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# THE EAST TORONTO OBSERVER

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## FAST FORWARD FIVE YEARS

A special report on how our community will change by 2015



**TWO VISIONS:** Will Scarborough be revitalized by the impending Pan Am Games or will the area sink further into hardship? Articles in this issue turn a critical spotlight on our community's future, and see the special reports on Pages 3-5.

## Murders lead cops to weapons, explosives

**KIMBERLEE NANCEKIVELL**  
The Observer

Durham Regional Police are investigating the connection between explosives and weapons found at Dayton Self Storage on March 31 and a double murder last spring.

The discovery was "part of an ongoing investigation" and no further details are being released at this time, police spokesman Sgt. Dave Selby said.

Police revealed on April 1 that the murders of Puneet Singh Chhina, 26, and Harjinder Singh Sandhu, 28 - whose bodies were found in the trunk of a car in Pickering last May - led them to the storage unit at Kennedy Road and Progress Avenue.

The Durham Police major crime unit executed a search warrant around 6:30 p.m. and found weapons and explosives inside. Details concerning the type of weapons or explosives have not been released.

The area was evacuated for investigation, halting TTC and GO Transit service.

Police called the Emergency Task Force explosives unit to the scene before containing the materials in a steel drum for transport.

Highway 401 was closed around 9 p.m. from Kennedy Road to the Don Valley Parkway while police took the drum to the Leslie Street Spit. The contents were then detonated shortly after 11 p.m.

Residents as far away as Pharmacy Avenue reported hearing and feeling the explosion.

"It must have been pretty powerful explosives because it shook my house and woke me up," Scarborough resident Wendy Winters said.

John Le and Vijay Singh both face charges of first-degree murder, kidnapping, and forcible confinement in connection to the murders, but no arrests have been made in connection with the explosives and weapons.

**To see a map and a timeline of events, visit [torontoobserver.ca](http://torontoobserver.ca)**

## Removing obstacles to food access in Scarborough

City's strategy aims to integrate food security into planning

**AMANDA KWAN**  
The Observer

Lack of transportation is the main obstacle to people getting healthy food in Scarborough, says Peter Dorfman, a manager in the city's health department.

"The number of people in high-priority neighbourhoods without cars is much higher than other parts of the city," he said. "And there's often many seniors and people who are already dealing with multiple challenges in priority neighbourhoods."

He was responding to a February preliminary report on Toronto's first food strategy initiative by the public health department.

The study aims to integrate food security into city planning, linking public transit to grocery stores, building community centres with gardens

and kitchens, and educating residents about healthy eating.

Last month Dorfman spoke with a group of seniors in Malvern about where they go to get groceries. Those living in the heart of Malvern told him they just walked to the local Food Basics.

But residents who don't live near it had to rely on their children to take them shopping, Dorfman said.

"That's okay. But what do you do if you don't have kids or your kids don't have a car?"

One of the solutions identified in the city's strategy is to encourage more food stores along transit lines.

"We're increasingly trying to organize the city around transit," Dorfman said. "When there's new growth, we should be thinking about access to food."



**AMANDA KWAN**/The Observer

Anna Wilson, a student at UTSC, unloads fresh produce from a Good Food box.

The plan also looks to encourage the growth of food markets around the city. Montreal has food stands selling fresh produce outside some subway stations, a system Toronto can implement

as well, Dorfman said.

The city is also looking to introduce food trucks that go around neighbourhoods selling fresh produce.

The Good Food Box, a program that provides fresh fruits

and vegetables to residents at a subsidized cost, began 16 years ago as a way to address Toronto's food security gap.

"The program feels pretty permanent to us," said Paul DeCampo, Good Food program manager. "It's something that's grown exponentially."

Today, they distribute 5,000 boxes a month through 200 neighbourhood drop-off centres.

"The food strategy is a significant moment because it's encouraging the city to be thinking food first," said Angela ElzingaCheng of Toronto Food Animators, a group that works with local agencies and residents in Toronto's priority neighbourhoods to start food projects.

The group worked with residents at Gordonridge Place, a Toronto Community Housing Corporation residence in Scarborough, to set up a community garden.

**See BETTER, Page 2**

# Kingston Rd. requires facelift: residents

## Restoration needed to reduce trash and traffic

**BILLY COURTYCE  
JOSH UNGAR**  
The Observer

Three months ago, the manager of the Idlewood Inn called the city to complain about an ugly, allegedly non-compliant sign that was put up by the used-car dealership beside her Kingston Road lot.

Looking out of her window today, Lisa Fritz is disappointed to see nothing has changed.

"They put the cars right on my lawn, they stick up non-compliant signs," Fritz said. "I phoned to complain about the sign in January. I don't see anything being done."

According to residents and business owners, it is the dirty lots, ugly signage and excessive litter that is preventing Kingston Road from bolstering its reputation. With the 2015 Pan Am Games fast approaching, Scarborough will be under more international scrutiny than ever.

### Making headway

But headway is being made in beautifying Kingston Road, according to Bill Blakes, manager of the Scarborough district office for municipal licensing and standards.

"Our guys enforce public right-of-way," Blakes said.



JOSH UNGAR/The Observer

A guest stands outside of The East Side Motel on Kingston Road and Eglinton Avenue, beside a trash-filled car.

"According to our staff, most businesses are complying with the bylaws."

Area residents, however, are not so sure.

The plazas and parking lots are dirty and disgusting, said local residents Marianne and Margaret, who didn't want their last names published. "They look dumpy, they keep the [lots] like garbage," Margaret said.

