



Tories promise national park

Rouge Valley would become tourist hotspot

JAMES WATTIE
The Observer

Just a quick drive from the skyscrapers of Toronto, and right in the backyard of Scarborough could be Canada's first urban national park.

The Conservatives, if elected, would establish a new national park in the Rouge Valley, according to their party platform.

"Its [the park] time has come," Ron Dewell, acting general manager of the Rouge Park Alliance said.

"Many cities have a piece of the park and it has run its course," he said.

The 47-sq. km. forested area is looked over by several different governments, including Toronto, Markham, Richmond Hill and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Scarborough-Rouge River Conservative candidate, Marlene Gallyot, claims the park would boost the prominence of the riding.

Park brings benefits

"It would be more recognition for Scarborough-Rouge River," she said. "It would bring in a lot more tourism and hopefully encourage foreign investors to come to the area."

Gallyot also said the park would create more jobs for the area. She wants to see this recognition help create a stronger infrastructure for the riding.

Rouge Park runs from the edge of Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine just north of Richmond Hill.

Park officials plan to re-work its trail system. The formation of a national park would help with funding the proposed changes, Dewell said.



ANDRE THURAIRATNAM/The Observer

That does impress me much

From her extravagant outfits to her electrifying dance moves, Shania Twain tribute act Donna Huber had the entire crowd dancing until the wee hours of the morning at Smilin' Jack's Bar and Grill Saturday night. See story on page 8.

Road plans could cause gridlock in Scarborough

ANDRE THURAIRATNAM
The Observer

It's been said Toronto has two seasons. Winter and construction.

With winter at an end, the city recently announced its 2011 plan for road work, including two major projects in the Scarborough area.

Coun. Denzil Minnan-Wong, chairman of the city's public works and infrastructure committee, unveiled the campaign at the corner of Victoria Park Avenue and Ellesmere Road last week.

"While it is critical to keep the roads in good condition, it sometimes can mean delays," he said. "In order to avoid disruptions, we coordinate our efforts with other agencies, such as utility companies, so that we can keep our disruptions to a minimum."

"We sympathize with motorists as they travel the city,



ANDRE THURAIRATNAM/The Observer

Coun. Denzil Minnan-Wong (left) speaks with Director of Transportation Services Myles Currie as the city unveiled their plans for road work later this year.

but I can't stress this enough. This work is absolutely essential."

Markham Road from Sheppard Avenue to Ellesmere is set to get a simple

road resurfacing, while Victoria Park from Hwy. 401 to Finch Avenue is set to undergo a complete reconstruction.

"The road resurfacing is

typically called a 'shave and pave' — that's where you just take the top off," Minnan-Wong said. "Roads can last a really long time and there has to be ongoing maintenance. Doing a shave and pave is a really important part of that."

"The reconstruction is where we go right down to the dirt. We pull out the entire road, the curbs, redo the sidewalks. It's a major initiative."

Like Minnan-Wong, Myles Currie, Toronto's director of transportation services, said he sympathizes with motorists.

"The city is aware of the construction season," he said. "What we try to do is keep parallel routes in the same part of the city free from construction and utility work."

"Victoria Park will be a challenge, so in this area we will try and keep our parallel routes open."

Even with neighbouring

routes to bypass construction, area resident Fiona Griffith said she's concerned traffic will be just as bad as last summer, when the southern portion of the road was being worked on.

"Pharmacy is the only [other route] that I can think of," she said. "But even last summer when we were trying to take alternate routes, we'd get blocked off anyway because everyone else is thinking the same thing."

"The traffic is going to be hectic."

The city has invested more than \$130 million into the 2011 road-work initiative, with money also going toward filling potholes. According to city statistics, Toronto has filled about 237,000 potholes in the past three years.

For more information about the state of good repair road work program, visit toronto.ca.

Office complex called bird killer

Consilium Place sued by ecology groups for collisions against glass towers

YEAMROT TADDESE

The Observer

Scarborough's Consilium Place is one of the deadliest office complexes for migratory birds in Toronto, a pair of environmental groups are alleging in a groundbreaking lawsuit.

Ecojustice and Ontario Nature are behind the suit against the management of the McCowan Road and Progress Avenue area complex, which consists of three 17- and 19-storey towers. According to Ecojustice, about 7,000 dead and injured birds have been documented by Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) at the site over the last decade.

The lawsuit is the first of its kind in North America, Ecojustice lawyer Albert Koehl said.

"If you kill a migratory bird without a hunting permit, it's illegal," he said. "If you kill a thousand birds, there doesn't seem to be a penalty for you. That didn't seem right."

Ecojustice spokesperson Kori Brus said a lawsuit was a last resort.



YEAMROT TADDESE/The Observer

Consilium Place is allegedly one of the most fatal building complexes in the GTA for migrating birds, due to the glass windows. Ecojustice and Ontario Nature have brought the building owners to court.

"For a long time before this, [Ecojustice and Ontario Nature] have approached the building owners on a voluntary basis," Brus said.

Michael Mesure of FLAP said there are several things that can be done to existing

buildings to prevent bird collisions. Visual markers on the glass are the most effective, he said.

Consilium Place attempted to scare birds away by using holographic tape, Mesure said, but that has not been effective.

"Birds learn very quickly that these are not threats," he said. "They fly over it and they fly under it."

Menkes Consilium Inc., Menkes Developments Ltd. and Menkes Property Management Services Ltd., along with three other com-

panies, have been charged under Ontario's Environmental Protection Act. The maximum fine under the act is \$6 million per day for a first offence. The suit is set to continue May 9-11 at the Ontario Court of Justice in Scarborough.

