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THE EAST TORONTO OBSERVER

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Nightmare on Cedar Drive

Two fires in one day make girl's dream come true

SARINA ADAMO
 The Observer

It was a nightmare come true for 16-year-old Sharon Thuraisingham when a fire broke out in her home at 28A Cedar Dr. on the morning of April 11.

"I had a dream about this about two or three weeks before it happened," said Thuraisingham, who said she didn't want to live there anymore since the house was cursed.

To make matters scarier, Thuraisingham hadn't dreamed a second fire engulfing the home the same day.

Firefighters told the Thuraisingham family the house was safe after the initial fire in the kitchen was put out but were called back hours later to find the roof ablaze.

David Thuraisingham, husband and father of two, said the first fire broke out right in front of his wife's eyes around 9:30 a.m.

"She was cutting some vegetables and she turned around and saw a fire coming

from the pan."

Emergency crews were called but the fire appeared to have been doused by the time crews showed up, the elder Thuraisingham said. Firefighters congratulated the family for their efforts, instructing them to call their insurance company and not to use the kitchen, and they left.

The family went to a relative's for lunch, except for son Roshan, 22, who took a nap in the house.

David Thuraisingham went back to working for a friend when he got a call from his son around 3 p.m., who was crying and telling him to come home.

"I couldn't get into our street. It was full of people, firefighters and police," the elder Thuraisingham said. "When I came [home] I saw the roof burning."

He blamed the second fire on bad insulation in the 1970s home saying the initial cause of the roof blaze was the kitchen fire.

She turned around and saw a fire coming from the pan
 - David Thuraisingham

See FIRE, Page 3



EMILY HUNTER/The Observer

Guildwood resident John Stehmann fights to save the natural integrity of the Bluffs by protesting wind turbines.

Tur-bind on the shore

Protest proves futile as council nixes anti-windmill motion

EMILY HUNTER
 The Observer

What was meant to be a symbolic step to halt wind turbines in Ontario has backfired on some Scarborough residents.

After council rejected the motion to place a moratorium on new wind turbines, Toronto will now do the opposite — promote wind power in the city with fervor.

Monday's executive com-

mittee meeting ended in a unanimous vote against the moratorium proposed by Ward 43 Coun. Paul Ainslie.

Instead, the committee passed an alternative motion on how the city will "promote, support and nurture" green energy projects, including offshore wind turbines.

"This is a grand slam home run for people who support wind power," said Ward 38 Coun. Glenn De Baeremaeker, who put the alternative

motion forward.

But not everyone agrees. Some Guildwood residents, who will be facing the proposed 60 wind turbines off the Scarborough Bluff's shoreline, are in an uproar over the decision.

"The Scarborough Bluffs is like a tourist area, and when they put these wind turbines up, they'll be spoiled," a Guildwood resident John Stehmann said.

With Stehmann's backyard

overlooking the shoreline, he says he's concerned not only about the view, but also about noise pollution.

"If I can hear a party across the Bluffer's Park, then imagine what the wind turbines will be like to live near every day," Stehmann said.

A major concern expressed by community members is that the noise from wind

See GUILDWOOD, Page 2



NADIA PERSAUD/The Observer

Bus operators Jeff Gill and Laverne Snagg act as panelists at the town hall meeting.

Tired of terrible transit: TTC riders

NADIA PERSAUD
 The Observer

A TTC town hall meeting last Sunday was meant to further dialogue between commuters and frontline TTC workers but calls for TTC Chairman Adam Giambro-ne's head set a different tone.

The meeting drew a packed crowd inside the auditorium at Stephen Leacock Collegiate Institute.

According to an electronic audience response system, 49 per cent of the audience were regular TTC users and the

same amount took the TTC to the Sunday meeting. About 53 per cent of the audience said they saw cases of avoidable unsatisfactory customer service within the last two to three years.

The meeting did not settle the concerns of some audience members, who wanted more answers.

"Throughout this meeting your answers have been overtaking our questions," concerned commuter Ryan Endoh said.

Throughout the meeting, the panelists stressed many

issues could be solved with an increase in funding but the government would only do so if pressured by TTC users.

Giambro-ne was not a favourite among the audience. The meeting's loudest applause came after Mai Cheng, a 72-year-old TTC rider, challenged Giambro-ne's position.

"He should be fired right away, on the spot," Cheng said.

For meeting details and audio clips, visit

Residents howling over no signs

Pet owners concerned about lack of coyote warnings in park

RYAN JHAGROO
The Observer

Despite a rash of coyote sightings in the area, warning signs won't be coming to Guildwood Park any time soon, according to Ward 43 councillor Paul Ainslie.

Ainslie has received only two complaints from concerned citizens in the last six months, and none of them involved coyote attacks, Ainslie said.

A coyote attacked a resident's pet dog last month and Guildwood residents and pet owners are concerned for the safety of their pets, *The Observer* reported on March 26.

Throughout the year, Ainslie has been in touch with Guildwood Park staff to gauge the need for signs in the area, but it's been deemed to a non-issue, he said.

"We do want to keep the park relatively sign-free," Ainslie said. "We want to keep the greenness of the area.

Too many signs would take away from the naturalness of the area."

Almost all inquiries around the city come from residents sighting a coyote in their street or backyards. Coyotes aren't the only wildlife spotted in the urban setting. People also see deers, foxes and other wildlife.

This is no cause for alarm, according to the councillor.

These are high green space areas and coyotes should be seen where they are, he said.

