



DOG DAYS OF AUTUMN

■ Police K-9 unit to host open house

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■ COMMUNITY SAFETY



Xueting Zhao /// The Observer

Rob Hart adjusts the seatbelts of daughters Christina, 5, and Marianna, 3. Both girls were in the car with him when he was involved in a collision with a pedestrian on Bayview Avenue.

‘I realized I’d hit someone’

Father of 2 shares story of tragedy that almost was

By XUETING ZHAO
The Observer

When Rob Hart buckled his daughters’ seat belts, turned on the radio and drove out of the McDonald’s parking lot in Leaside on a sunny afternoon a few weeks ago, he was feeling “nice and relaxed.” A devoted father, he enjoys nothing

more than spending time with his two girls, Christina, 5, and Marianna, 3.

Within a few seconds, though, that pleasant feeling turned to horror. A pedestrian had stepped into the path of Hart’s car.

For Hart, a software specialist at Centennial College’s East York campus, what was about to happen served as an uncomfortable reminder of another accident that claimed the life of a little girl in the same neighbourhood earlier this year.

With his view blocked for a few crucial seconds by a balloon that one of his daughters had been playing with, he did not see the man in front of him until it was too late.

And with his attention diverted by his cellphone, headphones and the full cup of coffee he was carrying, the pedestrian — a man in his mid-20s — was unaware of the traffic around him.

The car hit the man.

“I had stopped at the corner of the street,” Hart, 46, recalled of the moments leading

up to the collision.

“It was clear in front of me. I stepped on the gas and he flew up on the hood.”

In shock, Hart slammed on the brakes.

“My oldest daughter started screaming,” he said in an interview this week. “I realized I’d hit someone. He flew off the hood and landed on the road. His phone went flying, his earbuds came out and his coffee went all over the windshield.”

■ See ACCIDENT, page 2

■ POLITICS

Local candidates jump on board the transit train

Fare integration is one of the ways they’re looking to fix transit issues

By DENNIS GONZALES
The Observer

Poll after poll suggests that the biggest issue in this municipal election campaign is transportation, including public transit.

And East York candidates for city council have picked up on that — especially in Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth, where incumbent Mary Fragedakis faces challenges from five rivals, including Dave Andre and his high-profile campaign, and John Papadakis, who is trying for a comeback after serving as an East York councillor 20 years ago.

Andre has released two policy papers on transportation that call for relief along the Bloor-Danforth subway



■ ANDRE line through the construction of a tunnel that would directly connect the TTC’s Main Street station to the Danforth GO station.

Connecting from one station to the other is a five-minute walk, but Andre says there’s more going on with his tunnel.

“You create a more intentional transfer, and the connection would ideally only be the first step,” he said. “The physical connection would encourage people to make that connection, and it would be much more comfortable for them to do that, especially in the winter. But by opening that connection, you would then allow opportunities to do other things.”

A direct connection is part of his solution; Andre also wants to move toward more integrated fares.

For people in Scarborough or East York who would use the option of transferring to the Danforth GO station down to Union Station, the cost would be \$5.35 one-way — nearly twice as much as a TTC token. Andre hopes to reduce that cost during transfer, or even eliminate it, but he acknowledges that it will take time.

■ See CANDIDATE, page 2



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Liberal hopefuls vie for Beaches-East York nomination

By PEDER MYHR
The Observer

The municipal election campaign isn’t the only politics going on in East York. The Liberals in Beaches-East York are already anticipating the federal election scheduled for a year from now, and on Tuesday night, the five men and one woman vying to stand with Justin Trudeau in 2015 debated at the Royal Canadian Legion on Dawes Road.

It’s the first time in 20 years that the federal Liberal nomination has been up for grabs in

Beaches-East York. Liberal Maria Minna held the riding from 1993 until 2011, when she was defeated in her bid for another re-election by New Democrat Matthew Kellway.

“It’s just so exciting with these candidates that we have brought together,” said Jason Balgopal, the debate’s moderator and riding association president. “Any one would make a great representative.” A date for the actual selection of the riding association’s candidate hasn’t been set.

Transit was a key issue for some of the candidates. Jeff Rybak, a lecturer at the University of Toronto, stressed the importance of working

with other levels of government in achieving an efficient transit system. Lawyer Nathaniel Erskine-Smith discussed how improving infrastructure and transit would save Ottawa money.

Ali Khan and Tom McGee both spoke about their connection to the community and how it led them into politics. Khan is the son of immigrants to Toronto. He said he is driven by a desire to give back to the community that supported his family. McGee, a small business owner and father of two, met his wife in the Beaches, and has lived in the community for 14 years. He said he wants to help other families get access

to affordable child care.

Marisa Sterling ran as a Liberal in neighbouring Toronto-Danforth in the provincial election of 2011, but she was defeated by incumbent Peter Tabuns of the NDP. This time, running to become the federal Liberal candidate in Beaches-East York, she talked about the creation of jobs and a reversal of what she said has been Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s muzzling of science and data collection.

Filmmaker and activist Andrew Nisker appealed to potential left-leaning voters with a platform based on arts and advocacy.

POLICE & FIRE

Man, 23, faces second-degree murder charges

A 23-year-old man has been charged with second-degree murder after a 34-year-old man was attacked on Danforth Avenue near Greenwood Avenue while walking with friends on Saturday.

Police believe the two men started to fight, and the altercation escalated. The man fled after the victim's friends confronted him, police say.

He was arrested Sunday at a location on Queen Street and charged with second-degree murder.

Anyone with information is asked to call 54 Division at 416-808-5400 or the homicide squad at 416-808-7400.

Boy sexually assaulted near Coxwell Avenue

Police have issued a public safety alert after a boy was sexually assaulted while walking near Cosburn and Coxwell avenues on the afternoon of Sept. 16.

The suspect is said to be white, about 20 years old, 5'8" to 5'10" tall, with long, dark, wavy hair and a skinny build.

At the time of the attack, he wore a navy blue hoodie, blue jeans and white headphones.

Anyone with information is asked to call 54 Division at 416-808-5400 or Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-TIPS (8477).

~ Brittany Campbell

ENVIRONMENT

A clean creek cannot wait

Advocacy group sends letter demanding action on contaminated creek

By WILL KOBLENSKY
The Observer

Taylor-Massey Creek has been polluted with E. coli and lead from sewage, landfill and storm water runoff for over a decade, and in the run-up to this month's municipal election, politicians are weighing in with their cleanup ideas.

Efforts to decontaminate the creek, which runs through East York and Scarborough, have already been partially successful, although environmentalists say almost anything would have been an improvement — considering that the creek once had 20,000 times more E. coli bacteria than the provincial standard.

The Taylor Massey Project, an advocacy group for the waterway, penned an open letter to city councillors on the parks and environment committee in August, criticizing the city's "unfortunate gaps in its inter-departmental coordination for the delivery of its commitment to watershed management."