Margaret has been a Scarborough Village resident for 26 years, while Marianne moved to the area from the Upper Beaches nearly two decades ago.

"These unkempt areas and overpopulated apartments are a breeding ground for gangs and prostitution," Margaret

said.

Better enforcement is needed to help improve conditions in the area.

"It would improve business if they clean up the area," Fritz said. "I see traffic police, but I don't see too many inspectors."

The city is looking to address residents' concerns with the March 2009 Kingston Road Initiative – Action Report, which outlines the detailed plans for the stretch of Kingston Road between Port Union Road and Victoria Park Avenue. According to Ward 44 Ron Moeser, the report is stalling.

A section of the report, due in late 2009, was set to outline final plans and possible

means of funding, but has still not been completed. Moeser said he hopes the Pan Am Games will speed up the process.

"[The games] will be very beneficial. They will create partnerships with the community and generate \$152 million," Moeser said. "The community will have access to the facilities."

### Improving appearances

The plan suggests replacing existing buildings along Kingston Road with highrise condominiums and improving public space with a host of new parkettes and benches.

"We're hoping we can partner with some of the rundown motels and make something the community can be proud of," Moeser said.

Residents agree improving

the appearance of Kingston Road may have more than a superficial effect.

"It's a good area, it just needs some happiness and colour," Fritz said. "It's quite bland."

"When things look ill-kept, you get trouble," Marianne said. "Physically making it look prettier would definitely help."

While Moeser reiterated that some of the businesses are finally starting to clean up and the area is looking better, he hopes the added attention from the games will take the area to the next level.

According to Fritz, the increased traffic flow from the games should cause a "mini-boom" for local businesses and bring development to the area.

"Five years is not that far away — it's coming up faster than you think," Fritz said.

**It's a good area, it just needs some happiness and colour**

- Lisa Fritz

## Students' excellence rewarded

**FIONA PERSAUD**  
The Observer

Cornell Junior Public School has received the 2010 Garfield Weston Award for Excellence in Education.

The award, in the Determination in Academic Achievement category, was presented to the school at the gala reception on March 23.

Last year, Cornell was runner-up for this award.

The win was the result of lots of hard work and support, Cornell principal Tom Hanmer said in his acceptance speech.

"Cornell's strength is that of our team," Hanmer said. "A team that is focused on improving student achievement through high expectations and accountability, a



FIONA PERSAUD/The Observer

Students at Cornell Junior Public School were awarded a \$3,000 prize for hard work and achievement.

culture of collaboration and a partnership of parent and community engagement."

Runners-up were Agincourt Junior Public School and Blessed Margherita of Citta di Castello Catholic School. Each earned a \$1,000 prize, while Cornell received a \$3,000 prize.

The school, near Lawrence Avenue and Scarborough Golf Club Road, was opened in 1959 and is named after the Cornells, some of the first settlers in the area.

Toronto schools dominated the awards this year by placing first in every category.

Kennedy Junior Public School won the award for Overall Academic Achievement and J.R. Wilcox Community School won for Improvement in Academics.

The awards are based on an analysis by the Fraser Institute's annual report card of elementary schools in Ontario and the EQAO testing of Grade 3 and 6 students.

## Better food accessibility

### From Page 1

They started with 12 plots three years ago and expanded to 32 due to high demand, said resident and community activist Len Mirander. There are currently 15 people on the waiting list.

While the project at Gordonridge Place has been successful, Mirander said the food strategy shouldn't target one demographic.

"They're talking about low-income [communities], but what about the middle class and the upper class?" he said. "If we're going to make this work in Toronto, there can be absolutely no exclusion. It's for everybody to partake and work together."

But the main barrier to healthy food is one the city cannot solve, DeCampo said. The provincial and federal government control the tax system, which "really are the instruments that would lead to more equitable distribution

of wealth," he said.

People benefit from fresh food in more ways than one. Activists say it's also about empowering residents and fostering vibrant communities.

Good Food boxes aren't delivered directly to people's homes but through community centres.

"That way we are bringing community together around food," DeCampo said. "So people will start to recognize the various resources that already exist in their community and learn how to use them more efficiently."

Mirander says the garden at Gordonridge Place has fostered a sense of community that they didn't have three years ago.

"We have people from about 15 different countries gardening," he said. "You get to know your neighbourhood. It builds relationships. It builds participation."

## News Briefs

### Hospital hosts hockey cup

The Scarborough Hospital Foundation is hosting the Peter Zezel Cup event to raise money for the hospital. Registered teams will face off against former NHL players on April 9 at the Angus Glen Community Centre in Markham. The event is named after the former Toronto Maple Leaf player and Scarborough native who died of a rare blood disorder. To register, call 416-431-8130 or email gbonnell@tsh.to or register online at tsh.to.

### Company for seniors needed

Bendale Acres is seeking mature adult volunteers to work with seniors. Volunteers would be asked to fulfill occasional duties such as friendly visits, escorting the senior to special events, keep the senior company and assist them in other ways. Training and orientation is provided. Call Selena Lynch at 416-397-7058 or email her at slynch@toronto.ca for information.

### Walk to raise money for MS

The yearly Scarborough Multiple Sclerosis Walk will be held April 18 at Cederbrae Collegiate to raise money for the MS Society. There are two, five and 10-kilometre routes for participants to choose. Lunch will be provided in the Cederbrae gym. Individuals or teams can register. Call Craig Harris at 1-800-268-7582 or 416-922-6600 ext. 3137 for more info or visit mssociety.ca.