We want to keep the greenness of the area
- councillor Paul Ainslie

Nathalie Karvonen of the Toronto Wildlife Centre shares Ainslie's sentiment.

"We can't abolish [the animals] or kick them out," Karvonen said.

Southern Ontario ravines are normal coyote areas, she said.

"Coyotes are supposed to be in the area. And it's not like they're walking in the Eaton Centre."



RYAN JHAGROO/The Observer

A coyote warning, like the ones in Rouge Park, won't be coming to the Guildwood area any time soon, according to councillor Paul Ainslie.

Ainslie has had his experiences with foxes and coyotes in the area himself, he says.

"I lived in Rouge Valley along the waterfront and a fox always came around my backyard at 7:45 in the morning," Ainslie said.

For pet owners who want to let their animals out, Ainslie advised to take note of when animals come around the area.

As the summer approach-

es, coyotes will be retreating further out of sight, said Brad Gates of Gates' Wildlife Control.

"It's a seasonal thing. In the winter, less people go out and about."

Coyotes then encroach closer to Toronto, because they feel less threatened, Gates said. "When summer comes around, more people will be visible in the areas where coyotes travelled in

the winter and they'll back off."

In Rouge Park, signs are posted along some trails detailing how visitors to the park can manage a coyote encounter.

Ainslie said the best advice is to always keep your pets on a leash.

Karvonen said most attacks can be attributed to dogs and coyotes fighting over territory.

City sends 100 inspectors to survey 5,000 buildings

SAEDA RAGHE
The Observer

Many Toronto apartments may be getting much-needed repairs after the city surveys nearly 5,000 multi-residential buildings this year.

The city launched the Multi-Residential Apartment Building Audit and Enforcement Program in December 2008 to survey and rate apartment buildings in Toronto.

To date, more than 200 building audits have been done, according to Jim Hart, the executive director of Municipal Licensing and Standards.

Hart says the planned surveys will be given priority based on the information gathered by those involved with the program.

The city is sending out 100 inspectors to do walk-throughs of the buildings to help the Municipal Licensing and Standards team focus on the buildings in need of repairs. Their ratings and reports will determine whether a building needs a more thorough inspection.

"When we go out to a building, typically orders are issued to repair or replace something within the build-



JOSH UNGAR/The Observer

Apartment buildings like this one on 207 Morningside Ave. will be rated and surveyed by 100 city inspectors this year.

ing," Hart said. "We give a certain number of days for that to happen ... we continually monitor any buildings that we've been into because there are issues that need to be addressed, and we go back to make sure that they are addressed."

But tenants haven't viewed the inspections positively so far, says Geordie Dent of the Federation of Metro Tenants' Association.

Tenants see inspectors come in and issue warnings against landlords resulting

initially in a lot of repairs done, but tenants report not all the repairs are done and sometimes inspectors don't come back, Dent said.

Tenants said the inspections aren't beneficial, as they don't get reductions on rent or holds on their rent increases.

"Basically landlords should have been following the law, and they're not," Dent said. "All this really does is try to make them to follow the law.... Tenants want to see these landlords punished."

Guildwood in uproar over wind power

From Page 1

turbines will affect their health. The mayor said there are no such health effects.

"It's quite clear from all of the studies around the world that there are no negative impacts from wind turbines," said Mayor David Miller.

The city and Toronto Hydro do support further studies into some of the other issues raised, such as the health of fish habitats during construction.

But the mayor did not favour the turbine moratorium on Monday. Since wind power is a province-wide initiative, his hands are tied.

John Laforet, president of Wind Concerns Ontario, disagrees.

"City hall does need to take responsibility," said Laforet, who is running in the elections for Ainslie's ward. "They own Toronto Hydro. They own this project. And they'll own any damage they do as well."

His concern is that the proposed turbines are too close to the shore. A safe limit is 10 km offshore, he said,

while the Bluff's turbines are planned for two to four kilometres offshore. He said this could adversely affect the community.

"Nowhere in the world would you get away with building this, so why are we doing this here?" Laforet said.

But De Baeremaeker said the fears associated with turbines are unfounded.

"We have a wind turbine right in the heart of the city and we haven't had any reports of noise or vibrations making people sick — not a single one," De Baeremaeker said. "People seem to forget that the real threat is burning fossil fuels (like coal and oil) that is harming our very existence on this planet. Wind is not the enemy."

Ontario plans to close its five remaining coal plants by 2014 and re-power more than half Ontario's home with renewable energy projects like the Bluff's turbines.

McGuinty promises the new energy will provide 20,000 new jobs and \$9 billion in private investment.

Wind is not the enemy
- councillor Glen De Baeremaeker

LRT chugs ahead on Facebook

SARAH MOORE
The Observer

Neethan Shan, a council candidate for Ward 42, has created Facebook group to help pressure the Ontario government into restoring funding for Scarborough's Light Rail Transit system.

Started earlier this month, Friends of LRT to Scarborough (Sheppard Line, Malvern Line & RT extension) has nearly 200 members so far.

Shan hopes the social networking properties of Facebook will connect Scarborough residents to the cause and motivate them to get involved, he said.

"Facebook is one of the important medias that are being used for campaigns," Shan said. "It now has a lot of people, not just youth, but adults and seniors as well. It is a very effective tool."

The recent provincial budget put the brakes on construction of Scarborough's Light Rail Transit system, but city officials are pulling out all the stops to keep the project rolling.

After the Ontario government



SHAN

announced the decision to postpone \$4 billion in funding for the construction of the LRT system, Mayor David Miller recorded public announcements to be played on Toronto Transit Commission vehicles, urging riders to pressure the premier into restoring funding for the LRT.

