

COMEBACK KID

■ University baseball star rounds the bases again after horrific bike crash **Page 10**



Geoff Mosher /// Observer

Toronto-Danforth's Peter Tabuns (with microphone) was among the three East York incumbent MPPs returned to office by wide margins in last week's provincial election. Tabuns celebrated his win with family and supporters at the Sidewalk Café on Danforth Avenue. L-R: School board trustee Cathy Dandy, city councillor Paula Fletcher, son Anton Tabuns, partner Shawn Kerwin and city councillor Mary Fragedakis. Full election coverage: pages 4, 6-7.

One part red, two orange

By SHANNON KELLER and ALEXANDRA WARD
The Observer

Call it the cliffhanger that wasn't.

Polls and pundits suggested a neck-and-neck race heading into last week's provincial election.

Locally, several major media outlets called Don Valley West a 'riding to watch,' with a business news television anchor poised to unseat the incumbent Liberal transportation minister.

But while Dalton McGuinty returned to the premier's office one seat shy of a majority government, that was still 16 seats better than the Tories.

And in Don Valley West, it wasn't even close. MPP Kathleen Wynne and East York's other incumbents had margins of victory in the thousands.

Wynne beat Andrea Mandel-Campbell with more than twice as many votes: 24,454 and 58.3 per cent of the total ballots cast, versus Mandel-Campbell's 11,626.

This was Wynne's third consecutive win in the riding.

To the south, the NDP remains the force to be reckoned with in Beaches-East York and Toronto-Danforth. Voters in those ridings contributed two of the New Democrats' 17 seats across the province.

NDP incumbent Peter Tabuns

■ See FAMILIAR, page 6

Shots rattle street

By OCTAVIAN LACATUSU
The Observer

The second murder in three years on a tiny street at East York's northeast corner has shaken the neighbourhood.

Just after 11 p.m. on Sunday, Dane Dillon, 27, was visiting a friend and on his way home when he was shot in the parking lot of the Toronto Community Housing apartment building at 90 Parma Ct., near O'Connor Drive and Victoria Park Avenue. He died on the way to the hospital.

"Mr. Dillon was shot as he was trying to flee the parking lot," said homicide squad Det.

Sgt. Pauline Gray at a news conference on Tuesday night. "I'm fairly certain we're looking at more than one suspect at this point."

Police say Dillon was the subject of an arrest warrant a year ago for abduction, but they haven't confirmed any connection between the abduction and the slaying.

On Tuesday night, police went door-to-door asking residents if anyone heard or saw anything at the time of the incident.

Interviewed by a reporter, however, some said they're reluctant to divulge anything to

authorities out of fear for their safety.

"I'm afraid to be here," said one resident, who asked for anonymity. "I'm afraid for my son who has to grow in such a violent environment."

Another, saying she's worked in the neighbourhood for the last eight months, described it as relatively calm and quiet during the day, but in the evening, she said, the mood changes.

A 35-year-old man was shot and killed on Parma Court in the spring of 2008. This week's murder on the street was the city's 37th of 2011.



Octavian Lacatusu /// Observer

Police officers went door-to-door at Parma Court to ask residents if they witnessed anything on Sunday night.

City struggling to repair 'critical pipe'

By KRISTIN ANNABLE
The Observer

Residents in the Coxwell Avenue and O'Connor Drive neighbourhood tired of the construction eyesore at their intersection had better get used to it.

The trunk sewer repair that was begun in October 2010 with a scheduled completion date of January 2011 now faces further delays.

In 2008, city crews dis-

covered significant damage to the Coxwell Sanitary Trunk Sewer 60 metres beneath the intersection.

According to Lou Di Gironimo, general manager of Toronto Water, the trunk sewer is the most critical pipe in the city.

"If this sewer broke, the backup sewage would flow entirely into the Don River," he said. "There would be no way to turn it off and the environmental impact

would be huge."

In March, workers discovered an extra layer of concrete that they had to deal with, further delaying the completion date.

"This lost us a few months and our new completion date is May 2011," Di Gironimo said at the time.

May has come and gone, and construction continues.

Di Gironimo now hopes to have a new, fully operational sewer by the end of

2011.

The new series of delays stems from an extra drinking water well that was built directly on top of the old sewer that crews are trying to replace.

"This ground water is getting between the cracks of the old and the new shafts," Di Gionimo said.

"In order for us to continue to work on the trunk sewer, the area has to be completely dry."

NEWS YOU CAN USE

■ The Coxwell trunk sewer handles the flow from over 750,000 people

■ Construction's has an estimated price tag of \$30 million

Moms rise to challenge of breastfeeding

By ANETA TASHEVA
The Observer

On Oct. 1, mothers from across the GTA gathered in East York to breastfeed their children and walk together. Waving signs with messages such as "Mama's got milk" and "Proud to be a breastfeeding mother and woman," they promoted breastfeeding.

"We try to make the community aware of the breastfeeding benefits," said Lydia Ling, the event's main organizer for the past seven years.

The women gathered at the East York Civic Centre for the Toronto Breastfeeding Challenge, where 90 mothers breastfed their babies at 11 a.m. The Toronto Breastfeeding Network organized the event and made it a free day including food, awards and seminars. La Leche League Canada, a national organization providing breastfeeding support, took on the administrative role.

According to the Quintessence Foundation, which also provides support to breastfeeding mothers, the first Breastfeeding Challenge took place in British Columbia in 2001.



Aneta Tasheva // Observer

In honour of National Breastfeeding Week, mothers participated in the Toronto Breastfeeding Challenge and walked, along with other supporters, to raise awareness about the importance of breastfeeding. This is the first time the Toronto Breastfeeding Network has held the event in East York.

"It (began promoting) breastfeeding because breastfeeding is so good for the moms, for the babies, for the environment," Ling said.

The Breastfeeding Challenge has become an intercity competition throughout the world. Every year, mothers try to break the world record of breastfeeding the most babies

at the same place and time.

"It shows that there are people from all walks of life and all different backgrounds that are getting the message across," said Caroline Chocorlan, a breastfeeding mother who attended the event for the first time.

She believes mothers need to recognize the nutritional

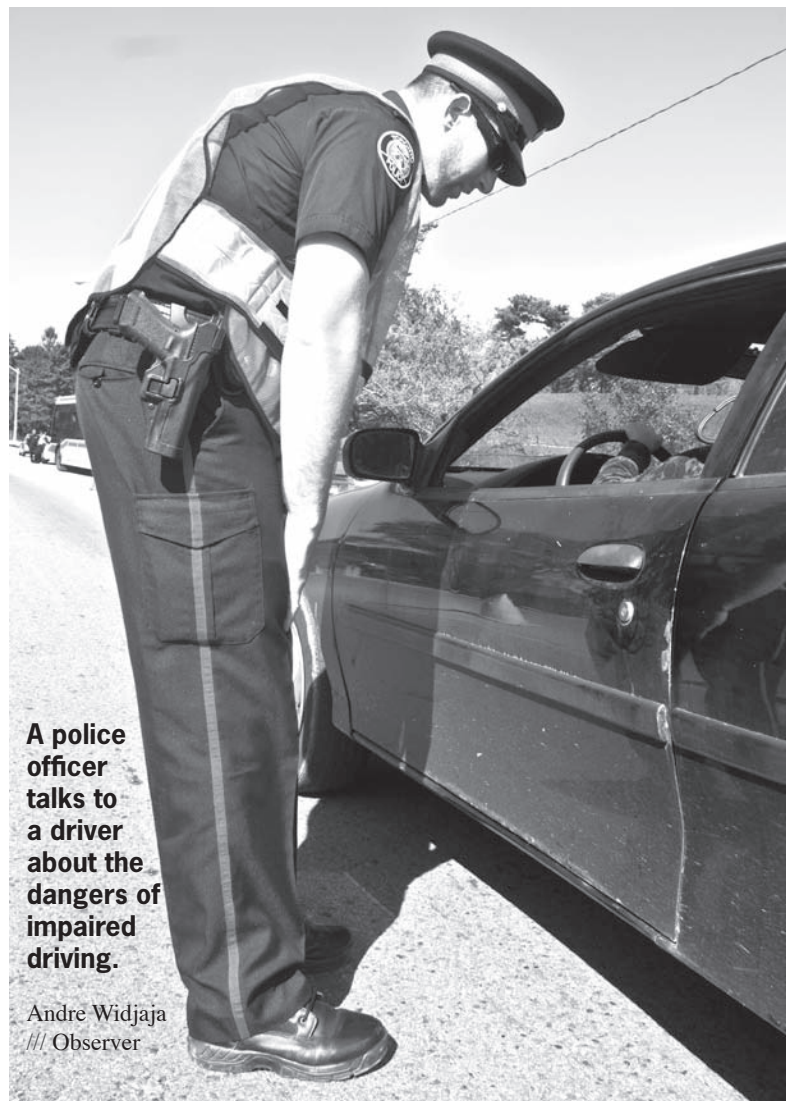
value of breast milk and, if they experience difficulties with breastfeeding, should seek support.

The event helps to provide a sense of community for mothers, Chocorlan said.

La Leche League Canada leader, Michelle Branco, believes the Toronto Breastfeeding Challenge has made a dif-

ference in showing the public that breastfeeding is something the community values. However, there is still a lot that needs to change, she said.

"Some of the changes have to be better support in hospitals (and) better prenatal support so the mothers really know better what to expect," she said.



A police officer talks to a driver about the dangers of impaired driving.

Andre Widjaja
// Observer

RIDE hits the road

Hearse hammers home the point at spot check

By ANDRE WIDJAJA
The Observer

Drivers at the intersection of Crescent Town Road and Victoria Park Avenue were met last Friday by police officers, a hearse, a taxicab and a TTC bus.

On the cusp of Thanksgiving weekend, Toronto police engaged in a RIDE spot-check to educate drivers on the dangers of, and alternatives to, impaired driving.

Although police commonly perform RIDE stops during later hours, Sgt. Jack West said monitoring drivers during the day is equally important.

He noted that individuals often have drinks during lunch and police need to send a clear message about alternative means of transportation.