### St. Paul's Church perfects parents

St. Paul's United Church is hosting a parenting class for infants and children up to five years of age. The course, called Nobody's Perfect, consists of eight sessions. It is organized by Toronto Public Health nurses and will be held on Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., starting April 23 and ending June 11. Call 416-261-4222 to register.

# SPECIAL REPORT

## Mayoral Think Tank What do they see for the future?

The next mayor of Toronto, elected in the fall, will shape the city for the next four years. The mayoral candidates talked to the East Toronto Observer about four major issues, and their vision for Scarborough.



GIORGIO MAMMOLITI

### Rooming Houses

Illegal rooming houses are not equipped to deal with fire hazards, but legalizing them can help neighbourhoods. "A lot of people don't know they have them already and that in fact, if you change the by-law, you would clean out certain parts of the community."

### Wealth Distribution

Funds should be diverted to invest in poorer areas of the city, like Scarborough. "You can't just give everything to the downtown part of the city. I want to make every part of the city feel like they're part of Toronto."

### Transportation

The inner suburbs, like Scarborough, are disconnected from the city. "If you don't have a proper transportation plan in place, you can forget about anything coming to Scarborough."

### Scarborough Vision

Scarborough's reputation for crime needs to be reversed. "It's a very tranquil part of the city. Crime is low and I'd like to make that lower." The area should be made into a tourist destination thriving with businesses.



ROB FORD

There should be designated areas strictly for rooming houses. "I wouldn't want my family living beside a rooming house. There's been drug abuse and alcoholics and fires. I don't think we should be putting them beside families, especially with young kids."

The city needs to help people living on the streets by bringing them into shelters or rehab centres. This will "get people and businesses back in the city and create a clean, friendly environment."

The city should focus on buses and subways instead of street cars. "I'm not a big fan of [LRTs] because we completely mismanaged the St. Clair right-of-way. We budgeted \$43 million and now we're over \$120 million and it's still not finished."

It's important to get youth off the streets and back in school. "I've started football programs all over the city because most troubled youth love to play football. And if you're playing football in school, that means you're going to class, you're getting an education and scholarships."



GEORGE SMITHERMAN

The city is "trying to ensure rooming houses would be regulated and restricted to arterials." This will also provide housing for low-income people.

Diverting development fees from downtown is illegal. The real issue is creating wealth within Scarborough — "not just sharing the pie differently, but growing the pie." Building mixed-use residential communities will create jobs and revitalize the area.

"There was no real commitment from the city to build the Malvern LRT in time for the Pan Am Games." There are financial and time constraints. Smitherman wants the line to be built but thinks it is unlikely to be completed in time.

Scarborough contains a lot of the city's "natural heritage and beauty," like Rouge Park, which should be preserved. The city also needs to create "more economic vitality and opportunities in Scarborough for people to live there, for property values to increase."

To hear audio of these candidates and Joe Pantalone, visit [torontoobserver.ca](http://torontoobserver.ca)

## SOS says no to wind turbines

SARINA ADAMO  
The Observer

In five years, a wind farm may spread across the waters of Scarborough — or not, if the opposition wins the debate to save the shoreline.

Despite protesting Scarborough residents, an anemometer is currently under construction in Lake Ontario.

Toronto Hydro is using it to collect data over the next two years to help determine if there's enough wind.

More wind means the first offshore turbines are likely

to be built near the Scarborough Bluffs.

However, plans for the windmills are being delayed by Save Our Shorelines activists.

"It doesn't make sense to build any industrial machinery where we get our drinking water," says John Laforet, president of Wind Concerns Ontario and Ward 43 council candidate. "You have to draw the line and say that our health and our drinking water are too important."

Laforet said he doesn't see them being built by the 2015

Pan Am Games.

The government must assess sediment movement before and after construction and how this may trigger environmental problems, said Jovan Stefanovic, a University of Toronto professor of geomorphology.

In the meantime, the turbine project seems to be going ahead.

"You have an environmental assessment so that everybody's opinion can be aired, but really it's the governments that decide whether they can proceed," said Joyce

McLean, Toronto Hydro director of environmental affairs.

The turbines cannot create enough noise pollution to cause health problems, McLean says, referring to the minimal noise heard from the onshore turbine at Exhibition Place.

"What we do know about onshore wind turbines is that when they're turning you're hearing the wind more than the sound of the machine," McLean said.

"You're not going to hear them when they are two to



These flyers have been posted against the Scarborough wind turbine project.

four kilometres away."

The location for wind testing along the Scarborough Bluffs is in a 26-km province-approved stretch.

Finding locations to

generate renewable energy is only one step in the energy consumption issue.

"Controlling how much we are using is a critical first step," McLean said.

## Pan Am Games to cost us more than we think, critics say

KIMBERLEE NANCEKIVELL  
The Observer

Scarborough is getting a new aquatics facility for the 2015 Pan Am Games, but residents might not be aware of the overall cost of hosting the games.

"[With] these kinds of circuses, there's no longer really any dispute," says John Clarke, founder of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty and supporter of No Games Toronto.

No Games Toronto was responsible for trying to stop



Toronto's bid for the games by rallying at future venue sites.

"[The games] are going to lead to very ugly displacement of low-income neighbourhoods and a sort of repressive climate for homeless people when the events actually take place," Clarke says.

Clarke says in order to see the effects the Pan Am

Games will have on the city, people need only look at previous Olympics or Pan Am Games.