Shan hopes his Facebook group will draw Scarborough residents who have not been actively involved in campaigning in the past.

"I wanted to create a group specific to Scarborough ... to connect the local community to the bigger campaign that is happening downtown," Shan said.

The LRT would connect many neighbourhoods in the east end in a faster and more efficient way, he said. "It will connect many of the low-income neighbourhoods, improve economic development [and reduce commuting time] which compromises the family life."

Shan's group allows users to post announcements about upcoming meetings and contact city officials. He plans to continue to campaign to have the LRT project in Scarborough completed and is setting out to hold a town meeting on the issue in the near future.

Ash kickin' in Guildwood

Trees succumb to bug infestation

ANGELA ROTUNDO
The Observer

The emerald ash borer, a tiny green beetle-like insect, is making trouble for residents in the Scarborough area.

Infested ash trees have been seen in the Morningside Avenue and Sheppard Avenue area, as well as in the vicinity of Kingston Road and Galloway Road, according to Ward 43 councillor Paul Ainslie's website.

Unfortunately, there is no known way to prevent the current infestation from spreading further among the 26,000 ash trees in the Guildwood Village area, the site says.

It is believed that the borer arrived in Ontario from Asia in 2002. Richard Ubbens, Toronto director of urban forestry services, has been tracking the bug's movement in Ontario for more than three years and fears the infestation may continue to worsen.

"That's the problem with this insect: you don't see infestation signs very easily," Ubbens said. "Chances are, when you do see it, it's already well estab-

lished in the area."

Residents with ash trees are advised to look for signs of infestation. The first signs are leaves dying from the top of the tree and v-shaped holes in the bark. But, as the insect's larvae infest the tree from within, noticing these signs often proves to be too little too late, Ubbens said.

The City of Toronto is doing what it can in order to prevent the infestation from spreading.

According to a statement about the infestation on Ainslie's website, the city has registered an insecticidal substance, TreeAzin, to inject into ash trees.



INFESTED TREE

While it has shown some effectiveness, it comes with a hefty price tag of \$250 per tree.

Ubbens says further research is needed in order to stop the infestation from spreading.

"The worst thing in the world right now is that we speed up the spread of this unknowingly through the spread of firewood."

If residents with ash trees on their property notice an infestation, they are asked to call local forestry officials.



SAEDA RAGHE/The Observer

Better Ballots panel discuss election reform at Scarborough Civic Centre on Tuesday.

City voting changes raised

SAEDA RAGHE
The Observer

Should permanent residents who do not have citizenship have the right to vote in municipal elections?

The controversial question was raised at an election reform held at the Scarborough Civic Centre on Tuesday.

The event organized by Better Ballots, an organization dedicated to raising awareness about ways to improve municipal elections, drew around 30 participants to discuss ways to make the election process better in Toronto.

According to Better Ballots, a possible benefit of allowing permanent residents to vote in municipal elections would be the promotion of immigrant integration and the increased accountability in a neighbourhood with a large population of immigrants.

A negative outcome might be devaluing citizenship.

Desmond Cole, project coordinator for the I Vote organization, said allowing people to vote for their school board trustee, councillor, and mayor won't be a deterrent to becoming a citizen and shouldn't be used to argue against giving municipal voting rights to permanent residents.

"We don't break up neighbourhoods by citizens and non-citizens.

"Whether or not you are a citizen you have the exact same rights to access and to pay for services as anyone else in this city," Cole said.

Another controversial option raised was allowing 16 year olds to vote. A possible benefit might be increasing youth interest and involvement in politics. A possible concern might be whether 16 year olds are mature or informed enough to vote.

Dave Meslin, project coordinator for Better Ballots, said they are collecting data on the feelings and thoughts

of town hall participants on these topics.

This information will be given to organizations that are already campaigning for the 14 proposed options.

Meslin says he doesn't think these changes will be implemented for the 2010 Mayoral Race but can be achieved for 2014.

"This is the first phase of a very long three or four year project.

"The first step is to talk to people and see what people want. We can't advocate for anything until we get an idea of what people want," Meslin said.

Meslin says the next step is an advocacy campaign.

"If we are trying to address issues around voter turn out, diversity, turn over, and fairness it will be really hard for politician to ignore our campaign," he said.

Mayor David Miller and the mayoral candidates are to attend the next meeting at City Hall on April 26.

News Briefs

Sexual assault suspects at large

Police have arrested two men in connection with the investigation of sexual assault involving a 16-year-old girl. The victim was taken to a home near Meadowvale Ave. and Ellesmere Rd. where four men assaulted her. Two men remain at large.

Trustee cuts delayed

The TDSB has delayed its decision to reduce the number of trustees from 22 to 20 until the next election. The cut could bring better representation to Scarborough schools, which currently have less than one-quarter of the vote even though they represent more than one-third of the board.

Woburn robot places seventh

Woburn Collegiate placed seventh out of 86 in the Robotics World Championship in Atlanta last weekend. Forty students from the school were chosen to participate. The students, along with 11 other Canadian teams, spent six weeks constructing robots to perform various tasks.

Author shares passion for food

Cookbook author Naomi Duguid visited the Guildwood Library last week. The award-winning food writer shared her passion for food and travelling. Duguid said it's easy to explore many of the dishes in China since they can be found in Scarborough and made at home. Get one of Duguid's recipes visit torontoobserver.ca.

