



■ POLITICS

Cabinet shuffle dealt to E.Y. MPPs

By KRISTIN ANNABLE and LLOYD QUANSAH
The Observer

All of East York's incumbents retained their seats when the electoral dust settled after the Oct. 6 provincial vote.

But that doesn't mean they retained their Queen's Park portfolios.

Cabinet minister Kathleen Wynne was shuffled again by Premier Dalton McGuinty last week, and on Wednesday, NDP leader Andrea Horwath gave MPPs Michael Prue and Peter Tabuns new responsibilities as well.

Wynne, who represents Don Valley West, was provincial education minister from 2006 until just last year, when McGuinty moved her to the transportation portfolio. Now she'll serve as minister of Aboriginal Affairs as well as minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. She says she's

undaunted by the prospect of cabinet multitasking.

"I think that that's the challenge and I'm excited to take it on," Wynne said.

"I think that I have a good working knowledge of municipalities around the province because I've dealt with all of them on transportation issues," she said. "When I was the minister of education... I spent a fair bit of time working with people in the aboriginal community... and so I look forward to broadening that relationship."

Even though she just received the ministries last week, she already has ideas for them. She has been on committees and advisory boards on economic development for aboriginal people and education. Her current goals in municipal affairs are to "consolidate and improve the working relationships with municipalities."

She said her strong listening and learning skills will benefit her new ministries.

"Both these portfolios have a lot to do with building relationships. It's very important to have that skill of listening

■ See EAST YORK, page 5



Octavian Lacatusu /// Observer

Jack... and Jills

ESL students at D.A. Morrison Middle School in East York were recently introduced to the art of carving pumpkins. Gulalay Noor (left) and Serene Guragain cheer after becoming the first ones in the class to finish creating their jack-o'-lanterns.

Parker defends community housing sale

Agency planning to sell 706 units, some of them in East York

By ALISSA RANDALL
The Observer

East York's councillors are split on the wisdom of selling more than 700 homes owned by Toronto Community Housing located in their wards and across the rest of the city.

The TCHC board voted on Oct. 21 to sell the dwellings, mostly single-family homes, with proceeds going to upgrade and repair the agency's other buildings. The

city still has to approve the idea, along with the province.

The properties are scattered throughout Toronto — and the East York area. That includes homes on Aldergrove, Barrington, Brown- ing, Oakcrest, Queensdale, West Lynn and Woodward avenues, as well as Ellerbeck Street, Milverton Boulevard and others.

According to John Parker, councillor for Ward 26/Don Valley West and a member of the TCHC board allied with Mayor Rob Ford, the sale is a good idea because Toronto Community Housing has many properties in the city that are in a poor state of repair.

He contended that the cost of bringing the single-family dwellings and the other units he wants

offered for sale "into a satisfactory state is double the cost of the repair required for our other units" — meaning that the money from selling the homes at market value would be invested in multi-unit buildings, which are cheaper to maintain. So these sales would help pay for a \$650-million repair backlog.

"We have thousands of apartment units, dwellings of various kinds, most of which are in an unsatisfactory state of repair — some of which are in a completely unacceptable state," Parker said.

TCHC interim CEO Len Koroneos has been quoted as saying that he hopes to raise \$336 million from the sales that would be put toward that \$650-million repair bill

the agency is facing.

Koroneos said that the houses will be sold in a slow and steady process, and Parker agreed.

For tenants living in the units, Parker said, "We are going to see to it that our residents' concerns are respected and their sensitivities are accommodated. We don't want to be disruptive towards our tenants, but at the same time we can't leave our overall housing stock in the state that it's in."

Most of the tenants living in the 706 units would be relocated to apartment buildings. At the Oct. 21 meeting approving the sale of the homes, tenants and housing activists argued against the idea, and the

■ See PROCESS, page 2

FIRE & CRIME

Man, 19, dies after shooting

Police are appealing to the public for more information about the fatal shooting of a teen at 90 Eastdale Ave. on Oct. 14.

The victim, Bradley Matheson, 19, was found in the sixth-floor stairwell of the apartment building near Main Street and Danforth Avenue shortly before 3:30 p.m., police report. They say Matheson was pronounced dead at the scene.

Anyone with information is asked to contact police at 416-808-7400 or anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 416-222-TIPS.

Two suspects sought in mugging

Two men are wanted in connection with the mugging of a 15-year-old boy in the area of Halsey Avenue and Dawes Road on Oct. 18.

The victim was in an apartment building at approximately 4 p.m., police say, when the muggers followed him into an elevator. Once inside, they demanded that the boy empty his pockets. Police report that the victim refused to comply and was punched in the face by one of the men. They took an iPod from the boy's pocket and fled the scene in an unknown direction.

The first suspect is described as black and of thin build. He has brown eyes and is 6'-to 6-2 tall. The second accused is black, muscular, 5-10 to 6-foot tall and weighing approximately 150 pounds.

Armed man robs pharmacy

A man is wanted in connection with a robbery at Hurst Pharmacy at 419 Donlands Ave. on Oct. 17.

At approximately 5:45 p.m., the robber entered the building wearing a disguise and approached the counter, police say. They report that he produced a handgun and demanded he be given narcotics. A 37-year-old woman and 49-year-old male, employees of Hurst Pharmacy, handed over the drugs as instructed.

The gunman fled the scene in an unknown direction. He is described as black, 5-10 to 5-11 and of medium build.

Victim punches gunman and runs

Police are looking for three teenaged boys in connection with the attempted robbery of a 16-year-old male at Eglinton Avenue East and Bayview Avenue on Oct. 14.

Police report that the muggers approached the victim at approximately 6:50 p.m. and demanded he give them his phone.

When the victim refused, police say, one of the trio produced a gun and threatened him. The victim punched the gunman in the face and fled the scene. The suspects left the area in an unknown direction. The victim was not injured.

The first suspect is described as 14 years old, 5-4 and approximately 110 pounds. The second is 14 years old, black and of thin build, police say. The final suspect is described as 14 years old and black. He is 5-2 and weighs about 79 pounds, police say.

Blaze causes \$100,000 in damages

Toronto Fire Services is investigating the cause of a fire in a manufacturing building for Crystal Clear Cosmetics at 20 Overlea Blvd. on Oct. 15. Damage is estimated to be between \$80,000 and \$100,000.

~ Sian Davies

COMMUNITY

It's time to disconnect, East York

Downspouts must be separated soon from sewer system

By KRISTIN ANNABLE
The Observer

On Nov. 20, some residents of East York may be finding themselves either on the telephone with a local contractor or rolling up their sleeves and preparing to do a little handiwork.

Toronto Water has reminded homeowners that by this date, all residents in high-priority areas of Toronto (which includes all of East York) must have their residential downspouts disconnected from the municipal sewer system.

Richard Noehammer, the director of business operations for Toronto Water, explained that a downspout is the pipe that carries rainwater from the roof of a house through the eavestrough and ultimately into city sewage drainage systems.

Most houses in Toronto have that final connection — but not for long.

Noehammer said that the reasons for the cutoff are to cut down on sewage system over-

flow during storms and better protect the environment.

"It is the easiest and best way to reduce the overflow," he said. "With these downspouts, rainwater and sewage water combine together. When there is overflow, this results in polluted water going directly into the rivers of the city."

By disconnecting these downspouts and attaching a "diverter," storm water will instead flow into the ground.

Plumber Fred Caprara agreed that this is beneficial for homes and the environment.

"They don't have to treat rainwater the same way that sewage water has to be treated," he said. "Therefore it is beneficial to have the storm water go right back into the ground where it will eventually make its back into a reservoir."

"By no longer having rain and sewage water going in the same place, it will prevent overflow," he added, "which can, in turn, prevent flooding of basements."

Caprara also said that this will prevent overworked sewage treatment plants from opening up the floodgates and letting raw sewage into rivers



Beth Ford /// Observer

City staff have been providing residents with information on how to properly disconnect their downspouts. This presentation took place at the Home Depot at Gerrard Square.

and lakes during big storms.

The disconnection can be done by hiring a contractor. Noehammer said those who are a little handy can do it themselves with a trip to a well-stocked hardware store and about \$50.