Park cash plan killed, bridge held

ERICA TIANGCO

The Observer

An April 5 city budget meeting turned down a request to redirect funds intended for a Scarborough pedestrian bridge to playground equipment.

The proposal had been made by Scarborough Centre Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker when it was revealed the 2003 plans to build the 25-metre bridge had gone nowhere.

The bridge was intended to connect a condominium building to the Scarborough RT at the Scarborough Town Centre. A letter of credit provided by the developer, Monarch Equinox Condominium Ltd., almost six years ago was for approximately \$850,000. The company also proposed to fund an additional \$600,000 for the project to sustain maintenance and connection fees.

A bridge too costly

Many Scarborough residents approve of De Baeremaeker's request.

"I don't see why a bridge needs to be built," said Kayla Williams, a resident who lives in a condominium near where the bridge is expected to be built. She believes it's both a costly and unnecessary plan.

"Any building close to the RT is only minutes away," she said. "It's not that big of deal for residents to walk an extra couple of minutes to access the mall or RT."

The developer and the TTC blame one another for the delay and increasing costs of building the bridge, according to city officials.

The costs have increased heavily to an estimated \$1.7 million.

That's too much for Kris-Andre Smith, a Scarborough resident of almost 20 years.

"If the condo had enough traffic and enough people using it, it might be okay. But also, I would factor in how much it would cost: \$1.7 million is definitely not worth it for a few minutes of convenience," he said.

De Baeremaeker told the meeting the developer is willing to give the city \$850,000 in exchange for not proceeding with the initial plans to build the bridge. Some projects De Baeremaeker indicated the funds could go to include the civic centre library, the Cliffcrest Community Centre, the Scarborough Walk of Fame, Thompson Park Tennis Club and the Centennial Community Centre.

See more at torontoobserver.ca

News Briefs

Police seek second man in sex assault

Police have arrested one man but are still looking for a second wanted in a recent sexual assault. A 28-year-old woman was allegedly sexually assaulted by two men in the area of Kennedy Road and Eglinton Avenue East at around 3 a.m. last Tuesday.

Assault case at Vic Park Station

Police are appealing to the public for their assistance with an investigation into an assault at the Victoria Park subway station. The suspect is described as having a very-light-black complexion, 6 feet tall, wearing a black coat and a dark toque.

Medication lost, harmful if ingested

A prescription bottle of Oxycontin was lost in the Eglinton Avenue East and Brimley Road area on Saturday, April 9. The medication could be fatal if ingested, especially to children.

Tory candidate denies ties to Tamil Tigers

JANICE YEUNG

The Observer

Scarborough Southwest's federal Conservative candidate Gavan Paranchothy has denied any connections to the Tamil Tigers, a separatist organization formerly based in northern Sri Lanka.

The organization was also listed as a terrorist group by Stephen Harper's government in 2006.

It was reported Paranchothy was in charge of organizing a tribute to the Tamil Tigers that was also broadcast on television last year.

The *Toronto Observer* contacted Paranchothy and his campaign manager Bret Snider, but they did not respond to the allegations.

In November of last year, Paranchothy was host of a television program on Tamil Vision International television

commemorating Heroes Day, in memorial to dead Tamil Tiger fighters.

Paranchothy changed his first name from Ragavan on television to Gavan for the election. He was nominated as a federal election candidate on March 12.

After cancelling a news conference on April 14, he issued a written statement.

"A recent media story has made insinuations that I am a supporter or sympathizer of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)," he said in the statement. "I must make clear that it is not true and that I absolutely condemn terrorists and terrorism."

Liberal incumbent Michelle Simson in Scarborough Southwest said she has no first-hand knowledge of Paranchothy's past.

She also said it is absolutely fundamental that background



COURTESY GAVAN PARANCHOTHY

Prime Minister Stephen Harper (right) insists his government has a strong position against the Tamil Tigers and has listed the group as terrorist. He denied making comments about candidate Gavan Paranchothy.

checks should be made before a candidate is chosen to run for federal office.

"The media was asking a valid question," she said. "It all started with him changing his name. The media has the right to delve into issues brought up by candidates running for public office."

Scarborough Southwest NDP candidate Dan Harris said there are not enough proven facts for him to properly comment on his competitor Paranchothy's rumoured connections to the Tamil Tigers.

“
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— Gavan
Paranchothy

Trudeau encourages youth to vote

AAKANKSHA TANGRI
The Observer

If young people want a voice, they should join political parties and vote, star Liberal candidate Justin Trudeau said Monday while campaigning in Scarborough-Rouge River.

Trudeau, son of former prime minister Pierre Trudeau, was at the Chinese Cultural Centre for a rally hosted by first-time candidate Rana Sarkar.

In the last federal election, only 37 per cent of Canadians between the ages of 18 and 24 voted. Trudeau said he hopes they will come out in larger numbers this time.

"Young people would rather join Me to We, or Greenpeace or Amnesty International than sign up to be a member of a political party," he said in an interview. "That can change because as young people start voting, they start making their voices heard and therefore their concerns matter in a very real way to politicians."

"Politicians will start responding to those issues."

Derek Lee, who stepped down after 23 years as the riding's MP, was also supporting Sarkar's campaign.

"In some ways, my departure and his arrival is a very conspicuous generational change that reflects the importance of youth participation in politics," Lee said.