St. Gilles hosting Irish dinner

St. Gilles Church at 35 Kecala Road will be holding an Irish beef stew dinner and music followed by the movie *Waking Ned Devine*. Tickets are \$12. For more information call 416-820-4185.

Two fires in same day

From page 1

"It spread and smoldered from the first fire. It wasn't detected but it spread to the attic."

Neighbours had seen the smoke coming from the roof. After repeatedly ringing the doorbell, they heard the family dog barking, so they used a crowbar to pry the door open. A neighbour ran downstairs to rescue Roshan who was still asleep despite the commotion.

No one was hurt in either blaze.

David is more fearful of repair costs, thinking they



KAITLYNN FORD/The Observer

The Thuraisingham home sustained \$300,000 worth of structural damage after it caught on fire twice in one day.

will exceed the estimated \$300,000, since the house is worth more than that amount. He and his wife only work part-time jobs, while looking

for a temporary home, trying not to impose on their relatives, whom they are currently staying with during the eight to 10 month restoration.

"All my friends are being so nice, saying if you need any help, if you need money...." David said with a smile. "I am blessed for that."

For information on how you can prevent a fire in your own home visit our website at torontoobserver.ca

ARTS & LIFE

Thirty photographers, one camera

School photo club work on display in annual two-week exhibit at the Bluffs Gallery

RISHMA LUCKNAUTH
The Observer

They have only one camera to share, but the students of St. Boniface Catholic School's photography club still manage to put on a high-quality exhibit at the Scarborough Bluff's Gallery for two weeks every year.

This year's show runs for two weeks, and is on until the week of May 3.

All photographs will be on sale to help raise much-needed funds for the club.

To take pictures, the students used a digital single-lens reflex camera, owned by educational assistant Cristina Da Silva.

The class broke into small groups, so while one group was using the camera, the other groups looked for things they would like to photograph.

The camera, however, has since broken, due to high usage at the hands of dozens of students.

Da Silva started the club three years ago as a way to provide an outlet for the non-athletes and non-musicians to express themselves through a different avenue.

"The main point of the photo club is to be able to teach them how to look through the lens with a different set of eyes," Da Silva said.

"It's about changing their perspective on things and



RISHMA LUCKNAUTH/The Observer

St. Boniface's photo club show their submissions that will be displayed at the Bluffs Gallery until the week of May 3.

being able to tell a story."

The program has since grown, based on high student interest. However, the club is in need of funding.

Da Silva runs the club with two other educational assistants, Christine Lombardi who supervises and Kevin Graham who oversees the technical work.

In its first year, students were asked to bring their own photography equipment.

"This is the third neediest area of Toronto," said Graham. "The kids are coming in with these cameras that are 20 years old that you can't buy film for anymore, or they are digital cameras that won't even help them."

Graham introduced the students to photo editing this year by use of his personal laptop and a free downloadable program.

The editing software

cannot work on the school's computers, which are too old.

To further engage the students the instructors use slideshows and props to get the students thinking about how they would like to photograph a subject and project meaning onto it.

In the club's second year, they were able to purchase one DSLR camera with some of the profits from selling photographs and calendars,

all of which normally goes back to the school.

The instructors hope that the club will get more funding so they can purchase more equipment. They are waiting to hear from the government about an application for club funding.

"The bottom line is, if we don't have any equipment, we don't have a program," Da Silva said.

Now in its third year, the

club is still rotating one camera between 30 students. Even so, the students have been able to produce exceptional work, by photographing simple objects.

"I learned a lot because my teachers were really good with us," said student Samantha B., who photographed a single domino standing in front of a set of falling dominoes, and titled it *Stand Firm*.

"It means don't follow other people because you might end up falling behind. Just be yourself," Samantha said.

At the show, three top prizes and notable mentions will be given for the best photographs, as judged by a panel of students and teachers.

First-place recipient Priscilla Y. will receive a point-and-shoot camera for her photo, *Defy the Odds*, which she felt is reminiscent of Haiti and presents the idea there's always hope in the most dire of situations.

The instructors said the program enhances the students' sociability, providing friendships to students who normally do not belong to a circle of friends.

"They're really proud of [their work]. They really want to showcase it," Da Silva said.

"They get to go to the art gallery. They get to dress up and they get to show their work. That's great for their self-esteem," added Lombardi. "It's beautiful."

Killer play from B.C. strikes Scarborough theatre stage

ALICE HOANG
The Observer

A group of people gathered at an island home find themselves conspiring, interrogating, investigating and acting, as they try to solve a murder.

The Ontario debut of *Castling for Murder*, a play by Elizabeth Elwood, runs until tomorrow at the Scarborough Village Theatre.

It might be safe to say white wine, scotch and rum were the main characters in the play. The actors were constantly pouring liquor, whether it was to have a "pre-dinner drink," to make a toast, or simply to have something to agree on during conversations.

The play is based on the short story *To Catch an Actress*. Elwood later developed

a mystery series around one of her characters, as the audience response was "good and enthusiastic," Elwood said.

The play is set on an island off the coast of British Columbia. Hardwood flooring, straw chairs, turquoise walls and thin, flowing white curtains depict cottage life by the seaside. The play, which has three acts, takes place entirely in a living room, with howling wind, thunder and screams coming from outside the cottage, as low lighting adds to the eeriness of the end scenes.

The intermissions between acts allow the audience to play detective, as people rule out suspects and debate over who they thought was the murderer.

Elwood said people tend to trivialize murder mysteries, but they're harder to work with than comedies because of their complexity.

