



Denice Raagas /// The Observer

Members of the Thorncliffe and Flemingdon communities marched in support of multiculturalism on Nov. 16. The parade came in the wake of the assault of a Muslim woman in a case police are classifying as a hate crime.

East York stands together

Thorncliffe Park marches for multiculturalism

By DENICE RAAGAS
The Observer

Shara Fathima marched partly in solidarity, partly in fear.

"It is scary to think that this could have been me," she said.

Fathima lives in Flemingdon Park, near where a woman was attacked while meeting her children at Grenoble Public School on Nov. 16. The victim

is Muslim and she was wearing a hijab.

So does Shara Fathima. "I could have been attacked, based on the way I wear my scarf," she said.

Fathima, also a Muslim, wore her hijab as she marched in solidarity against such attacks with other members of the Thorncliffe neighbourhood on Friday, Nov. 20.

Community chairs, MPs, the police and average citizens held banners protesting Islamophobia.

Bill Pashby, board chair of the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office, said the incident has

discouraged his community.

The agency decided to organize the parade, together with the police, in support of multiculturalism.

"I am hopeful that this event would lead to a positive thing," Pashby said. "People need to realize how important it is to be good to those who look and act a little different."

Arif Virani, MP for Parkdale-High Park, said the parade demonstrated that the country will not tolerate such attacks.

"We are trying to share a message that we are an inclusive society," Virani said. "We

are a society that looks after one another."

Several Toronto Police Service officers were also present at the event.

According to Staff Sgt. Matt Moyer, 53 Division, tangible steps are being made to help those in the community feel they are being supported and protected by police.

He indicated that the TPS Community Crisis Response Team is involved in preventing hate crime.

"Divisions are taking an active role in making sure that we co-operate," he said. "We want to communicate that we

don't see borders; we see communities."

The brother of the woman who was attacked at Flemingdon Park attended the peaceful protest, but he did not speak to media.

Hate crime has not gone away in Toronto, however. On Nov. 19, two women wearing the hijab were harassed on the Toronto subway.

Shara Fathima strongly endorsed the march.

"We are all victims in this together as humans," she said, "so we should be standing together and supporting each other."

Offering a warm welcome to cold riders

By SIDRA SHEIKH
The Observer

As the saying goes, there's a silver lining in every cloud — and that silver lining could prove profitable for some local businesses.

At the end of October, Coxwell Station closed its bus loop to accommodate improvements to make the station more accessible. It's expected to remain closed until October 2016.

During the closure, buses will be picking up and dropping off passengers at Coxwell Avenue. For commuters, having to wait in the cold at the temporary bus terminal is not an attractive prospect.

"It's one of those things where you have to kind of convince yourself that it's OK, but really it's not," said Hanna De Leon, a regular commuter in the area. "Having to wait outside, especially now that winter is coming, makes it even more aggravating."

However, for the owners of nearby stores, having people waiting out in the cold may be a good thing. In fact, said Billy Dertilis, owner of Red Rocket Coffee, it may have a "fantastic effect."

"I think whomever has a storefront where there's all of a sudden going to be a whole lot of people waiting for their bus is very lucky, especially before the holidays," said Dertilis, who is also chair of the Danforth Mosaic BIA, or The Danny, which represents over

Taking care of refugees here at home

By BRIA JOHN
The Observer

A group of East Yorkers decided to go from helpless to helpful earlier this year. They've banded together to sponsor a refugee family from Syria.

About 30 members of the People of the East End Refugee Support Group (PEERS Group) met for the first time last week at the Fox and the Fiddle on Danforth Avenue to delegate tasks.

After seeing the photos of Alan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea last summer, and noting the Facebook chatter around it, Nina Okens started the group with her friend Sarah Rotering.

"Many of us are self-employed, so that helps, but we know that we can't do it alone; that's why we're meeting tonight," Okens said.

The group has eight core members that manage the day-to-day necessities and about 230 members on the Facebook group.

"Many hands make light work. This is more than what I've done so far, which is zero," Okens' brother Patrick said.

As people floated around putting their names on lists for drivers or items needed to make a home, there was a sense of relief.

"I was so overwhelmed by the news and futility that I felt useless as a person and there was nothing I could do about it. Now I can absorb the news because at the very least I can



Bria John /// The Observer

Members of the PEERS Group met for the first time last week to discuss their sponsorship of a refugee family from Syria.

help one family," said core member Marjorie Chan.

"We got started because it felt like the government wasn't responding the way Canadians

wanted," added Mike Wallace, Rotering's husband and another core member.

So far, PEERS Group has raised \$35,000. It is now 15th

in line on the list of 350 private sponsor groups, which means its family would

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■ See BABY, page 5

POLICE & FIRE

Missing man last seen on the Danforth

Police are seeking the public's help in locating a 29-year-old man who was reported missing on Wednesday. He was last seen the day before around 5 a.m. in the area of Danforth and Logan avenues. Justin Meiliunas is described as 5 foot 7, 120 pounds with short, thinning brown hair, a brown beard and green eyes. Anyone with information about his whereabouts is urged to contact police at 416-808-5400 or Crime Stoppers at 416-222-TIPS.

Man in hospital after stabbing in East York

Police say that on Tuesday at about 3 a.m., a man was stabbed in the O'Connor Road-Parkview Hills area of East York. The man's identity and condition are unknown, but police say he was conscious when he was taken to hospital. There is currently no information on possible suspects.

Missing girl back home with her family

On Nov. 20, a missing person's report was filed for a 16-year-old female, who had last been seen on Nov. 19 in the area of Danforth and Carlaw avenues. She was found on Nov. 21 and is now safe with family, police say.