Sarkar, former president and



AAKANKSHA TANGRI/The Observer

The Liberal Party's candidate for Papineau, Justin Trudeau (right) was in Scarborough-Rouge River to campaign for first-time candidate Rana Sarkar (left). Incumbent Derek Lee (centre) was also there to lend support to Sarkar.

CEO of the Canada-India Business Council, stressed how important it was for youth and new Canadians to vote.

"It's such an amazing thing when you go to someone's door and they say, 'I just became a citizen, this is the first time I'm going to vote,'" he said.

As a student, Sarkar worked with Lee and credits the experience for his interest in politics.

"The most important set of skills that I learned in all of that time came of this foundational period of working with Derek," he said. "These are learning how to turn ideas into real things and that's what you learn when you get engaged in politics."

Trudeau, the Grit candidate for the Quebec riding of Papineau, pitched the Liberal Learning Passport to the students, many of whom told him they would vote in this election.

"A thousand dollars a year for four years for every student attending university or vocational school or college; \$1,500 a year for kids from

Young people would rather join Me to We, ... than sign up to be a member of a political party
— Justin Trudeau

low-income families — that is to help families cover the costs of higher education," Trudeau said.

York University student Vithusan Ramachandran said he wants to know what the new government will offer to young Canadians. "What will they do about taxes, student debt and job employment?" Ramachandran said. "How are

they going to make progress without fighting each other?"

Trudeau also took a dig at the Conservative government, calling it the most secretive, controlling, vindictive and manipulative government Canada has ever had.

"When RCMP officers kick kids out of Conservative rallies because of pictures on their Facebook that show them with Michael Ignatieff, that's an abuse of power," he said. "That is un-Canadian."

Sarkar, Lee and Trudeau also answered questions from the audience on youth participation and encouraged them to "just get out and vote."

Ash trees in serious decline from beetles

JESSICA LEE
The Observer

In 10 years, 80 percent of the trees in Guildwood Village will be gone, Toronto parks and recreation chair Norm Kelly says.

That's because they're ash trees and are under attack by a foreign enemy.

"In 2007, we picked up the existence of the emerald ash borer," Kelly said. "This is a little tiny beetle about a quarter to a half an inch that landed on our shores ...

about roughly 2002 to 2003. [It] came over from China.

The emerald ash borer is a narrow, hairless, metallic blue-green beetle. "It's terrible. The value of those ash trees are about a billion dollars," Kelly said.

"So all we can do is tell people, 'Hey, this is what's going to happen.' Some neighbourhoods are going to be devastated."

Kelly estimated there are about 804,000 ash trees in Toronto. Many were planted 40 years ago because they are

"beautiful" and because they grow quickly.

"I think [the public] will be dismayed," he said. "A lot of Scarborough, for example, a lot of the subdivisions that were built 30 or 40 years ago now have beautiful, mature ash trees on the boulevards.

"Well, they'll be gone in 10 years."

"It's going to take a ton of money to take the trees down and it's going to take a ton of money to replant."

According to Lorne Bertrand of Eastern Tree Removal

Company, trees can cost anywhere from \$1,000 to \$2,000 to remove.

"It depends on the size and location [of the tree]," Bertrand said.

City council decided April 12 that Toronto is going to cut down the ash trees.

Kelly estimated the cost to take all the affected trees down will be at least \$1 billion.

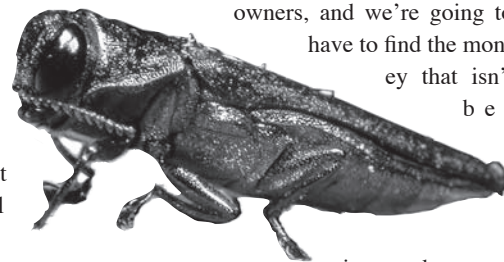
"Right now we don't have the money for it," he said. "We are already three quarters of a billion dollars in debt, so this couldn't have come at a worse time. We will need to get help from the other two levels of government.

There are some weapons the city can use to combat the bug in the strongest ash trees, Kelly said.

"We're going to try to save the healthiest and the most prominent ash trees on public property, but everything else goes," he said.

To help the public with the cost, the City of Toronto will waive the tree-cutting bylaw, which comes with a \$100 application fee and mandates an arborist examine the tree to be cut.

"It's an unexpected cost for the city and for property owners, and we're going to have to find the money that isn't



being used to cope with this," Kelly said.

It costs \$100-\$200 to plant a new tree through Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests (LEAF), a non-profit organization "dedicated to the protection of urban forests".

Tom Sachdeva, a real estate agent who has been selling houses in the Guildwood area for the last seven years, is facing a different set of problems.

"Once the trees are gone, nobody's going to buy," he said. "That's what's keeping the values high in Guildwood. And it's a mature community with a lot of trees."



JESSICA LEE/The Observer

Emerald ash borer beetles are eating the leaves of Ash trees in Guildwood Village while its larvae bore through the bark of the tree eventually resulting in death.

Grow-op busts higher

MERSIHA GADZO
The Observer

The number of marijuana grow-op busts in 2009-2010 in Scarborough increased by 52 per cent over the previous year, police documents show.

Last year, 93 grow-ops were found in Scarborough, up from 61.

That same period has seen a 25-per cent increase across Toronto: 248 grow-ops were found in Toronto, up from 199 in 2009 and 140 in 2008.

More police officers have been assigned to deal with drug-related issues in recent years, Const. Wendy Drummond said, which accounts for the dramatic rise in the number of busts.

"It's one of our service priorities," Drummond said. "Resources have been dedicated to eradicating and help reduce drug-related crime."

"Because we have more officers, we're able to do more work and [are] able to dismantle more operations."