"Comedies are a lot easier to write, because you're setting things up that the audience is anticipating," Elwood said. "[In a] mystery, you try to fool your audience."

There were some obvious set-ups, however, as

Comedies are a lot easier to write, because you're setting things up that the audience is anticipating
-Elizabeth Elwood



Sue Gilck/Courtesy of the Scarborough Village Theatre

Cast members at a dress rehearsal of Elizabeth Elwood's play *Castling for Murder*.

characters said to each other in nonchalant tones, "Don't walk too close to the edge — it's a 100-metre drop."

Elwood said she came up with the concept of her story when she was at a friend's home.

"I noticed something about the floors on the high rise and it gave me an idea, and thought 'Ha, that would be a neat little twist in a mystery

story,'" Elwood said.

She said being close to the water in British Columbia inspired her to move the setting from an apartment to an island on the sunshine coast, as her husband also encouraged certain elements in the plot and setting.

"I'm married to someone who's into his fishing, and hunting, and boating," Elwood said. "So, much has

filtered over the years [and] I actually do incorporate a great deal of that into my stories too."

Something Elwood had in her story that wasn't included in the play was her bottle of Dubonnet, which director Mike Woodbridge said he has not found in Ontario.

For the full story and more, see torontoobserver.ca

New treatment revives hope at annual multiple sclerosis walk

KIRSTEN PARUCHA
The Observer

A breakthrough treatment was the hot topic at the Multiple Sclerosis Society Scarborough Chapter's 15th annual MS Walk on April 18.

The treatment, discovered by Dr. Paolo Zamboni of Italy, attempts to cure chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency (CCSVI), a disfiguration

of brain and neck veins that disables them to efficiently return blood back to the heart. A balloon is inserted and expanded in the twisted veins to bring them back to normal. Dr. Zamboni says he believes this treatment can reverse the effects of MS.

Betty McKendrick, director of client services for the MS Society Scarborough Chapter, said the treatment is

an important discovery.

"It's a possibility that [CCSVI] may not be the cause of MS, it could be only its symptoms," McKendrick said. "It's hard to say right now because it's so new, but in the 15 years that I've been involved with the MS Society, there has been nothing."

McKendrick, 56, was diagnosed with MS 15 years ago. Although she said she believes the CCSVI treatment is important, she has not considered it for herself.

Barbara Dickson said the treatment is "the liberation treatment for MS."

Dickson, 48, who was diagnosed with MS 18 years ago, has applied for the waiting list to be screened for CCSVI at the Buffalo Neuroimaging Analysis Center in Buffalo, N.Y. If Dickson does make the list, it will likely be years before she is screened. Buffalo is the nearest location to Toronto to perform the screens; the treatment is not yet available in Canada.

Dr. Zamboni was in Toronto from April 14 to 20 for

a neurology convention. His visit coincided with the annual MS walk and provided a symbol of hope, Dickson said.

"We need hope. We need something to cling to and to hope for because the treatments that are available right now are too basic," she said. "MS is a devastating disease. It's progressive, it only gets worse. It's debilitating — you can't function. We need a cure fast."

More than 300 walkers and volunteers, including McKendrick and Dickson, attended the fundraising walk in Scarborough. It began at Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute at Markham Road and Lawrence Avenue.

McKendrick said the annual event is important for the MS community, in order to promote finding a cure and to ensure her family won't have to suffer a fate like hers.

"I don't want to see my daughter raise her children with MS," said McKendrick. "I don't want to see my granddaughter diagnosed with MS at the age of 30."



KIRSTEN PARUCHA/The Observer

Walkers trekked 2 km, 5 km or 10 km at the annual MS Walk to raise money for and awareness of the disease.



KIRSTEN PARUCHA/The Observer

Barbara Dickson believes fundraisers like the MS Walk will end the disabling disease.

Early birdies rewarded with golf course openings

JOSH UNGAR
The Observer

It may only be April, but the sun is brightly shining, bringing record-breaking temperatures and an early start to summer in Toronto this year. Some may call it a little dose of global warming, others the luck of the draw, a revolving natural occurrence in weather patterns.

Golf course owners around Scarborough are calling it a bonus and one of the best things to happen to their courses in nearly six years. Most were able to open two weeks earlier than last year thanks to the dry, hot start to

spring this year.

"It's been very good, spring came about two weeks earlier than normal this year," said Sean DeSilva, general manager at Cedar Brae Golf and Country Club. "It allowed our members to come back a few weeks early."

It was able to open April 1 this season as compared to April 15 last season. This early opening allowed members and their guests to get a jump on the season.

"The members get better value for the

dollar this way," DeSilva said. "We've had over 1,000 players already this year and we're usually just opening up."

The public courses also opened early to let the players

loosen up their swings and enjoy the sport. For public courses, which charge a set fee per round-of-golf, the financial impact from the extra two weeks can be huge.

"It has been really good so far, the first few days were so busy. Things are getting better and better," said Mike Lacroix, director of golf operations at Parkview Golf and Country Club. "When the sun comes out, so do the people."

Parkview opened on March 31, their earliest start in six years. Lacroix anticipates the predicted hot and dry summer will be great for business

at golf courses across the city.

For city operated public courses, the early weather brought a slightly early start.

"We opened on the 8th [of April] this year, usually we open on the 15th. It's a call made by the City of Toronto," said Sookie Ham, manager of golf operations at Tom O'Shanter Golf Course. "The business is really weather dependant."