West recalled recently stopping a truck driver just before noon. He said the driver had been drinking since the start of his shift at 7 a.m.

Also at the scene was Reliable DD, a Toronto-based company providing

designated drivers to people too intoxicated to get behind the wheel.

"No one wants to be the designated driver," said Kevin Gibson, co-founder of Reliable DD. "Even when we're out there you still have stubborn people with attitude."

Although Reliable DD is not the first or only company of its kind, Gibson said that most of the public is still unaware of the service.

"Eighty per cent of the people out there that we talk to have never heard of us," he said. "The biggest problem is there's lack of support from the bars. We have a lot of responsible bars that will call us to come and pick people up, but for the most part, bars over-serve them and send them out the door."

A hearse from the Giffen-Mack Funeral Home and Cremation Centre was on-scene in grim illustration of the consequences of impaired driving. Funeral home employee Brett Johnson said he's seen too many families lose loved ones over "silliness."

"You get to chose your ride home. In the event of being impaired you have the choice to take the taxi cab, police car or a hearse," he said.

Board defers on Garneau Collegiate's TOPS courses

By ALISSA RANDALL
The Observer

A decision to address overcrowding and move the Talented Offerings for Programs in the Sciences (TOPS) from Marc Garneau Collegiate was deferred by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) at a meeting on Oct. 5.

This will allow for a final report from the Marc Garneau Working Group, which will provide recommendations to the board.

Director of Education Chris Spence said staff are considering expanding the TOPS program in a new location, and that parents and

students have a desire to replicate the program.

At the meeting, Don Valley West/Ward 13 trustee Geri Gershon said teachers and TOPS officials want the program to remain in the school.

"We've heard from many people in the community... that the program should stay

in the school," she said. "It has benefit to the school and the kids have benefited from having the program in the school and the TOPS kids benefit by being there."

According to a TDSB report, there are 1,930 students at Marc Garneau: 1,680 in regular programming and 250

TOPS students. This means the school is 508 students over-capacity.

Superintendent Rauda Dickinson said she and the Marc Garneau Working Group are introducing short-term solutions by changing timetables to maximize space at the school.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The play's the thing

The East Side Players open their new season with Peter Shaffer's *Lettice and Lovage*. It will run from Oct. 27 to Nov. 12 at The Papermill Theatre. Tickets are \$20 or \$15 for students. Get tickets at www.eastsideplayers.ca or call 416-425-0917.

Celebrate local libraries

Oct. 22 is Library Settlement Partnership (LSP) Day at Toronto libraries. Events run from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Flemingdon Park branch and noon to 4 p.m. at Thorncliffe Park. Check www.torontopubliclibrary.ca for more details.

~ Lloyd Quansah

COURTS & CRIME

Man arrested after stabbing

A man, 41, was stabbed several times on Sunday outside of a restaurant in the area of Pape and Cosburn avenues. Police say the stabbing occurred at around 2:45 a.m. and the man was rushed to hospital with serious but non-life-threatening injuries. A 32-year-old suspect has been arrested and charged with aggravated assault and assault with a weapon.

Police search for muggers

Police are looking for two men after a 52-year-old man was mugged on Sept. 29. The incident occurred at 10:20 p.m. in the Danforth and Bastedo Avenue area. Police say the victim was punched and robbed. Both suspects are described as male, white, mid-20s, thin and about 5'10" tall.

~ Alima Hotakie

Retaining wall woes plague Pottery Road

Route remains closed until the end of November

By **LESLIE MARCINIAK**
The Observer

The headaches for motorists in the southwest corner of East York will continue for another month and a half, as Pottery Road remains closed.

The road, known for its steep grade, is a popular link between Bayview and Broadview avenues. The Broadview end has been sealed off from traffic entirely; the Bayview end is open only for cars trying to get to the Fantasy Farm function facility and the city's Todmorden Mills Heritage Museum and Arts Centre.

The city announced Wednesday in a press release that Pottery Road will reopen at the end of November. Construction continues on the new retaining wall.

This spring, the road was closed to through traffic in order to repair and upgrade it. Pothole repair, guide rails, a new sidewalk and work on the retaining wall are among the many improvements listed on the city website.

The original projected completion date was Sept. 5. When that date passed, the city's website stated that construction would continue until the end of September. The date is now pushed back to Nov. 30.

According to Maurizio Barbon, manager of design and construction for Toronto and East York, the area of concern is in close proximity to the new retaining wall.

Comments on some internet message boards have suggested the new Minto condominium building at Pottery

Road and Broadview Avenue may be part of the problem, but Barbon says that is not the case.

"The portion of the slope that is of concern is in the immediate vicinity of the newly constructed retaining wall," he said. "The retaining wall is significantly further west of the condominiums.... The concerns are more localized to the location of the retaining wall."

Barbon also said the slope in question is not in danger of failing, adding that the city is taking extra measures to make sure there is no chance of it doing so for any reason in the future.

According to Barbon, the city is currently reviewing the engineering consultant's recommendations and working to get Pottery Road open as soon as possible.

"The city is sympathetic to the public for the inconvenience as a result of the delayed reopening," he said.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

■ Pottery Road is a popular link between Bayview and Broadview avenues

■ The road was originally scheduled to reopen on Sept. 5

■ Drivers visiting Fantasy Farm or the Todmorden Mills Heritage Museum and Arts Centre can do so by entering through the Bayview end



Geoff Mosher /// Observer

A new retaining wall is being blamed for the continuing closure of Pottery Road. The city has delayed reopening the road until Nov. 30.



Alima Hotakie /// Observer

Protesters gathered at Queen's Park last month to advocate for religion-free schools. Organized by the Canadian Secular Alliance, the event was held in part as a response to Muslim prayer services at Valley Park Middle School in East York.

Protesting prayer

Valley Park Middle School's lunchtime prayer sessions spark demonstrations

By **ALIMA HOTAKIE**
The Observer

The Toronto District School Board is looking for a compromise that may defuse tension around lunchtime Muslim prayers at Valley Park Middle School in the Flemingdon Park area.

The vast majority of the school's students are Muslim, and since 2008 they've been praying in the cafeteria during their lunch hour, with adult leaders from the community.

Earlier this year, a man saying he represented a Hindu advocacy group

complained that the practice is discriminatory and disruptive to other students.

Other opposition then arose, including demonstrations held in front of TDSB headquarters, as well as at Queen's Park.

The Canadian Secular Alliance (CSA) organized the most recent protest, held at the provincial legislature late last month.

Speaking to a small crowd, CSA president Greg Oliver said there's no place for religion in the public school system.

"We are opposed to that as we would be for any

denomination," he said.

"It's not an anti-Muslim thing. We'd be equally opposed if it were a Christian prayer or Hindu prayer."

Farzana Hassan, director of the Muslim Canadian Congress, said the TDSB is endorsing gender apartheid.

"An outside imam comes in on Friday to lead these congregational prayers where female students are sent to the back of the cafeteria and menstruating girls are made to sit in dark, dingy corners," she said.

But Shari Schwartz-Maltz, manager of media issues at TDSB, said some groups have completely distorted the issue.

"This has nothing to do with school, but religious accommodation," she said. "We are legally obliged to provide a space under the Ontario Human Rights Code."

She further dispelled the notion the prayers are funded by public money.

"The parents cover all costs of the spiritual leader," she said.

Still, TDSB communications director Zoya McGroarty says while nothing has been confirmed, tentative changes are afoot to address the complaints.

"One of the possibilities being discussed is to bring in an older student from a nearby high school to lead the prayers," she said.

YOUR SAY

Does prayer belong in public schools?



Amy TIPTON

'If it allows them to practise their religion... and not miss school in order to pray, then I think it's totally fair.'



Draigan LeFEBVRE

'If a child wants to pray or their parents want them to pray, there should be some sort of mechanism for it.'



Kathy HARTLEY

'I think if you take the word 'prayer' out of it... 'Prayer' is really loaded, especially in a public school.'



Tim FAGBENRO

'Sure, why not? It's a free country. If I wanted to pray, it's my right to express my religion.'

Vast minority

Another election where many votes didn't count signifies a necessity for a new electoral system

With another Ontario election in the books, one glaring question remains unanswered: why is our electoral system so dysfunctional?

Our first-past-the-post system has proven itself unable to democratically represent voters. In election after election, it leaves a minority to decide the political fate of Ontario. How else could you explain an election where the victorious McGuinty Liberals lead the popular vote by just 2.1 per cent over the second place Hudak Conservatives — while winning 16 more seats? This is the same election where the NDP won 22.7 per cent of the popular vote... but barely 15.8 per cent of the seats, with just 17.

Yet when an alternative, mixed-member proportional representation, was proposed in a 2007 referendum, over 60 per cent of voters opposed it. Two East York ridings (Toronto-Danforth and Beaches-East York) were among only six ridings in all of Ontario where a majority of voters wanted "MMP." The Province of Ontario's Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform had overwhelmingly recommended the system but John Tory, who was leader of the provincial Progressive Conservatives back then, opposed it, and so did the Freedom Party of Ontario.

More important to that 2007 referendum outcome was the fact that the issue was nowhere near adequately debated. The Citizens' Assembly produced a report and a short leaflet outlining its reasons for support, and explained the admittedly more complex system. But Elections Ontario chose to distribute neither, and the result, according to one Strategic Counsel poll, was that 47 per cent of respondents knew nothing about the system, 41 per cent knew little and only 12 per cent understood the system.

This is the toxic environment of Ontario politics. A complete lack of engagement and the reluctance of the province and Elections Ontario to educate voters have left a system that is obviously lacking. No wonder half of Ontario voters chose not to participate in the election last week. It is blatantly obvious that only party supporters are considered necessary, leaving a majority of voters dispensable.

~ Geoffrey Mosher

Prue's no sweat(er)

MPP wears his lucky sweater on election nights, but experience was real key in election victory

Beaches-East York MPP Michael Prue gives some credit to his lucky sweater for his consistent electoral success. However, it's really his dedication to his constituency that has kept him in his seat — first, at East York's borough hall, then at Toronto City Hall, and for the last decade-plus, at Queen's Park.