Police released a list of grow-op addresses under access-to-information laws.

See more at torontoobserver.ca

Malvern welcomes Taibu

KAYLA KREUTZBERG
The Observer

The sounds of African drums rang in the official opening of the new Taibu Community Health Centre for the black community and Malvern residents on Wednesday evening.

"This is a community health centre, so we are providing primary health care, health promotion, disease prevention and community development programs for the community here in Malvern," said Liben Gebremichael, executive director at Taibu. "We also mandate to provide program services for the African and Caribbean population.







"It's geographically based but it's population-focused, so we are based in [and] serve all the residents in Malvern, but we also have a specialized focus on the black community across the Greater Toronto Area."

Taibu opened in 2008. It was temporarily located across the street from its new location, now at 27 Tapscott Rd.

See more at torontoobserver.ca







Canada Votes 2011

SCARBOROUGH-AGINCOURT

	HEALTH CARE	CRIME	ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION
  JIM KARYGIANNIS	"I believe in a one-tier public health care system. I strongly believe that you should use your health card, not your credit card."	"I want to work with government agencies to rid Scarborough-Agincourt of marijuana grow-ops and meth labs."	"We need to transition to a low-carbon, high efficiency economy. Canada needs to act now on clean technologies."	"Establish a new Early Childhood Learning and Care Fund that will begin with \$500 million in the first year."
  HARRY TSAI*	"I will support the principles of the Canadian Health Care Act and will ensure that the provinces carry out what is mandated."	"Canadians agree that the justice system should not put the rights of criminals ahead of the rights of victims and law-abiding citizens."	"We will support economically viable clean energy projects that will assist regions and provinces in the replacement of fossil fuels."	"The Conservative Government has increased transfer payments substantially. We have also taken action to provide support for students."
  NANCY PATCHELL	"We would like to have a national assessment program to help people get accredited in their field in Canada."	"We need more community policing and we need police to make connections and be a presence in the community."	"We need to focus on finding good, clean energy. The NDP's Climate Change Accountability act was shot down by the Conservatives."	"I think that everyone should have access to education. I think it should be affordable, and subsidized in many cases."

*Taken from party platform







SCARBOROUGH-GUILDWOOD

	HEALTH CARE	CRIME	ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION
  JOHN MCKAY*	The Liberals will collaborate with provinces and health professionals on quality and innovation.	The Liberals will mandate a national task force to examine systemic causes of violence against women with an emphasis on prevention.	A Liberal government will provide the leadership required for Canada to make a successful transition to the prosperous cleaner economy.	The policy initiative anchoring the Liberal Canadian Learning Strategy entail nearly \$3 billion in new federal funds over the first two years.
  CHUCK KONKEL	"Certainly the Harper Government is committed to maintaining the 6% in funding that has been placed in health care."	"If you defraud people of money and hard earned salaries of working class Canadians, then you deserve to do the time."	"The environment is also about business, we have to be very critical that we don't let our hearts speak for our pocket books."	"In terms of universities and community colleges, the government of Canada has to put resources into research and grant programs."
  DANIELLE OUELLETTE	"The NDP Health Care plan means more doctors and nurses to help the five million Canadians who do not have a family doctor."	"We will work to keep communities safe by investing in community-based crime prevention initiatives."	"We will work to ensure Canada becomes a leader in investing in renewable energy and ensure public transit investments are a priority."	"We will make post-secondary education affordable by attacking tuition costs with a designated \$800 million transfer to provinces."

Also running in this riding is Alonzo Bartley (Green Party)







*Taken from party platform

SCARBOROUGH-ROUGE RIVER

	HEALTH CARE	CRIME	ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION
  RANA SARKAR	"We will invest \$1 billion to allow family members to take time off from work to care for sick loved ones."	"No one disagrees that criminals must be punished but we also need to look at the systemic issues behind crime."	"We will support a Green Renovation Tax credit with a goal of retrofitting over 1 million homes by 2017 to lower energy consumption."	"The Liberal Learning Passport will provide a post-secondary bursary of \$1,000 a year over four years for every high school student."
  MARLENE GALLYOT	"We will push the Conservative platform regarding no public funding for abortions and introduce an adult fitness tax credit."	"I believe that criminals have to be deported if they are here in Canada illegally."	"We will work with the other levels of government to push the Clean City Project."	"We will expand the student loan program and help for part-time students. We need more facilities to engage youth."
  RATHIKA SATSABAIESAN	"We need a hospital in the riding as well as reducing the cost of prescription drugs. We need to recognize foreign credentials for doctors."	"There is white-collar crime that is happening that is being shoved under the rug. We will focus on youth redevelopment programs."	"We have been spearheading environmental issues for years before the Green Party. Turning Rouge Park into a national park is a good idea."	"We need to invest more into post-secondary education. Tuition fees should be dropping. I am against flat fees for education."

Also running in this riding is George Singh (Green Party)







ELECTION PREVIEW

	HEALTH CARE	CRIME	ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION
  MICHELLE SIMSON	"Health care should remain universal. My party wants to provide an increase in funding to the healthcare system."	"I [want] to retain the long-gun registry. There is a way to approach crime other than just locking people up and throwing away the key."	"We currently have a government that hasn't addressed anything. It is long past time to get real about saving the planet."	"I want post-secondary education for students with the grades to go. There is no better investment than education."
  GAVAN PARANCHOTHY*	"The Conservatives are committed to a universal public health care system and the Canada Health Act."	"The Conservatives want to crack down on human smuggling and strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces."	"A national conservation plan will be established that will facilitate the creation of new protected areas, national parks."	"The Conservatives want to provide loans and mentoring to young entrepreneurs and double the work exemption for Canada Student Loans."
  DAN HARRIS	"More doctors cut the number of unnecessary emergency room visits, which saves money."	"We need to attack the root causes of crime. Now is not the time to build many new prisons and fill them up."	"Cutting subsidies for large oil producers will help us to fund more green initiatives to protect our environment."	"We need to improve access to post-secondary education by improving grants and lowering tuition fees."