The letter also complained about councillors' relationship with each other, and it said the resulting inefficiency was behind stalled restoration efforts.

But Ward 31/Beaches-East York councillor Janet Davis disagrees.

"I think that's an inaccurate characterization of the situation," she said in an interview. "I moved a motion, which was approved (by council), that we will develop a master plan for



Will Koblenky // The Observer

Taylor-Massey Creek and the trail alongside it is undergoing restoration.

the Taylor Creek Park to guide city investments over the next few years."

The people working on the Taylor Massey Project say they were disappointed by the master plan because it doesn't take into account the entire watershed, including the Don

Valley. Davis agrees that a more holistic solution is ultimately required, but she added that she doesn't want to wait for other regions and departments to get on-board before taking action.

"We will create infrastructure

(like) tunnel tanks beneath Taylor Creek, for the full length of the creek, to capture the combined sewer overflow," Davis said, adding that the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority are currently doing an environmental assessment.

"I can't wait for the entire project to be lined up. I want to represent the interests of my community. I'm tired of waiting."

She pointed out that the watershed involves more than just her ward, and without the co-operation of all of their representatives, an overarching plan is a non-starter.

Both Brenda MacDonald and George Papadakis — also candidates in Ward 31 — have expressed their own concerns about the creek.

"It leads right to the Don that is part of our watershed that we require for flood protection," MacDonald said. "If we affect that in any way we are going to be in big trouble."

When asked in an interview what he thought of a community-driven restoration project, something the Taylor Massey Project has been asking for, Papadakis said, "They have to get involved. They have to be aware of the benefit of keeping Taylor-Massey Creek alive."

He said that cleaning the creek would involve "increasing planned habitat in the area, eliminating sewage water, storm water.... From what I know, there's some community involvement and some councillors who do some cleanup.... It should be done more often."

Papadakis said he is in favour of Davis' master plan, but he added that more projects like it would help.

Candidate envisions relief tunnel

Cont. from page 1

"We want to have all the details worked out before we do anything," Andre said.

"Build the tunnel — it will take one or two years depending on how we do the project, but while we're building it, we can discuss whether it will be an integrated fare, a rebated

fare or who's going to pick up that cost."

Andre's plan, he admits, is not just his own. Elements can be found in other places, including in mayoral candidate John Tory's "SmartTrack" plan. But Andre said his goal is to find common ground among all existing plans, and simply move forward.

"If you look at Olivia Chow's plan to build a relief line, I support the concept of a downtown relief line," Andre said.

"But the reality is that that is going to take at least 15 years to build, and we don't have 15 years to wait for relief on the Bloor-Danforth line."

Other planks in Andre's

transportation platform are "early-bird fares," further development of a city cycling infrastructure, Ward 29 "traffic meetings" for the public, and the city's hiring of a transportation 'czar.'

Papadakis, meanwhile, has a more modest transit platform, centering on construction of the downtown relief

line, and free transit for Canadian military veterans.

For her part, councillor Fragedakis is promoting a multi-point transit plan that includes the relief line and electrification of the GO train network, reversing cuts to bus and streetcar service; and adoption of new train technologies.

From counting the ballots to candidate hopeful

Sherbanowski decides to run in Beaches-East York

By GEREMY BORDANARO
The Observer

Janet Sherbanowski is switching roles this election.

She's worked for both Elections Canada and Elections Ontario. But this month, instead of helping to count ballots, her name is going to be on one — as a candidate for city council in Ward 31/Beaches-East York.

In an interview, Sherbanowski said

that she wants the recent antagonism at council to stop, and the councillors to work together on building a better Toronto.

"We need to build a community with a sense of togetherness," she said, "instead of arguing and picking sides."

She added that she hopes to be a vocal advocate for Ward 31 in particular.

"I feel like Ward 31 isn't being given proper representation," she said. "We need someone who can properly reflect the ward's needs."

Sherbanowski said her platform's main planks are better use of public funds, better care for an aging popula-

tion and promoting commercial enterprise.

"We need to have better cooperation between business and the ward," she said. "Small business is especially suffering because of major infrastructure issues in the area."

A stronger commercial climate will put more people to work, she added, and will create more wealth — some of which can then be invested in needed public works.

"Together we can accomplish great things," Sherbanowski said. "Instead of deciding who's to blame, we can work together to make the city better."





Jeremy Hon // The Observer

Ward 26 councillor John Parker is part of the “Tower Renewal” project that aims to upgrade buildings and reduce waste in the Thorncliffe Park area.

Parker plans park use

By JEREMY HON
The Observer

After eight years at city hall, Ward 26 councillor John Parker says he relishes the fact that the news media and even fellow councillors now come to him for counsel.

“I take satisfaction in knowing that an increasing number of people turn to me for commentary on city hall,” Parker said in an interview. “I seem to have a reputation for being the voice of reason at city hall and deciphering what goes on in there.”

That’s particularly been the case in the months of escalating scandals around Mayor Rob Ford.

But in seeking a third term as Don Valley West’s representative on council, Parker says his main goal is to make Toronto “a more desirable city to live in.”

“Toronto is a large city that is growing and changing. That can be a good thing or a bad thing. There is tremendous potential for Toronto to be a

stronger, more dynamic and promising city,” he said. “[By doing the] right things, such as transit and urban planning, we can direct the city of Toronto to its full potential.”

He points to steps that have already been taken. During his tenure as city councillor, he said, there have already been improvements and ongoing renovations to parks, community centres and libraries.

Parker is a part of the “Tower Renewal” project that aims to upgrade existing buildings, reduce waste and start recycling projects within the Thorncliffe Park area.

“The existing buildings there need an upgrade. The tower renewal isn’t just to improve the quality of the buildings but also to [help] neighbours get together,” he said. “The project aims to improve both the physical and social aspects of the building.”

Improvements have also been made to R.V. Burgess and Leaside parks in the neighbourhood — and Parker added there are still more changes

to come to Thorncliffe Park generally. It was originally developed in the 1970s to house 12,000 occupants, but now more than 30,000 people live there, most of them new residents to Canada.

Parker said he has also worked with the Thorncliffe Park Women’s Committee in advancing and improving the community for women.

Sabina Ali, the project co-ordinator of the committee, was responsible for spearheading the “open bazaar” park concept.

“The concept came to be in 2009, when the city was on strike. And nothing was happening in Thorncliffe,” Ali said in an interview. “It is a unique market that provides opportunities for women to sell clothing, bags, jewelry and food. Women are allowed to set up stands at the park and sell goods from their home country.”

“It provides a venue for women to [socialize] and improve their skills,” Ali said. “It’s hard to start a business.

This platform helps them improve their clientele, self-esteem and social skills.”