The Toronto Water website quotes the cost to homeowners as anywhere from \$100 to

\$1,000.

Low-income senior citizens and persons with disabilities will have a chance to apply for a \$500 credit toward the disconnection, Noehammer said.

■ For more information on how to disconnect your downspout, go to <http://www.toronto.ca>

Process 'unacceptable,' Davis says

Cont'd. from page 1
board's two tenant representatives voted against it.

Janet Davis, councillor for Ward 31/Beaches-East York, is also opposed.

"Toronto Community Housing should not be reducing the units in housing — but should be increasing them," she said.

Davis said there are "70,000 people for housing on the waiting list in the city of Toronto," including about 10,000 people needing housing with three bedrooms.

"We don't have enough large units to afford homes with more than one child," she said. "The process is unacceptable."

Davis said that when she phoned affected tenants in her ward, she found that most of them didn't know about the decision to sell their homes.

"I hope the TCHC will actually (consult) their tenants so they can speak to their concerns," Davis said.

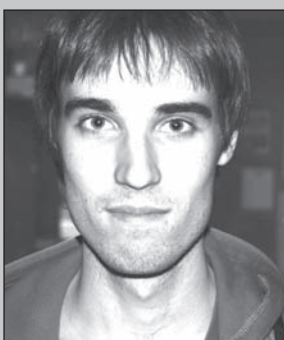
The plan will still require the approval of Toronto coun-

cil's executive committee and then the full council. Mayor Rob Ford backs the plan — having publicly expressed his wish to see Toronto Community Housing privatized.

Then the plan goes to the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing — now headed by Don Valley West MPP Kathleen Wynne.

YOUR SAY

Should TCHC sell off its houses?



Andrew CICHOCKI

'In our society, we need to take care of the less advantaged. If any of us were in that situation, we'd want someone to help us.'



Mary KEANE

'We have to protect the good safety nets we have here and not allow different government people to tear them down.'



Dory HOLMES

'I think it's horrible what they're doing. How would the politicians like it if we did that to them? They need to live.'



Phyllis PANDOVSKI

'Some of these people have lived here for 50 years. They should be allowed to stay until they retire.'

FIRE



Octavian Lacatusu // Observer

Phillip Kassias, one of the owners of Leaside Cleaners, stands in front of the Bayview Avenue dry cleaning business. A fire began in the shop, located at the corner of Bayview Avenue and Millwood Road, on Oct. 14 at about 3 a.m. The store beside it, The Flower Nook, was also badly damaged.

'I felt like my whole life is gone'

Owners of Leaside Cleaners distraught after fire guts shop

By ALISSA RANDALL
The Observer

Two businesses were damaged after a fire broke out on Bayview Avenue near Millwood Road on Oct. 14.

The blaze began at Leaside Cleaners, 1540 Bayview Ave., south of Eglinton Avenue, at about 3 a.m.

Both Leaside Cleaners

and the neighbouring Flower Nook were gutted.

The residents of the apartments above the properties were evacuated as a safety measure while firefighters battled the blaze, police said, but they added that there were no injuries.

Toronto Fire District Chief Stephan Powell said the fire started in the basement and it took about an hour for fire crews to bring it under control. The fire department has attributed the blaze to an electrical failure.

Powell said the estimated damage from the fire is about \$400,000.

Witness Sarah Byford said her boyfriend was smoking a cigarette outside of their house, located behind the burned building. She said that he saw black smoke and heard a bang.

"It looked like a rocket with black smoke," Byford said.

The owners of Leaside Cleaners, Mimi Kassias and her husband Phillip, said the fire and the destruction of their business have been traumatic.

"I'm shaking inside — the shock," she said.

Kassias said she has been working at her dry cleaning business for 22 years.

"I was crying and screaming and I thought, 'The world is over,'" she said. "When you see your business, your whole life... I felt like my whole life is gone."

Kassias said she immigrated from Greece "with nothing," and after building the business over more than two decades, "it's hard to see it burned down, you know?"

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Beat the flu with free shots

Free flu shots will be administered at the East York Civic Centre, 850 Coxwell Ave., on Nov. 12, Nov. 19, Dec. 3 and Dec. 10 from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Free shots are also available on Jan. 16 from 2 p.m. until 8 p.m. Call 1-877-844-1944 or go to www.toronto.ca/health for more information.

Open house at St. Patrick school

The Toronto Catholic District School Board will be hosting an open house event at St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School, 49 Felstead Ave., on Thursday, Nov. 3 at 7 p.m. For more information, call 416-393-5546.

Holly Berry coming to town

Get into the Christmas spirit at St. Luke's Anglican Church, 904 Coxwell Ave., during the Holly Berry Fair. It will take place on Saturday, Nov. 12, from 9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

There will be crafts, knitted goods, baking, books and much more. Call Lisa at 416-421-6878, ext. 21, or go to www.stluke.ca for more details.

Second career just a step away

Centennial College is hosting a "Second Career" open house at 6 p.m. on Nov. 10 to promote the provincial retraining program for people who have been laid off. Further information, including registration requirements, is available in the main office of the college's East York campus at 951 Carlaw Ave., or at www.centennialcollege.ca/calendar.

The event itself will be held at a sister campus, 941 Progress Ave. in Scarborough.

~ Octavian Lacatusu

War reporter shares tales of Afghanistan

By JESSE MIRSKY
The Observer

As Murray Brewster stood on the front steps of the mayor of Kandahar's compound earlier this year, he saw three men running across the courtyard.

"The first thing that crossed my mind... was suicide bombers," Brewster said.

The men were actually former Taliban fighters looking for food and shelter, but the episode highlighted the danger that Brewster, a war correspondent with the Canadian Press, faced in Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, the threat of violence Brewster had foreseen soon proved to be very real for the mayor, Ghulam Haider Hamidi.

"A few weeks later, Mr. Hamidi got killed in ex-

actly the same manner — by somebody hiding a bomb in their turban," he said.

Brewster has published his Afghanistan experience in a book called *The Savage War*. On Oct. 12, he promoted the book and discussed journalism with students at Centennial College's East York campus.

Speaking candidly, Brewster highlighted the importance of journalists' work.

"The public has a right to know and all of you have a duty to seek out that information," he said. "I never used to say this, but... you have a duty to seek out information by whatever means necessary."

He said that access to government information is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain.

"If you ask the Department of National Defence,

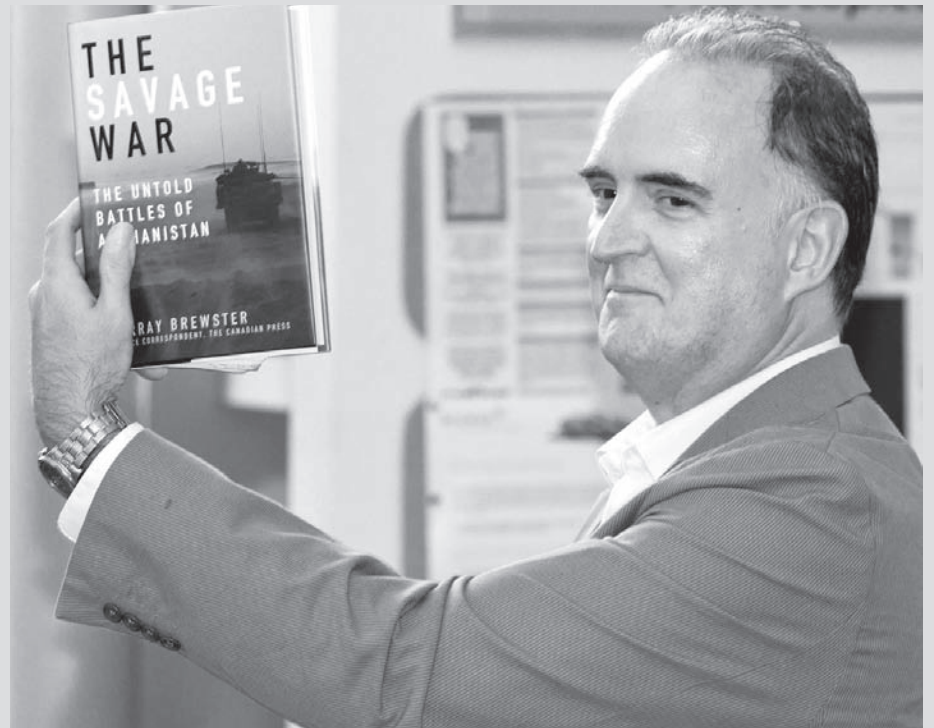
'What color is the sky?' it'll take three days for them to get back and say, 'Blue,'" Brewster said.