Also running in this riding is Stefan Dixon (Green Party)

*Taken from party platform







SCARBOROUGH SOUTHWEST

	HEALTH CARE	CRIME	ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION
  JOHN CANNIS*	For Liberals, universal access to quality, timely care regardless of your ability to pay, and regardless of which province you live in.	A Liberal government will improve the long-gun registry so that it better serves police, Canadian long-gun owners and rural Canadians.	The Liberal Party says they need to better manage our environmental footprint locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.	The Liberal Party platform says direct financial support to families for higher education is needed.
  ROXANNE JAMES*	In conjunction with the provinces, allow for a mix of public and private health care delivery, as long as healthcare remains publically funded.	A re-elected Conservative government will expand consecutive sentencing to offenders who commit sex offences against children.	The Conservative Party wants to strengthen their efforts to restore degraded ecosystems and reintroduce native species.	The Conservative Party will extend support for the Canada Youth Business Foundation.
  NATALIE HUNDT*	The NDP platform includes investing in more family doctors and nurses, and expanding care for seniors.	The NDP wants to hire more police to protect your community and recognizing local heroes.	The NDP wants to adopt the climate change accountability act to ensure Canada becomes a world leader in renewable energy.	Improving access to child care and post-secondary education.

Also running in this riding is Ella Ng (Green Party)

*Taken from party platform

SCARBOROUGH CENTRE

	HEALTH CARE	CRIME	ENVIRONMENT	EDUCATION
  DAN MCTEAGUE*	The Liberal Party platform wants universal health care for all Canadians.	The Harper government's 'tough on crime' rhetoric is the furthest thing from the open and honest debate we need to create safer communities.	Canadians have world-leading experience in natural resource development, gained over generations in energy, agriculture, forestry.	The Liberal Party platform feels that saving for post-secondary education is critical in the 21st century.
  CORNELIU CHISU*	The Conservative Party's platform says that all Canadians should have reasonable access to quality health care.	The Conservative platform wants to make sure our streets are safe through new laws to protect children and the elderly.	The Conservatives believe that the quality of the environment is a vital part of our heritage to be protected by each generation for the next.	The Conservatives will help every family with the costs of college or university, so your kids can be ready for the jobs of tomorrow.
  ANDREA MOFFAT	"There are distinct areas in Canada's health care system that requires change such as Canada's physiotherapy program."	"To control crime we need to start with our children. We need to provide support systems to help families."	"Environmental protection should start in communities such as tree-planting activities. We need a greener economy."	"Canadian students deserve high-quality, affordable education. Tuition fees have increased by nearly 20 per cent over the last 4 years."

Also running in this riding is Kevin Smith (Green Party)

*Taken from party platform

PICKERING-SCARBOROUGH EAST

Snap out of it, Canada

Canada is in a strange position right now. The world sees it as bland, boring and predictable. In a lot of ways, we are all of those things, and there's nothing wrong with that. Stability never hurt anybody, right?

Wrong. Young Canadians have become used to living in relatively the same world regardless of whether Conservatives or Liberals are in power. There's still universal healthcare, the buses still run and Tim Hortons continues to serve mediocre coffee. No one touches issues young people talk about, simply because the youth are split. One side is complacent in the world they live in. The other side consists of radicals with no chance of pushing their agenda.

University students come out every year on Nov. 5 to protest against rising tuition fees but in reality, the Drop Fees rally is just an excuse for a large number of people to get high together downtown.

Similarly, student union representatives meet with politicians and allow themselves to be wooed but only around election time. That is what's going on today on our campuses. Candidates schmooze students, who are then so starstruck over a famous politician visiting their campus that all they get out of the event is a blurry cellphone picture and an unnecessarily excited Facebook update.

These same students then proclaim their die-hard support for the Liberals or the Tories. In reality, when they go to conferences for politically engaged youth, they all come back with the same stories of finding "exciting networking opportunities" — that is, make out with other students.

Do these students regularly visit the websites of the political parties they claim to support? No. Political engagement is simply a fad that engulfs them every four years or so.

Canadian youth need to realize their country is not in a state of turmoil like Egypt. They can ask and get whatever they want from their government, as long as they don't do it G20-style.

A university student recently told me he refuses to vote because he thinks four years is not a long time for one government to make any significant change, so "Why bother?"

He is just one example. Apathy, not obesity, is the epidemic taking over North America, at least on this side of the border.

A solution some student unions have come up with is a vote mob. Large groups of students get together and literally mob their local election offices to be heard by candidates who rarely target them.

On the other hand, these mobs are meeting up on days leading up to May 2. But, there's no guarantee students who come out with their friends to cheer for extremely vague causes will also vote.

— Maryam Shah

Small steps are working better

With Earth Day approaching, communities around the city are gearing up to make over their neighbourhoods — for at least 20 minutes on any given day.

The Malvern community has several events to show it's doing its part to keep Scarborough clean.

These small community efforts are arguably much better than larger-scale events hoping to raise awareness about global warming, such as Earth Hour.