In those cases, the cost of apartments, condos and housing rose dramatically, says retired University of Toronto professor Helen Lenskyj, who has written three books on the effects of the Olympics on their host cities.

"The prices were pretty much out of range of even a middle-class person," she says. "Cheap accommodation is converted

by landlords into tourist accommodation, [evicting] the low-paying tenants to make way for more lucrative tenants."

Lenskyj is also concerned that impressing tourists and Pan Am officials will take precedence.

"The usual so-called cleaning up of the streets to make the city look wholesome to visitors involves mistreatment of homeless

people," Lenskyj says. "The police get special powers, as we saw in Vancouver, to do that sort of thing."

While Toronto will be footing the bill and suffering the consequences of the games, Scarborough will be hit especially hard, Clarke

says. "There's no question that the drive to displace

local communities is going to have a particularly virulent effect in a place like Scarborough, which has so many low-income communities."

Despite some benefits, critics say money would have been better spent on several facilities in the heart of needy communities.

"There will be lasting facilities and there will be benefits that continue to exist," said Clarke. "Even an earthquake will create some level of employment and opportunity."

The prices were pretty much out of range of even a middle-class person  
- Helen Lenskyj

# All that glitters is green

## City praises games' environmental conscience

ALINA SMIRNOVA  
The Observer

The proposed Pan Am Aquatic Centre will have a positive environmental impact by cleaning up the area where it will be built, Ward 44 councillor Ron Moeser said.

"It used to be a garbage dump," Moeser said. "We're going to clean some of that area up, as part of the overall approach."

According to the bid book, the Toronto games will strive to be the greenest ever and focus on sustainability and environmental responsibility.

The games will give Toronto an opportunity to showcase and create a legacy of climate solutions, said Deborah Carlson, campaigner at the David Suzuki Foundation.

Carlson says transportation is one of the components needed to be addressed to reach the goal of being environmentally friendly.

Lack of sustainable transportation was one of the areas where the Vancouver Olympics didn't do well, according to a climate impact evaluation by the David Suzuki Foundation.

Effectively communicating practical solutions to climate change is another area in which the Vancouver Olympics didn't do well, but the Pan Am Games can, Carlson said.

The Suzuki Foundation does not yet have plans to evaluate how the Pan Am Games will address climate impact, as they did for the Olympics, she said.

Moeser said he thinks the games will bring only benefits.

"We want to make it as environmentally friendly as possible and all those things will be part of the planning process."

Since the games are still five years away, there are no concrete plans yet on how exactly to make them environmentally friendly.

"It's important to plan early," Carlson said. "Pressure will build up closer to the day."

To see more on promises and recommendations, visit [torontoobserver.ca](http://torontoobserver.ca)



# Mapping out t

## The Observer explores S possibilities over the ne



ILLUSTRATION BY  
KAITLYNN FORD

# he future

Scarborough's  
next five years

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## Speaker's Corner

Locals express  
their visions for  
Scarborough 2015

**Sunny Chang, 26**  
*Scarborough resident*

"What's going to happen to the old RT? I think Scarborough is changing too fast. By 2015, we're going to feel the poor planning."



**Allan Tota, 25**  
*University of Toronto alumni*

"I think the new aquatics centre is going to be good for the school and will create economic sustainability for Scarborough."

**Katie Niken, 20**  
*Lick's restaurant employee*

"A lot of businesses will benefit from the games. There aren't a lot of eateries in the area, but there should be more."



**Anne Radi, 36**  
*TTC commuter*

"Scarborough is starting to look more like Toronto. By 2015, I won't be surprised if Scarborough is just called Toronto and isn't separate anymore."