Given the disparity between struggling Thorncliffe Park and affluent Leaside next door (where Parker resides), he wants to keep up with the growth of the city while improving the community.

“I really appreciate the diversity of the community in Leaside. There is the pressure of growth and opportunities as the city grows around them,” he said.

“But the Thorncliffe area is an exciting community. It creates new, committed Canadians who are taking a small step backwards but are committed to staying in Canada for their future generations.”

“People are here to stay in Canada and contribute to the economy,” Ali said about the new residents in Thorncliffe.

Parker said he hopes to keep his ward on an upward trajectory by focusing on community needs like transit, neighbourhood renovations and urban planning.

Officer, resident connects with the community

Just 415 seats away from winning in 2010, Burnside hopes to take Ward 26

By SHAWN FOURNIER
The Observer

Ward 26 council candidate Jon Burnside says that he has invested more than 25 years in the communities of Leaside, Bennington Heights, Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park — including over a decade as a Toronto police officer.

Burnside was just 415 votes away from unseating incumbent Don Valley West councillor John Parker in 2010, and many observers consider this month’s re-match one of the races to watch in the Oct. 27 municipal election.

Burnside said in an interview that his near miss four years ago has only served to raise his profile in the ward — and further motivate him in the campaign this time around.

“What sets me apart as a candidate is not only what I want to do but also what I’ve been doing,” he said. “I’ve been committed to the community and I’ve gotten results. I know that as a city councillor I can do a lot more.”

Burnside is a member of the Flemingdon Neighbourhood Service Board and the Ontario Government Trillium Grant Review Team. He was also the recipient of the Kathleen Wynne Community Service Award and Toronto Police Community Service Award.

On the topic of employment for Ward 26, Burnside said his primary goal is to work alongside Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne to further increase youth jobs in East York.

“Kathleen has worked really hard and been very effective in the community, but she hasn’t had a partner,” he said. “I want to be that partner.”

Burnside said that as a resident of East York, he understands the challenges and concerns that face the community.

One of his chief priorities is bringing the city council closer together to get more projects done — projects such as building and repairing more youth after-school facilities.

“In Thorncliffe and Flemingdon, you have 6,000 children with very few facilities — such as the tennis courts, which are very run down. I want to get city funds into the community to fix up and hopefully expand.”



■ BURNSIDE

Trustee candidate pushing smaller classrooms



■ SARAS-VOUTSINAS

Ward 15 hopeful is active in community

By VALERIE McDERMOTT
The Observer

Maria Saras-Voutsinas may not be a household name in Toronto-Danforth yet, but the school board trustee candidate is hoping it will be by Oct. 27.

The 39-year-old mother of two is running for the Toron-

to District School Board in the TDSB’s Ward 15.

A resident of the area for 17 years, Voutsinas said in an interview that she has already accomplished some significant tasks in the community.

Graduating with bilingual, specialist honors in political science from York University, she’s a community journalist, and free speech and human rights activist for the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada.

She’s also a parent council executive.

Because of that, Voutsinas said, she is already involved with parents in the community, discussing their concerns with the public school system while trying to find a solution.

She said that Toronto has the basic structure to form better schools but the board needs to work on communication between community, trustees and province.

“I want to be the voice for them,” says Voutsinas.

She’s a first-time candidate who said that she prefers to meet community members in person.

If elected, she said, she would make herself visible and accessible to the public.

Some ideas that she hopes to push forward in her campaign are smaller classrooms with more one-on-one time for students.

This will create better

programs for children with special needs such as learning disabilities and make sure that public school funding goes to the right places — “to creating [united] classroom spaces and not \$100 staplers for every classroom.”

When asked why she decided to run, she replied: “I knew it was time.... This community needs an advocate that hears them and their concerns. At the end of the day, it’s what they deserve.”

■ EAST YORK VOTES 2014

Candidate says no to unsafe roads



By **TANYA DEBI**
The Observer

Some East Yorkers say city traffic and the roadwork on Woodbine Avenue are making driving, parking and walking a safety issue, especially around the stretch between O'Connor Drive and Danforth Avenue — and particularly in school zones.

Ward 31 council candidate Brenda MacDonald is making road safety a major plank in her campaign platform.

She says she's especially worried about the streets surrounding D.A. Morrison Middle School on Gledhill Avenue, near Woodbine.

MacDonald said two recent accidents in the neighbour-

hood demonstrate the issue.

"We can do better with traffic in school zones," MacDonald said. "If the coroner's office is telling you to reduce the speed limit, you probably should."

MacDonald lives in East York with her husband and two children. This is her second time running to represent Beaches-East York on city council.

In the 2010 election she finished in the middle of the pack in Beaches-East York, with about eight per cent of the votes. She said street safety is the overriding issue for her.

She explained that she's concerned about pedestrian traffic — and making it easier for children and seniors to get

around.

But there are other issues for residents that MacDonald also wants to address.

"We have more seniors living in East York than anywhere else," she said. "The demographics are changing.... They need assistance (with snow-clearing); they need a lot of help."

MacDonald also said that she would like a study of Ward 31's patterns of transit use.

"I do think the TTC needs to audit the bus service in this area. The main complaint here is that there are too many buses and not enough people on them," she said.

But more importantly, she said, "We need a relief line for East York, for those to get

downtown" — referring to the proposal for a new downtown subway line.

MacDonald said that city council needs to work on the community's natural environment.

"I was concerned about here is Taylor-Massey Creek, because it leads right to the Don that is part of our watershed that we require for flood protection," said MacDonald. "If we affect that in any way we are going to be in big trouble."

The creek is heavily polluted from nearby industrial lands and the flow of storm water. The strong presence of E. coli was found along with other contaminants in 2005.

"We need expressed support and attention to this," she said.

■ MACDONALD

New perspective on East York schools

By **SANDRA D. SUKRAJ**
The Observer

Having recently graduated from York University with a major in political science, and being involved in the education system, Toronto-Danforth school board candidate Sergio Otoyá thinks that he has an advantage over his opponents.

"I know what the schools are like from a student's perspective," Otoyá said "but I'm also out of school and I have enough experience teaching that I can use that experience and bring it forward as a trustee. I can relate more to the students that are going to school."

At 24, Otoyá is not only a candidate for the Toronto District School Board's ward 15, he's also an elementary school teacher.

"A lot of politicians haven't been to a school or to a classroom in over 20 years," Otoyá said. "They might go in once in a while and check it out, but realistically speaking it's not the same."

Coming from what he said is a familial background in politics, and coupled with feeling a need for change with the school board, Otoyá said this is the ideal place for him to start his political career.

"I hope to be more involved throughout the school level," Otoyá said.

Among Otoyás' goals is addressing the TDSB trustee expenses issue. He said he hopes to reduce spending throughout the TDSB without affecting programming.