The event this year was a bust, with little effort by people to dim or switch off their lights.

Toronto Hydro reported energy consumption during Earth Hour went down 115 megawatts.

Sounds good right? Until you compare this to the year before, where there was a 296-megawatt decrease. Maybe colder temperatures played a part, or maybe people just aren't buying into a one-hour "show of solidarity" toward such a large cause.

When smaller communities decide to clean up their act, they make a bigger impact.

Sure, their efforts aren't going to be recognized worldwide, but for every area the Malvern Community Coalition cleared up last week, they affected their community much more than turning down their lights would have.

— Natalie Sequeira

Somewhere in Canada...

SHOPAHOLICS ANONYMOUS



JESSICA LEE/The Observer

Scarborough's devotion to the Liberals: Why change it now?

This opinion piece is supposed to proceed riding by riding, breaking down the issues to endorse candidates this paper believes can best serve Scarborough.

We have the issues before us and we know where each candidate and party stand.

But to go through each riding one by one would be a waste of space and time.

There is only one party that has benefitted Scarborough for the past decade or so, and they have the record to prove it. Liberals own Scarborough, much as they do a majority of the Greater Toronto Area.

Liberal candidates have maintained control over this area for a reason. In the past it was due to the party's views on immigration.

Some say that is not the case anymore. Some say other parties are speaking more in line with the ethnic communities that make up Scarborough.

But from Malvern to Rouge Valley and Miliken to Guildwood, Scarborough's residents have a choice to



James Wattie

make: Stay the course with the Liberals or vote against those that have run this area for more than 10 years.

John McKay, Dan McTeague, Jim Karygiannis, Michelle Simson and John Cannis have earned one more term to serve their respective ridings. Scarborough-Rouge River will greatly miss the leadership of Derek Lee, but it has a suitable and qualified replacement in Rana Sarkar. Sarkar worked under Lee and is prepared to step into the role of MP.

Scarborough-Southwest's Simson became the first federal politician to put her expenses online for all to see and dissect, continuing her support of an open and transparent government.

Scarborough Centre's Cannis listened to his constituents after calls for tougher criminal laws, as he supported a bill to tighten auto theft and property crimes.

But we cannot simply look at what these candidates have done for their ridings. We must look at the alternatives. According to polls, that means the Conservatives.

In Scarborough-Southwest, the Conservatives offer us Gavan Paranchothy. Paranchothy has changed his name (and multiple online personas) to rid any mention of his ties or television broadcasts paying tribute to the Tamil Tigers, a terrorist organization as declared by his Conservative government.

The Conservatives do not understand what Scarborough wants, needs or deserves.

The Liberal streak must continue if this area is to prosper and rid itself of the inaccurate reputation it has garnered.

Scarborough must remain red and hope the rest of the country votes in a similar fashion.

The East Toronto OBSERVER

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The East Toronto Observer Serving Scarborough is published by University of Toronto/Centennial College journalism students under faculty supervision. We are located at the Centennial HP Science and Technology Centre. Please address correspondence to The East Toronto Observer, c/o Centennial College, 755 Morningside Ave., Toronto, ON M1C 5J9, 416-289-5000, ext. 8306, fax 416-289-5168. Email: HPObserver@centennialcollege.ca The opinions expressed in The Observer do not necessarily reflect the views of the college. A companion website is at torontoobserver.com.

Sports Briefs

Students win \$5K each in Scrabble

Alex Li and Jackson Smylie from Jack Miner Senior Public School won \$10,000 in an international scrabble match in Orlando, Fla. last weekend with the word "carnate" for 87 points. Li and Smylie beat more than 400 students, including reigning champions from Windham, N.H.

L.A. King assists in game against

Scarborough native Wayne Simmonds has entered the NHL playoffs for the second time in his young career. The defenceman for the 7th-place Los Angeles Kings registered an assist in the team's 6-5 overtime loss to the Sharks April 19.

Volleyball veteran commemorated

The 2010 Ontario Sports Award ceremony took place Thursday at the Ontario Place. Sylvia Jacksetic, provincial officials committee chairman, of the Ontario Volleyball Association received the Syl Apps Awards for her "dedication and years of service to the OVA and volleyball community in Ontario."

Sprinter donates to Special Olympics

Akinremi to train four athletes competing in Athens this June

MERSIHA GADZO
The Observer

World-class Canadian sprinter Okiki Akinremi competed on the international stage for 17 years. He has been ranked one of the world's top 20 sprinters, and has trained with some of the best coaches in the world.

Now as a trainer himself, Akinremi is passing down his knowledge by donating a series of training sessions to four athletes competing in the Special Olympics this June in Athens.

The Special Olympics is dedicated to enriching the lives of those with an intellectual disability through sport. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, what first started out as a summer camp has now grown internationally to include nearly 3.5 million athletes.

"I think she did an amazing thing and I think that her legacy will definitely carry on," Akinremi said. "I'm happy to be a part of it and I'm happy to be able to give back to the athletes any way I can."

Through Motionball, a Canadian organization that raises funds for the Special Olympics, Akinremi has volunteered his time to help train the athletes at his own fitness studio, Explosion Fitness Resolutions in Scarborough.

"I think the Special Olympics is a great thing for athletes that have special needs," Akinremi said. "It's a great way for them to compete on the world stage and get the exposure."

