



## City seeks input on priority locations

By ALEXANDRA GATER  
The Observer

The City of Toronto is calling on residents, community partners and city council to have their say about how it should choose the next seven Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (formerly recognized as “Priority Neighbourhoods”) in a series of eight meetings.

Two East York-area neighbourhoods are already on the list of Toronto communities identified as needing better

city services: Crescent Town near Victoria Park and Danforth avenues and Flemingdon Park-O’Connor, with its epicentre near the Don Valley Parkway and Eglinton Avenue.

They were given the original designation of priority neighbourhoods by the city and the United Way in 2005. Since then,

they and Toronto’s 11 other designated neighbourhoods have shared about \$225 million in special investments.

The new series of meetings is part of the first significant revision of the list — which could see deletions from the roster as well as additions.

The second meeting saw citizens and agency representatives gathered at Monarch Park Collegiate in East York on Monday.

The meetings, taking place across the city this month, are part of the new Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020, seeking input on what makes a healthy neighbourhood.

Denise Campbell, director of resources for the City of Toronto, says the strategy relies on community participation.

“We are working with researchers, working with data and city staff are in communities, but we only have some perspective,” Campbell said. “I think residents and businesses and other stakeholders bring other knowledge to the table that will help guide our prioritization process and help us make some of the hard choices.”

The city has been conducting research on how to designate Neighbourhood Improvement Areas.

“Five keys areas were identified that need to be considered by city council

■ See FIVE, page 2

### COMMUNITY



Taylor Giffin /// Observer

### A veggie-lover’s paradise

Mike Hill of Hillsview Farms sells homegrown, chemical-free produce at the East York Farmer’s Market. The market is held at the East York Civic Centre every Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. until Nov. 5.

## Strap on those skates, East York

Politicians, hockey players and residents on-hand for opening of Leaside ice pad

By COREY SAVARD  
The Observer

Leaside residents recently gathered to celebrate the city’s first new indoor ice pad in 40 years.

Hockey players, politicians and officials of the Leaside Hockey Association were all on hand last Saturday for the ribbon cutting, opening a single pad surface that will be a twin expansion to the 61-year-old Leaside Memorial Gardens Arena at 1073 Mill St.

Ontario Premier and Liberal MPP for Don Valley West Kathleen Wynne and Don Valley West Conservative MP John Carmichael spoke proudly of the project that was first proposed in 1999. The focus was then put on three young members of the arena’s three youth programs (the Leaside Skating Club, the Toronto-Leaside Girls Hockey Association and the Leaside Hockey Association) who officially opened the new pad with a snip of the scissors.

The project got \$12.5 million from the municipal, provincial and federal governments, but it also required private donations — including \$1 million coming from a previously anonymous source.

Paul Mercer, chair of the expansion committee and family friend of Peter and Kathy Clark, who made their identity as donors known at



Corey Savard /// Observer

Leaside residents hit the ice for the first free skate at the new ice pad.

the opening, said the couple’s two sons grew up playing at the arena. The family approached Mercer knowing there had been several breakdowns in talks on how to make more ice available to Leaside residents.

“They came to me and asked me what did we really need and I said we need to show the people at city hall that the community is committed. They said, ‘Great, we’ll give you \$1 million you do what you have to do to get this job done,’” Mercer said. “That’s what really got the whole thing started.”

A major obstacle was the land where the expansion was to be built. It was situated on provincial land, previously occupied by the Ontario Film Review Board, and the only way forward for Mercer was if the city purchased

the land from the Ontario Realty Corporation.

The initial \$1 million would pay for the architects and for the city to plan what financial commitment would be needed.

Mercer said if it were not for the Clarks, the project would have taken at least two more years.

The couple originally wanted to remain anonymous to avoid the press, but chose to come forward because they felt the project would only be accomplished if someone took leadership.

In addition to the Clarks’ donation, \$2.5 million was raised by the community to offset the cost of purchasing the land for expansion, as well as an undisclosed amount by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who grew up in Leaside.

**POLICE & FIRE**

**No arrest in mugging**

A 22-year-old female was mugged in the area of Woodbine and Danforth avenues on Oct. 4. The suspect, a male, obtained a phone and fled the scene. The woman was left unharmed. No arrest has been made.

**Diamond ring taken in B&E**

A break and enter was reported on Oct. 2 on Barrington Avenue, in the area between Main Street and Dawes Road near Danforth. Computer equipment, a diamond ring and watch were stolen. Police have made no arrests.