"I think programming is really important, especially for the older grades," Otoyá said.

"Even for the little ones. For parents, it's extremely important to have some after-school programs, or before-school programs, so that they can get to work and come back from work."

Otoyá said he wants to put children first, including those with special needs.

"My platform for the whole campaign as been respect for our children, and that's what I plan to do if I get elected."



■ OTOYA

Up-and-comer proposes new revenue tools

By **DAKODA SANNEN**
The Observer

Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth council candidate Jimmy Vlachos thinks he may have some answers to Toronto's revenue problem that don't include tax increases or spending cuts.

The first-time city council candidate believes that there are too many dead spaces on city property, particularly TTC property, which could be turned into future revenue streams.

"The TTC has a slew of locations throughout town that are prime locations," Vlachos said. "The majority are one-storey buildings; why aren't [they] multi-levelled? Why isn't there an income-producing factor on top



■ VLACHOS

of those buildings?"

Vlachos suggested that medical tenants on top of TTC buildings could be one good idea with a positive side-effect for the city's elderly and ailing.

"If you had medical services above the TTC, you could get off the train, jump on an elevator, take it upstairs, go see your doctor, jump downstairs, jump back on the train. Who doesn't want a medical tenant?"

Vlachos, who said he's been a resident of East York for 20 years, speaks from experience — as a realtor who specializes in income properties. He believes his experience in realty will help transition him into a councillor.

"Real estate is performance-based. If I don't go out there and make a deal, I'm not going to eat," Vlachos said. "You give good customer service, you protect people's interests."

Among specific initiatives that Vlachos has planned for Ward 29 if elected, he supports the idea of bike lanes along the Danforth, and a review into how the city charges for parking, considering his view that ticketing in drives away business.

Retired E.Y. teacher looks to shake up school boundaries

By **SOLEDAD VEGA**
The Observer

Your child is in junior high and maybe you think he or she could become a basketball superstar someday — but what if none of the schools in your ward has a good basketball program?

A candidate for school trustee in Don Valley West thinks he has the answer.

"You can go to any school in the system you want," said Don Hedrick, who is running against incumbent Gerri Gershon in the public school board's Ward 13. "We could have 450 schools that are all different, all unique, and with no boundaries."

The retired teacher from the East York Alternative School wants to retire the Toronto District School Board's boundary system, and open all schools to all Toronto residents, regardless of proximity.

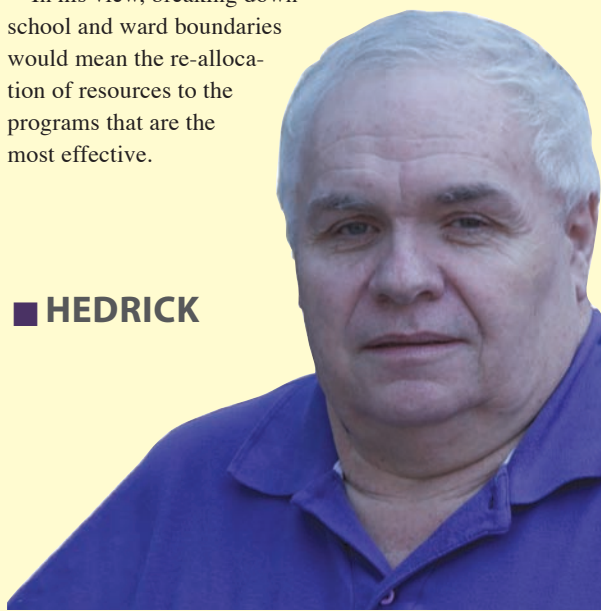
"Parents should have the opportunity to say, 'I do not want to send my child to that school. There's a better program somewhere else in the city and I should have that right to.'"

Hedrick was a teacher in the TDSB for almost 35 years. He also says he is not a fan of the TDSB's ward system that maintains trustees responsible for geographic areas of the city.

"Trustees focus spending on a [school] program because it delivers to their constituents," he said, "but it may not be the best use of the money."

In his view, breaking down school and ward boundaries would mean the re-allocation of resources to the programs that are the most effective.

■ HEDRICK



Does our city need more green space?

Project Fusion ignites a discussion about reimagining public spaces across Toronto

By **BRAD GARCIA**
The Observer

Fall's chill and portents of the winter to come aren't the only things putting a chill on parkland in East York and the rest of Toronto.

So students at Centennial College's East York campus are trying to open a debate around the pressure that city development is bringing to bear on the parks.

'Project Fusion' is an ongoing collaborative initiative at the college's Carlaw Avenue branch. It tries to merge students in all of the communications programs taught at the campus, in order to create media campaigns that affect social change on a city-wide scale.

On Sept. 24, the project's current contingent of students, alongside CivicAction CEO Sevaun Palvetzian, kicked off their first meeting and began plans toward heightening public awareness around reimagining public spaces for the 21st century.

"The facts are that more and more condos are being built in the city of Toronto," said Donna Lindell, the coordinator of the school's corporate communications program — and faculty adviser of Project Fusion.

"In a one-hour meeting at city hall, they approved over 700 floors of new condo development, which is frightening."

But while Toronto welcomes as many new residents as the population of Nova Scotia each year, the city's parks aren't necessarily keeping up. In fact, green space can be threatened by the simple need for space to put housing.

"Where do these people go when they are confined to their tiny little condos?" Lindell asked.

"Where do they go to be with their families, get exercise and to enjoy the outdoors? And where can they go if they're new Canadians, in a way that's still culturally sensitive?"

By seeking answers to questions like these, Project Fusion hopes to raise the issue of straining parkland higher on the agenda for public discourse — not just in the current municipal election campaign, but afterward as well.

That's what Lindell said happened in the last Project Fusion endeavor — when she and her students promoted the cause of better public transit for transportation-disadvantaged people in East York and beyond.

"If you looked at transit two years ago, it really wasn't at the top of the agenda in terms of what was in the media — and now it's the number one topic for the mayor's race," Lindell said. "We made that noise back when it needed to be made."



Brad Garcia /// The Observer

Donna Lindell, faculty adviser of Project Fusion, hopes green spaces will be emphasized in the upcoming election.



Erin Buckley/// The Observer

Holy Name Parish at Gough and Danforth avenues is celebrating its 100 years of bringing people together in the East York community.

A century of faith in East York

By **ERIN BUCKLEY**
The Observer

In 1913, when Msgr. Cline first held mass at Holy Name Parish on Danforth Avenue, it was in the upstairs of the small schoolhouse next door.

Even after weekly mass moved to the newly finished church basement, the building itself was still delayed during the First World War.

"Construction stopped for close to a year because of the war," said Nora Gilbride, 74. Gilbride, and her sister Anne, 78, were both baptized at the parish in the 1930s.