His work in Afghanistan was full of danger. Brewster credits extensive wartime training, provided by his employer, for his ability to mentally survive his seven tours of duty.

"The training that I've had, I can't say enough good about it," he said. "It helps you cope with some of the things that you've seen and some of the instances where you're thinking to yourself, 'What the heck am I doing here?'"

Speaking of the death of Mayor Hamidi, a man he considered a friend, Brewster's eyes were full of gloom.

"It's not as much trauma as it is sad," he said. "It's really sad."



Matthew Wocks // Observer

Murray Brewster displays his new book to journalism students. 'The Savage War' depicts his time in Afghanistan as a war correspondent and how he mentally survived the violence and tragedies he encountered.

EDITORIALS

E.Y. towers left out in the dark

With two shootings in two weeks, the East York area has been making the wrong kind of headlines.

The shootings took place in two of this area's most disadvantaged communities: one on Parma Court and another on Eastdale Avenue.

Both of these communities could greatly benefit from the City of Toronto's Tower Renewal program.

Former mayor David Miller launched the Tower Renewal program in 2008, with the goal of revitalizing the city's concrete apartment towers. This was to be achieved by making the towers more energy-efficient with the use of green technology, as well as by launching various community revitalization projects.



● For more about all things East York, check out www.torontoobserver.ca

While the program would involve a substantial investment upfront, tenants and building owners could save millions over the long term. Not to mention the improvement that it could mean to the quality of life for those living in the concrete towers.

The city selected four different regions in which to launch pilot projects under the program: Etobicoke/York, Scarborough, Toronto/East York and North York.

Unfortunately, the city's Toronto/East York pilot locations aren't actually located in East York proper. And the Tower Renewal program took another hit when Mayor Rob Ford took office last year.

In one published report, Ford's chief of staff, Nick Kouvalis, described it as a program 'that subsidizes toilets.'

Fortunately, for both the program and those living in the towers, the province has taken an interest in Tower Renewal and Ford will be increasingly hard-pressed to lump the project in with the 'gravy' he's so adamant about.

While the need in East York may not be as obvious as it is in other areas of the city, it is no less pressing. So what will it take for East York to become a higher priority at city hall? Let's hope it isn't another murder.

~ Alexandra Ward

COLUMNS

War of 1812 anniversary merits pride, not humility

Who told Canadians that it's wrong to be patriotic? Someone must have, because a certain important anniversary is being treated very differently on opposite sides of the 49th parallel.

Not long ago, I was in Washington, D.C. and I couldn't help but notice that some cars from neighbouring Maryland were sporting a new style of licence plate, with a War of 1812 motif. It's a colourful — and predictable — red, white and blue, with a depiction of the Star Spangled

Banner and bursting shells behind the licence number, and the words "War of 1812" just below the Maryland label. It turns out that this is the new standard design for Maryland plates, commemorating Fort Mchenry's defence of Baltimore.

Didn't Canada win that war? Why aren't we commemorating it? Where's our licence plate?

Well, a couple of years ago, something called the Niagara 1812 Bicentennial Legacy Council in Thorold, Ont., actually did offer a limited edition Ontario licence plate with a War of 1812 theme.

Have you seen one? Me neither.

With the 200th anniversary of the war upon us, Canadians all over should be preparing to celebrate such a proud anniversary. We should be making a big deal about this.

We need to step outside of that humble Canadian mindset that downplays patriotism... and we need to be as proud of this anniversary as we were when Sidney Crosby scored his "golden goal." (After all, if it wasn't for our victory in 1812, that goal may never have happened; we'd all obsess over baseball instead....)

It's a surprise to me that Canada hasn't done more to commemorate the war. We don't have to celebrate the bloodshed. Besides Brock University, a few

plaques and memorial sites, there just isn't much in the way of public awareness of this key event in Canadian history.

It may be a bit better in the Niagara region, which saw more actual fighting, but outside of that, the talk about the war is limited to a history lesson in grade school or a trip to Fort York. Even having one day of the year dedicated to remembering this pivotal event in our history would be nice. (It wouldn't even have to be a holiday.)

But instead, when drivers along the Gardiner were recently presented with a billboard for a major television documentary about the War of 1812, they couldn't help but notice that the presenter wasn't even Canadian; it was PBS and its Buffalo affiliate, WNED.

Remember how well Canada was able to promote the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver? The Royal Canadian Mint began issuing 25-cent coins promoting the games in 2006. Why has it taken so long for the government and the media to promote and recognize this huge occasion?

It would be tragic if this anniversary were to go unnoticed. So let's hope that within the next few months, we as Canadians begin tooting our horn more and more about this major anniversary.

Nick Pescod



Libraries take a hit

Local branches could face reduced services

While Margaret Atwood and many library-goers breathed a sigh of relief after Mayor Rob Ford's decision to keep all Toronto library branches open, the story doesn't end there.

The Toronto Public Library board will now have to vote on a new operating budget that proposes shorter hours and fewer resources for new materials.

The proposed 2012 operating budget suggests the S. Walter Stewart branch in East York, for example, will suffer a loss of 9.5 hours per week.

This change in library operation will inevitably discourage patrons from visiting libraries and could cause libraries to become outdated.

The proposed budget will shorten service hours on weekdays as well as weekends. This will result in many patrons, including students, feeling discouraged from going to libraries.

Currently, many students gather to work in libraries during weekends, on their days off from school. If the city reduces library hours on weekends, students will have to leave earlier and may, eventually, decide to study elsewhere.

Further, if the new budget establishes that libraries will receive less funding, the result will be fewer funds available to purchase new resources or replace damaged and lost materials. This will ultimately increase wait times on holds and will discourage patrons from seeking certain items.

At a time when technology changes very rapidly and new generations require sources in a variety of formats, libraries already struggle to find enough funding for new materials. In addition to books, patrons now expect libraries to provide them with audio books, e-books, DVDs and more.

Rather than receiving an increase in funding to keep up with the demand in new formats, libraries will have to face a reduction in hours and resources. This will cause many libraries to become outdated and, although no Toronto libraries are set to close at the moment, the new budget will inevitably lead to closures in the near future.

~ Aneta Tasheva

Occupy Toronto a confusing cause

In recent weeks, hundreds of Torontonians made their way to St. James Park to participate in Occupy Toronto, a movement inspired by Occupy Wall Street.

Protesters young and old held placards describing their feelings while chanting, "We are the 99 per cent." But after perusing Occupy Toronto's website in hopes of painting a clearer picture of the movement's ultimate goal, I was left slightly concerned about the point protesters are trying to make.

The sentence that led to my concern was, "We have not yet put out a unified message but be sure it will come." If they haven't provided a unified message, then what exactly are the "99 per cent" trying to prove?

As a student, I can identify and relate to the major problems with student debt, unemployment and financial crisis. However, I find myself wondering if the protesters' message is lost, or perhaps it is easy for the one per cent to ignore because of the way it's been presented.

Like this year's SlutWalk, which

saw women walking through the streets of Toronto declaring, "I am a slut," I find the idea and issues that propelled the movement worthy of attention. It's the execution that's left me feeling a bit unfulfilled.

Quite a few protestors have also taken to spending time in Toronto's financial district on weekends; a time when the alleged one per cent is at home most likely enjoying the benefits of their corporate jobs. If offices are empty and no one is really affected, I believe this movement is failing to become effective.

I'd like to offer the 99 per cent a bit of advice. Instead of donning Robin Hood masks and spending time staking out empty corporate offices, perhaps it would be more beneficial to take a different approach to the issues. If student debt is the problem, perhaps we should look to our government to reduce the cost of tuition. If a lack of employment is the problem, perhaps we should, again, look to elect a government that can create more jobs for citizens.