~ Naomi Grosman

**WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.**

**Multicultural laughs galore**

Toronto's multicultural comedy show returns to The Danforth Music Hall on Thursday, Oct. 17, presented by CBC Radio. Special guests include Angelo Tsarouchas, Sabrina Jalees and Elvira Kurt. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster.

**Explaining Isaac Newton**

Prof. Brian Baigrie from the University of Toronto will give a lecture on Isaac Newton at the Danforth/Coxwell library, 1675 Danforth Ave., on Wednesday, Oct. 16. The event starts at 6:30 p.m.

~ Sola DaSilva and Naomi Grosman



Rajesh Sammy // Observer

**Matthew Pellegrino describes the importance of testing the cooling pipes with nitrogen for leaks. He predicts that the Dieppe Park hockey rink and pleasure skating loop will be ready sometime in mid-November or early December.**

**Rink renovations almost ready**

By RAJESH SAMMY  
The Observer

Sometime in the next four to six weeks, East York should have its own Nathan Phillips Square, where children and parents will be able to go to enjoy a night of skating.

After consultation with the community in the summer of 2012, members of East York can breathe a sigh of relief.

Renovations are well un-

der way at Dieppe Park in the Greenwood and Cosburn avenues area for a new hockey rink and separate leisure skating loop.

The price tag for the renovations is at \$2.4 million, according to Councillor Mary Fragedakis, Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth.

It may look messy right now, but according to Matthew Pellegrino, a worker for Frank Pellegrino General

Contracting, the construction is more than half-done. They've been on the job since late May.

"So far, I'd say, maybe 15 trades in and out, but in total probably around 20, because we still have to get the landscapers and pavers," Pellegrino said.

This week, Pellegrino explained, refrigeration company Cimco has been "rolling out the cooling pipes, and

they are about 75-per-cent complete."

The week's work has included testing the cooling pipes to make sure there are no leaks by putting "nitrogen in the circuits so they can find out where the leaks are," Pellegrino said.

He predicted that the project would be finished sometime between "mid-November to the first week of December."

**The five keys to a healthy neighbourhood**

Cont'd. from page 1

in order to identify Neighbourhood Improvement Areas," Campbell said.

The five keys include economic opportunities, social development, participation in decision-making, healthy lives and physical surroundings.

"In order to make the strategy an effective one, the conversations are designed to get your feedback on how council can use these five keys for neighbourhood success to choose the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas," she said.

Residents were seated with city volunteers and given just over an hour to answer three questions: Are all the keys

important? Is anything council should consider outside of the five keys? What do non-improvement areas need?

"One of the things that may occur is... we may have multiple neighbourhoods that the city could do this co-ordinated work in," Campbell said. "We require the intelligence of a lot of residents to figure out what is most important to Torontonians that we should consider should we have multiple neighbourhoods that we could do this work in."

East York councillors Janet Davis and Mary Fragedakis both attended the meeting, providing feedback and answering questions. So did their city council colleague, Paula



Alexandra Gater // Observer

**Crescent Town is currently considered a Neighbourhood Improvement Area.**

Fletcher.

"I think there is not enough emphasis on community development, on finding the solutions from the community," Fletcher said. "Once the community can identify very clear-

ly some of those targets that can be supported then I think that's a great model. I don't think we do enough of that."

In 2014, a staff report will be written based on feedback from the eight meetings.

**Suspect sought in subway robbery**

**Second robbery at Chester station since August**

By NAOMI GROSMAN  
The Observer

Police are looking for a suspect following an armed robbery at Chester subway station on Sunday after 10 p.m.

This is the third armed robbery of a TTC booth collector since August. Two previous robberies happened at Chester station and Christie station on Aug. 6, and Aug. 26, respectively. Police suspect the same person committed all three robberies.



■ Suspect

"From the security video, we believe that the suspect is the same from two months ago," said Victor Kwong, media relations officer with Toronto Police Services.

This is of special concern to police, as Staff Inspector Mike Earl spoke to press about the incidences in August only last week, voicing concern that the perpetrator might strike again. He spoke to media again at a press conference on Oct. 7.

"My view is that this is brazen, bold and almost a slap in the face to the TTC and the police," Earl said. He added that police are concerned the violence may escalate.

Danny Nicholson, corporate communications with TTC, said they are working closely with police and have taken steps to minimize robberies.