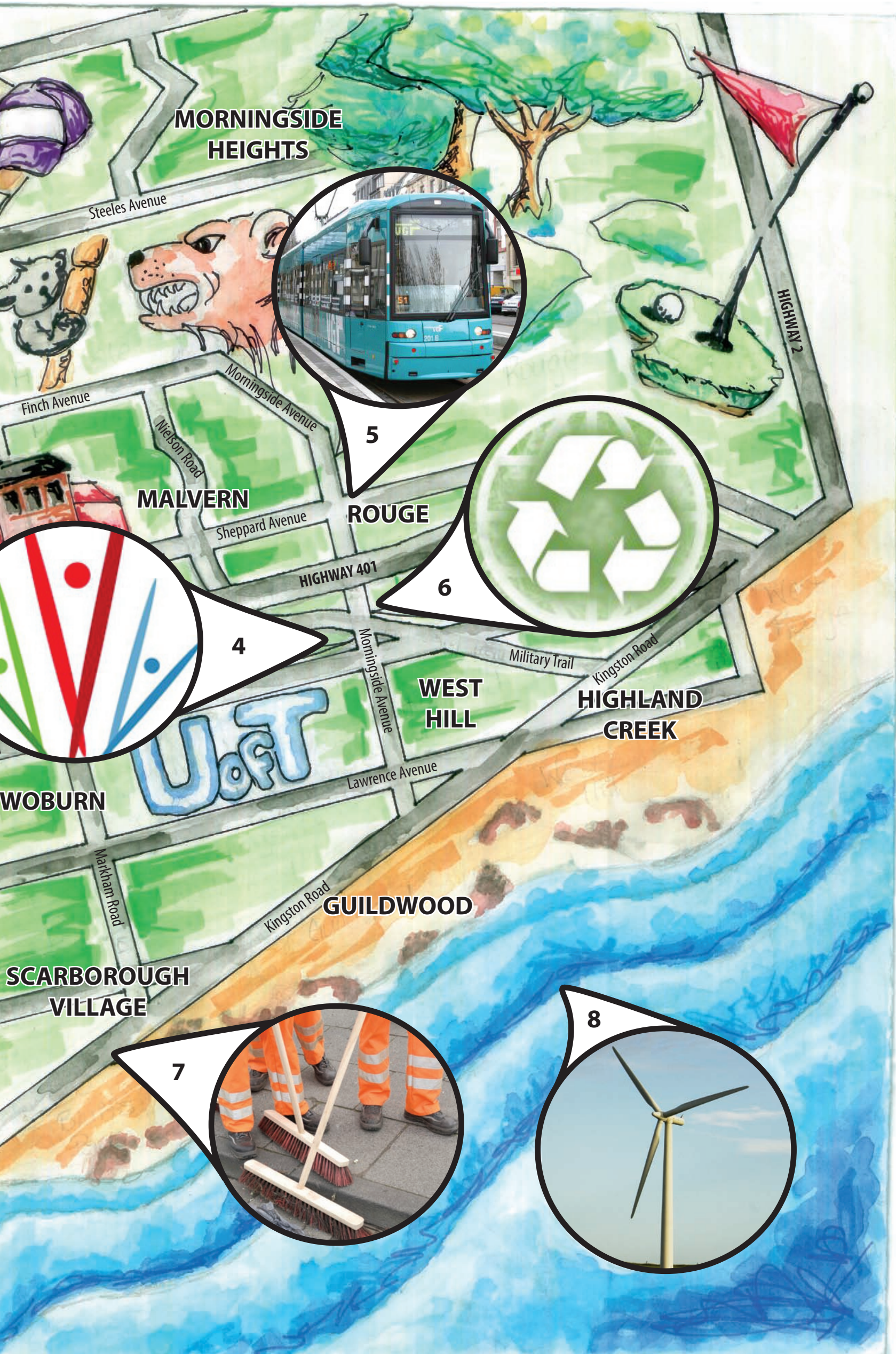


**Ronnie Lashef, 28**  
*Scarborough resident*

"It's crowded in this area already. There's just going to be even more smoke and pollution as more people come to Scarborough to use this new aquatics centre and watch the games."

**Sarina Lombarde, 18**  
*TTC commuter*

"It's going to get so busy because of all the people coming here to use the new buildings and stuff. It'll be packed and noisy."



## Tale of two cities

Scarborough has an opportunity to be more than Toronto's Bronx, known for crime and gangs.

With the Pan Am Games, a new Toronto mayor and green energy projects like wind turbines, by 2015 it could be a very different Scarborough from today.

There are two different possibilities for our future.

In one, Scarborough has a new world-class athletic complex that's open to the public and strengthens our athletic talents.

To host the games, a new transit system is built — one that finally evolves past our archaic system — with light-rail transit, which brings commuting in Scarborough into the 21st century.

Though today budget issues are slowing the tracks being built for the LRT, our new mayor could find the resources to connect us to the grid. The next mayor could also spread the wealth from Toronto to Scarborough, building the economy with job creation here and vamping up our manufacturing base.

And we could become a green energy powerhouse with 60 to 100 wind turbines built off the Scarborough Bluffs, helping not only us, but Ontario in the switch to renewable energy.

In the other vision of the future, Scarborough gets worse.

The world is unable to visit us during the Pan Am Games. Budget cuts have created a gap in our transit system. The LRT sits incomplete until 2016 as the old SRT is shut down.

East Toronto will also have issues like gentrification, kicking out the poor to "beautify" it for the games. As real-estate prices rise and condos are built, less space is made for the poor.

And instead of becoming a green energy leader, we become a green energy loser, as a lot of hot air by members of the Guildwood community scraps plans for the Bluffs' wind turbines.

So which of these two parallel universes is our future?

Well, as usual, the truth probably lies somewhere between the extremes: Scarborough will reap both benefits and costs in the years to come.

What we gain from the opportunities that lie ahead depends on whether we hold the changemakers accountable. With the Pan Am Games, we'll need the transit system secured. The next mayor needs to realize concerns before we cast our votes. And if we want sustainable energy for future generations, we need to take responsibility for our future.

With 2015 around the corner, we can shape the Scarborough of the future. Let's not blow it.

- Emily Hunter

## Yes we can, right?

"Where will you be in five years?" It's a jarring question. Some of us may not even know where we'll be in five hours.

The question has councillors and residents wondering.

The Pan Am Games are coming. Anxious fans, members of parliament, and activists can begin the countdown. The year 2015 is approaching faster than we think. Will Scarborough be able to handle the bombardment of athletes, fans, families and media?

As the proposed Scarborough RT is shutting down next year for much-needed improvements and a proposed LRT (in hopeful minds), we may have been slightly too ambitious. How will these people get to and from the city without adequate infrastructure? I don't mean to offend those working hard to get these plans in action. However, perhaps the movement should pick up the pace.

In the midst of the Pan Am pandemonium, we have a wind turbine war on our hands. But first, we must build an anemometer that will take eight months to set up and two years to collect sufficient data. And hey, if we have the time, we'll throw up some windmills and hope the athletes don't mind the eyesore and the constant humming.

I'm not saying Scarborough can't do it. If anyone can hold a crowd, host a party or award some athletes, Scarborough can. What I fear is that in five years, we'll be standing aboard a crowded LRT, perhaps slightly agitated by the lack of sleep from the hum of the turbines, maybe a little starved from the shortage of food and thinking: Why did we agree to this?