While hula hooping, drumming

and singing while marching to City Hall in a large group may be fun, when it becomes an integral part of "the movement" I'd say the movement has been lost.

Cheronne Thurab



Mayor still has a chance to change course: Prue

By MIKE BEAUVAIS
The Observer

Mayor Rob Ford's apparent unpopularity in East York is no surprise to Michael Prue.

The former mayor of East York and current MPP for Beaches-East York has a simple explanation for the 37-per-cent approval rating for Ford, as found across Toronto by Forum Research.

"He is obviously playing to his strengths and his strengths are in the 'burbs,'" Prue said. "If you look at where his strength is, it's North York, Etobicoke and Scarborough, and where his weakness is, is the whole downtown core because he's playing to another audience."

The poll's findings were released last Monday — before allegations of verbal abuse by Ford against city 911 dispatchers. The survey

ranked Ford second-last among mayors in Canada's 15 largest cities.

And among all of Toronto's pre-amalgamation municipalities, his rating is lowest of all in East York.

Prue believes East Yorkers who voted for the mayor now see that they are not getting what they thought they had elected.

"What they're seeing is that there are no savings to be made and, although he cut out the license fee and saved everybody \$60 who owns a car, there's nothing else," said Prue.

"There's no other gravy. When you're a politician and you say that there's gravy everywhere and then there is none and when you're a politician who says you're not going to cut any services and then start cutting them right away, I think people are smart enough to see that what you

were saying wasn't exactly correct."

With Ford only a quarter of the way through his four-year mandate, Prue doesn't think that all is lost for the mayor. He said the opportunity for Ford to change course exists. But Prue is skeptical.

"A week in politics is a long time and three years is forever. He can turn it around, although I doubt he will," said Prue. "He can't turn it around because it goes against his very being, his very fabric of what he said he was going to do. He was going to cut out the gravy and he was going to find deficiencies without affecting services and it cannot be done."

What might be the first step to right the ship for Ford? Prue suggests a simple mea culpa and some honesty to get the ball rolling.



Dennis Wu // Observer

A flair for the dramatic

The East Side Players opened their 44th season last night with Peter Shaffer's *Lettice and Lovage*. Actors include (l-r) Heather Goodall as Lettice Douffet, Emily Ames as Miss Framer and Malorie Mandolidis as Lotte Schoen.

■ Read the review at torontoobserver.ca

YOUR SAY

How was Ford's first year?



Gus KARATAGLIDIS

'With all the changes that he's trying to do, the sweeping of all the labourers to go conservative, it's been a difficult one.'



Kathy ABU-ELEDAM

'I just moved to the city, but from what I've heard from other citizens, it's all been negative feedback.'



Chris EMERSON

'I haven't followed him that closely, but every time I see him, he comes across as not the greatest leader.'

Cont'd. from page 1
and problem solving at the same time," Wynne said.

But she acknowledged that having two ministries does present a challenge because she will have to "divide her time" physically between the two offices. She said she will have her BlackBerry on all the time to "make those connections."

Meanwhile, provincial New Democratic Party Leader Andrea Horwath announced her new "shadow cabinet" on Wednesday, and both Michael Prue and Peter Tabuns got new assignments.

Prue, the MPP for Beaches-East York and already the NDP's finance critic, is now also the citizenship and immigration critic. He's been the finance critic for the past six years, and said he looks forward to his new, additional role.

These are responsibilities that he said his 20 years of experience working with the Ministry of Employment and Immigration has prepared him for.

"A lot of people don't realize the experience I have working with immigration," he said. "I worked the last 11 years as counsel to the minister of immigration, where I helped newly-landed immigrants, helped deport the bad guys and helped people settle into Canada."

Tabuns, the MPP for Toronto-Danforth — and former executive director of Greenpeace — was energy and environment critic. Now he's responsible for energy and education.

"Education is something that is critical for the people of Ontario, and now I get to work closely on policy," Tabuns said. "There are many young families in the riding of Toronto-

Danforth who value education," he said. "It means I have the opportunity to ensure that education is protected. This is going to be critically important with the introduction of all-day kindergarten."

Both Prue and Tabuns said their years of experience helped earn them their new, high-profile portfolios.

"We have been around for a long time. We know the ropes. It makes sense they would give these appointments to people who they know can balance the issues," Prue said.

Tabuns said he thinks the appointments reflect their experience at both levels of government — provincial and municipal.

"Our abilities that we showcased at these levels are being reflected with these appointments," he said.

New Canadians take a page from 'human books'

By CHERONNE THURAB
The Observer

Men, women and children celebrated Library Settlement Day on Oct. 22 in a unique way — reading one of seven "human books."

East York community leaders were invited to apply for a position as a human book in celebration of the library settlement program's fifth anniversary.

The job entailed spending half an hour with a "reader" discussing any number of topics.

The library settlement program was founded to help newcomers establish their

lives in Canada. The program has partnered with the Toronto Public Library and places settlement workers in branches to help new citizens make connections.

Jennifer Rajasekar, coordinator of the library settlement program, says the human books were all newcomers to Canada themselves at some point, and were gathered from all walks of life.

"This is a good opportunity for people to share their experiences and hear from people who have started a new life in Canada," she said.

The event at the Thorncliffe branch and other libraries provided newcomers with a



Cheronne Thurab // Observer

Raneem Alturk, 7, chats with "human book" Jihad Aliweiwi on Library Settlement Day.

chance to get to know their local branches as well as obtain information about the settlement program.

"It's a good opportunity for newcomers to get to know the service," she said. "They'll have somebody to guide them

from the beginning of their journey."

Rajasekar believes the settlement program works for a number of reasons, the primary one being its prime location and easy access to the services it offers.

"Our organization is in the heart of the community," she said. "We have a settlement program which helps (newcomers) with housing, immigration and employment and connecting people with schools."

Ayesha Firdouz, settlement worker at Thorncliffe Public Library, says readers were excited to connect with the human books.

"We have people from different backgrounds, so when they interview these human books, (readers) sometimes find connections," Firdouz said. "Each human book has something different. There's a variety of experiences and stories to tell."

Jihad Aliweiwi, executive director of the Thorncliffe neighbourhood office and one of the human books, finds the idea of a human book thrilling due to the authenticity of the storytelling experience.

"I think these programs are critically important," he said. "They are a window into a new world that you are becoming part of."

COMMUNITY



Aneta Tasheva /// Observer

Jessica Chang looks for an organic Halloween pumpkin with her son, Noah, at the Brick Works garden market. The former factory site has been immortalized in a documentary called *Brick by Brick: The Story of the Evergreen Brick Works*.

Building a story, brick by brick

Newly released documentary traces the history of the Evergreen Brick Works

By ANETA TASHEVA
The Observer

Catherine Annau remembers driving past the Don Valley Brick Works during her childhood when pollution overwhelmed the abandoned factory.

She sees a stark difference since Evergreen transformed the site into a market, sustainable education hub and park.

Annau, who grew up in Toronto, has spent the last two years directing the documentary *Brick by Brick: The Story*

of the Evergreen Brick Works. She wants to reveal the rich history of the site and show its transformation.

“One of the things that’s really unique about this site is how it represents so many different people in the city over its history,” Annau said.

The documentary illustrates how three brothers – William, George and John Taylor – opened the Brick Works in 1889. The factory became so successful that builders used its bricks to build Toronto landmarks such as Casa Loma

and Massey Hall.

After nearly a century of production, the factory closed in 1984.

In 2002, Evergreen began exploring ideas for building environmental projects on the site.

Annau believes the documentary has appeal for Torontonians because they will discover much about the history of their city. It will help people understand the workers who lived in Toronto during the time when the brick factory functioned, she said.

“For the workers, (the documentary) has the story of bringing a living and creating a new life (in Toronto) after the (First and Second World



■ Catherine Annau

Wars),” Annau said.

The documentary portrays personal stories of several men who worked at the Brick Works. They explain that, at the factory, Canadians

worked alongside European immigrants. Further, during the Second World War, German prisoners of war worked alongside other workers.