~ Dannika Russell



Kimberly Naipaul // The Observer

Former Leafs teammates (L-R) George Armstrong, Mike Walton, Bobby Baun and Eddie Shack reunite at Armstrong's induction into the Leaside Sports Hall of Fame.

Leaside honours 'The Chief'

George Armstrong inducted into sports hall of fame for his contributions to hockey

By **NASRA OSMAN**
The Observer

In 1960, NHL player George Armstrong decided to move his family to Leaside, so that his children could all attend the same school. Meanwhile, each day he served as captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs on the ice and off.

Nearly five decades later, Armstrong has earned recognition in his adopted home – in the community's sports hall of fame.

"I chose Leaside to live in and I've never been disappointed with that choice," Armstrong said. "And now the cream that comes to the top of the milk is me being inducted into the Leaside Sports Hall of Fame."

Armstrong was inducted into Leaside's Sports Hall of Fame on Nov. 20 for his contributions to the game of hockey throughout an illustrious career. He received a commemorative plaque for his accomplishments in front of family and friends.

The 55-year resident of Leaside posed for pictures, signed autographs and engaged in light-hearted banter about "the good old days" with former Leafs teammates Eddie Shack and Bobby Baun, whom he thanked for their support over the years.

"I'm especially thankful to have my old teammates come out here for me," Armstrong said. "They've added a great deal to this special occasion."

"The Chief," as he was he was affectionately known, was named captain of the Leafs in 1957.

He led Toronto to four Stanley Cup victories during his career.

Brian McFarlane, former Hockey Night In Canada host, spoke at Friday night's ceremony, and paid tribute to Armstrong with a poem full of admiration for the former hockey hero.

"George doesn't deserve this honour just for all the goals he scored, but also for his consistency," McFarlane said. "I remember him giving full effort in every game he played."

Armstrong was once recognized by former Leafs owner Conn Smythe as "the best captain, as a captain, the Leafs ever had." For McFarlane, it was also the case that Armstrong's leadership qualities during his playing days were second to none.

"Leadership is inborn in some players; if you get 20 guys in a dressing room invariably one of them will step forward and take a leadership role without anyone pushing them to do it," McFarlane said. "That's the kind of guy George was."

■ CYCLING

Are you up on signalling etiquette?

By **STEPHANIE BACKUS**
The Observer

Winter may be on its way, but until it really settles in, Meredith Johnson often still cycles with a friend down Midland Avenue. At a certain intersection, they both stop to make a right turn, and in unison they lift their left arms out and up to signal before they make the turn.

"I first learned about signalling from a childhood friend's parents who used to bring me along on their family bike rides," she said.

Johnson, 26, is a Torontonian who cycles everywhere. She commutes via bike year round, so she's quite used to signalling.

However, not all motorists and cyclists are familiar with signalling etiquette, especially on busy thoroughfares, such as Danforth Avenue. Despite this, Johnson considers the Danforth one of the safer routes on her daily commutes.

"I've never really had problems signalling on the Danforth," she said. "I find it to be a safer route than its western counterpart, Bloor Street. There's a lot more space and it's not as busy the way Bloor can get."

Johnson knows her hand signals by heart, but she's only one cyclist. The Ontario government has an online resource, demonstrating with graphics how to use hand signals. For a right turn, a cyclist raises the left arm out and up in a right-angle. For a left turn, the left arm is extended laterally. And for stopping, the cyclist holds the left arm out and down, with the palm facing back.

Yvonne Bambrick agrees that cyclists need to employ hand signals to communicate their intentions.

"Signalling your intentions as a bicyclist is as important as (signalling) when you're driving a car," she said.

Bambrick is the founder of CycleTO and the author of *The Urban Survival*

Guide to Cycling, which was published last March. She said the lack of safety infrastructure is the basic problem facing cyclists in Toronto.

"Because we don't have that network of bike infrastructure that we need to keep bicyclists safe while out on the road," she said, "people are just focused on their own safety and getting where they need to go."

Mayor John Tory addressed the lack of infrastructure for cyclists in a press release earlier in the fall.

"While Toronto has a growing number of cyclists, our cycling infrastructure has not kept pace and I intend to change that," he said.

Cyclist Johnson is glad to hear that, but in the meantime she has a recommendation for everybody using Toronto streets.

"I think currently signalling standards are fine," she said. "It's just educating both cyclists and drivers alike that may be a problem."

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Perogies and pickles on the menu at bazaar

Perogies, cabbage rolls, pickles and apple pie will be some of the food options at the Holy Eucharist Annual Bazaar, 515 Broadview Ave., tomorrow, Nov. 28, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. If food isn't enough to draw you in, there will also be jewelry, cards and handcrafted ornaments. Call 416-465-5836 for more information.

Make your own holiday cards

Ever look at a holiday greeting card and think, "I could've made that?" This is your chance! Todmorden Mills, 67 Pottery Rd., is holding a holiday greeting card workshop tomorrow, Nov. 28 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. For \$15 per adult and \$8 per child, you can learn about pop-ups, collages and the origin of greeting cards. For more information, call 416-396-2819.

Learn how to create wreaths at workshop

Decorations are a big part of the holidays, and now you can make your own. Todmorden Mills, 67 Pottery Rd., is holding an adults-only wreath workshop on Sunday, Nov. 29 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. For \$30, you will have evergreens and ribbons, as well as cider and holiday treats. For more information, call 416-396-2819.

~ Sayada Nabi

'Many benefits' for E.Y. in anti-poverty plan

East York councillor lauds city's reduction strategy

By NICOLE DAWE
The Observer

Toronto city council's passage of an ambitious 20-year poverty reduction plan is garnering good reviews among East York's representatives on council.