Akinremi helps the athletes (three of them sprinters, one a rhythmic gymnast) improve



COURTESY ALYSSA FRASER/DUET PUBLIC RELATIONS

Special Olympics athletes pose with trainer Okiki Akinremi at his Explosion Fitness Resolutions studio in Scarborough. From left to right: Monique Shah, Marianne Scharf, Akinremi, Christina Judd-Campbell and Catherine Partlow.

their technique. Along with training with their regular coaches back at home, they meet with Akinremi once a month and do exercises to improve their speed and prepare themselves for the Olympics.

Christina Campbell, who will be competing in gymnastics says she's been training hard, trying to improve her flexibility, and she hopes to bring home five gold medals.

"I think Okiki is a really great inspiration to all special-needs athletes and he's a great inspiration for other athletes as well," Catherine Partlow, a gold-winning track star said.

One per cent of all Canadians are born with an intellectual disability. Special Olympics Canada has so far supported 10 per cent of that number thanks to funds. But, as Paul Etherington, co-founder of Motionball says, there's still a lot that needs to be done.

"It's a massive issue," Paul said. "By support we can enrich their lives and help them to become more active members of society."

The Special Olympics helps athletes not only physically, but socially and emotionally as well. It offers them a chance to be a part of the community and to

have a new sense of belonging.

"So many people know about Paralympics but nobody knows about Special Olympics," Etherington said. "So, to have an Olympic athlete [Akinremi] tell his story and help train some of the Olympic athletes, it's incredible."

Motionball, founded in 2002 by the Etherington brothers, is entirely volunteer-based and has so far raised more than \$2 million for the Special Olympics. Through their fundraising events held across Canada, they plan to donate \$1 million annually by 2014.

Kathy Campbell, Christina's

mother said, without these organizations, athletes wouldn't be able to do their best and show other people what they can do.

"A lot of times, the instant assumption is what people with intellectual disability cannot do, whereas the Special Olympics gives athletes an opportunity to demonstrate what they can do well," Campbell said.

"We appreciate Okiki taking the time. He's done a great job and he's shared his skills and expertise with the girls and as a result has really given them an extra push and kick start to their training, and for that we're grateful."

Stingers baseball paves way for Canadian talent

KYLE LARKIN
The Observer

With the grudging end to the hockey season, April brings with it a new sport for Canadians to anticipate. For many Torontonians, baseball can be

just as exciting as the nation's favourite sport.

But the growth and support of baseball in Toronto has been lethargic. Aside from hockey, sports such as soccer, basketball and even cricket have received more support annually as base-

ball's popularity declines.

However, in recent years, Scarborough has taken large steps towards building a promising future for baseball in Toronto. Eight years ago the Scarborough Stingers were formed, and have grown continually since.

"There are now more than 100 kids playing baseball for the Stingers, and our coaches report that more kids are showing up at try-outs every year," said Greg Dennis, chairman of the Scarborough Stingers Association.

The Stingers have fielded AAA teams at every level. They've added three AA teams this season, and foresee more additions in the near future.

Dennis envisions more than just having fun.

"The number one thing we want to do is improve the Stingers program itself, with increased coaching clinics and instruction for the players," he said.

"We stress fun and fundamental development, and our

greater number of people.

Colin Cummins has also dedicated his time to local development, opening his own baseball training facility in Scarborough last month. Cummins has also run summer camps since 1998.

"The [MLB] strike in 1994 damaged baseball in Canada. However, influences such as Justin Morneau, Jesse Crain and Russell Martin, have given Canadian baseball a boost over the last couple of years," Cummins said.

"Joey Votto's MVP season last year has really given Canadian baseball a huge kick."

Votto, born in Etobicoke, is the second Canadian to win MLB's MVP in the last five years, and is complementing the resurgence of baseball in Toronto.

As a member of the Toronto Baseball Association, the Stingers work harmoniously with the York Simcoe Baseball Association and the Eastern Ontario Baseball Association to mature young athletes.

"[Athletes] bring us their de-

sire and raw talent, and we give them the tools to developing good skills-and then the most gifted will take those things to a higher level beyond the ball fields of Scarborough," Dennis said.

The formula has worked so far, pumping out high school prospects such as Caleb King and Mitch Triolo on a yearly basis. Former Stinger Brian Piper currently plays US collegiate baseball.

With the dramatic improvement of baseball development systems, Canada's current number of 20 MLB athletes will almost surely rise. And when it does, people like Dennis, Gallo and Cummins deserve praise.

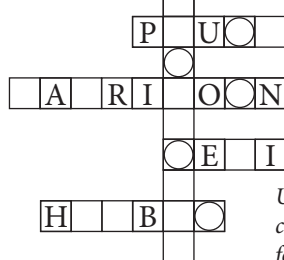
"The day will come soon enough that a Major Baseball League player will be able to credit his early development to the Scarborough Stingers," Dennis said.

"And I look forward to the day when a former Stinger toes the rubber or digs in to hit for the very first time at the major league level."

LINGUISTIC LARKS

Category

The Universe



With the letters given, guess the horizontal clues. Work your way to the vertical clue.

Unscramble the circled letters to form the final answer.

This band shares a name with a U.S. state

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

By Kyle Larkin

“

Athletes bring us their desire and raw talent
— Greg Dennis

program will be measured by our success in developing players as well as our competitiveness on the field."

The Stingers emphasize the importance of developing the skill set of kids who live in Scarborough. Clinics, held by Frank Gallo, director of baseball operations, are provided to help nurture young talent and create a brighter future for a

Shania Twain doubles the fun

ANDRE THURAIRATNAM
The Observer

Shania Twain — looking like the real Shania Twain from top to bottom — took the stage singing “Man! I Feel Like a Woman!”