Even after last week's victory, Prue was quick to acknowledge the beloved sweater... which was made by his wife, Shirley.

But the people of Beaches-East York have been quick — and right — to acknowledge Prue's service to the community in election after election.

He's an experienced politician who has worked hard for East York interests for almost a quarter of a century — going all the way back to 1988, when he became a councillor for the old Borough of East York. Then, in 1993, he became mayor. And when the Harris regime forced municipal amalgamation on East York and the other former Metro municipalities in 1998, he became a Toronto city councillor... until his election to the Ontario Legislature in 2001.

Since then, he and his supporters have demonstrated that Prue is a strong advocate for the riding, taking East York issues to Queen's Park.

For instance, Prue has been working to get funding for Toronto East General Hospital for about six years. The hospital is widely used by patients from all over the city's east end, but many of its facilities are in disrepair. According to the hospital's CEO, Rob Devitt, there are up to six patients being put in one room and the building's infrastructure — electrical and the like — is stretched beyond capacity.

Prue has pressed Premier McGuinty for a plan for the hospital, and this summer, the province approved funding for Phase 1 of TEGH's \$200 million redevelopment.

So don't be fooled by his gentle demeanour and cute sweater. Once the legislature is back to business, Prue will undoubtedly take his spot at Queen's Park and put his game face on, ready to tackle issues that not only affect his riding, but all Ontarians.

~ Andre Widjaja

COLUMN

Emphasis on high school grades diminishes value of knowledge

Many high school students will tell you they go to school to build up a good grade report and ensure their acceptance into a post-secondary institution.

Last May, I attended a seminar where Centennial College had invited several high school classes to spend a day at the Morningside campus in Scarborough. The students

Aneta Tasheva



also attended a presentation hosted by Connie Zehr, an environmental studies professor. She wanted to explain the importance of environmentalism and share what she learned during a recent trip to the Amazon rainforest.

At the beginning of her presentation, Zehr told the students she would distribute a quiz at the end. When the class heard this, most students began taking notes.

When she finished the presentation, a student asked about the anticipated quiz. Zehr said she simply wanted to ensure the students would pay attention and had joked about the quiz.

I watched in awe as most of the class grumbled that their attentiveness had been in vain. Meanwhile, the student who asked about the quiz complained that she had taken notes for nothing.

Like these high school students, many others also believe that if they are not graded, there is little point to their efforts in school.

Students are not entirely to blame for this type of thinking. High schools

put so much pressure on students to accumulate good grades that both teachers and students often forget the real purpose of education: to gain knowledge.

I know teachers need to grade their students for evaluation purposes. However, they also need to encourage students to develop a curiosity about the world, even when it's not graded.

Instead of developing a love of learning in high school, students often develop an anxiety about grades. This leads them to believe that any learning not garnering grade merit is of little or no value. In turn, they also feel that after a test, the information they were tested on is no longer useful.

When students come home from school, parents shouldn't merely ask what grade they received on their most recent assignments.

Instead, they should put more focus on what the students have learned.

This way, when they graduate, students will have more to show for it than a piece of paper with a list of percentages.

A fly on the polling station wall

They say that the voter turnout in last week's provincial election was disappointing. An historic low, they tell us.

And yet, a fly on the wall at an area polling station on election day might have flown away encouraged by

Kris Ali-Trotman



what seemed like energized proceedings at the polls.

Clerks barely had a chance to eat or even use the washroom because of what seemed like a steady stream of voters. New voters seemed more than happy to go through the little bit of bureaucracy required to get on the voters' list.

But even veteran voters had something of a spring in their step on the way to that little cardboard cubicle where they marked their X.

If media reports on the day of the election could be relied on, there were very few complaints anywhere. You might hear somebody comment about how newspapers displaying party leaders shouldn't have been visible to voters. Or somebody else saying that a voter wearing a party pin should have taken it off.

But keeping them all honest were the scrutineers, who descended on polling centres with eagle-eye vision. They kept track of who was voting, when and where — and whether anyone was breaking

any rules... especially anyone who happened to be from a competing party.

But there's something about election day that saves the best for last. That is, if you define "best" as suddenly being descended upon by hordes of your neighbours.

It started at about 8 p.m., just an hour before the doors were scheduled to swing shut: an invasion of people ready to exercise their democratic rights only after their return home from work... and a nice dinner. Despite 10 days of advance polling opportunities... and 12 hours on election day to cast their ballot... they waited until the last 60 minutes to turn out at the polls.

But by that point, everyone was running on adrenalin anyway — knowing that soon the ballot boxes would be opened, and all secrets revealed: a minority Liberal government; a sweep by East York's incumbents.

In the end, it was a welcome education in democracy. And \$157.30 from Elections Ontario to stimulate the economy.

No more pizza lunches?

By MATILDA MIRANDA
The Observer

If the non-profit advocacy group Social Planning Toronto were to have its way, bake sales and pizza lunches in public schools would be no more.

In a report released this fall, Social Planning Toronto calls for a ban on fundraising because it creates unequal opportunities for schools located in affluent neighbourhoods compared to schools in low-income areas. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) should pool money and distribute it equally among all schools, the group says.

But Cathy Dandy, the TDSB trustee for Ward 15/Toronto-Danforth, doesn't think a ban is the answer.

"You can't stop parents from donating," she said. "The bigger problem is what are funds being raised for and what the Ontario Ministry of Education allows fundraising to be spent on."

The ministry needs to sit down and figure out what resources are required to deliver all aspects of the curriculum effectively, she says. Once this is determined, she added, it should be mandated.

"The government spends a lot of time setting standards and expectations for school boards, but they haven't set standards for themselves," she said.

■ For more, see torontoobserver.ca

■ NOSTALGIA



Nick Pescod /// Observer

Former NHLer Paul Henderson stands with the jersey he wore when he got the winning goal in the legendary 1972 Summit Series. The jersey is touring the country and stopped at the Leaside arena on Sept. 25.

Leonardo resurrected

By VICKEN POLATIAN
The Observer

There are few artists in history as famous as Leonardo da Vinci. However, the Mona Lisa and the Last Supper are just two examples of Leonardo's brilliance.

Earlier this week, Leonardo da Vinci's Workshop: The Exhibition premiered in Toronto at the Ontario Science Centre. Scale models of Leonardo's inventions as well as a digital look inside his notebooks are the main attractions.

Everything was put together and developed by Leonardo3 (L3), a Milan-based research centre.

Interactive monitors allow exhibit viewers to not only see the work of the legendary artist, but also to understand and rebuild some of his creations.

"In our exhibitions we don't just want to celebrate the genius of Leonardo," said Massimiliano Lisa, the president and CEO of L3. "We made everything simple, with our digitally interactive touch screens. You can really go in depth and really understand what Leonardo created."

With the display, Lisa doesn't just want to teach, but also inspire new generations.

"We want to push the creativity of the young generation that comes here to the exhibition," he said. "So, our ultimate goal is to have as many new, young Leonardos coming out of this exhibition

as possible."

After years of research, Mario Taddei, the technical-scientific director of L3, realized that many of the things he'd learned about Leonardo were not true. A fascination with Leonardo's work made it his personal goal to "study da Vinci again." He wanted to bring truth to some of the myths in this exhibit.

The partnership of L3 and the Ontario Science Centre hopes to raise awareness about a man who lived 500 years ago. Had these ideas been published, they believe the current state of technology would be much more advanced.

"During his lifetime, Leonardo da Vinci was an inventor, painter, scientist, engineer, musician, architect and more. Visitors come to the centre to be engaged with science and inspired by innovation," said Lesley Lewis, the Ontario Science Centre's CEO. "Who better as the source of inspiration than Leonardo da Vinci?"

NEWS YOU CAN USE

■ The da Vinci exhibit will be running until March 18.

■ Ticket prices for the exhibit are \$25.00 for adults, \$17.00 for children and \$20.00 for youth/seniors.

Hospital launches \$200-million upgrading plan

State-of-the-art facility will provide 'modern space with less crowding'

By BETH FORD
The Observer

Toronto East General Hospital continues to advance its plans for a new era of care for residents of East York.

In August, the provincial government approved funding for the first phase of the hospital's planned \$200-million redevelopment project. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2015-2016.

The new state-of-the-art facility will encompass approximately 380,000 square feet of space, including an eight-storey building at the site of the current visitor parking lot located on the north-east corner of Sammon and Coxwell Avenues.

It will include a spacious modern entrance with two levels of underground parking.

The first two floors will be outpatient

clinics; the other six will be dedicated to inpatients with approximately 250 beds. These will include medicine, mental health and surgery beds.

When TEGH first opened its doors in 1929, it was a 110-bed facility. Its design was originally intended for care through the 1920s-'40s era.

East York resident Mildred Soya's daughter was born there in 1968 and her husband passed away there just two years ago.

She says she'd like to see some improvements.

"The staff were friendly and treated my family very well," she said. "But the crowded and noisy hallway I sat in with my husband overnight before he could get into a room of his own will stay with me forever. It's time for a change."

The new facility is designed to handle growing pains of the community over the next 50 years, leaving plenty of room to implement new technologies down the road.

President and CEO Rob Devitt said the hospital has conceptualized developments over the long term to ensure

proper decisions were made to prevent future regrets.

"Rather than planning one little project and realizing, 'Oops, we've stuck the expansion in the wrong place,' we've thought through where we will add to the building," he said. "You have to consider that we're on a very restricted property in a residential neighbourhood. We had to take a step back and develop this long-range vision for the campus."

The modern design of the new building has left no stone unturned. All areas of patient care will be up to par with modern standards. And the spacious hallways and private rooms are designed with mobility impairments in mind.

Overall, Devitt said, it will be a dignified environment for people to heal in.

"It'll give us modern space with less crowding, a more comforting environment with more privacy and access to natural light," he said.

The hospital's share of the project is estimated to be \$60 million.