"We need to foster greater economic opportunity for all," said Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth councillor Mary Fragedakis in an interview with the Observer.

The plan, called TO Prosperity, is aimed at creating opportunity and equality for residents with low incomes. It includes 17 recommendations, 71 actions and 17 measurement tools to tackle and track the reduction of poverty in Toronto. It was passed unanimously, and will cost an estimated minimum of \$100 million next year alone.

The strategy focuses on six themes: access to services and healthy food, transit equity, jobs with livable incomes, housing stability and systemic change. Fragedakis said all of these are issues within East York.

"There will be many benefits for East Yorkers and initiatives that will be taken in East York over the next 20 years," she said.

This includes free dental care for low-income seniors and adults, free TTC fares for children under 12 and incentive programs aimed at improving the quality and energy-efficiency of affordable homes.

"Reducing poverty requires that we do more than just address immediate needs," Fragedakis said.

The plan also increases "the number of licensed and subsidized child care spaces" and "the reliability across bus, subway and LRT modes."

"This strategy needs to be implemented in a timely fashion, and reviewed and if necessary revised," Fragedakis said.

Liyu Guo is the program assistant at Campaign 2000 and Family Service Toronto. She said the commitment from all of Toronto's city council is a good start and she hopes the plan will succeed where others have come up short.

In 1989, the House of Commons cast a similar unanimous vote to eliminate childhood poverty by the year 2000; this became known as Campaign 2000. It is now 15 years past the deadline — and childhood poverty in Toronto is actually at its highest rate ever.

"Action is much louder than words and promises," Guo said. "Children can't wait another 25 years to see any progress. Their future is at risk."



Nicole Dawe // The Observer

A homeless woman sits on a grate in downtown Toronto. The city's 20-year poverty reduction plan is designed to help people like her.

Hospital wants community to have a say in new rooms

By NAZANEEN BAQIZADA
The Observer

Hospital rooms are not exactly where anyone wants to spend their time, but for those who have no choice, Toronto East General Hospital is trying to make sure that patients have a say in their surroundings.

The hospital at the corner of Coxwell and Mortimer avenues has opened up mock-ups of the rooms that are going into the new "Patient Care Tower" that's being built on the site. The mockups are designed to test out everything before the rooms are actually built.

Kirsten Martin, the hospital's director of clinical operations and transitions, showed off the rooms in a private tour.

"We have three mock-ups in this room and two on another level," she said. "There's an exam room, an inpatient private room, a semi-private inpatient room and one of our mental health inpatient rooms."

One room is divided into three



Nazaneen Baqizada // The Observer

This is one of the mock-up rooms in Toronto East General Hospital's new patient care tower.

zones. For example, the family zone, which includes a sleeper couch, aims to have a comfortable space for family members and caregivers to stay

with the patient on overnights.

The rooms also have a lot of IT devices that allow patients to use not only cable TV, but also Skype and to

touch-ordering their food. They can even watch the exercises a physiotherapist may want them to do.

The mock-ups also have design elements to prevent things like falls.

"We don't want our patients falling, so we have things like a rail to hold onto on their way to the washroom; nightlights on the floor; and the floors have a lot more friction, so it's anti-slip," Martin said.

These mock-ups are an important step before creating the actual buildings, which are very costly. Simulating the facilities that will be repeated most often throughout the tower is one way for the hospital to make sure it has the design right.

Building the rooms is one part; the next step is actually testing them out. During the past two months, the hospital ran what's called "simulations and scenario-care testing," where it tested care processes and had multidisciplinary teams come to do functions such as transferring fake patients and performing biopsies.

TEGH has also held open houses

and received feedback from the community, staff (including janitors) and patients.

"Everybody matters, so you take every level of stakeholder and you review all the comments, and then we re-fix the design based on evidence-based design practices," Martin said.

Mock-ups have been a success for other hospitals, such as St. Michael's, Joseph Brant and Humber River. It used to be something only academic health science centres would do, but now community hospitals are also including them as part of their development.

"This is a really important way that hospitals engage the people who use the space to make sure that we're building what they want," Martin said.

"This is critical for making sure that those important spaces are right, because the investment to do this now, you'll end up building a facility that you love and that's a good legacy piece for the hospital."

'Books are not going anywhere,' says local bookstore owner

By THEMISTOKLIS ALEXIS
The Observer

Talk about endangered species. In an era seemingly dominated by big box chains and books-via-tablet, Re: Reading should be on the verge of extinction. But the owner of this independent bookstore in East York says he's not worried about surviving.

Christopher Sheedy opened Re: Reading in April of 2009. Located near the intersection of Danforth and Carlaw avenues, the second-hand bookstore continues to capitalize on the feel of paper in one's hand. Sheedy said

the avid reader still prefers a hard copy to an eBook. And he's not just talking about the silver-haired set.

"Forty-five to 50 per cent of my customers are under the age of 25," he said. "Books are not going anywhere."

Aside from a customer base with a preference for tangible books, Sheedy attributes the store's staying power to both a competitive price point and to what it keeps on the shelves.

"Our prices are as good or better (than online purveyors) and we have back catalogue books the publishers haven't put out," he said.

Sheedy learned the importance of affordability in his line of work firsthand. As a fresh Toronto transplant in the mid-'80s, he sustained his literary appetite by frequenting used bookstores.

Years later, he cites staff as another crucial factor in the endurance of Re: Reading. The store has a shelf dedicated to the taste of each staff member.

"The algorithm that Amazon uses is 'If you bought this, you'll like this,' but it has to do with purchasing more than 'This book is like this book.' Where with our staff, if you come in and say, 'I really loved *Eat, Pray, Love*;

what's a book like that?' then we can walk you around the store and give you a deeper knowledge of what you're looking for," he said.