Geoff Cape, co-founder and executive director of Evergreen, said the documentary will show how the Evergreen Brick Works project transformed an abandoned factory into a popular green space.

“The Achilles heel of the project... is that it’s environmental and for some reason that gets dismissed as a frill or elitist concept,” Cape said. “I think we can get beyond that (type of thinking) once we start proving our success over the next couple of years.”

SEE

THE FILM

■ A *Brick by Brick* screening and fundraiser will be held on Nov. 3 from 7-10 p.m. at the BMO Atrium inside the Evergreen Brick Works, 550 Bayview Ave.

■ The cost is \$75 per person, \$40 of which is tax-deductible

■ Tickets can be purchased at <https://secure.evergreen.ca/page/contribute/brick-by-brick>

■ Proceeds will go to Bike Works, a community bicycle space



● For more East York stories, visit us online at torontoobserver.ca

Halloween hijinks



Braydon Keddie /// Observer

Kelly Calahan, with her kids (l-r) Shannon, Daniel and Kathleen, sit with their home's new resident, George the Gravedigger. Robert Geddes (bottom left) sits in front of his darkly decorated Logan Avenue home in anticipation of Monday night's Halloween festivities. Geddes and his two young sons will be partaking in some trick-or-treating fun.



Alexandra Ward /// Observer



Alexandra Ward /// Observer



Alexandra Ward /// Observer



Alexandra Ward // Observer

Artist and Centennial College teacher David McClyment displays his work at the college's East York campus. McClyment organized a show of faculty art, which is open to the public in the "Corridor Gallery," upstairs at 951 Carlaw Ave., until this Monday, Oct. 31.

Teacher transforms 'hallway to nowhere' into art gallery

Students, faculty needed a place to show their work

By ALEXANDRA WARD
The Observer

When David McClyment first arrived at Centennial College's East York campus, there was no gallery space for students to show their work.

"I remember talking to the dean and saying that... as a school that has a very large visual arts curriculum... how do the students show their

work?" said McClyment, who is co-ordinator of the college's fine arts studio program and an artist himself.

"Well, they don't. That just seems to be counter-intuitive to me. If you're going to be a visual artist, you need to engage your audience."

So what was once an empty hallway to nowhere is now gallery space.

McClyment said that students were initially reluctant to show their work because there had not been a culture of exhibition at the school.

"My main thrust for this

space is to provide a venue for the students to show their work because I think that's really important on an aesthetic level, but also in terms of professional practices," he said.

The Corridor Gallery, upstairs at 951 Carlaw Ave., is currently showing an exhibition of work by faculty members. It will be on display until this Monday, Oct. 31, and it's open to the public.

"In the visual arts program, virtually everyone who teaches here is a professional artist that maintains an active

professional career above and beyond teaching," McClyment said.

"I dare say that like most of us that are here we love teaching, but our first calling is the creative aspect and so all of us keep this stuff going."

While McClyment acknowledges that there are some inherent risks in showing your work to students, he also feels that it's necessary.

"I think to be anonymous is just as bad, possibly worse," he said. "Everyone here is proud of their work. This is who they are visually."

Radio host mixes music with design

By MELANIE SCHAWILL
The Observer

It's only a short walk from the graphic design classrooms to the radio station at Centennial College's East York campus, but it was still a bit of a leap for second-year graphics student Josh Skinner to get behind a microphone and start programming alternative music for the World Wide Web.

Skinner began his own radio show last year with the Centennial College Internet radio station — with a focus on GTA artists.

"I figured that there is so much talent here," he said. "There are so many talented people just in our backyard."

He was frustrated with mainstream stations and wanted to focus on songs that weren't played.

"I got sick of hearing the same six songs every hour, every day," he said. "So I started playing music from artists around the world that you never hear."

Skinner uses his website, along with Twitter, to help attract listeners.

"The site is a huge part of the show," he said. "Graphic design has helped a lot because it's help me get the design sensibility, so it looks great and it's functional."

Centennial College Internet radio co-ordinator Jules Elder says the facilities are available to anybody who attends any of the Centennial campuses.

"It's not only for journalism, radio and television or broadcasting students," he said. "Any students that are a member of the college could use it."

He added that it's great for students who want to expand their horizons.

"It gives students an opportunity to practise what they learn in their classroom," he said. "(And) also to pursue their own interest."

Skinner agrees it has opened doors for him. Without his radio show, he would never have learned web design.

"I think it's great they just allow any students to go in because if they didn't I wouldn't be doing half the stuff I'm doing now," he said. "I wouldn't have bothered with it."

"If you can find a way to bring your program into a different light, you can find a way to make your program work with another fathom of media," he said.

Skinner's show can be heard every Friday at 5 p.m. To listen, follow the instructions at www.centennialcollege.ca/thecentre/radio

Comedians put the accent on Toronto

'Little Show That Could' celebrates a decade of laughter

By MIKE BEAUVAIS
The Observer

An audience of more than 1,400 people at the Danforth Music Hall discovered on Oct. 19 that laughter is the same in any language.

Eight of Canada's most prominent standup comedians, such as Angelo Tsarouchas and Debra DiGiovanni, took the stage for the 10th annual "Accent on Toronto," a celebration of ethnic comedy.

Having seen her project grow

over the past decade, CBC Radio's Tracy Rideout expressed a pleasant surprise at the show's success.

"I didn't think I'd be doing it 10 years later, to tell you the truth," said Rideout, the producer of Radio One's *Laugh Out Loud with Craig Norris*. "This is 'The Little Show That Could.'"

For Frank Spadone, another of the evening's performers, "Accent on Toronto" represented a homecoming — and the touring veteran of close to 15 years jumped at the chance to appear on the bill.

"Toronto's one of those cities. There's so much diversity and so many cultures here that, even

when you're talking about your own, which usually people love to hear, the stories are so real and they can relate it to their own stories," explained Spadone, who was born and raised in Toronto.

"Coming to Toronto, doing a show here, especially with a show like this and other comics, who are bringing in (their communities)... Angelo (Tsarouchas) is on it, so the Greeks are here... Filipinos. It's great."

Having the decade-milestone

show held at the Danforth Music Hall was crucial for Rideout, and she conveyed her gratitude for procuring the building for the night.

"I wanted the show to be in the community. I didn't want it to be in a large, corporatized theatre," Rideout said.

"I wanted it to be in a community and a family-owned business.... It's been here since 1919," she added, referring to the music hall.

Nobody on the card was more excited for the show to be held in the East York area than area resident Gilson Lu-

bin. Lubin, who hosted *MTV Live* and appeared in his own Comedy Central *Premium Blend* special, said that performing in East York has been something he had been looking to do for some time.

"I went to two schools that I loved, East York Collegiate and Eastern Commerce, and I grew up around here," Lubin said. "You don't know how many times I've thought 'Man, I'd love to perform in my neighbourhood,' even if it was at East York Collegiate or at Eastern Commerce."

Even though this year's edition of "Accent on Toronto" only just finished, Rideout has some ideas for how she would like the show to enter its second decade.

"Now that the show has its own energy and its own drive and its own press and people come back year after year, I want to introduce (the audience) to some new people," she said.



● For more on this story and others, please visit us online at torontoobserver.ca





Rory Barrs /// Observer

The Danforth Karate Academy has an enrolment of about 100 students, which includes children and adults from age three all the way up to age 65.

Karate Academy helps give E.Y. some punch

By RORY BARRS
The Observer

Armand Portelli was hesitant to participate when his mother, Laarni, first brought him to observe a karate class as a three-year-old.

But after just a few weeks of watching from the sidelines, Armand found the courage, took the plunge and happily enrolled at Danforth Karate Academy.

Now seven, he is one of the most advanced students at his age at the Pape Avenue school.

"It's amazing what they learn," said Laarni. "It teaches them how to be patient and to listen."

Since taking up the martial art, Laarni has noticed a material difference in her son's ability to focus on his schoolwork and other extracurricular activities.

This comes as no surprise to Gordon Davis, the founder and head instructor at the academy.

"Although it's a physical activity, there's much more to it than that," said Davis, who holds a sixth-degree black belt. "It's learning how to focus, concentrate and set goals for yourself."