Photo courtesy of Scott McGrath

L-R: City councillor Mary Fragedakis, talk show host John Tory, Mayor Rob Ford and John Papastergiou, associate owner of the Shoppers Drug Mart at 755 Danforth Ave., launched a fundraising drive for TEGH last month.

The results are in...

Wynne has wonderful week

By KRISTIN ANNABLE
The Observer

For incumbent Liberal MPP Kathleen Wynne, election week proved to be full of good news.

She propelled herself to victory in Don Valley West, which many called a riding to watch.

And off the campaign trail, Wynne celebrated the arrival of her second grandchild, when her daughter gave birth.

The run-up to voting day wasn't so rosy.

Wynne faced what seemed like a tough challenge from first-time Progressive Conservative candidate Andrea Mandel-Campbell.

As a former anchor for CTV's Business News Network, Mandel-Campbell had a recognizable face and name and some credibility among

the business people living in the affluent neighbourhoods of the riding, like Leaside.

Still, Wynne quickly built a vote total of 24,454 votes, or 58.3 per cent.

The diverse background of the riding's residents was visible at Wynne's victory party at the Cypriot Greek Community Centre on Thorncliffe Park Drive.

Men, women and children from a multitude of backgrounds gathered to celebrate her win.

Wynne believes inclusiveness and diversity is what Don Valley West represents.

"No matter where we came from, we all came from

somewhere else. Some came 140 years ago," she said.

Marcia Camaraine, a resident of the area for 10 years, commented on the mix found in Don Valley West.

"From Bayview to the middle-class areas with newly-landed Canadians, Don Valley West has it all,"

she said.

"People of different languages, socio-economic backgrounds and races. I love that, but it does make for a difficult riding for politicians to reach."

Wynne wants to continue the work she started four years ago, including getting more tenant associations for the rid-

ing's residents.

"Without having a tenant association to turn to, residents with issues with their landlord or problems in their building find it harder to get action," Wynne said.

Last year, Wynne worked with residents of 43, 47 and 49 Thorncliffe Park Drive to start an association in the apartment complex.

Wynne also plans to help the community oversee the completion of Leaside Arena, the construction of a cricket field and an overall focus on education issues in her riding.

"Education is an investment in the future of our residents," Wynne said.

Having defeated then-PC leader John Tory four years ago, Wynne will now enjoy a third consecutive term at Queen's Park as Liberal MPP.



Kristin Annable // Observer

Re-elected Liberal MPP Kathleen Wynne celebrates with one of her supporters at the Cypriot Community Centre.



Lloyd Quansah // Observer

Toronto-Danforth Liberal candidate Marisa Sterling was still upbeat following her defeat by incumbent Peter Tabuns.

Sterling's spirits high despite loss to Tabuns

By LLOYD QUANSAH
The Observer

Her loss to Toronto-Danforth incumbent Peter Tabuns hasn't dampened the spirits of Liberal candidate Marisa Sterling. Nor has it lessened her desire to try again.

"I think that serving as an elected official is the ultimate way to (serve a community)," Sterling said. "I am going to be an MPP."

She vowed to stay a part of the Toronto-Danforth community.

"We're going to stay a family here and we're just going to grow this family."

Sterling earned 11,209 votes, or 30.7 per cent of the total, while Tabuns garnered

TORONTO-DANFORTH

19,701 for 53.9 per cent.

Sterling wants to "keep moving forward together" with voters who helped her gain more votes than in the past.

Sterling walked into Three's Company on Danforth Avenue on election night not showing a shred of defeat. She gave a lot of credit to the team she assembled and during her speech to supporters, said she is "forever grateful" for them giving up "their heart and soul the last three months."

She congratulated Tabuns for another successful campaign and thanked voters for their support.

"I'm honoured for those that had their faith in choosing me to be (MPP) and I completely respect those who made another choice," Sterling said. "At the end of the day, all of us are just here for the people and as long as we remember that, we're going to do great stuff."

Campaign manager Rob Newman, who Sterling described as her "yin and yang," said Sterling will be back, and predicted a more favourable outcome next time around.

"We created a real crack team here that knows now what it takes to run a winning campaign," he said.

Familiar faces return to East York ridings

Cont'd. from page 1

defeated Liberal candidate Marisa Sterling with nearly twice as many votes in Toronto-Danforth.

The New Democrats' environment critic finished with 19,701 votes and 53.9 per cent of the field. Sterling

ended with 11,209 votes, or 30.7 per cent.

NDP incumbent Michael Prue earned 17,807 votes, or 46.6 per cent of the total, in Beaches-East York. Liberal candidate Helen Burstyn came in second with 13,816 votes, or 36.2 per cent.



For more election coverage, please see torontoobserver.ca

Don Valley West results

CANDIDATE	PARTY	VOTES
Kathleen Wynne	Liberal Party	24,454
Andrea Mandel-Campbell	Conservative Party	12,828
Khalid Ahmed	New Democratic Party	3,661
Louis Fliss	Green Party	718
Dimitris Kabitsis	Communist Party	125
Rosemary Waigh	Vegan Environmental Party	108

Toronto-Danforth results

CANDIDATE	PARTY	VOTES
Peter Tabuns	New Democratic Party	19,998
Marisa Sterling	Liberal Party	11,358
Rita Jethi	Conservative Party	3,484
Tim Whalley	Green Party	1,321
Kevin Clarke	The People	143
Stephane Vera	Freedom Party	113
Neil Mercer	TOP	110

...veterans are back

Another win for Prue... and sweater

By **ANDRE WIDJAJA**
The Observer

The Toronto Naval Club was a packed house by the time polls closed.

Approximately 100 people had their eyes glued to the television at the front of the bar. The crowd erupted in cheers and claps every time an NDP candidate was announced as a winner.

However, just after 10 p.m., the gathering turned into pandemonium.

The man they were there to support walked in sporting his famous East York sweater and an uncontrollable smile.

Beaches-East York incumbent MPP Michael Prue took 46 per cent of the vote to easily win his fourth consecutive election.

Prue was shaking hands and

hugging people all the way to the front of the building where he delivered his victory speech.

He took the podium and thanked a list of people including his wife, Shirley, his campaign volunteers and others who supported him.

On election nights, Prue has been known to sport the "lucky" sweater his wife knitted over 20 years ago when he was a municipal politician.

This year was no exception.

"I've won in every election ever since," he said. "It has brought me

total luck. This sweater is just magic."

Prue said he came into election night confident he'd win.

"It was absolutely amazing walking the streets," he said. "When you talk to people and they would come and shake my hand and say that they voted for me in the advance polls."

He also credited the victory to the strong sense of community in

Beaches-East York.

"We do it for each

other," he said.

"Tonight, the people of Beaches-East York said that we are a team."

Long-time Prue supporter Mike Nicoloff said he voted for him because of his dedication to people in his riding.

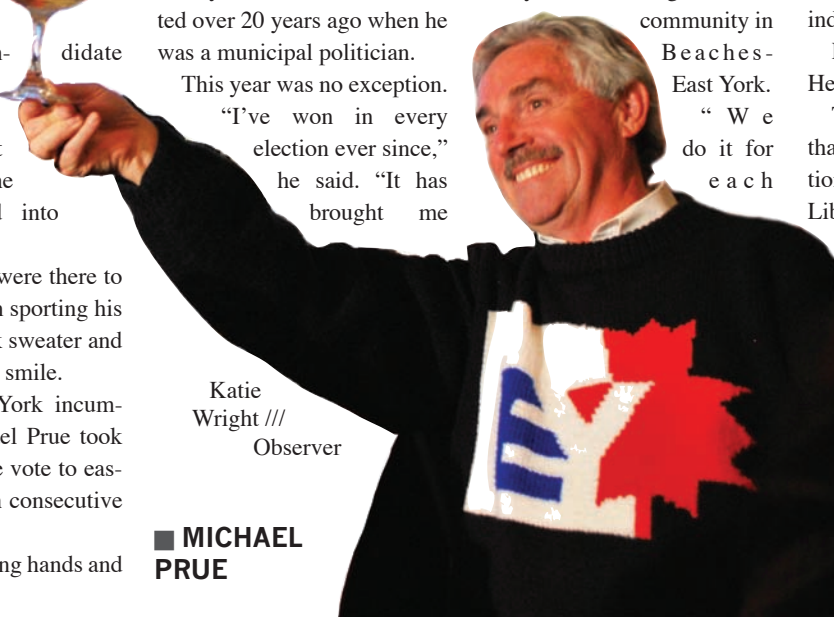
"He's a working man's working man," he said. "This isn't Bay Street or anything. It's always been about a lot of independent businesses."

Prue beat Liberal candidate Helen Burstyn by 5,000 votes.

The race was slightly closer than the last provincial election where Prue beat then-Liberal candidate Tom Teahen by 7,000 votes.

He says he will continue to tackle big-ticket issues like health care and education.

"We have to reform health care," Prue said. "We're spending way too much money and the costs are going up way too fast."



Katie Wright // Observer

■ MICHAEL PRUE

BEACHES-EAST YORK



Jesse Mirsky // Observer

Liberal candidate Helen Burstyn reads from her Blackberry at Wise Guys Deluxe Bar and Grill on Danforth Avenue.

Burstyn vows to run again

By **JESSE MIRSKY**
The Observer

Helen Burstyn may have lost in last week's provincial election, but when she greeted a crowd of supporters at Wise Guys Bar and Grill on the Danforth shortly after polls closed, she was quick to tell them she'll be running again. "Never as close as this," she said about the race. "I've got my eye on this (riding) because it's important and it's been under-represented."

Burstyn finished about 4,000 votes and 10 percentage points behind the Beaches-East York winner, incumbent New Democrat Michael Prue.

As she thanked her supporters, Burstyn paced and grinned. She seemed humbled by the support she'd received over the campaign.

She also spoke as if the campaign was still in full swing.

"I know the community services that are here and I also know the ones that aren't here and they're never going to be here unless we get somebody... who knows how to work in and for government," she said. "It's the only way."

Burstyn got to the party late after polls closed. Before she arrived, Liberal supporters sporting red 'Burstyn' pins sat glued to television screens around the bar.