"We've installed debit machines...

which will lessen the amount of money inside the collector booth," Nicholson said, adding that it might deter someone who is considering committing a robbery.

Police are asking for the public's assistance in identifying the suspect. He is described as a white male, 25-30 years old, 5'10"- 6'. He was wearing a bandana to cover his face and a black toque during the crime.

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SMOKING BAN



Naomi Grosman /// Observer

Toronto council will soon decide whether to expand the smoking ban in Toronto. If approved, it would include a ban on smoking on restaurant patios. A few patrons at Kahlua Café Bar on the Danforth say smoking on a restaurant patio is part of the enjoyment when having drinks.

# Smoke-free patios on the agenda

East York residents split over proposed ban on smoking in outdoor spaces

By NAOMI GROSMAN  
The Observer

On an unusually warm October afternoon, Miles Robinson and a few of his friends get together at a restaurant patio on the Danforth to have a cool drink.

While they're outside, they have no qualms about lighting up a cigarette to enjoy with their drinks.

"I believe that we have the right to smoke outside," Rob-



Should smoking be banned in such public spaces as patios, parks and beaches? Take our online poll at [torontoobserver.ca](http://torontoobserver.ca)

inson said.

"If a bar owner wants to allow smoking on the patio, he should be able to."

But smoking on patios might soon be a thing of the past.

The Toronto Board of Health recently made recommendations to city council to increase the restrictions of the general city smoking ban to include public spaces such as parks, beaches and patios.

John Parker, city councillor for Ward 26/Don Valley West, is supportive of the

suggestion.

"I fully support initiatives aimed at reducing smoking in public places," Parker said.

"We all recognize the health hazard of smoking and of second-hand smoke.... We want to protect innocent bystanders from the folly of others."

One of Parker's council colleagues, Janet Davis of Ward 31/Beaches-East York, agrees with him and the suggestion made by the health board because, she said, smoking on patios has a

negative impact on everyone close by.

"I support a further smoking ban on patios in Toronto," Davis said.

"Smoking in those areas do have an impact on both customers and staff and I think it should be prohibited."

But it seems that these East York councillors disagree with some of their constituents who enjoy lighting up.

Back on his Danforth patio, Robinson believes that he has the right to smoke outside — and a friend of his agrees.

"You should be able to smoke anywhere as long as it's outside," Alex Massouplos said.

# Parents weigh in on smoking ban debate

By MADOLYN MacCALLUM  
The Observer

Parents have enough to worry about when their children are outside playing — so some East York parents are pleased that soon there may be one less hazard: second-hand smoke.

Toronto Public Health has proposed extending a city-wide smoking ban to some outdoor spaces, including playgrounds and sports fields. While some of these areas have designated smoking rules already in place, a ban to make them all smoke-free is in the works.

Julie Amoroso, a research consultant with Toronto Public Health, says the Smoke Free Ontario Act (SFOA) bans smoking on school property and grounds, which means all sports fields and playgrounds on public and private school property must be smoke-free. But the SFOA allows municipalities to pass their own smoking bylaws.

"Since 2009, Toronto has had a bylaw that prohibits smoking within nine metres of a playground, wading pool or splash pad at the High Park Zoo and at animal farms operated by Toronto's Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division," Amoroso said. "Smoking is not banned in other areas of Toronto's parks, such as near sports fields."

The current regulation already puts smokers at a distance from the areas where children play, but there are still issues with these bylaws. Mercella, an East York resident and mom who lives near Westwood Middle School, said she hopes that the ban will pass, because she still has to tell her young daughter not to pick up cigarette butts from the ground.

"Sometimes you find in the playgrounds things that you don't want to find and you don't want your kids to pick up, so even if it's nine metres away from the playground they still pick it up," she said.

Not only are some East York parents worried about their kids picking up butts off the ground, they are concerned for the health of their children. Another East York mom, Kerry, said she thinks smokers shouldn't be smoking where a large group of people are nearby.

"It's bothersome to them," she said. "It doesn't smell nice, it blows right in their face and it's bad for them."

The Toronto's Parks and Environment Committee will consider a report on the issue of the smoking ban in city parks on Oct. 23.



Joie Ann Merana /// Observer

## No rocking chairs here

Leaside United Church hosts weekly chair exercises led by Eric Daw to help seniors stay in shape, regain balance and strength. They use small weights, bouncy balls and hula-hoops as part of the exercises. From left to right, Jeanne Blair, Muriel Friesen and Douglas Gardner participate in the exercises.