Davis first took up the sport at 10, immediately recognizing

it as his passion.

In his early 20s, the Toronto native began his formal training in Shotokan, a style of karate that would become the foundation of his school.

After 18 years on the Danforth, three years ago Davis relocated slightly north to Pape and Cosburn Avenue, looking to entrench his academy in a more family-oriented neighborhood.

His current enrollment of roughly 100 students includes children and adults, from ages three to 65.

At first glance, a karate lesson can often be intimidating, with instructors barking out orders. Though discipline and focus remain important components of the classes, you won't find teachers shouting or berating students at Danforth Karate.

"There's more than one way to get a point across," said Davis, 52, whose affable nature translates into his instruction methods. "We like to let kids be kids."

When Laarni Portelli was first shopping around for karate schools for her son, she was turned off a location closer to home by the way the children were treated. She

likes Danforth's welcoming environment, and that it isn't too "hard core."

Peter Jaukovic, 30, is one of the many amiable instructors that help differentiate the studio from its competition.

"Our overall goal is to share what we know," said Jaukovic, a 24-year veteran of the sport. "Some schools just treat you like another member, but we try to make it more like a family environment."

For \$110 a month, students can attend as many classes as they wish, up to a maximum of five scheduled lessons per age group.

Davis believes it is more vital than ever to market a karate school as a place where students can learn and enjoy themselves, all at a competitive price point.

Over the last decade, the market of after-school clubs and private dojos has grown to be oversaturated.

"It has become a little bit commercial, where people are just looking for an activity for their child," said Davis. "When I was training, you had to really want to be there. If you want to keep the kids, you have to make it fun and exciting for them."

Toronto Newsgirls breaking boxing boundaries

Trailblazer for women getting involved in male-dominated sport

By CLAUDIA LAROUCHE
The Observer

There are a few hallways to walk through in the unwelcoming basement of a massive building on Carlaw Avenue in East York, but following the smell of sweat is the best way to find Savoy Howe and her women.

Standing on the doorstep, the view is submerged by punching bags, ring, mattresses, mirrors, lockers, boxing gloves, and more importantly Howe and the women who are the soul of the Toronto Newsgirls Boxing Club.

It's more than 30 minutes before the class begins, and among those gathered are Shawn 'The Beast' Henry and Sonnja 'Fearless' Parris, who are already training while Howe, the owner, works at her office in the background.

"I love it," said the 30-year-old Parris. "I come here every day and I like the training aspect and that we

are all women sharing stuff."

Parris came to the Newsgirls Boxing club three years ago through the Shape Your Life program, whose goal is to express anger and aggression in a positive way.

"I'm a survivor of violence and it was a way for me to express anger and kicking out in a healthy way," said Parris, who has nine fights under the belt.

After the eight-week program, she received three months membership at the club for free and has never left.

Henry has been training for only eight months, and already had a fight last June.

"I'm having fun right now. It feels good and I like fighting. I want to become a professional," said the 28-year-old.

A 2010 National silver medalist, Howe founded the Newsgirls Boxing Club in 1996 within the walls of the Unitas Boxing Club where women shared the space with men.

Two years later, it became obvious to Howe that women needed their own space to feel comfortable and to be able to focus.

"We needed a place to feel safe and in confidence,"

she said. "Men are different, they spit on the floor and they looked at us in a way we didn't appreciate. They also didn't really want us there, so we moved to Sully's and stayed there until 1996."

Moving to Toronto from New Brunswick 23 years ago, Howe began boxing at the Toronto Newsboys Club to gain a better self confidence.

"I saw a photo of a woman with a boxing glove in a newspaper, and I thought that's what I want to do," she said.

"At that time, being gay was not the same thing that it is today, it was harder and I didn't want to be afraid, so boxing seemed a good way to get rid of that feeling," said Howe, who has had 15 amateur fights.

Times have changed since then. Howe is very excited by the bright future ahead in women's boxing with the sport having made its debut recently at the 2011 Pan American Games in Mexico as well as next summer at the 2012 London Olympics.

"This is very good and important for women to be able to fight and compete," she said. "It's also good for the younger girls to see women reaching the top in boxing.

They can say 'Me too, I want to do that'."



Claudia Larouche /// Observer

"I'm having fun right now. It feels good and I like fighting. I want to become a professional," 28-year-old Shawn 'the Beast' Henry, above, said.

Bosshart living the dreams as just a regular Jane

Former Olympian now coaching youth

By ADAM MARTIN
The Observer

Dominique Bosshart has tasted the highs and lows of life as a professional athlete.

A practitioner of taekwondo, the current resident of East York represented Canada at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, winning a bronze medal in the women's heavyweight division (+67 kg) at only 22 years of age.

That was undoubtedly the crowning achievement of her career.

But when she crashed and burned, losing both her matches at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Bosshart was forced to re-evaluate her fighting career.

"A lot of little things happened in my life that led to say, 'Maybe it's time to end it. Maybe it's time to quit,'" the 34-year old Bosshart said.

Just like that, she would be forced to say goodbye to active competition, one of her greatest joys, and say hello to living life as a normal person working a regular job.

When Bosshart was 13-years old, her brother, David, convinced her to come and try taekwondo with him. Bosshart fell in love with the martial art right away.

"We saw black belts who were going to nationals, competing for medals," Bosshart said. "I thought, 'Wow, that's so cool!' I was really impressed."

Bosshart instantly became a favourite of her coach, Victor Black, and also of Grandmaster Kang, who was visiting the Landmark branch of his taekwondo operation in 1991 when he first took notice of her. Right away he told coach Black, "Oh that girl, you have to push that girl."

Soon enough, Bosshart saw herself being shuttled back and forth between her little town of Landmark and the big city of Winnipeg.

"My parents started driving me to the city to practice," Bosshart said. "It was an hour outside the city, and it was a big commitment for my parents and even my coach to take time out of their lives to drive me down."

From 1993 until 2007, the future Olympian com-

peted for the Canadian national team.

Her confident attitude carried her into the Sydney Games. She beat Finland, but lost to Russia next. Since the Russian combatant made it to the finals, Bosshart was carried over to the consolation bracket to fight for third place. She defeated Croatia to claim the bronze for herself and her country.

"I was just really happy," Bosshart said. "It was an amazing experience. I was proud at the moment and afterwards to be able to do that. I didn't realize how much it can affect other people at the time."

Athens, however, was a different story.

"I think overall my mind state wasn't as good as it was in Sydney," Bosshart said. "My focus was off, I had a small injury, and a lot of little things were nagging me. It was disappointing."

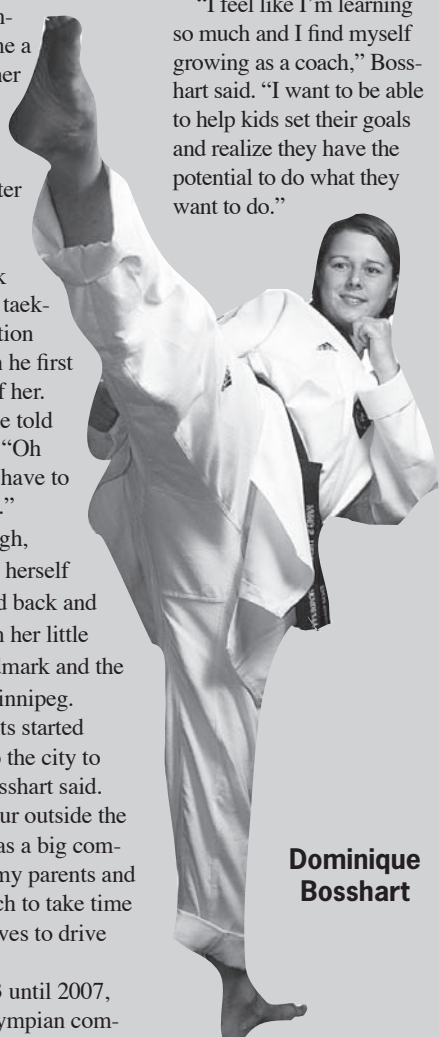
After deciding to take some time off, Bosshart focused on finishing her degree in sociology at the University of Toronto, while also working part-time at Home Depot to help pay the bills.