Maria Minna, former Liberal MP in the riding of Beaches-East York, was co-chair of Burstyn's campaign. She arrived at the bar, after a day of door-to-door campaigning, about an hour before Burstyn.

"She's a fighting spirit. Whether or not we take down Michael Prue tonight, I don't know," Minna said.

"But Helen is a strong candidate, would make a fabulous member of parliament here and... that's why I backed her."

Alfred Apps, president of the Liberal Party of Canada and a personal friend of Burstyn, arrived at the bar shortly after polls closed.

Sipping red wine, he said he thought Burstyn's ability to close the historically large gap between the NDP and Liberals in Beaches-East York was impressive.

He also said another Liberal government in Ontario is an important step.

"Given what happened to us last May, this feels fantastic," Apps said, referring to the Liberals' federal election loss. "This is all a good sign for the future of the party."

At the end of her speech, Burstyn made a point to thank her late husband, co-founder of the Luminato Arts Festival, David Pecaut. Surrounded by family, friends and campaign workers, she insisted she'd be back to run in the next provincial election.

Beaches-East York results

CANDIDATE	PARTY	VOTES
Shawn Ali	Green Party of Ontario	1,025
Helen Burstyn	Ontario Liberal Party	13,816
Chris Menary	PC Party of Ontario	5,364
Naomi Poley-Fisher	Freedom Party of Ontario	144
Michael Prue	Ontario NDP	17,807
Joe Ross	TOP	45

Tabuns says win fights apathy

By **GEOFF MOSHER**
The Observer

Peter Tabuns says that the NDP will play an important role in decision-making at Queen's Park this fall.

The New Democrats' re-elected MPP from Toronto-Danforth also says the historically low voter turnout carries a message for Premier Dalton McGuinty and his Liberals — that they need to do more.

"I think people have been disappointed with Mc-

Guinty for years," Tabuns said. "This takes them out of the process and leads to apathy."

Tabuns and the 16 other elected NDP MPPs may be in a better position to influence policy during the next session of the legislature, after the Liberals won a minority government last week.

Tabuns was re-elected in Toronto-Danforth with 19,701 votes, or almost 54 per cent of the total. Liberal candidate Marisa Sterling finished second with 11,209 votes.

"We want to reach out directly to people, to give

voice to their concerns and make them feel they are involved in the process," Tabuns said. "I think the

opportunities still need to be explored but they may give us a stronger voice."

Paula Fletcher, Toronto city councillor for Ward 30, echoed Tabuns' sentiments at his post-election celebration.

"Together we make this

happen in Toronto-Danforth," Fletcher said. "Together we are able to elect New Democrats that make us proud at every level, that are groundbreakers and policy innovators."

Tabuns said his priorities are getting people back to work, securing funding for transit and preventing further erosion of health care.

"The McGuinty government never abandoned the Harris path for health care," he said.

"McGuinty has delisted services, and continues moving towards privatized funding."



■ TABUNS

TORONTO-DANFORTH



Nick Pescod // Observer

Amy Thiessen sells produce from her family farm in Jordan Station, Ont. The East York Civic Centre Farmer's Market runs every Tuesday until Nov. 1.

SPORTS

East York Bulldogs nab top spot at the finals

By **ROSS JOHNSTON**
The Observer

The East York Baseball Association has a lot to be proud of this year.

A successful summer campaign for all of its rep and select teams was capped off with the East York Bulldogs Peewee Select team capturing the Ontario Baseball Association Championship last month.

Bulldogs coach Shawn Cussion is all smiles as he reflects on his team's run to the championship.

"This was a fantastic group," he said. "We've had more or less the same kids for four years now, so I really think it was all about how they gelled as a unit."

When asked about the mental fortitude of his squad, Cussion is quick to point out that it's all about perspective.

"These guys went into the finals knowing they were going to win it," he said.

"You couldn't have asked for better team spirit or attitude."

The Bulldogs went into the finals having completed an undefeated regular season.

They managed to see off teams from Forest Glen, Uxbridge, Martingrove and Brampton before meeting their rivals Mississauga in the championship game.

He says although there were two stand-out performances in the big game, it was a team effort that brought home the gold.

"The pitcher, Shane Massey, was fantastic that day," he said.

"He held Mississauga to one run. Then we had Jesse Smith who hit a three-run home run to give us the win. It was a close game, but each and every one of the kids knew it was their time. I'm so proud of them."

Cussion's sentiments are echoed by EYBA president Andrew Pace, who credits the organization's success this summer to a strong work ethic and team spirit.

"It's fantastic for the kids because they get to win a championship," he said, "but it's also great for the organization because it shows that we were focused on each of our teams who won big games."

Exhibit focuses on the world

Photographer brings first show to Leaside library

By **LESLIE MARCINIAK**
The Observer

While travelling on horseback in 2009, photographer Marcus Brunmeier stopped for a moment, when something caught his eye.

It wasn't an animal, mountain, or even a scenic sunset.

It was an open field, with nothing but a single line of hydro wires and a long, narrow dirt road stretching for miles.

At first glance, it appears the resulting photo could have been shot in any rural location — until you discover it is from Mongolia.

"When I saw that dirt road, I thought, 'Oh look! Civilization!' since we had mainly seen hills for days," Brunmeier said during a reception at the Leaside public library branch, where his vibrant collection of photography, *A Wilderness of Colour*, was on display.

The exhibit featured 13 photos printed to canvas, capturing scenes from Brunmeier's travels around the world, with an emphasis on colour.

Brunmeier describes the collection on his website: "I try to represent the contrasts I saw in nature and the breadth of the spectrum they encompass. The idea is to give the observer a flavour of how I felt in those places."

Brunmeier's travels are quite extensive, from working as a sea kayak guide in New Zealand, to teaching English in Vietnam. However, it was his many years spent leading expeditions across northern Ontario as a river guide where his photographic talents began to flourish.

This is where artist, teacher and Leaside local, Barbara Mathews, first noticed Brunmeier's potential.

Her son brought home a CD full of photos of his outdoor adventures from camp

that his river guide had taken. Brunmeier simply made the CD for the kids to take home as a memory of their expeditions.

When Mathews saw the photos, she was impressed.

"The pictures were just beautiful," she said. "I took notice immediately. He really is a true artist."

She chose one of the photos and created a painting based on it and showed Brunmeier. Later on, it was Mathews who encouraged him to submit an application to the Toronto Public Library for free use of one of their exhibit spaces to showcase his photography.

He chose the Leaside library, a location in the GTA with special meaning for the Guelph native.

"Most of the kids I met at camp were from Leaside and that is where a lot of my original photography and desire to travel was inspired; on our trips and the places we travelled to in Ontario," he said. "I really wanted to come back here for my first show."



Leslie Marciniak // Observer

Photographer Marcus Brunmeier poses next to his first sold piece during a reception for his photography exhibit, *A Wilderness of Colour*, at the Leaside library on Sept. 24.

IMAX film explores Canadian railway story

By **MIKE BEAUVAIS**
The Observer

For the first time in the 40-year history of IMAX cinema, Canada has its first uniquely Canadian film.

Playing at the Ontario Science Centre's OMNIMAX Theatre, Stephen Low's *Rocky Mountain Express* explores the Rockies' vastness while relating the story of building

Canada's first transcontinental railway, through the cross-country journey of a restored steam engine.

Low, director of other IMAX productions like *Titanica* and *Mark Twain's America*, believes seeing Canadian history come to life on the giant screen is long overdue and that Canadians hold too modest a view of their nation's narrative.

"I think we underestimate," said

Low, addressing the media following the film's premiere showing. "If you look at the history of railroads... this is the great railroad story on earth."

A culmination of six years' work, Low feels his film is a great teaching resource for a generation likely unfamiliar with the Canadian-Pacific Railway (CPR) story and its impact on the country's formation.

"I became more and more concerned that the newer generations don't know anything about the CPR," said Low, "and yet this was the defining moment in Canadian history. If those engines hadn't have climbed those hills, in 1886, it was over. Canada was finished. The Americans would have come in and taken over Western Canada."

With the film depicting events in-

tegral to Canada's history, Science Centre staff relished the opportunity to debut it.

"This is the first Canadian story (for IMAX)," explained Dr. Hooley McLaughlin, centre vice-president. "We've had other Canadian vignettes on things to do with geography and climate, but this is one of the Canadian stories on how Canada was formed."

Hill sisters start and end careers with Lady Saints

By JONATHAN BRAZEAU
The Observer

Kate and Sami Hill aren't going to let a little sibling rivalry get in the way of leading the Eastern Commerce Lady Saints to OFSAA gold.

Sami is in her fourth and final year with the senior girls basketball team and her younger sister Kate has followed in her footsteps and joined the Lady Saints this season.

For Sami, getting along with Kate on the team has been a bit of an adjustment from life at home.

"It's been good but weird because at home we're always used to competing with each other, like, 'I'm better at this, this is mine,' but now we have to work together," Sami said. "It's a lot of fun and it's working pretty well so far. It's just a weird change."

Sami also said she doesn't favour Kate on the court, a fact to which Kate attests.

"She's not afraid to really say what she has to say to me and she doesn't give me any special treatment," Kate said. "She'll probably be harder on me actually."

With their older brothers Alex and Jake having also attended Eastern Commerce and starred for the senior boys team, Kate has thought about going to the school since she was in grade one.

After seeing Sami win the

OFSAA championship as a rookie in 2008 and emerge into a starting guard and the team's leading scorer last year, Kate tried out and made the Lady Saints in September, the only grade nine student on the team.

Lady Saints coach Kareem Griffin said it's been an easy transition for Kate on the team.

"She has been around the program for years and is the last of all the Hills that has come through Eastern," Griffin said. "She came in already knowing what the regiment is and understood it."

However, the early morning practices along with afternoon workouts and late scrimmages, not to mention a full day of classes squeezed in between, were still a little overwhelming for Kate at first.

"It's actually been harder than I expected," Kate said. "The training is way harder than I've ever been used to and the coaches are way more intense."

