

CARIBBEAN HERITAGE
Rita Cox visits to launch
collection at Malvern - See page 4

RUGBY SEASON BEGINS
Pope John Paul Panthers start off
their season right - See page 7



THE EAST TORONTO OBSERVER

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New Raptor pops into mall

COURTNEY ROBERTS

The Observer

Kids and parents lined up for hours outside the new Cellular Point store, which celebrated the opening of their Malvern Town Centre location on April 18.

But not everyone in line was there to activate a cell phone.

Many were excited about meeting "Pops" Mensah-Bonsu, the 25-year-old Britain native who has just signed a one-year contract with the Toronto Raptors.

Cellular Point president Bobby Maker said he wanted to do something different than a regular store opening.

Dream come true

"We've always dreamt of going to the next level and we wanted to bring to the small communities the bigger stars," Maker said.

This has been a dream for him since he started the company in 1999. Now with 21 locations across the GTA, Maker hopes to bring more Raptors to disadvantaged communities by the end of the year.

Bonsu received more than a warm welcome to Toronto. He signed several pictures, posters and basketballs of



COURTNEY ROBERTS/The Observer

Excited Raptors fan Malique Ellis smiles while getting an autographed photo of 'Pops' Mensah-Bonsu at the opening of Cellular Point in Malvern Town Centre on April 18.

adoring fans.

"These are the people that make my job worthwhile," he said. "They come out to every game and support us even in a tough season. They make it easier for us to play.

"When I was a little kid, I loved it when the athletes

came out and gave back to the community so I always told myself, if I was ever in that position, I would do the same."

Not only does Bonsu stress the importance of giving back, he also notes the importance of education.

"I probably wouldn't be here without my education and my parents," Bonsu said. "They instilled those morals and values in me at a young age."

Thirteen-year-old, Maliq Ellis was excited about the event as soon as he heard

about it.

"I was very happy to see a real basketball player in person," said Ellis while gripping his autographed photo of Bonsu. "I hope he continues playing basketball and I would like him to come back because he's a good dunker!"

Timing of LRT line depends on Games, TTC says

COURTNEY ROBERTS

The Observer

Toronto will have to get on the PanAm bandwagon before Malvern can get on the new light rail transit system, Scarborough Community Council has been told.

Construction of the line would be accelerated if Toronto receives the bid to accommodate the expected influx the games will bring, said Mitch Stambler, TTC manager of service planning, at the April 21 council meeting.

The Malvern line is to connect commuters to the Sheppard East LRT line scheduled to begin construction in June.

"Once that [Sheppard] line is done, right here in Scarborough, we will join world class cities like Paris, like Barcelona, which have modern, low floor, accessible light rail transit," Stambler said.

The city's LRT plan is for a network of electric, above-ground transit that is cheaper than a subway system. The lines emit 92 per cent less carbon dioxide than cars, which may reduce pollution in an already congested city.

On April 1, the Province announced \$1.7 billion to extend and upgrade the existing Rapid Transit from McCowan station to Sheppard and then to Malvern Town Centre.

Stambler also announced improvements already made to improve efficiency on the TTC.

They include off-peak bus service increases and the new Bike Ride program that allows cyclists to easily transport their bicycles to where they need to be.

As of next month, several buses running throughout Scarborough will have bike racks.

For more information on light-rail plans, visit torontoobserver.ca.



TRISTAN CARTER/The Observer

Yards like this one on Mornelle Court are to be targeted by two cleanup days this month.

Cleanup time in Scarborough

TRISTAN CARTER

The Observer

Spring cleaning does not have to be confined to your house.

Mayor David Miller is promoting both the 20-minute makeover on April 24 and his community cleanup day on April 25. The city is encouraging people to take part in these events and help clean up some of the trash on our streets and in our parks.

Paula Chambers, principal of St. Thomas More Catholic School, will be getting her students involved.

"We've got garbage bags and gloves and the whole school will be outside. Each

grade level will have a section of the yard," Chambers said. "Basically we clean the paper and other things from along the fence lines what's been left over from the winter."

Waste reduction

While the event improves the area aesthetically, it is also a great opportunity to teach kids the values of conservation and respect for the natural environment, Chambers says. Children learn things like remembering to turn off lights and running water to save energy and properly disposing of trash.

"If there's garbage in our

schoolyard we are the people putting it there. So they realize that they have to use the waste containers," Chambers says. "And it makes them feel good that they've cleaned everything up and they like living in a clean environment."