Naomi Grosman /// Observer

## Drawing from life

Hagen Materne (top left) has attended the life-drawing sessions at Centennial College's East York campus for more than five years. "It's a creative outlet that I don't get at work," he says. They're held at the 951 Carlaw Avenue campus every Tuesday evening and are open to the public for \$8 apiece or \$40 for all eight sessions.

### ■ CREATIVITY

# Poetry legend inspires local audience

Toronto's poet laureate reads from his newest collection of poems

By SOLA DaSILVA  
The Observer

It was a day of inspiration, creativity and poetry reading.

Toronto's poet laureate, George Elliot Clarke, read to a captive audience from his newest collection of poems, *Lasso the Wind: Aurelia's Verses and other Poems*, at the East End Arts poetry festival.

The birth of his daughter was the inspiration for his closing poem, *La jour de la Bastille*.

"The birth of a child is always a good news story," Clarke said. "It's the great miracle of our existence and it's difficult not to fall into clichés."

The festival was the inaugural event for East



Sola DaSilva /// Observer

**Poet laureate George Elliot Clarke reads a piece from his new collection of poems, *Lasso the Wind: Aurelia's Verses and other Poems*.**

End Arts, a community organization set up to promote and support local art in Toronto's east end.

The Children's Peace Theatre, an inconspic-

uous heritage building in Taylor Creek Park, was a fitting location for the event, with its outdoor amphitheatre.

"This is a very special place. It feels like you are miles from the city," said Janet Davis, city councillor for Ward 31/Beaches-East York.

"It gives people in this apartment neighbourhood an opportunity to experience nature and explore ideas and find themselves in this little oasis in East York."

East End Arts is a Local Arts Service Organization (LASO) funded by the City of Toronto. According to Davis, LASO secured \$100,000 in funding to nurture arts in the Toronto-Danforth and Beaches-East York wards.

The mayor's office also used the occasion to present a congratulatory citation to Clarke on the occasion of his appointment as a visiting professor at Harvard University.

"I'm very surprised and honoured," he said, "but it's nice to know that the mayor and the city council recognize the importance of the arts and how the arts are about uplifting everybody."

## ABOUT CLARKE

■ George Elliott Clarke is Toronto's fourth poet laureate.

■ He is the E.J. Pratt professor of Canadian Literature at the University of Toronto.

■ He won the Governor-General's Award for poetry in 2001.

■ He is an Officer of the Order of Canada.



Taylor Giffin /// Observer

## Tree of life

UFC fighter Mark Bocek adds his name to Toronto East General Hospital's Tree of Life campaign. On Sept. 30, Bocek and John Tory of Newstalk 1010, Anthony Farnell of Global News Toronto and Lady Jay Lakeshia Bertie came together at John Papastergiou's Shoppers Drug Mart on Danforth Avenue to show their support for the campaign, which raises funds for cancer care and women's health at TEGH.

# Chasing the dream

By LARRY CHEUNG  
The Observer

Fresh out of Osgoode Hall Law School, East York resident Kevin Liang, 28, began his articling in the spring of 2011, before putting it on hold.

Now Liang is chasing other ambitions, making his way



■ Kevin Liang

through the mini-tours of the professional golf world. The prospect of becoming a professional athlete and playing on the PGA Tour has made Liang shift his focus from the confines of offices to the openness of greens and fairways.

"It has always been a dream of mine to be a professional athlete. I feel like this is a good time to pursue my dreams, while I'm still young," Liang said. "I started playing when I was 22, and I aim to be a touring professional at least on the Canadian Tour by the age of 30."

Many of Ontario's aspiring pros develop their skills playing local mini-tours such as the Great Lakes Tour and the Mandarin Tour. They devote their time to getting better and maximizing their preparations for the PGA Tour of Canada qualifying school, where the top 20 players earn full status, and the next 20 players earn partial status on the tour.

Liang might have started golf late compared to many of his fellow competitors, but he is completely confident in his ability to make it.

"To succeed in anything is hard work and belief and if you don't try how will you know if you can succeed?" Liang said.

"No matter how much talent you have, it doesn't mean anything if you don't work hard. Everyone needs a dream; dreamers are the ones that become truly successful."

Liang plans on working the next few months to save up some extra cash before heading down to Florida at the beginning of February to get ready for the PGA Tour of Canada, which takes place in April.