But Sheedy acknowledges that used booksellers do it more for the love of literature than to get rich. And with Book City and Circus Books a short walk away to the west and east, respectively, Sheedy would rather foster kinship as opposed to competition.

"When we don't have a book, I send people to Book City and Circus, whereas Indigo wants to crush all the competition. If I send them to Book City, we all stay open, whereas Indigo is about making everybody close."

105-year-old still has charitable spirit

By **SUZANNA DUTT**
The Observer

Last Friday, Nov. 20, was an opportunity for anyone in the vicinity of Toronto East General Hospital to have a brush with celebrity. For that was the day that Olive Dodds and her knitting group brought their wares to the hospital's Coxwell lobby to sell.

"There will be hats, scarves, and baby clothes," Dodds said beforehand. "All sorts of lovely things."

If ever there was evidence of a fountain of youth, this 105-year-old TEGH volunteer would have to be it.

Prior to immigrating to Canada, and becoming a volunteer at Toronto East York General Hospital, Dodds used to be a nurse in England. Her job was in the orthopedics

ward, helping in patient care and administrative work.

"Running around taking X-rays and patients all over the

place got really stressful," Dodds said.

So now she contributes to TEGH's mission through knitting. The idea for making dolls happened when Dodds was flipping through a craft book that she remembers buying when she lived in Britain.

"All the patterns and characters were in this one book and I decided to make them," she said. To complete one doll, it takes her about a day and a half. She tries to customize each one so that it has a special story.

"I make every one a different colour, and change between little girls and boys, rabbits and ducks," Dodds laughed.

She has been volunteering at TEGH for three decades — and as a way of showing its thanks, the past few years TEGH has been throwing Dodds birthday parties each August. Each year there is a bigger crowd that shows

up to celebrate it with Dodds.

"She is very popular here," said Denny Petkovski, the manager of the hospital's volunteer department.

He called Dodds "the star of our department, and everyone wants to meet her and buy her dolls."

The icing on one of Dodds' birthdays cakes was when, on that same day, the hospital sold almost 100 dolls. Of the \$1,000 raised, all of it was donated to the hospital.

This wasn't the only surprise. On her most recent birthday, she received a congratulatory letter from Queen Elizabeth.

"I was so excited!" Dodds said.

"I had also received one on my 100th birthday as well."

Although Dodds has been sick lately and often unable to take her regular Tuesday volunteer shift, she doesn't plan on giving up her work for TEGH.

"I'll continue doing it for as long as I can," she said.



■ OLIVE DODDS

Giving children much-needed SPACE to dance

Owner of performing arts school says main focus is on boosting dancers' self-esteem

By **THEMISTOKLIS ALEXIS**
The Observer

An East Yorker is putting her own stamp on the way dance is taught to enthusiasts and even future professionals.

Linette Doherty opened The School of Performing Arts for the Community of East York ("SPACE") in 2004, near the intersection Danforth Avenue and Linsmore Crescent, steps away from the Greenwood subway station.

While SPACE offers a variety of classes, ranging from jazz to musical theatre, Doherty said her primary focus is on instilling self-esteem in her students — something she says was absent from her experience as a young dance student.

"I know growing up and throughout theatre school, even as an adult, there are a number of teachers who teach through intimidation, or telling you you're not good enough," she said.

"The drive to get better is comparing you to everyone else in the class and fostering this sort of competition between everyone."

With the flaws in her own tutelage in mind, Doherty made a conscious effort to build camaraderie between her students once she started her own school.

"When you go and do a performance at the end of the year, you're all onstage together. I don't want that you're on there resenting somebody who got a part that you wanted," she said.



Photo from Fotolia

Aside from avoiding the mistakes she saw in her own teachers' methods, Doherty said she knows that not all of her students are aspiring professional dancers.

For her, SPACE gives those who attend a means of expression and gaining knowledge of self above all else.

As for those who do show up with intentions of further pursuit, Doherty knows the difficulty in sustaining a career in her field.

"There are plenty of talented people in this city who are folding pants and making lattes. There's no guarantee in this business, so I feel you have to have something more out of your class than a career option," she said.

Doherty was teaching dance in East York long before she opened SPACE, beginning at a friend's studio in the Woodbine and Cosburn avenues area.

After the studio was bought out, Doherty

was let go, several months into her pregnancy. That unexpected departure from the studio prompted her to open her own. Doherty said that after opening SPACE, many of her former students defected to her in support of her endeavour.

As for choosing her staff, most of whom have taught at SPACE for several years, Doherty said she looks for a shared emphasis on building students' self-esteem.

Urban fairies brighten up Danforth Avenue

By **VERONICA AGUDELO**
The Observer

It isn't fairies who recently decorated some storefronts along a stretch of Danforth Avenue.

Not literal fairies, anyway. But they do call themselves the Urban Fairies, and they've brightened the stroll between Jones and Westlake avenues.

This creative initiative started with Natalie Coulter, Joanne Bell, Angela Matich

and Lindsay Thashlin. Coulter explained that the idea was to connect local artists with businesses. The project grew with a plan to help the East End Music Project, a non-profit music program helping children get access to music classes at affordable prices.

"This project is different, out of the box," Kelly Ackerman explained.

Ackerman is the owner of Face-to-Face Games. He and 50 other businesses owners each contributed \$100 to cover the

cost of the artists' material and lent their spaces for the colourful fairy doors — an initiative to not only enrich the visual environment along their eastern stretch of the Danforth, but also to attract new customers.