In addition to the events she has organized at her school, Chambers also plans to help clean up parts of the Rouge River Valley this Saturday.

Other eco-warriors can get involved by registering on the City of Toronto website. They can also pick up gloves and garbage bags at local civic or community centres. Pizza Pizza is sponsoring the events and will distribute bags and gloves at various locations.

NEWS

Centennial to bring new life to Guild Inn



LAUREN HUMMEL/The Observer

The Guild Inn will have a facelift with plans for renovation and restoration from its new owner Centennial College

Hotel and hospitality program moving into historic space

LAUREN HUMMEL
The Observer

The city is donating the Guild Inn to Centennial College to be converted into another campus for the college's hotel and hospitality program.

The city will also pay for renovations and development on the property located in the Kingston-Galloway area.

"We won't be buying it because we simply don't have the money," college president Ann Buller said.

The hotel towers were demolished April 14 as part of the first phase of the

revitalization of the Guild Inn grounds.

"The college has been trying to acquire the property for years now," Buller said.

The rest of the buildings on the property, including the Bickford building, are to be maintained. New buildings are also to be built on the property, such as a restaurant and a bar.

The college is looking to expand its space so certain programs can move into campuses that enhance the students' learning experience Buller said. The aviation program may move to an airport in the near future.

Police hope to foster trust with youth at local picnic

Fourth annual Division open house will be held May 9

MATT ALLEYSNE
The Observer

Local police are reaching out to the community with their fourth annual open house and community picnic.

The Community Police Liaison Committee will host the event on May 9 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 43 Division, located at 4331 Lawrence Ave.

"This event is designed to bring together youth and police officers from our community in a fun filled activity," committee co-chair Marilyn Hodge said. "It is

about fostering an environment of trust."

1,500 people attended the free event last year.

Families will have an opportunity to tour the station as well as Emergency Medical Services. Exhibits include a police cruiser, a fire engine and an ambulance.

"There will be many things to do from face painting, to a silent auction and even a mobile skate park provided by the East Toronto Boys & Girls Club," Hodge said. "Plus of course their will be plenty of food for everyone."

The event is made possible by generous donations and support from community businesses, as well as ProAction Cops & Kids, a charitable organization that provides funding for Toronto Police Programs for youth at risk.

"Sometimes trust does not come easy between a community and the police especially when it comes to the youth," Ryan D'Sena said. D'Sena, has applied to the police academy and said he has wanted to be a police officer since he was 16 to help build that trust.



Courtesy of Marilyn Hodge CPLC 43 Division

Police Chief William Blair and 43 Division Superintendent Paul Gottschalk mingle at the 2008 open house.

Women building homes for the needy with Habitat

RIMA RAMOUL
The Observer

Women, pick up that hammer and those bricks and join your sisters in arms in building houses for sixteen poor Toronto families.

The Habitat for Humanity Women Build is hosting a build blitz to

help families rise above poverty, by providing them with a new place they can call home.

"We are expecting over 1,500 volunteers to come out to build over the course of the nine-day blitz," Joanna Matthews, the communications and events coordinator of Habitat for Humanity, said.

A special emphasis is placed on women lending a hand, as the site describes a Women Build as including "all the benefits of a regular Habitat for Humanity build, but adds a twist by focusing on the encouragement of women to get involved in what is considered an otherwise male dominated

profession."

A total of 16 houses are expected to be built during the blitz which is set to take place in Scarborough, from May 1 to May 9.

The organizers are also asking that donations also be made so to help pay for the materials needed.

As of April 20, the Habitat for

Humanity Toronto's Women Build raised a total of \$ 1,868,800, reaching 93% of its goal a \$2 million.

"It's going to be a truly inspirational experience and I'm thrilled to be a part of it."

For more on this story, see torontoobserver.ca.

News Briefs

Shooting but no one's hurt

Gunshots were heard at the Kingston-Galloway area about 11:45 p.m. on April 9. Police seized several weapons when they arrested a Twenty-year-old Clifton Golding.

Tax clinic at Burrows Hall

Burrows Hall is having an income tax clinic on April 28. A Canada Revenue Agent will do single income tax returns for people with low incomes. 1081 Progress Ave. For info call 416-396-8740.

Children not forgotten

A trust for the children of Pamela Apoko who was stabbed to death on April 2 has been set up by family and friends. Pamela Apoko "In Trust" CIBC account 08902-6369731.

Brush up on dental info

Walmart stores will provide info about your teeth and gums. This includes demonstrations on proper dental care. The Better Check Up program will be at 5995 Steeles Ave. E. on April 26.