Larry Cheung /// Observer

# Art exhibit inspired by Picasso, Dali

Romanian-born artist celebrates life through colourful works of art

By ALI RAZA  
The Observer

Surreal art meets Picasso in a collection of paintings by fine artist Sergiu Berbec.

The East York campus of Centennial College is hosting an exhibition of Berbec's work. The paintings are available for viewing in the Corridor Gallery, upstairs at 951 Carlaw Ave.

A look at Berbec's paintings echoes old styles of famous artists such as Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso, but Berbec paints his own views in his art.

"My abstracts are related to my life experiences with the social community," Berbec said. "It has a lot to do with the past, in the sense of where we come from and why we end up being who we are in life."

Berbec, a Romanian-born Canadian, started painting and drawing in Grade 9 at the Central Technical School on Bathurst Street in Toronto.

That program paved the way for him to attend Centennial College's Fine Arts program.

Berbec also looks for inspiration in Toronto's Distillery District and at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

"Another artist that inspired me a lot is Ai Weiwei," Berbec said. "I admire his way of thinking."

Berbec's art will be displayed through Nov. 1. Prior to this exhibition, Berbec had his paintings showcased in a group exhibition at La Revolución on Dundas Street West.

Berbec's mentor and instructor, Centennial College's David McClyment, believes Berbec's talent is growing.

"The sophistication he uses has changed," McClyment said. "The scale of the work has grown larger and so has the ambition of the composition."

Berbec's view of art is that it is a medium in which messages can be conveyed more powerfully than usual. He thinks colour is very important in his artwork.

"Colour gives an essence of power which gives strength to a piece," Berbec said. "Different colours affect your emotions differently, I chose this as an avenue because there's so many possibilities, so many ways to create something."

The exhibiton, titled Innovation I, is Berbec's first solo exhibit. He hopes to have many more.

"My future plans are just to have people enjoy my work," Berbec said. "I'd be happy showing my art in the Distillery district or some smaller galleries in Toronto. I want my audience to have a better sense of knowing me."

Berbec's art is just the beginning of his journey. For him, art is his biggest enjoyment in life.

"His enthusiasm is infectious," McClyment said. "I'm very excited for him."



Ali Raza /// Observer

Berbec poses with "Clown Festival." His show runs until Nov. 1 in the Corridor Gallery of Centennial College's Carlaw Avenue campus.

EDITORIALS

# Let's breathe free

Medical Officer of Health's proposal to ban smoking in public places heading to council

The proposed ban on smoking in outdoor public places put forth by Dr. David McKeown, the Medical Officer of Health for the City of Toronto, could have a positive impact not only in the present, but in the future as well.

His proposed ban would see beaches, parks, sports fields, hospital grounds, restaurant and bar patios, and entrances to public places that include schools all designated as smoke-free.

A report released last week by the city's health board stated that Toronto has one of Canada's worst rates of exposure to second-hand smoke in public places.

With fewer places to legally smoke, finding a place becomes more of a nuisance — and that alone might make the next generation think twice before lighting one up for the first time.

McKeown's proposal has been approved by the health board and will go to council in November.

But what may seem like a no-brainer from a health standpoint will be a logistical headache to implement — and Mayor Rob Ford has already voiced his disagreement with this proposal.

Most restaurant and bar owners can also be expected to be in the group of naysayers, considering that business might be hurt as a result of a ban on patio smoking.

But in the end, one less smoker and one less victim of second-hand smoke would definitely be a step in the right direction.

~ Larry Cheung

# Preaching reform

Toronto-Danforth MP Craig Scott hoping to make voting in Canada more proportional

The Opposition party in Parliament, the New Democrats, want electoral reform — and they're taking their case to the people.

Last month, Toronto-Danforth MP Craig Scott met with East Yorkers and others at Eastminster United Church on Danforth Avenue to preach the gospel of reform.

The proposed reform would mean a version of mixed member proportional representation in the House of Commons. It would allow voters to select both local members of Parliament for their individual ridings and, separately, a party for national governance. MP Scott said the system has proven effective in countries like Germany, New Zealand and Scotland.

Two important points were raised at the Eastminster meeting. First, attendee Adam Smith agreed the Canadian electoral system is not proportional.

A party's percentage of popular vote can differ vastly from the percentage of seats in the House. Smith said that allows power to be skewed or distorted.

Smith's observation is very true. On several occasions recently, we've seen a party with only a small edge in popular vote forming a majority government. Winner take all. Critics say that system does not represent the true verdict of voters.