No one can predict where we will be in the next five years. We can simply hope. Hope the Don Valley Parkway and Gardiner Expressway don't charge a \$5 toll to support this endeavour. Trust the University of Toronto students don't cause uproar over heightened tuition fees because of this. Wish for the turbines to be built without travail. Pray the SRT and ambitious LRT will be up and running. Lastly, have faith that the athletes won't laugh at our failed attempts to make this the perfect Pan Am experience.

Enough with the meetings, debates, and debacles. We've got a party to host. Let's get the PANdemonium A-Movin'.

- Sarina Adamo



BRADLEY FEATHERSTONE/The Observer

## No one wins with Pan Am

Half a decade from now, buses from roughly 42 nations will exit Highway 401 at Morningside Avenue to marvel at an immense athletics facility, newly built right here in our backyard. They will step onto freshly paved parking lots and gaze around in every direction at the flourishing city that surrounds it, rejuvenated by the dawn of the Pan American Games in 2015.

At least, that's what we would like to believe.

More likely, they will be digesting the sound of a police siren somewhere not-so-far away, and looking at our current cluster of dilapidated apartment buildings that will have had five more years to rot.

Yes, the games may change a few things. They may be excellent for Toronto, an obvious source of tourism revenues and worldwide praise, if all goes well. Locally, it would be excellent for UTSC students, who may finally be treated to an athletics facility suitable for the ninth strongest university on Earth, according to Times Higher Education, rather than one barely suitable for a Scarborough high school.

The games may even give Scarborough the transportation the TTC has promised, with the LRT passing directly through the neighbourhood.

What the games will not deliver is a new Scarborough mindset.

The "suburb" has a bad reputation for a reason, and that will not change due to a new building in town. It's neither fair nor productive to repeat typical Scarborough stereotypes which impact the area's repu-



Billy COURTICE

tation almost as effectively as reality. But the reality is that the city has talked about improving the area for decades, and things are only getting worse.

Take Kingston Road: thick documents promising revivals for Scarborough roads have existed since the mid-1990s, when the city decided outdated and seedy motel strips, overgrown vacant lots, and sprawling used car dealerships don't reflect the glitz and glamour of the big city.

Come 2010 and the motels have only got seedier, the lots further overgrown, and the used cars older. Toronto's latest approach is to replace such holes with rows of condominiums, but since residents wouldn't want the already jammed road to receive any more traffic, it is unlikely our reps at city hall will do anything this time either. Instead, the city will likely plant a few pennials and pussyfoot around the issue for another lifetime.

Oh, and the taxes will probably get hiked again, too.

The fact is that Scarborough is too far gone for a mere athletics facility to bring some life into the dead town. Anything new that comes with the games will simply

fade into a desuetude state a few years after the hype fades away.

The LRT will most likely be made obsolete by 2020 in favour of some new form of technology, just as the Scarborough RT was several years after its haphazard creation. These glorified streetcars will bring their own traffic implications to already unmanageable streets in the area, and the TTC already has lobby groups detracting from its positive impact. The LRT will be old, loud, and disliked before long, not to mention its windows covered in fresh graffiti, its floors covered in fresh garbage, and filled with the same stink that plagues the RT. Bringing in something new does not keep people from using it, abusing it, and making it old all over again.

This also applies to new businesses that are to appear with the games as well. Sure, they will thrive during the games, but eventually they will fall into disrepair like almost every other business in the vicinity. Once they begin to bottom out, they will receive help from neither investors nor the city, and an entirely new generation of businesses will suffer the same fate as other Scarborough businesses have for years.

It is too bad, because locals care about the state of their town, but with an infrastructure that is suspect, and violence rates that do not want to drop, the area can't seem to shake its penchant for being the armpit of Toronto.

The motto for the 2015 Pan Am games is "Your moment is here."

But Scarborough, this is not your moment — not yet, anyway.

### THE EAST TORONTO OBSERVER

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# Budget deficit stalls transit plans

## Scarborough Light Rail Transit line may not be completed for Pan Am Games

SAEDA RAGHE  
The Observer

Transit City spokesperson  
Ryan Bissonnette.

Transit upgrades needed to support the 2015 Pan American games will be built as scheduled, but other TTC projects may be delayed because of the 2010 Ontario budget.



Due to a record budget deficit, the Ontario government will ask Metrolinx to reschedule planned projects.

Projects already started, such as the Sheppard Rapid Transit line, will not be affected.

The provincial government is hoping to save \$4 billion in the next five years.

The Scarborough Light Rail transit (LRT) project is slated to start construction in 2012 and be completed by 2016, according to TTC

The TTC is conducting a constructability study to see if construction can be expedited and completed in time for the 2015 Pan Am Games, Bissonnette said.

Councillor and mayoral candidate Joe Pantalone says the Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT) line likely won't be operational by 2015 because of its bad condition.

"There's no doubt that transportation has been badly impacted by this provincial shock of reducing the amount of money they want to spend on transit across the GTA," Pantalone said.

The SRT system will be shut down to make way for the new LRT. Supplementary bus services, in place of the



COURTESY OF TTC.CA

The TTC is conducting tests to see if the LRT will be ready for the 2015 Pan Am Games. It will provide service from Kennedy station to the east Scarborough area

SRT, could mean transit delays across east Toronto.

The University of Toronto Scarborough is in talks with the TTC on how to improve access to the campus, said the school's chief of planning Andrew Arifuzzaman.

Arifuzzaman said the TTC has been very accommodating so far and he is confident transit issues will be worked out by the Pan Am games.