Donate some time for seniors

The West Scarborough Seniors Club needs volunteers for its lunch and shopping programs. If you have the time contact Lavanya Savari at 416-755-9215, ext. 226 for more info.

Walking through the village

Scarborough Village is doing a walking tour to get to know your neighbourhood. May 2 from 12 to 2 p.m at Cougar Court ending at Scarborough Village Community Centre.

Riders gear up to conserve Rouge



Courtesy of the Rouge Valley Conservation Centre

Riders set out for another Ride for the Rouge event. The annual bike ride allows the RVCC to collect money that will be poured into restoration and educational programs, such as the Year of Energy Conservation.

Bike to help vital watershed

RIMA RAMOUL
The Observer

Dust off your bike, pump-up its wheels, and take it out for a spin. The Rouge Valley Conservation Centre is providing you the perfect opportunity.

A fundraising bike ride is to be held on May 9 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with the proceeds going toward restoration programs provided through the centre.

"Money raised from the pledges and donations will go towards our Year of Energy Conservation, Restoration and Education programs as well as guided hikes," the centre's Serena Lawrie said.

Those wishing to participate can either choose a 25/50 kilometre bike ride to take them all the way through the superb Rouge River watershed.

Or if they prefer two feet over two wheels, take part in a hike through the Rouge Valley with a guide.

Pat Mohr, who participated

in a previous Ride for the Rouge event, said she thoroughly enjoyed her experience.

"It was a lot of fun," Mohr said. "I got to help the Rouge River watershed and visit many different parts of it. I also enjoyed the satisfaction that comes with completing a physically challenging task."

This year, she is returning and will be helping the centre run the event.

Lunch will be provided and those who collect the most pledges can win prizes, such as gift cards, an electric guitar, and two first-class VIA Rail tickets to Quebec City.

"Ride for the Rouge is an excellent way to learn about the Rouge, to help protect it, to test your endurance, and to make new friends," Mohr said.

"There is also a great BBQ after the ride."

Organizers are expecting 200 to 250 participants.

For more information, visit rvcc.ca.

Residents still can't go home after explosion

MATTHEW ALLEYNE
The Observer

It has been 36 days since the explosion that took place at the condominium complex at 3650 Kingston Rd., and residents are still waiting for someone to tell them when they can go home.

A month after the incident the building was released by the Ontario Fire Marshall to property management after being deemed structurally sound.

Estimate of cost

Management and the insurance companies are assessing the damage and coordinating the repairs so the building can be occupied again.

"Preliminary estimates for the cost of the repairs will be over \$1 million and, based on current information from the engineers and contractors, it could take approximately two months to complete repairs," said Michael Holmes, president and chief operating

officer of the condo's management Larlyn, in a press release. The residents are going on their fifth week of being displaced with no word about getting them back home.

Many residents are frustrated it has taken four weeks just to start the repair process, according to messages received by the *Observer* through an email list.

Not home yet

"Even if the news they have isn't good news, they should still keep us informed. At least we can better plan our lives until we get back home," one resident wrote in an email. Deltera Constructions, the company that built the complex, has made a recommendation to temporarily restore power while the work is being done.

Various parties involved state in emails to residents it will not get them back home any faster due to the nature of the damage to the electrical system.



Courtesy of Kerry McLeish Communications Officer RVHS

From left: Dr. Ricci, Chief Cardiologist RVHS; Mike Dignam, RBC Branch Manager; Jennifer Tory, RBC Regional President; Lisa Gallagher, RBC Regional VP; Lynda Bremner, Account Manager; Joylan Gonsalves, VP Admin Assistant.

Gift from the heart to save a heart

Big business gets involved in a unique campaign for machines to save lives

LAURA ROSS
The Observer

The Royal Bank of Canada has partnered with the Rouge Valley Health System for the Gift from the Heart to Save a Heart campaign. Branches in Scarborough, Ajax and Pickering will be selling raffle tickets to raise money for Rouge Valley's cardiac care program from April 16 to

June 14.

Their goal is to raise \$75,000 to buy three new electrocardiogram machines.

Electrocardiograms are used to screen for heart disease. They are also required for every patient over 50 admitted to the hospital for surgery. The health service has 30 machines, but they get worn out and need replacing.

RBC has 15 branches in

the community and the regional vice-president for Scarborough, Pickering and Ajax, Lisa Gallagher said it's all about making a difference.

"The goal is to build a healthier community and give back," Gallagher said. "These electrocardiogram machines will touch a lot of people."