The second observation made in the meeting is also very important. Another member of the audience, Jordan Grant, pointed out the Conservatives and the Liberals may not be as ready to accept this reform as the NDP, considering they are the beneficiaries of the status quo.

How then, he asked, can we expect to achieve any consensus on the proposed reform?

A true reflection of the voters' mandate is very crucial in a democratic country — and not just for Canadians' sake.

As the Canadian democratic system is seen as one of the exemplary models to many evolving democracies in the world, it's important that significant flaws in our system be addressed.

So the reform proposal of MP Scott and his caucus colleagues in the NDP demands proper scrutiny. A national debate should be held and expert opinions should be invited.

And the two other major parties of Canadian politics must participate in the process and seriously consider this reform proposal — for the sake of democratic practice and not party interest.

~ Amirul Islam

COLUMNS

# Poverty is to blame

When we read international news, we're often bombarded by stories from the Middle East, Africa and Asia that highlight the next big thing in terrorism. Whether it's Al-Shabab, Boko Haram or the Taliban, the media constantly reminds us (directly or indirectly) that there is a reason to be afraid.

Afraid of what? I'm not blaming the media. We as journalists are just doing our jobs and reporting what we see. But the question pops up: What am I supposed to fear?

The obvious answer would be terrorism and violence. Everyone fears this. But the commonality among these terrorist groups is they vehemently support and impose their view of Islam.

So should we fear Islam? Of course not. Why

should we fear an idea or a belief anyway? Is it so terrifying that someone somewhere else thinks differently than we do? The point I'm trying to make is that we cannot and should not continue associating the acts of an individual or a group with their professed religion.

Current adherents of Islam number around one billion people.

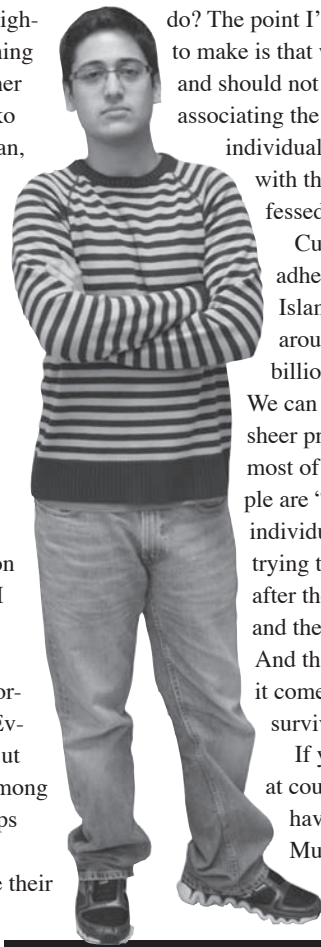
We can assume by sheer probability most of those people are "normal" individuals just trying to look after themselves and their families. And that's what it comes down to: survival.

If you look at countries that have large Muslim populations, you can find high rates of poverty.

Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Pakistan all suffer from great poverty. Coincidentally, a lot of violence associated with terrorism and religious zealotry are found in these countries. Some bigger countries like Egypt, Syria and Iran suffer from political and social instability (currently very evident in the civil war in Syria).

Trying to convince anyone living well to sacrifice everything they have for a belief is a formidable task. But asking someone who already has nothing, and in some cases has already lost everything, to sacrifice for a belief is much easier. How many terrorists come out of Dubai? Or Istanbul? Affluent places with Muslim majorities don't seem to produce the same violent fanaticism that the poverty-stricken regions do.

It's poverty, not a religious or political belief, which produces the type of violence that we see reported almost daily in the news. Once we begin to understand this, we can begin to break the grip of fear that terrorism depends on.



Ali Raza

# All it takes is a 'hello'

When Harry Potter used his wand to pull a wispy, greyish strand from his mind and recreate a memory, I immediately imagined imitating the scene with my sister and getting the same result.

Of course, after an angry scowl and a slap, I realized-real life is different from the movies.

Still, I practise Potterish amusements when I sit on the bus or travel anywhere. A wordless stranger becomes of great interest to me. I've always wanted to tap into the minds of people and hear their thoughts or see a glimpse of their memories to better understand who they are.

Of course, I have to be a bit discreet about this in public. I don't want people thinking I'm invading their privacy.

But, if I had the ability, I would like non-verbal communication to be like a faucet — easily turned on and off.