"I think this is the perfect example of the Business Improvement Area thinking outside the box," Ackerman said. "I saw more people over the summer for the fairy door... We had tons of new customers." He added: "It is a different thing to do. Put

a door in your store and have a new people come."

Ultimately, local artists like Maggie Deutch, Robert Cruickshank and Paul Byron joined in.

"Danforth is a vibrant community with great ideas. This project just confirmed how collaborative and close a neighborhood could be," Coulter said. "This project was so successful because of this awesome community. At the end it shows how much people are committed to the community."



Marwa Mohkam Sheikh // The Observer

Frank Pasion, one of the artists whose work is being shown at the Don Valley Art Club exhibition, showcases his studio, which houses portraits that he's created over the years. His work will be displayed until Dec. 6 at the Todmorden Mills Heritage Site.

From books to brushes

He was a high school teacher by profession, but painting was always on his mind

By **MARWA SHEIKH**
The Observer

Frank Pasion believes it's never too late to follow a dream.

"My artist friends, who are my age, and I... say we're so lucky that we have this," he said.

It just took a good part of a lifetime to realize that dream.

The Don Valley Art Club (DVAC) opened its latest exhibition on Wednesday, in the art gallery at the Todmorden Mills Heritage Site on Pottery Road.

The exhibit includes art by Pasion. But his artistic jour-

ney was a long time coming; he started painting at a very young age, and then stopped.

"I let it go when I was out of high school," Pasion said. "And I think I stopped doing it because at the time I think people didn't think it was cool."

He became a high school teacher, teaching history, French, economics and geography. He taught for more than 40 years and then retired in 2004.

Despite his extensive teaching career, Pasion never taught art. He married, had children and led what he calls a "pretty traditional" life.

Art didn't reappear in his world until the 1970s, when he was in his 50s. Even though he didn't actually paint at the time, he spent time studying it and educating himself about it.

He frequently discussed it with a good friend who was an

art historian and teacher. She finally provoked him to start painting again.

"Frank, why don't you just paint the damn picture?" he remembers her asking. "Your problem is that you think your first painting has to go in a museum."

That summer, Pasion went to a little town in Quebec and began to paint. He hasn't stopped since.

He paints portraits mostly, and he can complete one in 25 minutes.

The joy of painting at this age, he said, is that he doesn't do it for the money or the recognition.

"To make it as an artist, there is also a tendency for artists to try to please the audience, the customers," Pasion said.

"I've always wanted to paint the way I paint. I've always done it for myself."

Being a member of DVAC for the last 15 years has allowed Pasion to stay active as a painter. He considers himself a "fairly new" member, because some have been members for 30 years or more. But he enjoys the club because it provides a comfortable community for him.

"A lot of people are older at the club, so they're not looking to have an explosive career in painting," he said. "They just want to go out and paint the geraniums... which is great, because doing it is better than not doing it."

Pasion believes he has pursued his life's greatest passion on his own terms, which brings its own rewards.

"So if there's anything that you can find in your life that tempts you and you want to pursue, go for it," he said. "You have to do it because it's your salvation."

Baby, it's cold outside (so c'mon in, BIA says)

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500 businesses on the Danforth between Jones and Westlake.

"People are not only going to notice, but sometimes they'll want shelter, which means they'll just walk in and browse."

The store closest to the temporary waiting area is a Subway restaurant. Sharan Sidhu, an employee at the location, has already noticed a difference in the number of people coming into the store.

"It's been busier since the change," she said. "A lot of people come in just to wait for the bus, but it's also affected the sales."

However, Dertilis predicts this effect will only extend to the nearest stores and restaurants.

Commuters "might go a few doors down, but the truth is, especially if they're waiting longer for their bus, they're going to be even antsy to get on the bus," he said. "There may be some (who go into shops further on the Danforth), but it's not going to be big

numbers. Maybe five per cent of people may venture out to see."

Tim Liao, a clerk at the Double-D-Store two doors down from the Subway restaurant, tends to agree.

"No, it is not improving my business. People who use transit always want to get home or to their destination as soon as possible," he said. "They are afraid of missing their bus, so if they come here their bus will come and they will have to wait longer for the next bus."

Alice Liang, a bartender at Helen's Bar & Burgers, which is located next door to the Subway restaurant, agrees with Dertilis and Liao. However, to her surprise, a man sitting at the bar admitted to being there only because of the bus loop closure.

"I was waiting there and it's cold outside, so I thought I'd have a beer and then go home," David Osmond said. If it wasn't for the waiting area being outside, he added, he'd "probably just get to the subway, then get the bus and go north, and that's it."



Bogdan Stanciu // The Observer

Shall we dance?

Dancers of all skill levels attended the Pirates and Sailors' Ball held on Saturday. The Church of St. Barnabas on the Danforth was the venue for the event, which was billed as an evening of naval-themed ballroom dancing.

'Every Canadian has felt a little piece of the refugee experience'

Cont'd. from page 1

come early next year.

"There are still a lot of question marks. We don't know what our family will look like or be like. But it's all about what the family wants," Okens said.

The pointed violence in Toronto since the attacks in Paris has only hardened the group's resolve. Okens posted recently on the Facebook group that anyone who felt unsafe

attending would be provided with transportation, a post she wished she never had to write.

"It personally makes me very angry. Every Canadian has felt a little piece of the immigrant and refugee experience, but it seems like some have forgotten. There's no room for cowardly behaviour like this in Canada," she said. "Now is a time to stand with (the Muslim community) and be present for them."

Some members joined because they just wanted to pay

their privilege forward.

"I've lived a very privileged Canadian life. Maybe that's what makes me feel the need to help. It's just a no-brainer, of course I'm going to help. This is what our country is about. This is what makes it beautiful," said Tawnya Halman, Rotering and Wallace's neighbour.