"For this facility to be most affective, people need to have access to the facility.

What the transit line does is that it actually gives that access. It will make that athletic and aquatic facility a very vibrant place. It will really make it the regional draw it was intended to be," Arifuzzaman said.

## Briefs

### Free income tax clinic starts

In time for tax season, the East Scarborough Storefront at 4040 Lawrence Ave is currently hosting free income tax clinics for all low-income individuals and families until April 30. Call 416-208-9889, ext. 39 for more information and to schedule an appointment with a trained volunteer.

### Mentoring newcomers

The Centre for Information and Community Services of Ontario is seeking volunteers to mentor new immigrants to Toronto. Volunteers must give one to two hours a week for at least six months. Contact Rose Chiu at 416-293-4565, ext. 117 or r.chiu@cicscanada.com for more information.

# Artistic talent shown at local Bluffs Gallery

## Scarborough council provides workshops

KAITLYNN FORD  
The Observer

Spring was in full bloom at the Scarborough Arts Council's Bluffs Gallery.

The Spring Fever! display, one of three exhibits run SAC this year, showcased 40 mixed media, season-themed, pieces from 27 recruits.

"Visitors love the show," SAC office coordinator Susan Dimitrakopoulos said. "We have such a variety of work, and people are very inspired by it. We have a lot of great submissions."

The walls of the quaint, four-room gallery were brought to life by beautifully crafted images representing the splendor of springtime.

Artist Mary Lee Chisholm, submitted two mixed media pieces for the Spring Fever! exhibition.

Both works were done in her forte, Bunka Shi-shu, which is Japanese punch embroidery.

Chisholm is a certified master instructor of the art, and teaches classes at the Port Union Community Centre on Lawrence Avenue East and out of her home.

"Depending on the image, [Bunka] can take anywhere from 50 up to 300 hours to complete," Chisholm said. "Usually [the art submis-



BRADLEY FEATHERSTONE/The Observer

SAC executive director Tim Whalley poses with artist Vda Serasinghe's painting "Ocean Tone."

sions] are already done. I didn't just stitch them for this, because I couldn't get them done that quickly."

The pieces she submitted were completed in 1992 and 1995.

"The SAC treats their members well," said Tharmila Rajasingam, arts management specialist. "One of the best benefits of a membership is access to exhibition space at Agincourt or Cliffcrest Library, or Bluffs Gallery. For an aspiring artist, that's a big deal."

The SAC also offers two workshops to Scarborough residents: Professional Practice Techniques and Photography Basics. They aim to provide the community with the tools and techniques necessary to improve their artistic skills.

The SAC's annual event, Art in the Park, a one-day only outdoor art show and sale, is scheduled for July 17. They are currently calling for artist submissions from the community. The deadline is May 21.

# Models to strut for a cause

ALINA SMIRNOVA  
The Observer

With a measuring tape swung around her neck, Lydia Manget sits across from a rack of clothes ready for a fashion show that sold out two weeks ago.

Manget is the owner of Felicia's Collection, the boutique providing clothing for the show sponsored by the Canadian Federation of University Women Scarborough.

The proceeds of the show will go to support the Scarborough Women's Centre and to Centennial College Student Awards. A raffle will also be held, with its proceeds going to the Stephen

Lewis Foundation which funds HIV/AIDS related projects in Africa.

When the CFUW Scarborough first began developing an award fund in 1976, the aim was to help young women in Scarborough get a university education, said club member Ann Rutherford.

"We were targeting gals who had not necessarily had the highest marks in school, but they were very close to the top and they showed financial need," Rutherford said.

They also donate money to University of Toronto Scarborough, which matches their donation and gives out scholarships in their name, she said.

"Women who had the privilege of being educated, they want to give back to help other people may not have been given the funding," Manget said.

Manget has had the boutique in Highland Creek Village for the past 17 years.

This will be the fifth show she organizes for the CFUW Scarborough. Models in the show will be 20 to 70-years-old and of all backgrounds and sizes, Manget said.

"It's a lot of fun once everyone one is on the runway," she said.

The CFUW Scarborough has 60 members, around half of them will be helping out in the fashion show on April 12, she said.

# School closures set to hit West Hill

Major changes may be coming to five elementary schools in the West Hill area, according to a report presented at the Accommodation Review Committee meeting at Joseph Brant Senior Public School on March 29.

The recommended changes are a result of four months of discussions and debates on how to deal with a declining student body in the Toronto District School Board.

Heron Park and Peter Secor will be combined with Joseph Brant to create a school that will teach kindergarten and Grades 1 through 8, according to area superintendent

Allan Wolch.

The remaining two schools are set to be restructured to teach up to the Grade 8.

Although it's a difficult decision, the changes are necessary to deal with declining enrolment, Wolch said.

"We'll be providing an enhanced educational model for all three of these schools [and] reduce operational costs."

While all the facilities will be upgraded to accommodate the expected larger student body, Joseph Brant will see the most renovation with 18 additional classrooms to serve primary and special education classes.

It is hoped William G. Miller Junior Public School and Eastview Junior Public School will be ready for September 2011 and Joseph Brant ready for September 2012, Wolch said.

The community's reaction has been mostly positive, he said.

"It's difficult to close a school," Wolch said.

"It's emotional and it tears at your heart. The reason we were successful in achieving what we wanted to achieve in this [review committee], we presented a better educational program for the kids."