So how do I learn strangers' stories? Clearly being a wizard is out of the question and otherwise-mystical powers to read minds is not terribly realistic.

Would a 'Hello' suffice?

It is a simple yet daring word to say. Rejection is possible — and being looked at askance — but are the potential costs worth the benefits of getting to truly know someone?

Will the stranger no longer be a stranger and rather become an acquaintance... and maybe, eventually, a friend?

Each person has a story and I will forever be on a quest to get to know as many stories

as I can. I want to understand as many people as I can so that in the end, I am not just walking, sitting or looking at strangers.

Instead I become more alive through my connection with another human being.

Someone who feels and thinks and says things just like I do, even if those things are different.

It will be a risk but it might be a worthwhile one if you take a leap. There are so many people in this world and I believe we were not made to be alone. A connection is all it takes.

So I dare you: Say hello and see where it goes.



Joie Ann Merana



Mark Cadiz /// Observer

John Wilson, lead tour guide for the hiking trips through the Don Valley, gets ready for the early morning start at Evergreen Brick Works.

# Looking for lost rivers

Brick Works hikes explore the city's forgotten streams

By MARK CADIZ  
The Observer

Look beyond the skyscrapers and cranes and you might notice a creek or two meandering through parts of the city.

If you brush up on your history, you'll find that Toronto was once filled with streams that flowed in and around the city.

Many of these 'lost rivers' were piped in or buried underground by the city to make

room for expansion, according to the lead tour guide at the Evergreen Brick Works in East York.

"In many ways, the city kind of built itself around these creeks and there are a number of them around and in this area," John Wilson explained during a recent hike through the Don Valley.

"Many of them flow into the Don River."

As part of its green initiative to connect Torontonians with nature, the Brick Works has organized a series of nature and heritage hikes along the Don River.

Kathleen Law, originally from Ottawa, moved to Toronto recently and was

looking to discover the city's hidden green spaces. She was one of the people taking part in the recent hike.

"This is my first time. I wanted to be out in nature and meet some new people and learn more about Toronto's natural history," she said. "It is something I do regularly and I thought this would be a good way to get familiar with the terrain."

Law, like many of those who take part in hikes at the Evergreen Brick Works, was looking for green activities in the city.

The 'lost rivers' hike winds its way along two of the lost creeks, showing hikers how the streams fit into the city's

fabric. A large part of the hike is on the Belt Line Trail, which is situated in a creek valley called Yellow Creek and bends into Mud Creek.

Wilson, who volunteers as a consultant for Evergreen Brick Works, is well known in the community. In fact, it could be said that he has the Don River running through his veins.

"Hiking for me is a thousand different things," he said. "It is a way to keep active; it is a way to get to know the city better and a way to get in touch with nature."

Hikes at the Evergreen Brick Works are being offered for free every weekend until Oct. 20. They start at 10 a.m.

■ SAFETY

## Quick response to complaints about roadwork

By MADALYN HAMANN  
The Observer

A road construction issue near Frankland Community School on Logan Avenue has been resolved after concerns were raised about sidewalk safety early last week.

Roadwork has been frequent between Danforth and McConnell avenues over the past month. However, the work being done along Logan became a concern for some residents and parents of children who attended Frankland.

They said that with the construction work being close to the school and the increased traffic on the street, walking along the sidewalks became hazardous. Frankland's principal, Terry Walsh, took note of the issue.

"The first day, there were some concerns about it," Walsh said. "The second day, I met with the city inspector and the person who was responsible for the construction company. All we said was that the construction in the street and the whole area was a concern."

Walsh said he got a quick response.

"Now it doesn't start until the kids are in school and ends before three," he said, referring to the daily construction schedule.

Barriers were also put up along the sidewalks as a further preventive measure.

So what was a problem earlier in the week was no longer the case by the end of it; despite the heavier traffic flow due to other blocked off roads in the area, there was general relief.

"The communication has been excellent," parent David Innis said. For him, the road issue matter was well taken care of.

"It was a problem earlier, but you have to live with it," he said. "Stuff has to get done."

The roadwork is expected to conclude in the next few days.

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■ COMMUNITY

# Building a music career one brick at a time

Rapper plans to showcase '1 Brick' video first to North America and then to the world

By MADOLYN MacCALLUM  
The Observer

Music is constantly running through his head, and when he puts pen to paper, the ink starts flowing as if by magic.

Andrew Dainard, up-and-coming rap artist and East York resident, has been making music for some time.