But although only part of the church was finished by the outbreak of war in 1914, that year is considered its starting point — and so this

year, it is celebrating its 100th anniversary.

Nora Gilbride reflected on the anniversary of the parish by noting that "for a few years, it wasn't a very [large] community, but it's come back."

Joyce Rerrie, 71, started becoming actively involved in the parish after retiring 14 years ago. She says that the new faces in the parish are encouraging.

"It has grown a lot," Rerrie said. "Quite a lot of young families now, within the last six or seven years... which is nice."

Rerrie became the pastoral associate in 2001. When she retired last year, she became the chair of the 100-year anniversary team.

"It's been good," Rerrie said. "We've had a lot of events so far this year."

One of the biggest events happened on Sept. 28, when 12 of the church's previous pastors gathered for a special mass with Toronto's Cardinal Collins.

The African Catholic Community, who hold their mass at noon at the church, joined them — something Rerrie said she was excited about.

"There [were] both communities, both choirs, rituals from both," she said. "The African community, they say their mass in French and English. Some of the music [was] in their dialect as well."

The community aspect is what draws Rerrie and the

Gilbride sisters to the parish more than anything.

"[The anniversary] has been good," Nora said. "It started with the mass last September, with the bishop; since then, we've tried to do something every month. We actually... had a very good karaoke night last February."

"It wasn't a big crowd, but everyone was having a great time," added Anne. "[Even though] there was terrible weather... we had chili, and then we did karaoke."

"It keeps me grounded, keeps me centred, gives me a purpose," said Rerrie.

The last major event of the anniversary year is the church fundraiser on Oct. 17, at the Ellas Banquet Hall on Danforth Road.

Candidate makes accessibility a priority

By **NOLAN WHITE**
The Observer

Dimitre Popov doesn't like to think of himself as a politician. But he may have to get used to the idea, considering that he's running for city council in Don Valley West.

Popov has affiliated himself with Canadians for Integrity — not an official political party, but an organization that describes itself as non-profit, non-partisan and dedicated to holding politicians to account.

In an interview, Popov said

that he has lived in Ward 26 for almost 20 years.

"There is a lot to be done," he said. "Unfortunately, many politicians just state the facts of what is needed to be done. No one is trying to elaborate on the finer details of the issue. They are just trying to convince people that they are the best candidate for the job, that they possess the ability to make changes that contribute to a better life."

Popov said that, if elected, he would focus on staying in contact with members of the



POPOV

community.

He said he would try to work closely with activists and other residents, learn from them what the issues are, and address those concerns at city

hall — all while working with other politicians to get them on the same side.

"It's very important to find a way to communicate properly with city councillors, to motivate and reason with them," he said. "The first approach would be to reason. If councillors seem to act on special interests, I would bring them to light in the public, to keep people informed. But definitely, there should be cooperative work for the greater interest of the taxpayers of Toronto."

EDITORIALS

Learning by example

Some Toronto District School Board (TDSB) trustees have come under fire over the past couple of weeks due to the release of an audit that raised questions about their spending practices. And at the forefront of the issue is East York's own Gerri Gershon, whose expense account claims, according to published reports, include a \$4,000 tour of Israel and a \$22 doormat.

The Toronto Star was able to get those details by obtaining the result of an internal audit by the TDSB — at a cost to the newspaper of \$1,485. Which raises an interesting additional question: Which is more troubling: the questionable use of taxpayer dollars or the fact that just getting to the information was such an expensive hassle?

But setting that aside for now, it seems to us that school board trustees would do well to learn from the example set by another East York public board trustee, Ward 16/Toronto-Danforth's Sheila Cary-Meagher.

Cary-Meagher has effectively dispensed with all questions about her spending by voluntarily posting detailed expense reports to her own website. Cary-Meagher actually proposed a motion in December 2013 that would require all trustees to do the same. The motion passed in April but there are still squabbles over just how far the expense reports should venture back in time.

This sort of idea isn't new. Many municipalities publish expense reports from their councillors, and Toronto is no exception. Shouldn't the same be required of school board trustees; indeed, of municipal officials across the board?

Perhaps simple expense reports aren't going far enough anyway. Perhaps public officials should be required to at least briefly explain in those reports how their purchases with taxpayer money help them to successfully carry out the duties of their office.

If an issue as basic as transparency in expense reports is something that some trustees can't agree on, then perhaps on election day it's time to find new trustees who can agree. It's time to find more trustees like Sheila Cary-Meagher.

~ Dakota Sannen

Damn this traffic jam

You get behind the wheel in this city and you know you're in for it: traffic and construction. Now traffic is a given in any major city. But Toronto traffic jams are world-class (as we're often reminded when this organization or that releases its list of 'longest commutes in Canada' or 'longest commutes in North America' or 'longest commutes in the world'). At peak hours, the ribbons of metal seem to stretch as far as the eye can see.

But the real problem on our roads isn't the volume of cars. It's the construction. You don't have to drive very far in East York or the rest of Toronto to find a construction crew doing patchwork on a bumpy road. And none of the fixes last very long.

That's the problem: so much of the work being done is only serving as a temporary fix for roads in bad basic condition. Heavy use and the elements eventually degrade the work — and come spring, it's a return to the ritual of fixing the same roads all over again.

When roadwork results in lane closures and lowered speed limits, some drivers will merely take their business elsewhere — onto roads that used to be more lightly travelled but are now busy alternatives to construction zones. Then, they wear out early and have to be resurfaced... and we spiral down further.

Consider the case of Eglinton Avenue. When stretches of Eglinton recently came under the jackhammer, O'Connor Drive and York Mills Road suddenly got a lot busier... and the whole neighbourhood just seemed to grind to a near-halt.

Moreover, filling in potholes and sealing yawning seams with new asphalt doesn't help to solve the fundamental problem of an aging road infrastructure that was never meant for this volume of traffic and extreme weather wrought by climate change.

Ultimately, the quandary around Toronto road maintenance is perhaps the most obvious example of a city in dire need of infrastructure revitalization. And with a municipal election two dozen days away, there's no better time than now for citizens to demand serious steps toward that revitalization. Let's make sure our candidates for mayor and city council get the message.

~ Jeremy Bordonaro



For more in-depth coverage on the mayoral election, and community stories from all around Toronto, visit us online at torontoobserver.ca

COLUMNS

Scotland vote hits home

Last month, the world as I knew it nearly went topsy-turvy. My nana, born and raised in Scotland, threatened to disavow her place of birth if her fellow Scots voted to separate from the U.K.

It's hard to put into words just how profound an act this would have been. My nana's Scottish pride might as well be wrapped around her like a MacLellan clan tartan. Her apartment has so much Scottish paraphernalia in it that it would have taken an entire shinty team to clean the place out.

But in spite of her Scottish pride, she was resoundingly against an independent Scotland. My nana is a sharp woman, and even at 91, it's hard to knock her reasoning.