So far though, the hard work has paid off as Eastern Commerce sports an 9-2 record, with wins over Michael Power/St. Joseph and Ajax's Notre Dame, teams that were at the top of the rankings in the GTA last year.

"I think we're progressing really well," Sami said. "We still have a lot of work

to do but we're better than before."

Eastern Commerce won the city championship last year, but returned from OFSAA empty-handed and the team was hungry to begin the 2011 season strong.

Griffin credits Sami's consistency to deliver, even when they have her coming off the bench, as one of the factors in the team's early success.

"Her game has gotten better, but at the same time, you know what you're getting from her," Griffin said. "She doesn't really care where she comes in, from what I'm seeing, as long as she gets to play."

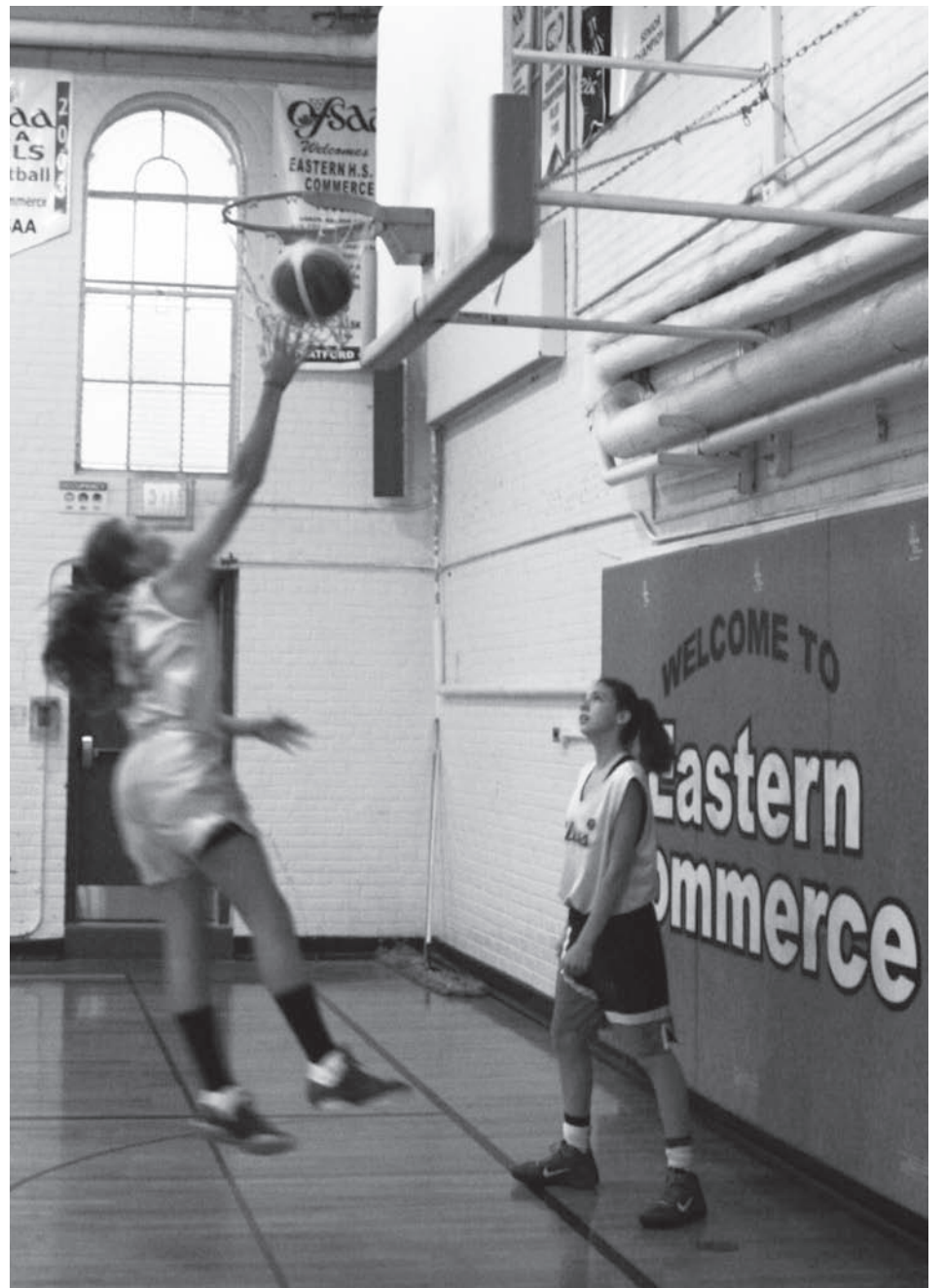
"She came in and performed just as well as when she started."

Now with Kate on the team, Griffin said it's funny seeing the similar personalities between the two sisters.

"They're both good shooters and love to play a fast-paced game," Griffin said. "They're fierce competitors on the floor."

While Sami is still undecided about which college or university she'll attend next year, Kate hopes to be the Saints' starting point guard in the future and it's only a matter of time until it happens.

"At the pace she is going, we expect her to be the top of her class when she is in her graduating year," Griffin said.



Jonathan Brazeau // The Observer

Sami (left) and Kate Hill run drills at Eastern Commerce basketball practice. "They're fierce competitors on the floor," coach Kareem Griffin said.

Goliath tennis back on serve

E.Y. Collegiate still developing after a return to the courts

By PATRICK KIERNAN
The Observer

East York Collegiate is back on the hard courts for another tennis season, but it hasn't always been that way.

The Goliaths' tennis club is now in just its fourth season back following a four-year span where a lack of interest from students and readily available coaches made it impossible to assemble a full squad.

East York has a long history of athletics, but with no tennis team and a passion for the game coach John Ganev, with the help of fellow coach Sam Levy, began the long and tedious task of recruiting and molding players in 2007-08 in hopes of forming a team that could compete in the Tier II South East.

It was a success.

"It was gone for four years but we brought it back," Ganev said. "Basically the first year you're just trying to encourage any and all kids to come out."

"You're finding out who actually knows how to play tennis in the first place, even if it's just the basics, and then you try to spread word of mouth and you just gradually build from there, but it doesn't happen overnight."

Starting from scratch and finding an adequate number of players to fill an eight-man roster is difficult, but Ganev and Levy were fortunate to have a shining youngster the year they brought the program back.

Richard Tomsing is in grade 12 now, but has been a bright spot in his years as a Goliath.

"We're really lucky to have him," said Ganev. "He's been on our team every year since we started the program. He's always done really well for us and he's been there while we try to continue to grow and improve."

The first two seasons were trial years for the two coaches, but they knew what they were getting themselves into, remaining focused on their goal of growing team camaraderie and landing a berth at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association Finals.

Three years after the program got back off the ground, the hard work paid off.

Last season was the most efficacious for the young team with Tomsing finishing second in OFSAA's boys singles.

"It was nice to finish second and show people that we can play," said Tomsing. "We just need to stay focused



Patrick Kiernan // Observer

Courtney Cooke and Richard Tomsing are all smiles after their first win of the season.

and keep doing what we're doing."

Ganev and Levy didn't revive the program for their own satisfaction, rather for the students who wanted to play a game that for years wasn't available the way others were.

"We're really proud of our entire team," said Ganev. "From the kids who have been here all along to the

kids who are in their first year, it's been great."

These coaches have a lot to be proud of and have provided an opportunity these students may not have had.

"We now have 15 and 16 kids coming out each year," said Ganev. "The numbers keep growing and they all really enjoy it, so it's nice to see more students

Local skatepark acts as blueprint for kids

Continued from page 11

Pierre's involvement hardly ended with the opening of the park. The video arm of Team EY, now under the banner PEP-studios, holds 14 full length and over 100 short films in its vault.

Team EY also spawned a clothing line, I Love East York, with profits reinvested to cover the costs of film production. Pierre's efforts are not for profit.

Partnering with the city, he established an affordable skateboard camp, that's now spearheaded by fellow Team EY member Everett MacLean.

Since 2006, MacLean has been programming for the park, and now is the owner and operator of the EY Skate Loft, an indoor facility for camps, lessons and winter drop-in skating.

"This year we had 140 athletes in our camp," MacLean said. "This is where we run a lot of our programs and do a lot of our events."

Team EY isn't just Pierre, MacLean or the handful of others who've been responsible for furthering community programs and facilities.

"To me it is more of a mentality or an attitude, rather than a group of individuals," MacLean said. "It is everyone who contributes."

"Whether it's a five- or eight-year-old kid who's at the

park on a weekly basis, or a guy in his 40s who's there all the time. They all contribute immensely."

While Pierre admits he at times comes across as authoritarian, he maintains that his intentions are good.

His goal is for the local youth to appreciate the dedication and time commitment that went into establishing the skateboarding community that appears so vibrant today, but once was barren.

Through Team EY mentorship, Pierre and MacLean are trying to pass the torch to the younger generation.

In 2007, they were named City of Toronto Youth Group of the Year.

The two long-time friends now act as consultants for Ontario municipalities looking to build their own parks and programs. The idea of forming an Ontario commission for the sport is also on their agenda.

"We consult with the Team EY model," MacLean said. "Other communities lack the initiative to make a skateboarding park and the ambition and enthusiasm to see it through."

If Pierre and MacLean can help other neighborhoods establish anything comparable to what they've accomplished in East York, then there won't be many kids in Ontario without a place to land that first trick.



Terrence Llewellyn /// The Observer

Jonathan Isaacs has returned to baseball six months after a horrific accident derailed his hardball career: "The whole recovery process has been an incredible lesson in patience and perseverance."

U of T all-star back on the diamond

Isaacs returns to Varsity Blues after severe accident

By **TERRENCE LLEWELLYN**
The Observer

It was a calm and quiet day. The plan for Jonathan Isaacs was simply to get some training done before participating in the ride to conquer cancer.

But on that calm and quiet Saturday, April 30, fate threw him a curveball in a fastball count.

The concurrent blare of the sirens from the ambulance and the fire truck penetrated his state of haziness. His girlfriend Leah's presence provided relief in such tense circumstances.

Although, there were the stitches, bruises and endless headaches, they didn't hurt as much as being away from the game that he fell in love with as a kid.