Others have personal experiences with refugees in Canada. Matthew Hall's partner came to Canada with her family as a refugee

from Vietnam.

"She lived in a camp in Hong Kong for two years, so she couldn't just sit on her hands when she heard about this," he said.

Leah Bowen's family was part of a church group in Spruce Grove, Alta. that sponsored a Vietnamese family in the 1980s. She remembers playing with the kids and helping set up the family's home. She's donating some kitchenware and her time as a driver

for the incoming family.

"It's something significant you can do to the fabric of Canadian life," she said.

As more people walked into the pub throughout the night, the core members sighed in relief.

"We're inviting a family, we hope, to a community. Everyone here is because they care and want to help. When they come, it can be to a welcoming place," Chan said.

Bowen says it's important to

stay realistic, though.

"It's important to not have an idealized picture of a family and be realistic - we want to reach out but they might not be open to it. We don't know their trauma. We have to remember not to get too romantic about saving refugees," she said.

Okens says yes, they're helping a family, but the group is going to learn a lot.

"Our lives have already cracked open and the family's not even here yet," she said.

■ EDITORIALS

Losing E.Y.'s past

East York heritage properties are being affected by urban developers' quest for condominiums

Heritage is an important part of any community. It represents a city's culture and its history.

With the city of Toronto constantly growing, the demand for homes, including condominiums, is on the rise. To accommodate this increase in population, developers sometimes eye heritage buildings in the city as ripe for replacement by new homes.

The community of East York is no different. Several buildings in the area have already been subjected to this type of urban development.

The developers' target customers are mostly new homebuyers, either single people or newly married couples. Condos developed in areas that skirt the city's centre are always appealing to those who want to be closer to downtown without having to pay extravagant prices.

The East York area has traditionally been home to generations of families, but the community has already seen favourites such as the O'Connor Bowl bowling alley being converted for urban development purposes. But for the people of the community, demolishing buildings that have been a central part of their history is taking away a part of the culture.

Urban renewal is great for the city, but gentrification sometimes threatens the character of the community.

And East York should brace itself to say goodbye to yet another local site. The Don Valley Hotel at 175 Wynford Dr. is a building that was commissioned in the 1940s by the Four Seasons hotel, which had decided to venture out of the downtown core. Now HCA Architecture has presented a proposal to the North York community council to convert it into luxury condominium towers.

Currently surrounded by the Del Manor retirement residence and another luxury condominium by Tridel, it's granted that the Don Valley Hotel seems a little outdated in its look. Moreover, jobs will be created in the process of this facelift. Over the long term, the regeneration may draw more business into the area, bringing with it higher-income families.

But while acknowledging that gentrification can be beneficial to some constituencies of our community, let's also fess up to the reality that it can displace people who have been a part of East York for generations. In some cases, it takes away a neighbourhood's cultured essence — and replaces it with cold, blue buildings.

In little time, gentrification may impose a uniform, even sterile look on the city core and its surroundings. The danger in that is that ultimately, there will be fewer communities, people and culture; just busy city life.

~ Arifa Rattansi

Advice for the TTC

The TTC has recently released a staff report naming all of the stops on the upcoming Eglinton Crosstown LRT.

Any addition to the TTC's subway/LRT infrastructure is a step in the right direction. But right now its main priority should be decongesting the busiest parts of Toronto. Although the idea of implementing the frequently proposed Downtown Relief Line has resurfaced, it is taking a back seat to the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and the York-Spadina subway extension. The downtown relief line would include subway service connecting a southern station on Line 1 (Yonge-University-Spadina) to a station on Line 2 (Bloor-Danforth).

According to a 2011 study conducted by Metrolinx, by 2031 Union Station passenger traffic will be two to three times greater than in 2006. That means that if East Yorkers want to travel north or south of Bloor Street, they have to transfer at Yonge-Bloor station. The construction of the proposed downtown relief line would not only decongest passenger traffic from Union to Bloor station, but it would also make travelling to the downtown core easier for East York residents. The TTC's priority should be creating relief lines.

If the TTC is going to build a subway line along Eglinton, then it should at least make sure that all Torontonians are getting the benefits. Without the downtown relief line being built, then East Yorkers should at least have a subway line in the east end of the city. Without this, East York residents will still have to transfer to the congested Yonge-Bloor station. This line may serve as a convenience to Scarborough residents; for East Yorkers, public transportation is a necessity. According to a 2011 survey conducted by the University of Toronto's Data Management Group, 25 per cent of households in East York do not own a car, compared to only 16 per cent of Scarborough households.

The TTC needs to improve service in the areas where it is needed most.

~ Ben Rappaport

■ COLUMNS

Keep the faith out

Terrorism is a scary reality in today's world. But governments and media sometimes make it worse — and divide people by the way they handle terrorism.

Terms like "Islamic terrorism" and "Muslim terrorists" are used daily in our media. But that's dangerous language.

How empowering for tiny, cowardly factions to be associated with a religion encompassing one and a half billion people. A recent CNN story estimated that there is a maximum of 106,000 people fighting or identifying with extremist groups. Mathematically, that means .00006625 per cent of Muslims identify as "extremists."

All of a sudden Islam doesn't seem that scary.

The so-called Islamic State, Al Qaeda and their ilk do not even represent the attitudes and beliefs of one per cent of Muslims.

But some people still seem to associate "Muslim" with "terrorism." Some Canadians seem to be skeptical of anyone from certain Islamic countries or anyone wearing Muslim garb.

Interestingly, so-called Christian groups like Africa's Lords Resistance Army, the west's Aryan Nations, the Council of Concerned Citizens and the Ku Klux Klan receive little attention in comparison to Islamic offshoot groups — despite similarly despicable ideologies and tactics.