For the prestigious Scarborough Golf & Country Club, which caters only to an elite group of equity shareholders, the opening day was the 15th, slightly earlier than recent years.

"We will only open when

the turf is able to be played on without doing any damage," said Terry Kirkup, the head professional golfer at the club. "Membership is excited to have a very early start."

Managers agree that the courses are in very good shape for this early in the season. While there is still some damage from the ice, it's to be expected at this point, and the greens are quickly improving.

"The golf course is in relatively good shape," Ham said. "We still have some patchy spots on the greens, but with this weather, I think it will be really good soon."



JOSH UNGAR/The Observer

Fore! A golfer tees off at Tam O'Shanter Golf Course in Scarborough, which opened on April 1, two weeks earlier than usual because of above-average temperatures.

TTC off track

When it comes to the TTC, who doesn't have something to complain about?

Toronto residents at a town hall meeting, hosted by the Amalgamated Transit Union on Sunday, were more than happy to share their thoughts on the recent behaviour shown by the TTC.

It's no secret the TTC is a hard-working system — with its napping ticket collectors and bus drivers who take breaks at the most inconvenient times.

Unfortunately, the town hall meeting failed to comment on those specific grievances that have the public so enthralled. With the recent chain of unusual events, the TTC has tried to get back in good graces with the public and maybe that's why city figures like Adam Giambone and Rob Ford attended.

A panel of bus drivers and TTC operators assembled on stage to discuss the difficult decisions they face on a daily basis.

Fare evasion was a "difficult decision" topic that kept popping up as a sore subject for TTC operators. Paul Campbell, one member of the on-stage TTC panel, explained that the decision to let someone ride without a proper fare is a "tough call."

And we thought you couldn't ride a bus in Toronto without the proper fare.

It's a rare day when riding the TTC is a better-than-average experience. It is highly unusual a rider will leave a bus or subway commute smiling. Frankly, riding the TTC has become a part-time job Torontonians have been forced to take.

Granted, working for the TTC nowadays requires a brave effort. It takes a certain calibre of person to work in a profession that deals with a vast majority of the public on a daily basis. For the amount of money it's costing Torontonians to "ride the rocket," the TTC needs to work a lot more on customer service.

If Sunday's town hall meeting was any indication, riders will continue to despise the TTC unless serious changes are made to the system as a whole.

It's been said public transit is the lifeblood of our city. It's about time riders stop suffering with an anemic transit system that doesn't even live up to mediocre expectations.

- Angela Rotundo

Too long-winded

The residents of Guildwood seem determined to put an end to the short life of the Scarborough Bluffs wind turbine project. Since many people have approached local councillor Paul Ainslie, he has proposed a moratorium on wind-turbine projects in all of Ontario until more research can be done. But wait a second. The project is barely in its fetal stage.

All that currently exists is an implemented wind anemometer, which will make its way along the Scarborough Bluffs, to see if this area could be a good location for wind turbines.

They're arguing about wind turbines that may not come to be.

Some of us have been residents of Guildwood since we were kids. We grew up climbing the Scarborough Bluffs' gorgeous trails. We love the Bluffs and the last thing we would want to see is something put in place to ruin its natural beauty.

A wind farm does not seem capable of doing that.

Several months ago, when this issue first came into the public eye, flyers were put in mailboxes asking the residents of Guildwood to come together to fight against the wind turbines. The flyer featured a caption underneath that read: "Healthy children, or unreliable expensive power. Mr. McGuinty, is it worth it?"

The flyer implied that if we allow these wind turbines to be built, our children will pay the price of our bad decision.

Aren't we putting all this effort into green power in the first place, so we don't drown our world with fossil fuels and leave our children with a world filled with pollution and regret?

Ironically, one of the Scarborough Bluffs' most prominent features is the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station. Any destruction a wind turbine could cause pales in comparison to that of a nuclear plant.

Let's back up and look at the big picture. Climate change is real and our society is addicted to fossil fuels. We need to start producing energy in sustainable ways. Although the Ontario government has made a commitment to develop green-energy projects, it's laughable to think city council would promote halting all wind-power development — and why should they? Wind turbines produce energy in 80 countries around the world, and are a fifth of Denmark's electricity.

Instead of viewing the possibility of a wind farm in a negative light, residents should feel proud to be a part of a community that is progressive and environmentally responsible.

-Bradley Featherstone



KAITLYNN FORD/The Observer

News Item: What once was a nice place to go for a walk or dock your boat, has now become an unusual place for dumping even more unusual items. Residents of Bluffer's Park are concerned the grounds are being used as not only a garbage can, but a pet cemetery. For over two years, dead animals have been seen floating in the nearby lake, even washing up onto the shorelines, yet city officials have done nothing to fix the problem.

Talkin' trash to litterbugs

At this time of year, when Mother Nature plays a game of give and take with the temperature, a warm day gets everyone out of the house.

Well, unless you're like me and seem to be shackled to your desk every time the sun comes out.

That's why when I recently found myself with some free time on a nice day, I grabbed my shades and headed out to see what the locals were up to.

My location of choice was the nearby Morningside Park.

When I got there, I found lots of people — children playing in the sand, friends chatting over lunch at a picnic table, a jogger heading for the trails — but I found much more of something else.

Garbage, garbage, and more garbage.

Driving into the park past a sign about litter, I watched an entire newspaper flutter across the road and into the trees, where it joined a collection of garbage that almost outnumbered the leaves on the ground. Sitting on a picnic table catching some rays, I could see garbage at my feet, in the bushes, and even in the sand around the jungle gym.