But she missed her passion.

Luckily for Bosshart, a friend bought a taekwondo school and invited her to teach once a week. Then, another acquaintance tore his Achilles' tendon, and pretty soon she was instructing at two different places.

She just may have found her true calling.

"I feel like I'm learning so much and I find myself growing as a coach," Bosshart said. "I want to be able to help kids set their goals and realize they have the potential to do what they want to do."



Dominique Bosshart



Ryan Fines /// Observer

Members at the East York Curling Club guide a rock toward rings, but Saturday's activities were put on hold while President's Choice used their house as the backdrop for an upcoming TV commercial.

Spotlight shines on E.Y. Curling Club

President's Choice brings lights, cameras, action and volunteers for commercial shoot

By RYAN FINES
The Observer

Carolyn Fleming's days at the East York Curling Club are generally quite busy.

Fleming has worked as the club and facility manager at the city-owned EYCC for 13 years, but last Saturday may have been her most eventful day on the job yet.

With President's Choice using the EYCC as the backdrop for its latest television commercial marketing appetizers and desserts, Fleming's cozy club was thrust into the spotlight.

"It was very, very busy but it went quite well," Fleming said. "They had their food and banners set up out on the ice and up here in the lounge as different staging areas during the shoot."

During a typical work day Fleming manages all business at EYCC, ranging from scheduling and staffing to maintenance and bartending. As busy as she is, Fleming handles all of this with lots of smiling and laughter.

Despite an active schedule that accommodates more

than 1200 curlers weekly the tidy six-sheet curling house, nestled at 901 Cosburn Ave., is a welcoming site.

Recreational curlers socialize between games while the stained wooden beams on the ceiling, red and green table settings and a gas fireplace radiate an air of Canadian hospitality.

Invaded by lights, cameras, and action, ordinary activities at EYCC were shut down Oct. 22 to meet the bustling needs of the commercial shoot.

Nearly 200 volunteers posed as subjects in filming which used the curling club, converted into a winter setting, to sample PC's newest products.

"The place was packed, said Fleming. "And the attention to detail was incredible with tablecloths, centrepieces and other decorations creating a Christmas theme in here."

PC chairman Galen Weston wandered the club offering samples of his company's products to the people during the filming, and even tried his hand at curling.

"[Weston] threw a few rocks, and did pretty good actually," said Gerry Barker, a member of EYCC's senior men's curlers. "Then they put a tray of cookies on a rock and pushed it along the ice and swept it into the rings, fun stuff like that."

When selecting a broad demographic to test out products, a curling club provides a wonderful variation of opinion since the sport is embraced by Canadian men and women both young and old.

"It's a winter activity for a Christmas-themed commercial," said Mike Vince, another curler at EYCC who was part of the shoot. "And it works better than hockey because curling offers more of a social setting."

"There's no prize for winning, it's just a good place and a good group of people to play with. You get to kid around and play with different guys every week, so you get a chance to meet everybody."

Officially opened in 1965, Saturday's commercial shoot was the first event of its type to be carried out at East

York's local curling house and due to the hustle and bustle needed to film, it may be the last.

"There are a lot of demands that need to be met, so I probably couldn't do that again," said the club manager.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

East York Curling Club schedule:

■ **Monday:** Daytime women, 1 p.m.

■ **Tuesday:** Mixed first draw, 6:45 p.m.

■ **Wednesday:** Men's first draw, 6:45 p.m.

■ **Thursday:** Men's first draw, 6:45 p.m.

■ **Friday:** Mixed first draw, 7:15 p.m.

Saints OK as underdogs

By **ANDREW ROBICHAUD**
The Observer

Head coach Kevin Jeffers flashed a smile and a fist pump at the Eastern Commerce Saints practice on Monday as his players executed the system that has made the team so successful over the past 10 years.

The senior boys' basketball squad has seen better days of late. After four straight Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) titles from 2002-2005, the last two trips to the provincial tournament have ended in the quarter-finals – last year to the eventual champions from Vaughan.

Eastern Commerce's trouble began as senior players fell into ineligibility issues leaving the team shorthanded for a major part of the 2010 season and into OFSAA.

Guard Ammanuel Diressa has been with the team for four years and says the dark time weighed heavily on the remaining players and the relationships with the ineligible players he felt had let the group down.

"We were upset with the guys because we were relying on them and we look at this team as a family," he said. "But we were happy the juniors were coming up to help us."

And that's the path the Saints have taken heading into this season. Only four players remain from last year's squad, including Diressa, while the rest of the roster has been filled out by junior promotions and transfer students.



Andrew Robichaud // Observer

Saints head coach Kevin Jeffers, middle, runs a tough system. However, through heavy breaths and sweat dripping off his players foreheads, he sometimes finds the time to make a joke and share a laugh.

Jeffers says finalizing the roster for the season was harder than most years – partly because he had 60 players at tryouts and has opted for an A and B team – but there is a certain type of human being that can play for Eastern Commerce, and that criteria is written in stone.

"Hard workers who give us their all, show up, get it done in the classroom and they're leaders," he said. "They're not

afraid of hard work, they want extra time, they want extra minutes and they understand what it means to be successful and put a banner on the wall."

Down to a roster of 11 players, Jeffers feels he has found that group of guys who can continue to leave the Eastern Commerce mark in gyms across the city and the province, but the rest of the teams they'll face may not be as scared as in past years, just cautious.

"I'm glad I don't have that bull's eye on my back. I'm glad that it's on someone else's. We just want to be happy and play basketball," he said. "The dumb thing, everyone says, 'Oh, Eastern is here,' and they still say it. You have that tiger lurking in the bushes and coaches know what we can do, we just have to live up to it now."

Two premature exits from OFSAA have the Saints wearing the underdog tag

around its neck, but second year point guard James Sylvester says the team believes in its potential more than anyone else, and that's all that matters.

"We think we can be really good if we all just stick to the principle and trust each other, bring help and communicate. We can be a great team," he said. "This season I just hope we come together and try to win OFSAA, that's what I want."

Sylvester gets the point this year

By **ANDREW ROBICHAUD**
The Observer

James Sylvester was a backup point guard for an entire season, played a little bit of a shooting guard role, and mostly just kept his mouth shut on the bench of the Eastern Commerce Saints senior boys' basketball team.

Frustrated? Yes. Demoralized? No. Impatient? Yes. Giving up? Not a chance.

The 17-year-old is now in his second year with the team and is gearing up to begin the season as the starting point guard, quite the change from his role in his rookie season.

It all sort of came to

fruition over the summer. Sylvester was invited to play for a team run by Saints head coach Kevin Jeffers, however Jeffers opted to have the young guard play on a junior level team, despite possessing the skills to play for the older group.

"It was the summer that he played with us... I didn't take him to the senior team

because I wanted him to be a point guard," Jeffers said. "If he would have played with the seniors he would have been behind three other point guards and he wouldn't have got the reps."

Sylvester had the opportunity to play big minutes and be the anchor of an offence, both valuable tools for experience and a way to constantly develop the primary skills of a point guard.

"I think it was a good decision he made for me to play at a younger level because I had to work on my guard skills and I think that it improved much better than before," Sylvester said. "I was in the gym working out early in the morning, so I think my dribbling and shooting went up."

It also allowed Sylvester to mature as a leader on the court. A maturity that has taught him how to fight through the bumps and bruises that come with the sport.

"My decision making got better, too, because when I made a bad decision it gets

at me and stays in my head," he said. "Mentally, I'm thinking the play is over and I have to make a better play because you can't go back in time to change it, you have to look forward."

According to Jeffers, his growth has not gone unnoticed and the plan for Sylvester will benefit the young guard but also the team as a whole.

"You can see his development. He's making plays, making reads and we don't want him to just be a pure passer, he is too talented for that," Jeffers said. "We want him to be a creator; create for himself and create for others."

Jeffers feels he has found his anchor as the season approaches, but also that the sky is the limit for the up-and-coming star.

"This year, you see he is now our point guard. He's going to start as our point guard, get a lot of playing time, and he'll finish as our point guard," he said. "After another year, he'll be amazing to see and amazing to have."