"Ach! It would be a damn foolish thing to do," she said.

"They're thinking with their hearts, not thinking with their heads!"

Her view was that the Scots wouldn't be gaining

anything from independence. All they would get was the uncertainty that would follow. They would lose standing in organizations like NATO and the European Union.

They would also have a currency dilemma, and — perish the thought — even the price of scotch would be an unanswered

question if Scotland had voted Yes.

Watching the votes being tallied on Sept. 18, I thought about the 1995 Quebec referendum. Just as I can't imagine a Canada without Quebec, it's

hard to picture a visit to my nana's place without a sermon on the reasons Scotland was superior to all other nations.

I paid my nana a visit after the votes were tallied and No had won and I walked under the sign over her driveway that read "This parking is for Scots only."

"I knew the Scots weren't so daft as to vote to leave," she said over some black pudding and a dram of scotch, "Scotland showed the world what true democracy is. Canada can only hope to be so civil."

And once again, everything felt right in the world.



Peder Myhr

Media's spectacle a crime

The incongruity of shrinking crime rates alongside growing police budgets has become a recurring topic of debate in this municipal election season. The issue: With Toronto's crime rate down 41 per cent since 2001, a record \$1 billion police budget seems out of line.

The decline in the crime rate might be a surprise to some people — given the steady diet of urban mayhem that some Toronto media try to feed us. Some television newscasts especially can't seem to resist portraying Toronto as Canada's Gotham City (with Rob Ford as an eerie cross between the Joker and Penguin).

The truth of it is, within Canada, Toronto has the lowest crime rate among major cities, well below runners-up Quebec City and Guelph. And Toronto is actually an outlier internationally — with many major cities, such as Berlin and London, among the most "dangerous" in their respective countries.

This is no fluke either. The past year has actually been the city's least violent year since — get this — 1960.

So I can't help but feel a bit frustrated when a spectacle is made of every crime committed within city limits.

Consider last week, and the coverage of the death of 19-year old high schooler Hamid Amanzada. The question of the day became 'Do you feel safe sending your children to school?' I know that the community can't look away when a promising young person is stabbed to death at school — a location that we all agree is supposed to be safe.

But



Erin Buckley

we should also acknowledge that this sort of tragedy is, mercifully, extremely rare.

Fortunately, not everyone buys into the portrayal of Toronto's mean streets. I saw a parent interviewed on TV last week who told the reporter that the murder didn't really change how they felt. Of course, the report went from that to shamelessly sprawling video clips of a distraught woman, sobbing uncontrollably in front of the camera.

Watching this, it occurred to me: maybe the friends I have — those who think Toronto is a truly dangerous city — get their mentality from the news.

The fact is, reporting each and every crime as though it's the beginning of a widespread epidemic isn't intelligent journalism; it's a poor-man's version of instant spectacle.

In short, Toronto is a beautiful city. More importantly, it's safe, and getting safer every year. Hopefully we'll start to reflect that — in everything from police budgets to news coverage.

45 years later, Bennett hasn't lost his steam

By BETH JARRELL
The Observer

To say that Centennial College veteran audio-visual specialist Al Bennett knows his way around the East York campus would be an understatement.

After all, he has been getting to know his way around the college for 45 years.

Bennett, 65, recently celebrated his 45th anniversary of working at the school in a special ceremony to honour him and others who have served long tenures at Centennial.

"I got a standing ovation that day, and it just blew me away," he said. "I went up on the stage, and was shaking hands, and they say 'I think you'd better turn around,' and everyone was standing and clapping."

For Bennett, who started off at Centennial as a student in the business program, working at the college was a no-brainer.

"I was walking down the hall when I saw a sign on the wall that said 'Vacancy, Audio-Visual Technician Needed,' so I thought 'I can do that,'" he said

"I applied, got the job, quit as a student and went in and signed in the same day, started working that same day."

Bennett now works at Centennial's Carlaw Avenue campus, where he has been for the past six years. Before this, he worked at various Centennial campuses across the city's east end.

Bennett's colleague and campus Dean Nate Horowitz remembers working with Bennett in the early days of his career, when both were in the audio-visual department.

"I know he's very proud of the years he's been here and the contributions he's made to the college," Horowitz said. "I know he's pretty happy doing what he does, and he is very successful at it. He's a great guy."

When asked if he plans on staying another 45 years at the job he loves, Bennett just smiled.

"Maybe another five years," he said, laughing. "Other jobs you just sit there, and it's like a rubber stamp.... Those jobs, that would drive me nuts! I don't care how much they pay; I wouldn't do it. You gotta love what you do."



Photo courtesy of Peter Visima

Christine Manning doles out samples of Manning Canning homemade Italian goods at the Fairmount Park Farmers Market.

Can-start Kickstarted

Local woman turns to Kickstarter to fund her love of preserving food through canning

By CHRISTOPHER LUM
The Observer

The day was overcast, with rain in the offing — and a definite chill was in the air.

But that hardly stopped anyone at the Fairmount Park Farmers Market, just off Coxwell Avenue, a few blocks outside East York's southern boundary. Tents were being set up and tables were laden with local produce, freshly baked bread and canned goods.

At the end of that line was Christine Manning, founder of Manning Canning. A nearby pavilion did double-duty — as the venue for both a newspaper interview, and a class on methods of canning and preserving food, a paradigm that for her was inculcated from childhood.

"I grew up in an Italian household," Manning said. "My mom was Italian and she was very much of the mindset, 'Why buy it if you can make it?'"

It was when she moved to Toronto from Alberta to attend Ryerson University that Manning got her first taste of what the rest of us would describe as "jam."

It was only later when she and her husband moved to Scarborough that she had the room to begin gardening and canning again.

"We had a bumper crop. Everything in the garden just grew like gangbusters and I had so much produce... I was giving it to friends," she said.

"And people were telling me I should sell it, and that's when I first started

selling Manning Canning."

"One of the things that I realized when I started Manning Canning and becoming a small food producer, in a city as vibrant and as focused on food as Toronto is, there are relatively few commercially certified kitchens in the city," she said.

"The hardest part of being a small food producer is actually finding a space to make your product."

This prompted Manning to purchase a space on Vanderhoof Avenue to build a suitable kitchen for her and her fellow small food producers to use.

"So for a couple of years now, my goal has been to build a production facility for Manning Canning, but also build a rentable com-

mercial kitchen space for other small food producers," she said.

Sadly, this new facility isn't going to be cheap to build, as Manning explains.

That's why she launched a Kickstarter campaign on Sept. 20 to help raise funds to purchase some of the equipment required for the kitchen.

"One of the reasons the city is not overflowing with commercial kitchen spaces is that commercial kitchens are extremely expensive to build," she said.

"An overhead hood can cost \$30,000."