And while this was all unnecessary in itself, it had nothing on what I saw next.

It was something only the most heinous of litterbugs could have done.

A pile of garbage lay across the grass



Kimberlee NANCEKIVELL

Putting garbage
in the garbage
can is more
time-efficient
than tossing it

right beside a garbage can, with room to spare.

And right before Earth Day!

As I sat there pondering what would possess someone to dump their trash beside a garbage can rather than inside it, I came to the conclusion that maybe Earth Day was actually the perfect time for this litterbug to commit their crime against nature.

Earth Day sparks something inside people that makes them want to love the environment and treat it right, even if they normally spit their gum on the sidewalk or toss their takeout containers out the

car window. The surge of park cleanups — like the Kingston-Galloway cleanup or the upcoming Morningside Park cleanup — is a testament to this.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm all for cleaning up the park, and these events will surely take care of the litterbug's latest work, but it made me think: What if the litterbug strikes again after the cleanup?

By April 23, or 24 for the enthusiastic ones, all those eager garbage pickers will have satisfied their Earth Day craving and that garbage will stay where it lands.

That is, unless park goers realize that putting garbage in the garbage can, or in their pocket until they find a garbage can, is more time-efficient, and keeps the park much cleaner year-round than tossing it on the ground and coming back once a year, when it takes an entire day to get a park almost clean.

Earth Day should not be a day about making up for your past environmental sins from the rest of the year.

If you need more of an incentive to clean up your act, take part in an Earth Day barbeque at one of the clean-up events.

So if you're planning to join the crowds at a cleanup this spring, there are no hard feelings here, but please don't throw your napkin from the free barbeque on the ground.

THE EAST TORONTO OBSERVER

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Lack of funds hurting league

Task force hears proposals to improve Scarborough minor hockey

JOSEF JACOBSON
The Observer

Build arenas with multiple ice surfaces.

Provide better equipment for young hockey players.

Raise the temperature in the rinks to accommodate older fans.

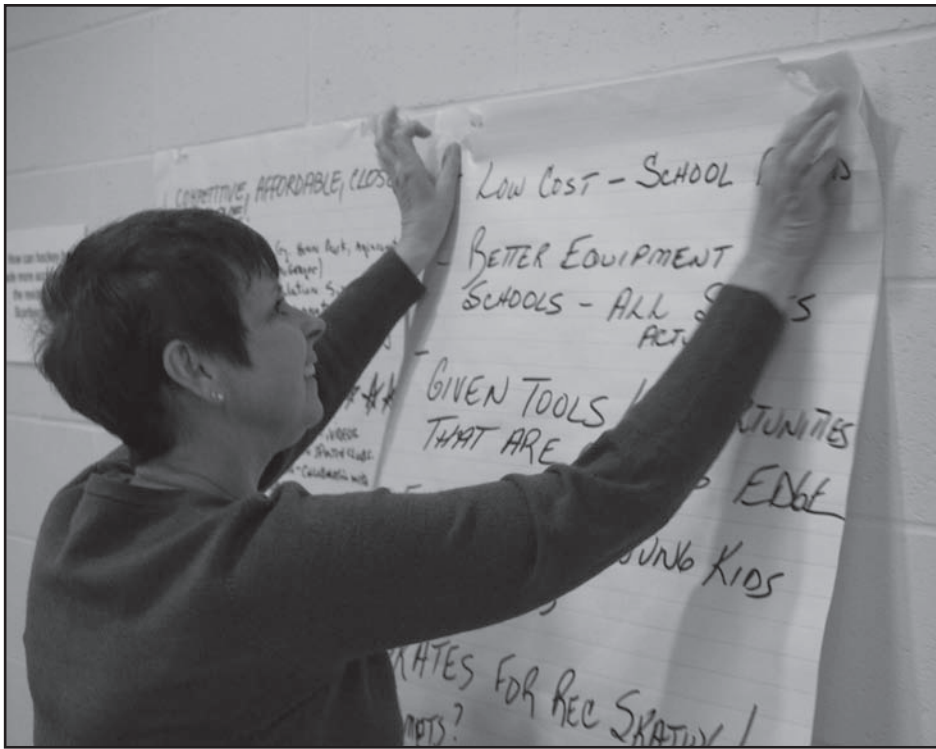
Find new ways to sell the sport to new Canadians.

Scarborough residents had a lot of suggestions for improving the state of hockey in Scarborough, the task force researching the problem heard at a meeting at the McGregor Park Recreation Centre on April 17.

The problem is that many of these suggestions may not be feasible due to a lack of funding, local officials say.

"Some of them are pie-in-the-sky, but other pie-in-the-sky things in our lifetime have been realized," said Margo Cowie, a hockey mom and member of the hockey task force created by Scarborough Community Council to investigate the state of minor hockey in the area.

"If we don't change the conversation soon I think what you're going to see is the programs will fold, and



JOSEF JACOBSON/The Observer

Margo Cowie posts suggestions to improve Scarborough minor league hockey.

once they fold it is so hard to start them back," she said. "I think to rebuild them is a lot easier when they're still there."

Scarborough Hockey Association president John Kelloway also outlined his vision of hockey in the area at the meeting.

"One house league with a strong select program, with

a middle ground of what we call 'minor development' and one 'A' club representing Scarborough and if we do our job well enough, one 'AA' club," he said.

"It would be dreamy to have a 'AAA' club."

The SHA is feeling the effects of low enrolment and high costs for minor hockey in Scarborough,

as the association spiraled into turmoil and eventually merged with the GTHL.