Andrew Robichaud // Observer

James Sylvester, left, trained through the summer playing for a team run by Saints head coach Kevin Jeffers, right, in order to improve as a point guard.

OFSAA past champions 2002-2011

AAAA 2011

Gold: Vaughan
Silver: Loyola (Oakville)
Bronze: Father Henry Carr
4th: J. Clarke Richardson (Ajax)

AAAA 2010

Gold: Oakwood
Silver: St. Thomas More (Hamilton)
Bronze: Mother Teresa
4th: Vaughan

AAAA 2009

Gold: Eastern Commerce
Silver: Mother Teresa
Bronze: Pickering
4th: Notre Dame (Welland)

AAAA 2008

Gold: Pickering
Silver: Eastern Commerce
Bronze: Beal (London)
4th: Mother Teresa

AAAA 2007

Gold: Pickering
Silver: Eastern Commerce
Bronze: Father Henry Carr
4th: Sir John A Macdonald (Waterloo)

AAAA 2006

Gold: Mother Teresa
Silver: West Hill
Bronze: Pickering
4th: Father Henry Carr

AAAA 2005

Gold: Eastern Commerce
Silver: Mother Teresa
Bronze: West Hill
4th: Cathedral (Hamilton)

AAAA 2004

Gold: Eastern Commerce
Silver: Cathedral (Hamilton)
Bronze: Frontenac (Kingston)
4th: Mother Teresa

AAAA 2003

Gold: Eastern Commerce
Silver: Father Henry Carr
Bronze: Cathedral (Hamilton)
4th: AN Myer (Niagara Falls)

AAAA 2002

Gold: Eastern Commerce
Silver: Oakwood
Bronze: Nelson
4th: John McGregor (Chatham)

The East York

OBSERVER

CENTENNIAL COLLEGE

4-PAGE SPORTS SPECIAL

■ Dominique Bosshart went from the Olympics to coaching youth, and could not be happier

Page 10



Vol. 40, No. 9

Friday, October 28, 2011

www.torontoobserver.ca

Serving our community since 1972



Jonathan Brazeau /// Observer

Leaside Lancers quarterback Dan Giacomello scrambles to avoid the rush against the Central Tech Blues at Central Technical School on Oct. 21. Central Tech won the game 12-0.

Perfecting the pocket

Lancers' Giacomello taking advantage of chance to lead Leaside under centre

By JONATHAN BRAZEAU
The Observer

Dan Giacomello was given the chance to lead the Leaside Lancers and he's running away with the opportunity.

The 17-year-old quarterback guided Leaside to a 3-2 record in the TDSSAA regular season and the senior boys team is on their way to the Tier 1 South Region semi-finals to face the Northern Red Knights at Birchmount Stadium on Friday.

Giacomello believes he's improved a lot since taking over the starting role at the beginning of the season.

"I feel like this is a really great big breakout season for me," Giacomello said.

"The coach is giving me more chances and I couldn't be more thankful to him."

The Lancers had a lot to prove entering the 2011 season. Leaside came within two points of winning the city championship last year, losing 16-14 to the Richview Saints.

Starting quarterback Michael Gallagher graduated after the school year, handing over the pivotal position to his backup.

"That was a great motivation seeing him as the cover boy and taking the team into the

city final," Giacomello said.

"Most of our team looked up to them and we want to be as good or better than them."

"We're trying very hard to fill what was placed on us last year. There was a lot of pressure and with a 3-2 season, I think our team handled it very well."

Giacomello picked up as much experience as he could before taking over the role. He previously played with the Toronto Junior Argonauts of the Canadian Junior Football League and with the Metro Toronto Wildcats of the Ontario Varsity Football League.

The experience with the Wildcats over the summer helped Giacomello as he was able to bounce back from being benched during the playoffs.

"It definitely gave me a different perspective that I have to keep fighting for first position, it's never secured," Giacomello said.

"This team needs me a lot this season, so I'm just going to be here and step up for them."

Csaba Vegh, who coaches

with the Lancers and the Wildcats, has seen Giacomello grow and mature as a quarterback over the years.

"He's very smart in the way he approaches the game," Vegh said. "He makes great reads, especially as a high school quarterback."

"He's definitely a leader on the team. The quarterback sometimes has to be your best player and he's right up there."

Lancers head coach Jim Georgiadis added that Giacomello's confidence level has taken a huge step forward this season.

"He's getting to the point now where he's able to sit back and be able to read defences and pick out open receivers," Georgiadis said. "There's really a confidence about his game right now."

"He's shown a lot of leadership out there and he runs the offence really well. We're really pleased with his progress and his performance each and every week."

Giacomello said he wasn't always that confident and football has changed him as a person.

"When I was younger I wasn't the most socially active guy so [football has helped]

little things like communication skills and leadership," Giacomello said.

"I'm more out-spoken now. I like getting involved in things and it's helped me try out new things like clubs and teams."

That confidence is rubbing off on his team too.

"He's got such a personality that guys just feel very confident around him," Georgiadis said.

"When a situation is stressful or it's a dire part of the game, he's someone who can keep it very calm in the huddle and the players around him believe in him, he believes in himself and it's starting to show."

Leaside now faces a Northern team that got the better of them on Sept. 30 with the Red Knights winning 38-7, however, Giacomello is up for the challenge.

"They definitely beat us down last game," Giacomello said. "We're looking forward to keeping it a close game and hopefully pulling out with the win."

Giacomello is still undecided about which university or college he'll attend next year but hopes football will be part of his schedule.

"I'm not entirely sure if I'm able to keep up with the academics and football but I'm always open to the option," Giacomello said. "I love football and would love to play it for as long as I could."

Leaside linebacker Ryan returns despite unlikely odds

By PATRICK KEIRNAN
The Observer

Sean Ryan has returned for yet another football season at Leaside, but his journey back to the gridiron wasn't easy.

Last season brought success for the Lancers' star linebacker as he led his team to the City Finals, the best finish in school history, but Ryan's run was cut short when he was injured in the semi-final game against Agincourt Collegiate.

"It was a standard outside run play," Ryan said. "I was chasing the quarterback and a receiver coming back the other way caught me with a blindside hit. It was a legal hit; it was just unfortunate the way it went down."

"It was scary for me...I blacked out on the field and suffered a major concussion."

The severity of head trauma suffered forced Ryan to watch his team compete in the City Finals from the sidelines; a game Leaside would later lose 16-14.

Still, the now 12th Grader remained humble and proud of his team's accomplishments, despite ultimately coming up short.

"Just to be able to make it that far with such a small school compared to the guys we were going up against was really big for the team," Ryan said.

While it was a big and scary blow to Ryan and the rest of the Lancers, he was fortunate to have time on his side and was able to recover gradually over the summer, preparing him for a strong and healthy comeback.

With the injury now

behind him, Leaside's captain just wanted to forget about what happened last year and focus on the 2011 season, where they currently sit in third place in the South Tier 1 Senior division with a record of 3-2.

"First game I was a little nervous going in, I just hadn't had contact in a while," Ryan said. "To get that out of the way with no problems or complications was just a weight off my shoulders."

For the rest of Ryan's team and coaching staff, seeing him back on the field and playing without side affects or hindrances is all they could ask for.

"He didn't look hesitant at all," said head coach Jim Georgiadis following Ryan's first game back. "He's playing the game at full speed, which is a good sign to see."

Ryan plays a huge role on the Lancers' squad and his senior status has brought more responsibility.

"He's a team captain, I expect him to be the leader," said defensive coordinator Csaba Vegh. "I expect him to be the person to take control of situations and make plays on the football field."

Lancers' football hasn't always had success on the field, but with a bitter taste still lingering in their mouths, Leaside is looking to make it back to the post-season and as deep into them as possible.

"Of course our goal is to make the playoffs, first and foremost are the playoffs," said Georgiadis. "If we get to that second season and get in that tournament we're going to do the best we can to go as far as we can."



Jonathan Brazeau /// Observer

Sean Ryan, right, has fought through a lot of adversity to return to the game he loves.



● For more sports coverage from the Observer, go to torontoobserver.ca