Now he has finally been put on the map with his first music video, "1 Brick." Dainard, whose handle is DizzytheGOD, released the video last month on YouTube.

He was thrilled to finally see the finished product.

"I have been making music for quite a while now, so personally, when I saw the video, I felt like it was a long time coming," Dainard said.

"My video man, Joe Cash, delivered exactly what I had wanted, which was a crisp, clean introduction video."

Dainard's video for "1 Brick" shows his viewers what he can really do and hints at what they can expect from him in the future.

He is currently working on his EP album, which he hopes to shop around to labels in the industry.

As a kid, Dainard grew up listening to Notorious BIG, Big L, Tupac Shakur, Dr. Dre and Eminem, and he says they have played a big role in influencing his music.

However, Dainard added that when it comes to writing, he doesn't need much influence.

"Influence for a song doesn't take much, to be quite honest. I hear music in my head all day, every day," he said.

"I couldn't stop myself from making it if I tried. Lyrics just come to me, so I write them down."

When Dainard was younger, he said, he was attracted to the materialistic things he thought he could get from being in the

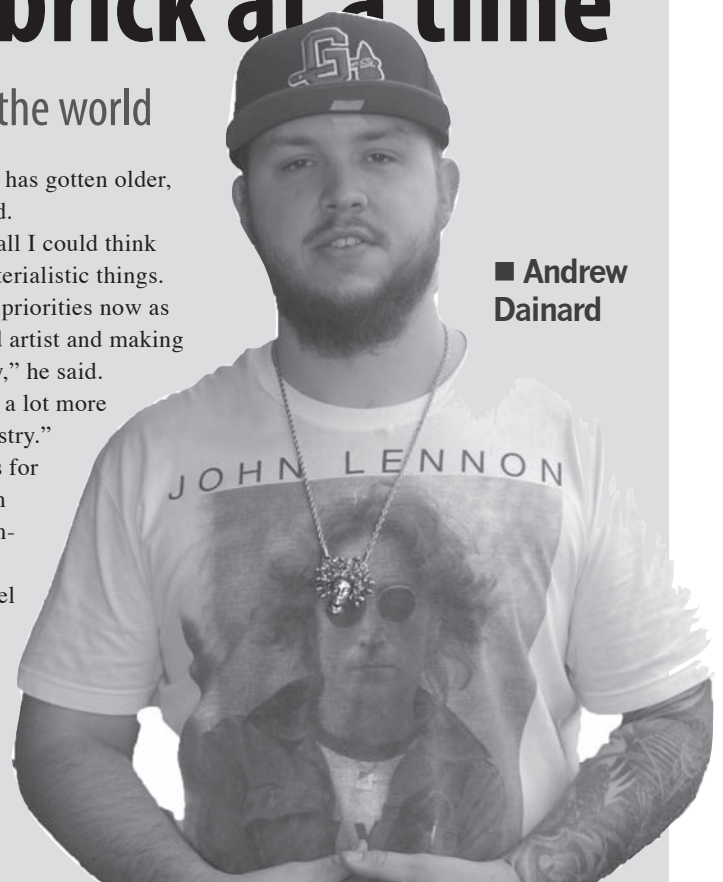
music business. But as he has gotten older, his thoughts have changed.

"When I was younger, all I could think about was money and materialistic things. I still do, but those aren't priorities now as much as just being a good artist and making quality music consistently," he said.

"I care about the music a lot more than I care about the industry."

Dainard has big dreams for himself, and working with Achieve Dreams Entertainment, he hopes to secure and sign a deal with a label soon.

"I plan to make a living out of making quality music and showcasing it to North America," he said, and then, "hopefully the world."



■ Andrew Dainard

## Snapshots of fall in East York...



Naomi Grosman /// Observer

(Top) Cyclists on the Danforth enjoy the unusually warm weather of October.

(Right) A perfect fall day – time to enjoy a coffee at an outdoor patio.

(Bottom right) The Toronto-Danforth NDP Riding Association unveiled a plaque this fall at Withrow Park to commemorate the riding's late MP, Jack Layton — who also served as federal NDP leader.

(Bottom left) Community members gathered in Withrow Park to make their first community “stone soup.” Taking their inspiration from the popular folk tale, they invited visitors to the park to buy food from the farmers’ market and then donate vegetables to a communal pot.



Alexandra Gater /// Observer



Sun Lingmeng /// Observer



Madolyn McCallum /// Observer