The meeting was co-chaired by Ward 37 councillor Michael Thompson and GTHL executive director Scott Oakman.

"What we are trying to do is research, fact-find and then sit down as a committee to assess the information

that we've gathered from the public," Thompson said. "Then to come up with some recommendations and refine those in such a way that we can attempt to meet our mandate."

The GTHL's Oakman, who played his minor hockey in the SHA system, said minor hockey in Scarborough has not changed to accommodate shifting demographics. Oakman said that SHA's amalgamation into the GTHL has seen positive results so far.

"The sentimental side of me is sad to see the former structure change, but then the other side of it is that if we don't change we're going to get left behind," Oakman said.

Thompson recognizes he has taken on a tough task.

"This is a very difficult job, actually," he said. "It's not easy because everyone has their own ideas and formulas to make hockey work. People are very passionate about their hockey so it's exciting we are going to take on this challenge."

The McGregor Park Recreation Centre will host another minor hockey summit on April 24.

Sports Briefs

West Hill grad heads to playoffs

Scarborough-born NHL player Chris Stuart has made it to the playoffs for the first time in his career. Stuart is a forward for the Colorado Avalanche. He attended West Hill Collegiate Institute.

Draper spreads his wings, again

NHL forward Kris Draper of the Detroit Red Wings is also in the playoffs. Draper, a four-time Stanley Cup winner, has scored more than 100 goals for the Red Wings. He is the longest-serving NHL player from Scarborough.

Angels help young athletes

The Flying Angels Track Club is headed to Pearson Collegiate. Training will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m. for athletes in Grades 2 to 8. The Flying Angels is a non-profit organization dedicated to academic achievement and travel opportunities for young athletes. For more information contact the club at 416-848-7426 or email info@flyingangels.ca.

R.H. King to play Sir Oliver Mowat

Toronto District School Board begins the girls slo-pitch softball season. The first game for R.H. King Academy will be on May 4 at 2 p.m. at Densgrove Diamond. They will play Sir Oliver Mowat Collegiate Institute. For more information on game times and locations check the TDSB website at tdsb.on.ca.

Kicking to cure breast cancer

The fifth annual Kick 4 the Cure women's indoor soccer tournament was held at the Scarborough Soccer Centre last week. More than \$20,000 was raised for breast cancer research at the event. Money was raised through tournament entry fees, pledges and other donations. The Markham Wildcats won the tournament beating Leaside 5-0.

Girls team of 'sisters' reaches for top

ALINA SMIRNOVA
The Observer

Two players sit on the field, one girl bandages the other's ankle and rips the tape with her teeth.

This is a soccer team that does more than play together.

"We all think of each other as sisters," midfielder Shannon Liverpool said.

The girls are part of Storm G95, a competitive soccer team representing the West Rouge Soccer Club. The club is part of the Scarborough Soccer Association.

Last year the team didn't lose a single game in the Central Girls Soccer League. Taking first place with a record of 13-0-1, they were promoted, for the second year in a row, to level three.

The team doesn't shuffle players often. Twelve out of the 18 girls have played on the team for more than four years.



ALINA SMIRNOVA/The Observer

Storm G95 just got back from a tournament in Ohio, where they played their third major tournament in the US.

"We don't go actively to recruit players," team manager Savik Ramkay said. "We develop players."

The team just got back from a tournament in Ohio, their third major tournament in the U.S. Travelling together is one of the best parts of being on the team, the girls said.

The coach, Mark Liverpool, says these trips

develop the team by building their confidence and skill.

"The mode of play in the U.S. is one of power — direct and surging attack," he said. "The players in the U.S., more so than opponents we play in Canada, appear to run on pure adrenaline."

Aside from ball control and movement, the girls are taught how to win and lose respectfully, Ramkay said.

The team is already planning for the 2012 Gothia Cup in Gothenburg, Sweden. The Gothia Cup is an annual youth soccer tournament with the largest number of participants in the world.

Beyond that, some girls hope to get a scholarship and play professionally.

For now, the girls are just enjoying playing together. Their camaraderie is obvious

as they begin sharing candies and laughing. Grace Winter, the team's goalie, runs up, asking for one. Someone opens the candy for her and puts it in her mouth so that she wouldn't have to take off her goalkeepers gloves.

Would they play on another team, the best one in Ontario, if they got a chance?

The girls shake their heads in unison: "No."

FEATURE



'Bear'els of fun at the zoo



It may have been a little chilly, but that didn't stop this party.

The Metro Toronto Zoo held its Party for the Planet on April 17 and 18 in celebration of Earth Day's 40th anniversary. This is the fourth year the zoo has participated in the conservation event held at zoos across North America.

This year's theme was biodiversity, and exhibitors huddled in tents lined up along the Tundra Trek to tell kids how they can help.

Exhibitors this year included Earth Day Canada, Polar Bears International, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Parks Canada, Great Lakes Outreach, Adopt-A-

Pond Wetland Conservation Programme, Turtle Island Conservation, Education Programs, Live Green Toronto, the Royal Ontario Museum and the Ontario Science Centre.

Plenty of activities were available at the tents to teach kids while they played. They could help sing the Cherokee Water Song with Turtle Island Conservation, dress up like an insect with Parks Canada, or play a recycling game, just to name a few.

And it wouldn't have been a party at the zoo without some animals, so kids and their parents were also able to see a pair of recycling hornbills and enjoy a talk with the polar bear keeper.



Photos by Kimberlee Nancekivell