Twain, otherwise known as Donna Huber, brought her Twain tribute act to Smilin’ Jack’s Bar and Grill at 3482 Lawrence Ave. E. Saturday night.

“I couldn’t even tell it was not Shania Twain,” said Jordie Scott, a Scarborough resident at the show.

He wasn’t exaggerating. Everything from her tall, black leather boots to the trademark Twain hairstyle made the performance feel close to the real thing.

Huber’s high-energy show had the entire crowd — a mix of fans and Smilin’ Jack’s regulars — on the dance floor till the wee hours of the morning.

“I loved her [stage presence],” Scott said. “I really liked what she was wearing too. She had the whole getup. It was great.”

Lori Dennis, an old friend of Huber’s, was also at the Saturday night show.

It was the first time they’d crossed paths in more than 10 years. She recalled being with Huber the moment she was struck with the idea to pursue a performing career.

“We went on vacation with some friends to Nashville. She went in the Barbara Mandrell recording studio and did karaoke. She

sounded horrible,” Dennis said with a laugh.

“But, she said that somebody else there said that she looked like Shania Twain,” she added. “So she got a karaoke machine and practiced and practiced ... until she was ready enough to make the decision to do this.”

Before starting the act in 1996, Huber had experience singing in a choir but never as a lead performer.

“I said I was going to do this for about three years and have some fun and then I’ll move on,” Huber said in an interview the day before the Smilin’ Jack’s show. “That’s really what I thought. I never expected to sing. I wasn’t thinking music back then. It wasn’t in my brain at all. Maybe in the shower, but that’s it.”

Now, 15 years later, she said she’s enjoying paying homage to one of her favourite artists.

And, it seems, so are her fans.

“What sets her apart is her overall performance, the energy she brings,” Scott said. “She keeps the audience really involved. A lot of other bands just go out there and sing, but she’s a full package of entertainment.”

For a list of Huber’s tour dates, check out her website, shaniatwin.ca.



ANDRE THURAIRATNAM/The Observer

During the first of three sets at Smilin’ Jack’s Bar and Grill Saturday, Donna Huber sang familiar Shania tunes.

Arts Briefs

I bet I can date her and you can’t

The Scarborough Village Theatre is performing the Broadway hit *Guys and Dolls*. It tells the story of a bet between two men over who can date Sister Sarah Brown of the Save-a-Soul Mission.

Show times are April 28 – May 13 at 8 p.m. and May 1 – 14 at 2 p.m.

For ticket prices visit theatrescarborough.com

Flea market coming Saturday

A flea market and rummage sale will be held at Christ Church Scarborough Village on Sat. April 30 from 9 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend the annual sale.

Sing your heart and soul out

On May 1, the Bel-Canto singers, a community choir, will be presenting their annual concert, *Songs for the Heart and Soul* at 2:30 p.m. The concert will take place at St. Dunsten of Canterbury Church located at 56 Lawson Rd.



COURTESY CHARLES WEISS

Scarborough Arts member Charles Weiss poses with a wood-carving of a Northern Pike. His work is on display at the Bluffs Gallery until the end of April.

Fishing for inspiration

CHANTELLE HENRIQUES
The Observer

Nestled in a corner on Kingston Road in Scarborough, the Bluffs Gallery is easy to spot with its bright door painted to look like a butterfly.

It is local artist Charles Weiss’ newest addition to the Bluffs gallery that catches the eye of many. It is a painting named ‘Northern pike chasing a perch.’

Weiss grew up fishing with his father around the Kawartha Lakes and Georgian Bay areas.

“My experiences while fishing are a great thing for me as an artist. It allows me to make accurate observations,” Weiss said.

Weiss’ work on display at the Bluffs Gallery is an oil painting. He also specializes in woodcarvings. In high

school, he worked on a bass sculpture 30 inches in length.

Weiss says painting fish has always been of interest to him because things that live in water are a source of beauty to him.

“Ever since I was a young lad, I was inspired by the world below the water,” he said.

Weiss became a member of the Scarborough Arts committee when he moved to from Eto-

bicoke in 2006.

“There is a gathering of arts people here in Scarborough that are very different from the art groups in Etobicoke.”

Program coordinator Ben Lopes says the most interesting thing about ‘Spring Fever’ is the uniqueness and variety of pieces.

“It’s a really interesting broad mix of pieces. You have traditional type of works like landscapes and floral pieces. But then you have psychadelic, abstract pieces,” he said.

“I was inspired by the world below the water” — Charles Weiss

Chess fever

Local libraries promote strategic board game

ALEX KOZOVSKI
The Observer

Yuanling Yuan is quickly becoming the queen of Toronto’s chess community.

The 17-year-old chess prodigy is Canada’s top female chess player, was the youngest Women International Master chess player ever, and is now spreading the game of chess throughout the GTA.

Chess in the Library, a student volunteer-run program, was founded by Yuan in hopes of spreading the conservative game across the GTA.

At least for now.

Yuan has a specific goal in mind, unwavering since start-

ing the club back in June 2009.

“The goal is to expand the program to every province in Canada,” said Yuan, a student at Victoria Park Collegiate Institute.

The program is well on its way to doing just that.

Already spanning across 17 Toronto libraries, Chess in the Library has expanded to libraries in Calgary and Victoria. The goal of the program is to promote the game of chess, through casual games for the beginner, and Chess Federation of Canada (CFC) rated games for the experienced.

See torontoobserver.ca for more on this story



COURTESY CHESS IN THE LIBRARY

Yuanling Yuan competing in the 39th Chess Olympiad in Russia, representing the Canadian Women’s Team.