Isaac, a 22-year-old student at the University of Toronto and star outfielder for the Varsity Blues, had just come off an impressive season where he led the team in hits and steals and was named an OUA all-star.

The Leaside native was looking forward to a summer of playing and coaching baseball (Isaac coaches a competitive youth team) but those plans were thwarted two days after his final exams.

While riding in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery with Leah, Isaac began down a straight

away path as he recalls the moment his promising summer took a dark turn.

"All I remember is my handlebars going sideways underneath me and my wheel turning sideways," Isaac said. "My memory of the next while was a bit hazy, but I do remember being on my back with Leah putting her sweater on the cut above my eye and talking to the dispatcher from her phone."

Isaac was then rushed to the hospital where he later found out he had suffered a broken cheek bone at the orbital bone and upper jaw, along with a severe laceration above his eye and a major concussion.

The ensuing months would be one of the most difficult periods in the outfielder's life.

"I couldn't eat solids, I was sleeping 12-18 hours a day, I had non-stop headaches, light sensitivity, I couldn't watch TV or read, I had difficulty even putting sentences together," Isaac said.

"It was difficult because the physical injuries healed within a couple of weeks but it was the concussion that kept me out."

Inactivity was something that Isaac struggled with at first; a summer void of baseball seemed certain to

prolong his suffering.

However, with the support of family, friends, coaches, teammates, and the medical staff who treated him, the OUA all-star's recovery became a burden much easier to bear.

By mid-August, Isaac saw significant improvement in the recovery process and was cleared to commence light exercise.

By September, the Blues were on the verge of a new season and Isaac saw an opportunity to impact the team in a way he hadn't before.

"I went to tryouts and told the coaches I still wanted to be involved even though I couldn't play," Isaac said. "They were incredibly supportive and gave me a role as a sort of player/coach, it was a great opportunity for me to learn from them about coaching and to contribute to the team."

Blues pitcher Ryan Donnelly spoke about the difficulty the team had in replacing Isaac in the lineup. "It's really big to lose your lead-off hitter in the beginning of the season," Donnelly said. "Actually, we've been juggling around who to fill into that spot."

That sentiment was echoed by the assistant

coach Pierre Cote, who admits that the outfielder's absence had left holes in their game plan due to his versatility.

"We really had to rethink our offence and defence, in terms of, who would play this very important role of lead-off hitter," Cote said. "Also who would cover this huge hole in centre field?"

On Oct. 1, six months after the horrific accident that changed the course of his summer, Isaac made his comeback to competitive baseball and to a normal life. Despite the trials and hardships suffered, Isaac chose to extract the positives from his arduous journey.

"The whole recovery process has been an incredible lesson in patience and perseverance," Isaac said. "It has also allowed me to really appreciate how great and supportive the people around me really are."

As for the future, Isaac, who is studying to become a physical education and biology teacher, is also interested in doing research into the reasons for the ascendance of arm injuries for youth baseball players.

For the 22-year-old it's the chance to combine both his passions and it's something he's fully committed to.

"That really ties my passions for baseball and teaching together and I definitely see coaching as a part of my future."

Community chips in for new arena

Leaside close to another ice pad

By **ANDREW ROBICHAUD**
The Observer

Param Ratna has never played ice hockey, but he will do whatever he can to help toward a new arena for Leaside. And a new arena is desperately needed.

Leaside Memorial Community Gardens has been a staple in the neighbourhood for almost 60 years and home to over 2,500 participants in its three major user groups, Leaside Hockey Association, Toronto Leaside Girls Hockey Association and the Leaside Skating Club.

The community of Leaside is home to over 6,500 families and even more in the East York catchment area with access to the arena. Although it sounds like a good problem to have, Leaside Gardens has only one ice pad and can't support the traffic coming through the doors.

Ratna, a host at the Fox and the Fiddle on Laird Avenue, has committed to donate 10 per cent of the food and beverage revenue up to \$25,000 to the fundraising cause for a new arena.

The goal for the project is a steep \$9.5-million, but the city has agreed to lend \$7-million to be paid back with generated revenue. It does make Ratna's commitment seem small in comparison, but every dollar counts and he's more concerned about the children.

"The amount of kids that play hockey, they don't have a home arena in Leaside. They go to Flemingdon Park, or Victoria Village, or even the other side of the city," he said. "They may play one or two games in the [Leaside] arena and most of their home games are at other places."

Ratna said he might even raise his donation to \$30,000 because of all the support from the community at the restaurant.

"They [customers] come every day and I also see a lot of new faces that say the donations are great and wondering how they can help," he said. "We have a lot of stuff going on here, the [hockey] teams are helping, the customers are helping and the staff is involved too."

John Parker, city councillor of Ward 26 – Don Valley West, says Ratna is a prime example of members of the community making a difference that goes beyond a dollar amount.

"He represents the type of enthusiasm we're finding all over the place," he said. "That was a tremendous show of support. Not only to we welcome the money, but he also gave profile to the campaign and kept the project in the top of mind with the community."

According to Parker not everything has been perfect on his side of the operation at city hall, which is a big reason why maximum exposure of the project is vital to its success.

"It's not a big item with other councillors. So far the budget proposal has received support so in that sense we've got the support we need to proceed," he said

"I've mentioned the project to the three other councillors that represent the areas that are within catchment area and they have wished us well but have not become engaged in the project."

A lack of interest made it difficult to get the city to front the money, part of which was a \$1.2-million purchase of a vacant down the street from the old arena, but after many meetings the powers that be were convinced the plan would work.

"The city has met with the local building committee and has been satisfied there are enough committed users of the new rink that the revenues that will come in can be predicted with accuracy and they are sufficient to support borrowings of about \$7-million," he said.

Charlene Kalia, fundraising chair of the expansion committee, tremendous progress has been made by everyone involved with the project and the final product is closer than ever.

"At the end of the day, our fundraising committee was given a goal last November and we are, in less than a year, well towards making that goal," he said. "We live in an amazing community and we're very lucky to have the support we have."



Andrew Robichaud /// The Observer

Param Ratna holds different events at the Fox and the Fiddle to raise money for the arena.

E.Y.'s king of the kickflip

By RORY BARRS
The Observer

Nick Pierre is either idolized or disregarded by the denizens of East York Skatepark.

Many of the skaters he's mentored through camps or private lessons appreciate his avuncular presence at Toronto's Stan Wadlow Park.

Others, who he has derided for littering, alarming tomfoolery — such as igniting a fire on the grounds — or recently destroying a railing, will disregard him as the type of overbearing parental figure they are trying to avoid when they come to skate or bike.

Pierre chastises the culprits for the same reason he befriends community members of all ages, whether they're using the facility to harness their skills, or simply spending time with friends.

It's because he truly cares.

"One of the biggest achievements for me, is seeing the community at this skatepark become what it is [now]," Pierre said. "I'm super passionate about skateboarding, and everything I do, I jump in with both feet."

Without the 32-year-old patriarch, there would be no ramps, rails or bowls; the after-school hangout for countless youth wouldn't exist.

It began as a hobby, crafting homemade skateboard videos to distribute around the neighborhood.

Advancing into local



Rory Barrs // The Observer

Nick Pierre takes a break from performing tricks at the East York Skatepark at Stan Wadlow Park. The 32-year-old worked with the city of Toronto to help get the project off the ground in 2006.

schoolyards, Pierre organized improv contests, quickly realizing there was a skateboarding community in East York that simply lacked cohesion.

By 2002, an assemblage of skaters, video producers, musicians and artists had officially formed Team East York (EY), a group dedicated to promoting a positive skateboarding environment.

Quickly, the films became more professional, debuting

at launch events with several hundred people often in attendance.

And with the assistance of city councillors, Pierre was able to procure funding for a temporary skate facility at Greenwood Park.

But what Pierre was really seeking, was something more substantial and permanent.

Timing is everything, and luckily the city of Toronto had passed an initiative to expand the construction of

skateparks, so funding was readily available.

Assisted by Coun. Janet Davis, \$360,000 was secured for the project, and Pierre's vision became a reality.

"We had all the kids in the community come into a workshop and draw all their favourite stuff," said Pierre, who works as an employment counsellor for the province of Ontario.

"We didn't just build any old skatepark, we built

the park the community wanted."

The ribbon was cut on East York Skatepark in 2006, and it's where you will find 14-year-olds Carter Douglas and Colton Sheehan, nearly every day after school.

"I just love having a skatepark around here," Douglas said.

"It is our local park, where I landed my first tricks," Sheehan added. **See BLUEPRINT, page 9**

Soccer club goes beyond sport

By MIKE WOODROW
The Observer

Dragan Zagar looks over the soccer pitch at Dieppe Park, proudly admiring his creation and the impact it has had in the community and the game.

Over the past 35 years, the East York soccer club has been a fixture.

Originally an extension of the Parks and Recreation department in the city of Toronto, Zagar took over in 1977 when only "60 or 70 kids played." Today, approximately 2,000 players — ranging from age four to 18 — participate in the club's House League program.

"When we took over the club our goal was to develop soccer in this area," Zagar said. "And we succeeded."

The club also fields competitive teams for boys and girls between the ages of 10 to 18.

Perhaps more important is the work the club does with area schools in an attempt to promote the game.

"Any school that asks us to support them, whether it be fundraising [or] offering scholarships to players in East York...we try to work together," Zagar said.

"Working together with the community and the schools, it's for both of our benefits."

Working together with schools also means donating equipment and uniforms.

Men's U-16 coach Bert Lobo has been with the organization for 26 years and appreciates the goals of the club.

"Going to other clubs there's been a lot of turnover...a lot of people move around and go club-to-club which doesn't create that whole community aspect," Lobo said.

"I've had opportunities presented to me to join other clubs. East York is where I am and it's where I want to stay."

While the organization goes to lengths to grow the game in the community, it still tries to teach kids that it is indeed just a game and that there are more important things in life.

"Soccer is not the be all end all, winning isn't, it's what they end up in life," Lobo said. "Hopefully they'll still be playing when they're [older] still getting in there and running around getting exercise."

