said. “It becomes something of its own.”

Jensen said she hoped that the interactive idea would “catch on and continue.... Based on what we learn from this year maybe we'll do something a little differently, but people seem to like this.” For more information on the show, visit [www.beachguildoffineart.com](http://www.beachguildoffineart.com).



## A last (sweet) breath of summer

As East Yorkers anticipated the official arrival of fall this past Wednesday, they seemed to cram in as many summer activities as they could (presumably to soften the blow of autumn). The four photos to the right are from the barbecue picnic held for families of the Main Square Day Care Centre at Taylor Creek Park on Sept. 13. The weather was slightly cool and wet, but that didn't stop the youngest attendees from frolicking and lining up for ice cream.

Directly below, students at the East York campus of Centennial College on Carlaw Avenue demonstrate different styles of corn cob consumption at a mixer for the start of the school year held on Sept. 16.

At bottom left, Kristopher Truchan shows off his artistic side at the Harvest Festival held at the Todmorden Gallery on Pottery Road on Sept. 19.

(All photos by Alex Kamakaris)