Manning has many ideas for backer goodies on her Kickstarter campaign, from a "food lover's package" all the way up to her own 1966 MG Midget convertible.

Toronto Cat Rescue cares for all kitties

By CHRISTINE HOGG
The Observer

Harriet stared out from behind the glass window of her cage.

"Just getting used to my surroundings. I'm a bit shy!" the sign read. The perfectly black kitten with golden eyes who seemed playful and alert was one of many Toronto felines who were available on a recent weekend at East York's PetSmart, located at 835 Eglinton Ave. E.

Sept. 12 marked the kick-off night of the 20th annual Cat Adopt-A-Thon organized by Toronto Cat Rescue. Backed by a mandate that carries a no-kill policy, it operates on a volunteer basis and is committed to finding abandoned cats and kittens a new home.

Volunteer intake co-ordinator Nalini Ramroop outlined the importance of TCR's operations.

"In January 2014, Toronto Cat Rescue partnered with Toronto Animal Services. The majority of the cats we rescue come from TAS. These cats are not doing well in the shelter and are at risk of being euthanized due to extreme illnesses or behavioural issues," Ramroop said.

While there are other adoption programs in effect, Toronto Cat Rescue is the only sanctuary that refuses to euthanize any adult cat or kitten, regardless of its condition.

"The difference between adopting from the Toronto Humane Society and Toronto Cat Rescue is that TCR is an all-volunteer organization, whereas the THS has paid staff with huge donors. Toronto Animal Services is a city-run organization with paid staff as well. So adopting from TCR versus these other two organizations means that you are supporting an all volunteer run charity, who rely on donations to continue the rescue work," Ramroop explained.

More often than not, perfectly healthy cats and kittens are euthanized due

to over-crowding at local shelters and lack of funds that are needed to provide medical assistance. TCR aims to change this through dedicated volunteers and a foster care program.

"To become a foster parent to a cat there is an online application, followed by a screening process. Every foster home is assigned a Toronto Cat Rescue foster co-ordinator, which is a person who is very knowledgeable about medical and behavioural cat issues," Ramroop said. Todd Burgess has been a foster parent with TCR for almost two years. He has fostered roughly 25 cats and has adopted a pair, who were a result of 'foster failure.'

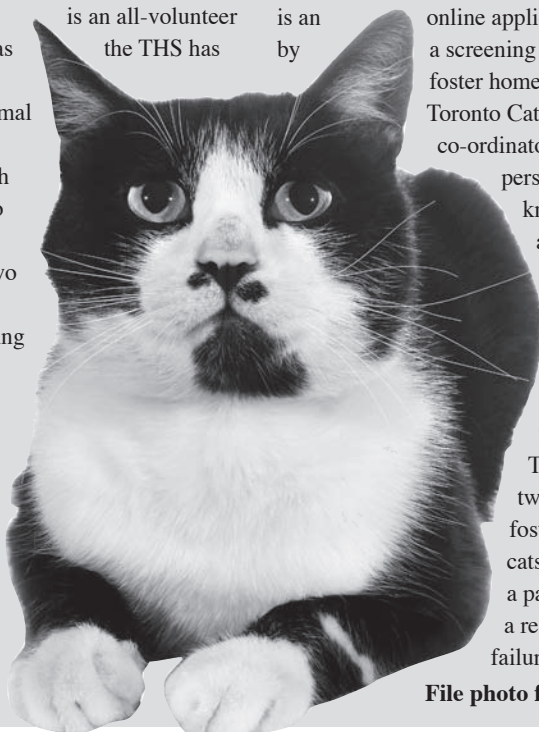
"Foster failure means the cats you were giving a temporary home to, you fell in love with. So they just really liked me and I really liked them so I said all right," Burgess said with a laugh.

Although Burgess himself adopted two adult cats, there is still a certain stigma that arises when talking about adopting cats.

"I think with a lot of people there is this romantic notion about getting a little kitten, and you raise it all the way through to adulthood. But ... when it grows up, it's not so cute anymore," Burgess said. Due to this issue, Toronto Cat Rescue has a strict screening policy on adoption.

TCR has trained volunteer screeners who interview potential new pet parents to make sure the adoption is a good match. If the adopter is a Toronto resident, the adoption fee includes the first year of pet licence as well as six weeks of free pet insurance.

The event wrapped up at the end of that same September weekend with 84 cats and kittens successfully finding a loving new home. The TCR is participating in the Scotia Bank Toronto Waterfront Marathon on Oct. 19, during which they hope to raise \$30,000 toward continuous cat rescue funding.



File photo from Fotolia

Candidate says transit, parking are top priorities

By DAVID KENNEDY
The Observer

Ricardo Francis, a candidate for councillor in Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth, says that politics is in his blood.

"I was born into politics," he said in an interview. "I'm from an established political family in the eastern Caribbean."

Originally from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Francis now lives with his wife in Ward 29. He attended York University and is a licensed paralegal.

Francis said he decided to run for councillor to make a meaningful contribution to Toronto-Danforth, and to give people better access to their councillor — something he feels has been lacking.

"I take an opportunity every single day," he said, "every moment I have, to meet everyone, to put a name to the face and a face to the name."

In campaigning, Francis said, he has tried to be as accessible as possible, and he insists he will carry this open-door policy into office if elected.

On the issues in the ward, Francis feels transit, taxes and parking are the most important to voters.

"If you live in a major metropolitan area like the city of Toronto," he said, "you need to have access to transit 24 hours a day. Transit should be an ongoing investment... because if you don't have an proper transit system the economy will obviously be slowed down."

Francis also wants better roads. He pointed to Broadview Avenue as a street in desperate need of resurfacing.

To accomplish these goals, Francis said he will roll up his sleeves and use his skillset to get the job done.

"I'm an independent thinker," he said, "I listen to all the perspectives, I listen to all the opinions, I listen to all the views, before I come to a conclusion."



■ FRANCIS

Trustee hopeful wants to reassess time spent on in-class learning

By SAMANTHA BRIDGES
The Observer

As a parent with children in the separate school system, trustee candidate Kevin Morrison says he is proactive when it comes to children's education.

This is Morrison's second time running for the Toronto Catholic District School Board in Ward 11. He placed second in 2010. Morrison has also been involved in the Toronto Catholic Parent Involvement Committee,

where, he said, he spoke to other parents and students, especially about the issue of how much time is actually spent in class learning.

"I think one of the biggest issues is the amount of time that is being missed for in-class learning. It can take a long time to get all the students in the building, get settled in and then finally be able to start the day. Then you have to factor in two recesses, a lunch break and get them ready for home time," Morrison says. "A lot of that valuable learning time is missed."

Morrison said teachers and parents should be aware of how much time is spent on learning material.

"Things are getting better, but there is still a long way to go. There's a lot of misjudgment in the school board, and our kids and community deserve results that will create positive change."