Aiming high at Toronto Climbing Academy

By RYAN FINES
The Observer

It was 15 years ago, while on a two-week rock-climbing trip in Mexico, that Sean Milligan found his calling.

"The day I got back, I gave notice at my office job," Milligan said. "I apologized and said, 'I'm sorry, I can't do this anymore,' and started down the

climbing road."

Aside from a five-year stint as a high school teacher, Milligan has been living his dream as a rock-climbing coach ever since.

Milligan is the head instructor and facility manager at the Toronto Climbing Academy, located at 11 Curity Ave.

The state-of-the-art facility offers a variety of drop-in and registered classes, including

climbing programs and camps for children ages 6-12.

Not only does rock climbing challenge children's bodies by requiring physical strength, balance and hand-eye co-ordination, but there is a need for intellectual muscle sometimes absent from other sports.

"It's not just lifting weights or running around," Milligan said. "If you don't use your head, you're not going to get

very far."

Team sports also require mental focus from a strategy standpoint, but Milligan insists young people stand to gain a lot from an individual hobby like rock climbing.

"It offers much more in terms of personal goal-setting, individual achievement, and tends to be far more mentally engaging than many other activities," he said.

"There is strategy to each ascent, and whether or not a young person is aware that they're [strategizing], that is the appeal of the sport."

Rock climbing is not only exercise for the body and mind, but it's also truly rewarding for adventurous youngsters.

"They're always having tons of fun," said Lesliye-Aikayla So, an instructor with TCA.

"Sometimes they're scared, but when they see other kids climbing the wall it provides motivation for them and helps to build up the courage to overcome their fears."

While most recreational

sports claim that having fun is more important than winning, the sentiment rings especially true for rock climbing.

In an individual activity there are no winners or losers, which helps to establish a friendly atmosphere within their programs.

"Kids gain confidence when they see that they are able to do things that, quite often, they thought that they couldn't accomplish," Milligan said.

"They say 'wow, I can really do this', and there is potential for life-long development in [recognizing] that."

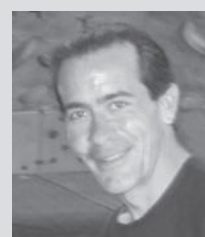
Experiencing physical, mental and personal growth are the hallmark qualities that make rock climbing courses at TCA a valuable alternative to traditional recreation like swimming lessons or hockey.

"No matter how often you [climb] there is always something new, something harder," Milligan said. "Kids just try things, and it doesn't always work, but when it does you learn something."



Ryan Fines // The Observer

Sean Milligan is the head instructor and has been involved in the sport for 15 years. Scaling walls is just a part of his everyday life.



■ Milligan

4-PAGE SPORTS SPECIAL

East York Collegiate continues to rebuild its tennis program since returning to league play three years ago **Page 9**



Local track hopeful ready for shot at Pan Am Games

By **CLAUDIA LAROUCHE**
The Observer

In less than a month, Miana Griffiths will be busy preparing to showcase her skills to the world.

The Oakville track and field athlete will be competing at the 2011 Pan American Games in Guadalajara, Mexico, with a Canadian delegation of over 470 athletes – more than the 2007 edition in Rio de Janeiro.

Specializing in the 50, 60, 100 and 200 meters, as well as the 4 x 100 and 4 x 400 relays, it will be Griffiths's first time participating at these Games.

"I was selected two weeks ago, and I was full of joy! It's always a pleasure to represent my country," said the 20-year-old in an interview with the Toronto Observer.

Griffiths, who is ranked in the top 20 in the world and considered Canada's best — had one of the best performances by a runner during the 2011 indoor season at the Athletics Ontario Youth Senior Championships held in Toronto, where she clocked a time of 7.25 seconds in the 60m event.

Despite injuries, Griffiths also placed third in the 100 at the Toronto International Track and Field Games last July.

The Pan American Games are a valuable and timely experience for Griffiths and her young teammates as they represent a huge stepping stone to qualify for the 2012 London Summer Olympics.

"It's a great experience to compete amongst the best in the world, and get used to the atmosphere of competing internationally," said Griffiths, who started track and field at age 10 in the backyard of St. James Catholic Elementary School in Oakville.

Athletics Canada has the same vision.

"With most of the team being young athletes, we expect that they will gain valuable experience by competing in a large Games atmosphere and hope they will thrive in that environment," Mathieu Gentès, Director, Corporate Services and Public Relations told the Observer.

"For them, it's all about observing, learning and taking things back, which will aid and further their development," he said.

Athletics Canada selected a total of 17 athletes to be on the Canadian track and field team that will be led

by Dylan Armstrong, silver medalist at the 2011 world championships in South Korea. Along with Griffiths, three other athletes from Toronto and 10 in Ontario are headed to Mexico.

Even with only three athletes out of 32 that made it to the finals at the recent IAAF world track and field championships, Griffiths doesn't think Canada is struggling in the sport.

"We have some great athletes now and upcoming that can truly put Canada on the map," said Griffiths, who is in her third year studying Psychology and Law at Ryerson University. "The more exposure and experience from these international competitions will be highly beneficial for us to dip our feet in the pool, and get a sense of reality."

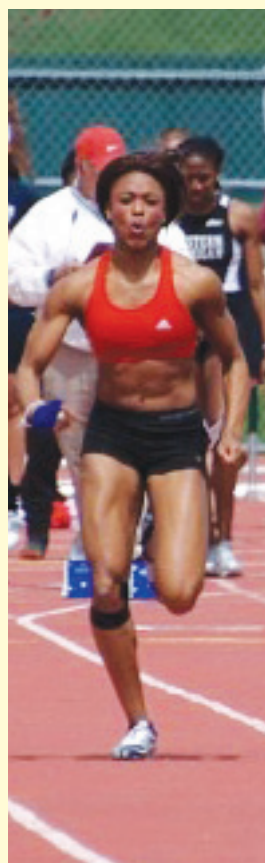
She doesn't only have the 2012 London Olympics in mind, Griffiths also wants to become a successful lawyer or psychologist, and design sportswear clothing for athletes.

"I want to be a role model out there that people can look up to. Nothing in this world is impossible," said Griffiths, who is on the International Association of Athletics Federation's top list in 60m for women's sprinters.

Chances are that she will be around for a while.

She even came up with her own saying.

"Life is like a basketball, you have to bounce back harder. What good are you contributing to your life if you stay deflated?"



Miana Griffiths



Adam Martin /// The Observer

Located at O'Connor Drive and Yardley Avenue, O'Connor Bowl has been a staple in the community of East York for 59 years. Heading deeper into the fall, the alley has already begun another busy season.

Staying out of the gutter

O'Connor Bowl continues to serve the East York community with five pin bowling

By **ADAM MARTIN**
The Observer

When one thinks of great Canadian inventions, there are a few that immediately spring to mind.

One is the telephone, largely credited to Alexander Graham Bell around 1876. Obviously it changed the way humans communicated with each other and to this very day remains an intrinsic part of every day life.

Another is insulin. First discovered as a treatment for diabetes by Dr. Frederick Grant Banting in the early 1920s, it changed the world of medicine forever and showed the world Canada was a pioneer in medical science.

There's even basketball, which was created by James Naismith in 1892. It has grown over the past century to become one of the most popular sports in the world.

But there's another sport that's distinctly Canadian, yet not nearly as well known.

Five-pin bowling was invented by Toronto's Tommy Ryan in 1909. He wanted to

create a game that was easier for his customers, who often complained that 10-pin bowling was too difficult.

More than 100 years later, the sport is alive and well at East York's O'Connor Bowl.

"It's a sport that somebody from age two or three can play, and we have some people that are 95 that play," said the club's manager, Mike Gorman. "It's a sport that anyone can play. It's not hard."

Originally owned by the late John Martin, who was the sport's figurehead in its heyday, O'Connor Bowl has been around since 1952, marking 2011 as its 59th season. It's one of the oldest five-pin alleys in the world and one of the most popular.

Gorman, who has worked at the club since 1987, says his alley is home to more than 1000 league bowlers who come from all walks of life. That number doesn't even count those who play purely for leisure.

And with the hot summer months gone, O'Connor Bowl's manager thinks that number will only increase.

"In primetime, which is

from Thanksgiving weekend until Victoria Day weekend, it's really busy," Gorman said.

One of the reasons for the club's increasing popularity is that it offers 'cosmic' or 'glow-in-the-dark' bowling, a relatively recent fad that O'Connor Bowl is taking advantage of.

"The glow bowl, on Friday and Saturday nights, is like a rock'n'roll bowl," Gorman said. "It creates interest for young adults, who come in to listen to the music and play in the black lights."

But even the environment during normal hours makes for a uniquely enjoyable experience.

"There's a difference in atmosphere [between five and 10 pin]," said Loretta Hotton, who has worked at O'Connor Bowl for six years and plays both. "I find I have a lot more time to get closer to the people I'm around."

Still, while the alley itself is doing just fine, the sport of five-pin bowling could surely use a boost, especially when its popularity is compared to 10-pin bowling.

"We had CBC and TSN helping us out," Gorman said. "They had pins' games, but pretty much there's no five-pin bowling on television anymore. We just don't have

the publicity anymore."

Hotton echoed that sentiment, saying, "In order for people to want to try a sport, they have to at least see it on television."

"We've had several commercials done here but they actually put in 10 pins because it's more popular in the States," Gorman said. "Canadian will recognize five pin, but if you want everyone to watch, they put up 10 pins."

In addition to lack of recognition, Hotton believes "a lot of people reflect negatively about it because it's not the norm."

But Gorman thinks people are making a mistake when they dismiss five pin as too easy, which is often the reason it's forgotten for its 10-pin cousin.

"It's easier to participate in 10 pin, but it's not easier to score," Gorman said. "Ten pin is an easier scoring sport because you have 10 pins and they're so close together, whereas five pin has a small ball and the pins are more spread apart."

"In the future I would like to see five-pin have more bowlers, especially kids," Hotton said. "More people would like it better if they start at an earlier age."