Raffle tickets cost \$5 each

or three for \$10. All proceeds will be donated to the Rouge Valley Health System.

There will be five major prize packages for the raffle: an entertainment package, a home office package, a fun in the sun package, a shopper's delight package and a dining bonanza package.

Winning tickets will be drawn at Rouge Valley Centenary on June 14.



PHILLIP SMALLEY/The Observer

Easter festivities in Scarborough

Priest Mikolaj Sidorski (right) blesses Ukrainian Easter baskets in celebration of Orthodox Easter at St. Anne's church in East Scarborough on April 19. Parishoners Leonid Bobenko, Walter Bolusmjak and Bill Kachur sing behind.

Lit City celebrates local culture

AMANDA LY
The Observer

Scarborough isn't the first thing that comes to mind when you think of literature and culture, but Lit City's Eastern Edge challenges that idea.

Lit City is part of Toronto's 175th Birthday celebration and the Toronto Public Library's campaign



SMITH

Keep Toronto Reading, which takes place from April to May.

Many literary cultural events happen in Scarborough, but this time it's formally recognized by the city, said Tina Srebotnjak, project manager of TPL.

"We're very aware of our Scarborough constituency and wanted people to take another look at Scarborough," Srebotnjak said.

Eastern Edge highlights authors from Scarborough and books that are inspired by the neighbourhood.

It includes performances and readings for kids -- wine tastings and discussion panels for adults.

Events take place at library branches across Scarborough from Danforth to Malvern.

The demand came from Scarborough residents and librarians who said they were tired of Toronto hogging the limelight when Scarborough is just as vibrant and culturally diverse as Toronto.

Scarborough native David Chariandy's first novel *Soucouyant* was inspired by his community and uses the Bluffs as his book's backdrop.

It's a coming of age narrative that describes what it's like to grow up in Scarborough as someone of Caribbean descent.

He talked about his award-winning novel at Taylor Memorial Branch during a lunch event on April 22.

Chariandy now lives in Vancouver and teaches English at Simon Fraser University.

All events are free except for the wine tasting. So far, the community has responded with a high turnout, she said.

For more information visit toronto.ca/litcity.

Malvern welcomes Rita Cox

Guests celebrate arrival of Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection

LAURA ROSS
The Observer

April 15 marked a special night for the Malvern branch of the Toronto Public Library. It celebrated the relocation of the Rita Cox Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection from the Cedarbrae branch to its new home at the Malvern branch.

Guests were welcomed by steel pan drummer Taurean Clarke as they entered the library's community room, decorated with colourful Caribbean memorabilia. The music, decorations and intimate space gave the night a Caribbean flair.

About 60 people were in attendance, including councillors Paul Ainslie and Chin Lee. Dwayne Morgan, an author whose works are part of the collection, also performed some of his poetry for the occasion.

Dr. Rita Cox herself was the guest of honour and received a standing ovation when she rose to give her speech.

"I'm a librarian," said Cox. "I worked in a community

and as a librarian one of the things you do is you serve the needs of your community. The makeup of the community led me to start the collection."

Cox joined the Toronto Public Library as a librarian at the Parkdale branch in 1960.

She looked at the demographics of the area and decided that putting together a Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection would serve a need that was not being met.

Cox started the project in the 1970s and it was a labour of love, focused on Black and Caribbean historical and cultural experiences she spent a lifetime building.

The collection contains materials for people of all ages, including books, periodical subscriptions and audiovisual resources.

It is recognized as one of the most comprehensive Black and Caribbean heritage collections in Canada and focuses specifically on Canadian content.

You can view the rest of the collection at the Maria A. Shchuka, Parkdale and York



LAURA ROSS/The Observer

Rita Cox speaks to the assembled crowd on the importance and relevance of the Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection to the Malvern community.

Woods branches.

It is housed in more than one branch because there are over 16,000 items in the collection. You can support the collection by donating to the Rita Cox Endowment Fund.

Margaret Mikulinski,

library service manager for the Malvern district, simply couldn't wait to get her hands on it.

"The collection is a lovely statement of our commitment to our community and we want to make sure that the

people in Malvern can enjoy the collections that speak to them," said Mikulinski. "It's perfect for Malvern."

See a photo gallery of this event at www.torontoobserver.ca.



HERO AT LARGE

Mark Gatensby takes his usual position as a hero in a Scarborough fire engine, but the site of the awarded firefighter's latest heroics was on another continent.