-Saeda Raghe

## SPORTS

# Scarborough cricketers play way to Dubai

Players try out for training program

ANGELA ROTUNDO  
The Observer

It's the chance of a lifetime for a few lucky local cricket players: an experience taking them on a world adventure.

Legendary Pakistani cricketer Mudassar Nazar visited the Canadian Cricket Academy on March 31, hosting auditions to select 10 to 15 talented players for a training program in Dubai.

They will be given the opportunity to train with high-tech equipment in world-class facilities for two weeks.

For Malvern cricketers, this type of opportunity will elevate their athletic abilities to an elite level, Nazar says.

"If these guys are given the exposure, they'll surely be some of the best in the world. You've got to provide them with the opportunity," said Nazar.

The chance to train with Nazar is a rare opportunity in itself. Known as one of cricket's most influential figures, Nazar has coached the national teams of Pakistan and Kenya. At the academy, he's looking to find the next



ANGELA ROTUNDO/The Observer

Cecil Pervez, Zain Iqbal, Sajid Virk and Saad Nazar auditioned to participate in a training program in Dubai with cricket legend Mudassar Nazar.

generation of players.

"The players here are pretty good," he said. "The thing is, working in programs like this, it's dawned on me that these kids were actually as good as the Pakistani kids back home, or the Indian kids or the English kids. I'm really impressed."

The academy has dozens

of youth playing the sport on a regular basis. Since Malvern has seen a growth in popularity for cricket, the sport has done more than provide an outlet for physical activity.

Nazar understands the impact a game like cricket can have on one's life. As he demonstrated tricks and skills for those hoping to make the

cut, he spoke about the way cricket has changed him.

"It's given me a damn good lifestyle. It's given me prominence. It feels very good when people recognize you in a strange setting. But it's made me a better person. Looking at the world go by, you pick up all the good and bad things about different cultures and I

feel rather fortunate that I was able to do that."

In the coming weeks, the Ontario Cricket Association and International Cricket Council, including Nazar, will decide the fortunate cricketers to take part in the training excursion. More than 45 talented players, most from Ontario and Quebec,

have been selected so far.

The advice Nazar would give to those eager to travel the world playing the game they love?

"If I'm walking by and I see a group of kids playing cricket, I just can't move. I just stand and watch them. They must have the passion. They must love the game."



BRADLEY FEATHERSTONE/The Observer

A Snowball Classic swimmer dives into the water at Centennial Community Centre.

## Local diving club in deep

Even a burst of summer-like weather isn't enough to entice residents of Scarborough to come out and dive.

Scarborough Diving Club president Elise Tracey is surrounded by divers on a regular basis, but the only thing that keeps diving alive is the attention it gets from media coverage, she said.

"Anytime there's diving seen in the Olympics or World Games, where it becomes more talked about, then a lot of kids register because they want to try it," Tracey said. "It's not really one of those sports like hockey and soccer you think about right away,"

Tracey and the diving

club face many challenges outside of promoting the sport. Funding and financial support for the club is, at best, at a satisfactory level. But it's frustrating to maintain a sport with little to no support, Tracey said.

"It's been hard. We've tried going to businesses and getting sponsors and it's almost impossible. And even with our own fundraising, it's hard to get help in that area."

Not only does diving come under financial pressure, but the lack of proper facilities in Scarborough make it that much more difficult to attract participants.

"We have the coaching

staff here, certified coaches, but we just don't have the proper facilities," said Tracey.

For now, Tracey's hopes for the diving club will rest on the fate of the 2015 Pan American Games. With new world-class facilities, including an Olympic-sized pool, being built over the next five years in the area, Tracey said this will help local residents take an interest in the sport.

"Sports should be a huge part of a family's life, but it's a no-brainer that kids should have the opportunity to try sports, no matter what sport that is. I think we'll see that in the years to come."

— Angela Rotundo

## Area athletes thrilled by thought of Pan Am swimming facility

JOSEF JACOBSON  
The Observer

Local sports clubs are thrilled about the prospect of using the new world-class athletics compound slated to be built at the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus.

"Everybody is excited and it's overdue to have a facility in the area," said Robyn Bate, head coach at the Scarborough Diving Club. "Most of us run out of high school pools, so for us to go from there to a full facility with a 10-metre [diving] tank and a 50-metre pool is unbelievable."

Bate said the new facility will serve Scarborough and the rest of the GTA, as clubs travel from as far as Burlington and London to use pools in Toronto.

Bates adds that she feels the new complex will be important for the survival of aquatics in the city.

"I don't foresee another



pool coming around for years and years."

Plans for the facility include two Olympic-sized swimming pools, as well as a running track and racquet courts.

Although the complex's main purpose is to serve the needs of the Pan Am Games, it is to be made available to the university and the general public by 2014.

"We expect to start construction at the very end of 2011 or beginning of 2012," said Laura Matthews, director of communications and public affairs at UTSC. "The intention is that the facility will be operational a year before the games will open."

"It will serve many different groups," said Matthews. "It's going to be a great place for recreational

athletes and people interested in a healthy lifestyle."

A shared-use agreement with the city and the university will be written to help determine who gets access to the complex.

"We'll look at scheduling for when the community can use the site and when U of T can use the site," said Ward 44 councillor Ron Moeser, a supporter of the bid.

"There will be times when it's open to both [the community and the students], there will be times when just students can use it. All those things will be decided based on the needs of the community and university."

The cost for the public to use the facilities is yet to be determined, but Moeser would like to make it as accessible and inclusive as possible, he said.

"A lot of it will be free," he said. "For seniors, I'd like to make sure it's free because they've made their contributions over the years."