Considering the aforementioned, why pigeonhole an entire religion based on the actions of much, much less than one per cent of its members? Christians aren't stereotyped based on the actions of the Ku Klux Klan, or the LRA, so why are we so quick to typecast all Muslims?

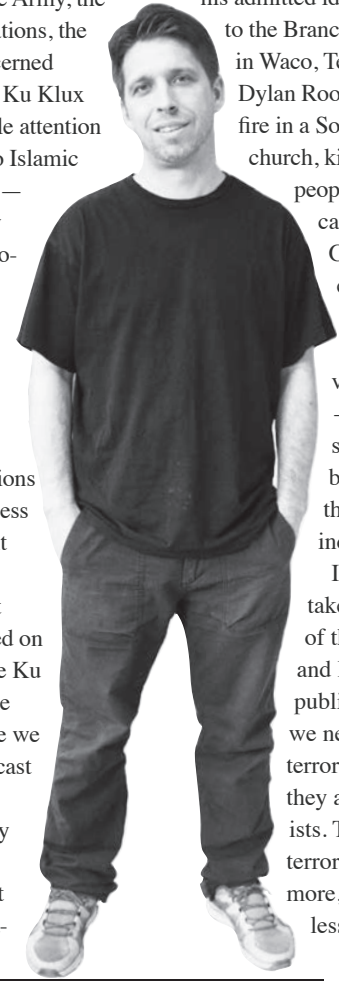
When Timothy McVeigh blew up a government building in Oklahoma City, we called him a terrorist, but

we never called him a Christian extremist. Not even after his admitted ideological ties to the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas. When Dylan Roof opened fire in a South Carolina church, killing nine

people, we didn't call him a Christian extremist.

Both were individualized — as they should have been, because they were individuals.

In order to take away some of their power and limit the public's fear, we need to see terrorists for what they are — terrorists. That's it, just terrorists. Nothing more, nothing less.



Jason Sutcliffe

Jolly about decorations

It seems that the holiday decorations come out a little earlier every year.

"Too soon," some say. "Lack of respect," others add.

The City of Toronto came under fire recently for putting up a Christmas tree before Remembrance Day. Even though it won't even be lit until tomorrow, Nov. 28.

Now I'm not saying that I agree with putting up decorations on the first day of November. What I am saying is... who cares? If my neighbor wants to put up a festive pole in July, what business is it of mine?

Now the argument goes that it's disrespectful to the veterans to put up decorations. But I think that those who make this argument are actually underestimating the impact of Remembrance Day.

We understand that veterans fought for our freedom and they deserve the day — not an argument over whether we pay enough attention to it.

Remembrance Day ceremonies are held in schools. They're held at cenotaphs in public squares. The veterans are the focus, as they always have been and as they always will be. I don't know anyone who is distracted from the observance by the decorations in some mall.

So who cares if Hudson's Bay has strung up some lights or moved an evergreen into the window? (If it's the commercialization that is insulting, why don't we ban advertising altogether on Nov. 11?)

When talking about Christmas, Calvin Coolidge,

former president of the United States, said it's "not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy."

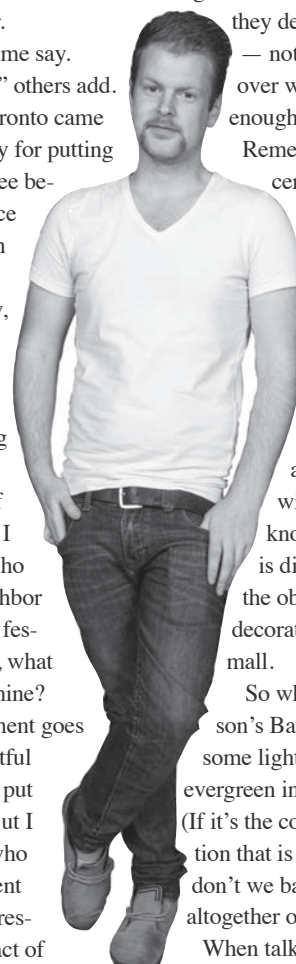
That doesn't seem incompatible with Remembrance Day. It actually seems to echo many of the things veterans say they fought for.

The holidays are a time to come together as a community. To help our neighbours, to connect with friends and family. It's about small acts of love, kindness and attention.

Maybe if we got into the holiday spirit a little earlier, a few more people in Calgary would have remembered to donate to the poppy fund, where donations apparently went down 10 per cent this year.

Or maybe, given the discouraging news from Paris and elsewhere recently, we should just leave holiday decorations up year-round. They could be a constant reminder to try to keep the holiday spirit going year-long.

At the very least, we wouldn't have to argue just for the sake of it.



Pat Rail

Old Leaside, from bridge to baby



Courtesy of City of Toronto Archives

The Observer continues its look back on East York history through photographs from the City of Toronto Archives. These two pictures are a reminder of Leaside near the end of the Roaring Twenties. The photo at left was taken on Aug. 18, 1927, and shows the Leaside Bridge under construction. The picture on the right is described in the archives as a “baby show” at the police picnic, July 17, 1930. The winner’s proud mom was “Mrs. Jas. Semple” of Millwood Road.

New book celebrates women and flight

Author channels love of aviation, interest in female pilots into story

By **SAYADA NABI**
The Observer

When Mary Ellen Pauli wanted to become a bush pilot, the times didn’t encourage women in aviation. A man even discouraged her.

“If women were meant to fly,” he said, “the sky would be pink.”

But such attitudes didn’t stop her, for her mother told her, “Where there is a will, there is a way.”