■ MORRISON

An open 'dog'-house

Toronto Police Dog Services invites public to open house at facility on Beechwood

By PRESTON DOZSA
The Observer

The sound of a German Shepherd barking as it runs through exercises in a field is loud in and of itself.

The sound of 10 German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois barking as Const. J.D. Massey enters their kennel is enough to make him rush through that portion of his tour of the Toronto Police Dog Services headquarters.

"It can get pretty loud in there," Massey remarked after he left. "But it's useful when officers are away or unable to look over their partner for a few days."

That the kennel, and the three-acre facility it is part of, exists speaks in no small part to the changes the unit has gone through since it was founded in 1989. At that time, it was composed of only two handlers and dogs.

"Now we're at 23 handlers and over 30 dogs," Massey said, pointing at a framed picture of a group of dogs on the wall. "That photo was taken five years ago for our 20th anniversary, and I hope we'll have a new one taken for our 25th."

In honour of this special anniversary, the unit will be hosting an open house for the public at its headquarters on Sunday, Oct. 18. The event will feature a tour of the fa-

cility, a meet-and-greet with the dogs and several live canine demonstrations.

The open house is an opportunity for the unit to showcase the work that the officers and their partners find so rewarding every day.

For Const. Derrick Gaudet, the newest officer to complete the training with his canine partner Major, the unit is the most interesting department he's worked in over his 25 years on the force.

"I've been trained in the Marine Unit and Emergency Task Force, but this job is more rewarding because me and this guy (Major) work together," he said. "And he's the best partner I've had in my career."

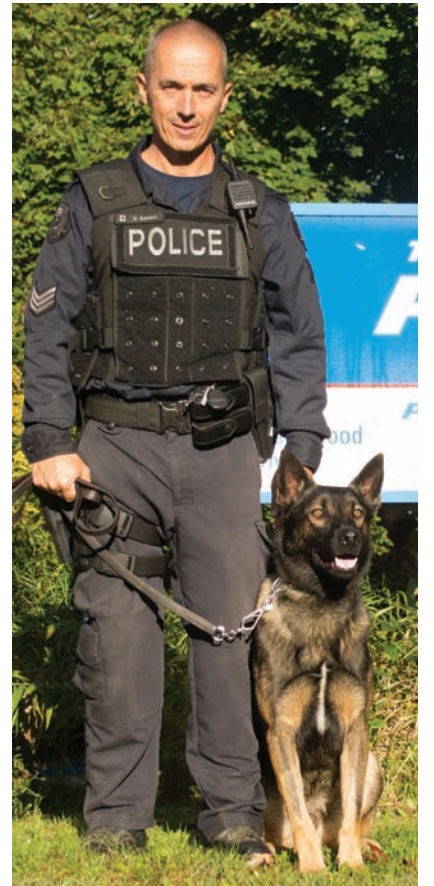
The last open house was held five years ago to celebrate the unit's 20th anniversary.

According to Staff Sgt. James Hung, the unit's commanding officer since March 2014, the length of time between open houses is a result of the unit's focusing on both milestone years and the logistics required to put such a large event together.

"It's a landmark year. The last one was the 20th, and after this year the next event will be for the 30th year," Hung said.

"It takes a lot of resources and planning to set up an event like this, though the community helps a lot when the time comes."

The open house will begin at 10 a.m. and end at 4 p.m. at 44 Beechwood Dr. Food and drinks will be provided for the family-friendly event, though Hung add-



Preston Dozsa // The Observer

Const. Derrick Gaudet and his canine partner Major.

ed that 'family-friendly' does not include pets.

"Please don't bring your pets and dogs to the event," he said. "We don't want any conflicts."

Catholic father tries for trustee spot

By BRITTANY CAMPBELL
The Observer

Desmond Alvares is a businessman with a background in finance, a father of four, a devout Catholic — and one of the candidates running against four-term incumbent Angela Kennedy to represent East York on Toronto's separate school board.

Having grown up in a family of educators, Alvares said in an interview that he embraces an environment where the importance of education is vital and the dedication to Catholic

values is cherished.

"I'm a Catholic supporter. I grew up in a Catholic school system in the U.K. and I've been here about 20 years," he said. "A lot of my family [are] teachers and have been involved in the school; I've got four kids who have gone through the school system in this ward and I am quite involved with that."

Although this is Alvares' first time running in a municipal election, he has plenty of experience participating with professional boards and organized groups specific to education.



■ ALVARES

"I think that there could be more that can be done to ensure better communication goes out to the parents more often," he said when asked about what could be improved

on within the school board.

"Initially I put my children in French immersion, and we were having a lot of trouble," he said. "All of the parents... got together by introducing an after-school program called ACE and we actually made the school successful and more parents came to that school."

Alvares also wants to focus on better funding for school transportation, students with special needs, reducing costs in other areas and putting more into school safety and increasing enrolment in Catholic schools.

Accident had a 'big impact' on driver

Cont. from Page 1

Stunned, Hart put the car in park, jumped out and ran to the pedestrian to assess his condition. As he helped him to his feet, the man said he thought he was OK, but "in shock."

Bystanders called the police, but firefighters and paramedics were the first to arrive. They concluded that the pedestrian was unharmed, but took him to the local hospital anyway to be checked out.

When the police got there, they decided not to lay charges, as both driver and pedestrian had played a role in the accident.

Hart is still shaken by the event.

"Just in those seconds, someone could have been killed," he said. "I thought it could have been a senior citizen or a child my daughters' age."

Hart's concern doesn't come out of nowhere. Last July, also in Leaside, seven-year-old girl Georgia Walsh was struck and killed by a minivan while crossing the street at an intersection. In that case, the driver of the vehicle was charged with careless driving and failing to stop at a red light.

"Some of the firefighters were talking about it," Hart said. "They said it was in the same neighbourhood where the little girl was hit."

In Hart's case, the story has a happy ending. Sadly, that wasn't the result for the 63 pedestrians killed in collisions last year, said Const. Clint Stibbe, media officer for Toronto Police Traffic Services.

Of those collisions, 22 were determined to be the fault of pedestrians, while 18 were not.

"If you are looking at a situation of a

mid-block crossing, more than likely the pedestrians are at fault," Stibbe said. "If you are talking at an intersection, whether it be a left or right turn, in most cases it is the fault of the driver."

But he emphasized the statistics are analyzed in general terms, whereas the causes of a fatal vehicle-pedestrian collision could vary from case to case and should be inspected independently.

Hart said the accident has had a big impact on him both as a parent and as a driver.

"I am more cautious now as a driver," he said. "I am trying to drive less if I don't have to."

It's also had an impact on his eldest daughter.

"Christina keeps telling me how to drive," Hart said. "She keeps telling people I hit somebody."