Once she’d saved enough money to pay for her pilot training, Pauli shocked the manager upon arrival at the training centre.

“We didn’t think you were going to show up,” the manager said. “We only have men in this apartment.”

Pauli offered to move in anyway, and if there were any complaints, she promised to move out. There were no complaints and today Pauli works as a helicopter bush pilot for the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Mary Pauli’s story is one of many in Elizabeth Muir’s new book, *Canadian Women in the Sky, 100 Years of Flight*. The book profiles women in aviation and their success despite gender discrimination. In addition to her published books, Muir, an East York resident, holds degrees from three different universities, including a PhD from McGill University.

“I am not a pilot,” Muir said to those attending her book launch at the Dora Keogh pub on Nov. 18. “I

know nothing about flying at all, except that I find flying to be one of the most magical things there is.”

As a child, Muir dreamed of being a stewardess. After learning the job required her to be trained as a nurse, she was disheartened, but not enough to prevent her fascination with aviation.

“Only six per cent of all the pilots in Canada are women, and this is actually what interested me in writing this book,” she said.

Pilot Akky Mansikka is part of that six per cent.

“I never had aspirations to become a pilot,” she said at the book launch. “I grew up in the Netherlands and women just didn’t become pilots.”

Twenty years ago, Mansikka was diagnosed with cancer and doctors told her she had a year to live.

“I thought, ‘How do I want to spend my last year?’ And thought, just once to take off on my own in an airplane would be the coolest thing ever,” she said.

Mansikka became a licensed pilot at the age of 50.

Today she continues to fly with The Ninety-Nines in Operation Skywatch, the pollution detection program for the Ministry of the Environment.

Despite advances made by women in aviation, Wendy Cragg, another pilot in attendance, believes there is still a long way to go.

“I am excited to read more about ladies who have been an inspiration to us and learn more about their stories,” she said, “and hope more ladies are encouraged to fly.”



Courtesy of Elizabeth Muir



Sayada Nabi /// The Observer

Top: Bush pilot Mary Ellen Pauli poses with her helicopter. **Left:** Pilots Mary Ellen Pauli, Adele Fogle, Akky Mansikka and author Elizabeth Muir (l-r) at the book launch.



The edge of night

As the sun sets earlier, East York allows night-dwellers to see the city in the light of darkness. The Chester Hill Lookout (top) is an ideal vantage point to view the illuminated Toronto skyline. Pape subway station (below) is one of the epicentres of rush hour, but in darkness, streaks of light adorn the road. The glass pyramid-shaped, Ismaili Centre (right) is next to the Aga Khan Museum on Wynford Drive, and brightens up the northern edge of East York.

Sanjeev Wignarajah /// The Observer



HEALTH CARE

Clinic to integrate services in Thorncliffe

Group hopes to combine medical and community services under one roof

By CAMERON AXFORD
The Observer

It's 10 a.m. at the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office. The community organization has only been open for an hour, but it's already bustling with people. Toddlers play with toys in the preschool area, newcomers learn English in a classroom and those looking for employment are helped with resumes.

But with all of these services from a well-established organization that serves a third of the community annually, Thorncliffe residents are still undeserved in the area of primary healthcare.

The neighbourhood has 30,000 people and zero general practitioners.

This prompted the TNO to create Health Access Thorncliffe Park, an initiative to integrate medical services into the community fabric.

Two years after its inception, the program is bringing a health clinic to the area. It is off to a slow start, only being open for half days on Fridays. But there are plans to have a fully functioning clinic soon.

This initiative benefits not only Thorncliffe residents, but taxpayers in general. According to TNO executive director Ahmed Hussein, few residents leave the neighbourhood for healthcare. Instead, they go to walk-in clinics. This burdens the medical system in a number of ways.

Without primary healthcare, many people go to the emergency for all procedures.

"That is a costly problem. Going to the doctor for a 45-minute consultation is a 10th of the cost of a visit to the emergency," Hussein said.

Going to the emergency for a preventable illness wastes time and space for those in much more critical conditions. Hussein also emphasized how crucial GPs are for children and seniors, who need checkups more frequently.

Mohan Doss is the director of programs at the TNO. His job includes evaluating the efficiency of initiatives. Doss' hope is for TNO to support the new primary healthcare centre with currently existing Thorncliffe programs.

He says they have built a unique "wraparound" model that is "integrated to include settlement, employment, housing, language, family, children and women's services, all of them built around primary healthcare."

It's an idea he calls "one-stop shopping."

Doss thinks that having medical and community services all under

one roof will better serve the community.

The TNO has learned this lesson from experience. The new health clinic replaced a pregnancy clinic that didn't survive a year. Without the cornerstone of primary care, the initiative failed.

"You need to have integrated services with primary care at the centre, and then you can bring other services in," said Hussein.

Greg Stevens is a senior consultant at the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN). LHIN is Ontario's local health authority, responsible for creating community health plans. They worked closely with the TNO to address the needs of one of Toronto's youngest and most immigrant populated areas. Stevens also thinks that the closure of the pregnancy clinic was no major setback as it gave a better understanding of what Thorncliffe needs.

"We were able to step back and see after what the community needed in a more comprehensive approach," he said. "The pregnancy clinic was a good chance to see what is needed and learn from the clinic in terms of operations."

The primary care clinic is only the beginning. Stevens says various groups have submitted a proposal for more integrated health services, including TNO, the Flemingdon Health Centre and Toronto East General Hospital.

The proposal includes a call for more infrastructure which will allow more co-operation between these groups, "complementing the services that are already there." The Ministry of Health is currently overlooking the plan and should have an answer within the next six months.

In the mean time, LHIN is investing into Thorncliffe's health clinic to extend their hours.