Local firefighter honoured for saving woman's life in Africa

MAXX SMITH
The Observer

It is no surprise to hear the firefighters at Station 214 on Meadowvale Road are heroes because they save lives in their job.

But one local firefighter was honoured recently for his heroism off-duty. Way off-duty — in Africa.

Mark Gatensby was given the Roy Silver Award by the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association on March 18.

"It all started from the blog, us just telling, 'Hey, there was a crazy accident on our trip,'" the first-class firefighter says.

Gatensby faced a harrowing ordeal while on vacation in Botswana in March last year. A tour guide named Joe tried to fix a faulty door while their caravan was driving down the highway.

"When she opened [the door] the wind caught it and her hand was on the handle, and it just pulled her right out," he says.

She hit the highway at about 90 km/hr.

After the driver pulled over the vehicle, Gatensby and the passengers rushed out to help Joe. She was unconscious but still breathing.

"Prior to [firefighting] I was a paramedic for six years with York region," Gatensby says. "In all my years doing that and in the years doing this I've never seen someone so graphically injured."

The situation he faced looked like a movie scene.

"She had a really badly fractured ankle, her knees were pounded in and her kneecaps had been crushed," he says. "She had gravel stuck in her body all over the place. She was head to toe road-rash and blood, and her scalp was split in three different spots, two of which were so big that you could clearly see her skull."

When Joe woke up she had little recollection of who she was, let alone what happened.

"I felt that she would probably die," he says.

At 150 kilometres from a city or

a hospital, Joe faced poor odds of survival.

The driver phoned the tour office and guaranteed an ambulance would arrive in two hours.

Gatensby knew it would be too long so he convinced the ambulance to meet them halfway. The crew used what was around them to make an impromptu stretcher. With no drugs to sedate her, Joe could not keep still under the immense pain. They tried to contain her using a lunch table and their sleeping mats.

When Joe was semi-contained, the crew realized they couldn't safely transport her inside their truck because she may sustain further injury from driving roughly on the highway.

"Luckily after about five minutes an oversized pickup truck came along," Gatensby says. "We asked them if they'd take us [to the clinic]. These guys said no."

"We're going to get fired and we need the money from this job for our families," the

drivers reasoned.

But Gatensby didn't blame them, understanding their stressful lives.

The whole time I was still wondering: when is she going to go unconscious and not wake up again?
- Mark Gatensby

Still the crew refused to give up what may have been Joe's only chance of survival. They offered the drivers money.

"In the end I wound up taking the keys from the ignition of the truck and said, 'You guys can either help us or I'm going to throw your keys into the field,'" Gatensby says. "We settled on \$50 dollars each U.S. and all they were going to do was drive us 10 kilometres backwards to the little clinic."

The drivers accepted and exceeded the crew's expectations.

"In the end they drove past that clinic and actually drove us 30 kilometres to a better one so these guys did their part, it just took a little encouragement," says Gatensby.

There were already 40 to 50 locals waiting

for treatment at that clinic. There was one nurse and no doctor. The nurse allowed them to use a spare room that was locked. But she didn't have a key for it.

"There was this big huge Aussie Rules rugby player, a big guy named Scott, 280 pounds, six-foot-seven," he says. He told Scott to break down the door.

They eventually stopped Joe's bleeding. To clean her wounds, Gatensby and the passengers opened IV bags and used them as sterile water. The clinic had no stitches or medicines.

"We did what we could at the clinic...at this point she was really shocky," he says. "Most of the time she was complaining she was on fire and then she was cold."

With no medications, all the crew could do was wait for the ambulance to come.

"The whole time I was still wondering: when is she going to go unconscious and not wake up again?" Gatensby says.

The paramedic vehicle arrived an hour later. Joe was hooked up to monitors and treated with morphine. The ambulance made the 120 km trek back to a hospital in Maun. She was airlifted to a major trauma centre in Johannesburg the next day. Four days after, Gatensby and the crew found out she would be fine.

Gatensby never heard back from her, noting she probably doesn't want to remember the incident. A mutual friend has been updating him on her successful recovery.

"The main thing is that she lived and didn't seem to be too much worse for wear based on her injuries," he says.

The only reason anyone in Canada found out about this was because Gatensby and his girlfriend kept a blog of their travels and mentioned the crazy day.

"When I got back to Canada the guys (at the station) asked me, so I told them the story in much less detail," he says. "Our captain on our crew wrote a letter to the union for off-duty awards. With that letter came a nomination for one of these awards which I was fortunate enough to get."



PHOTOS BY MAXX SMITH/The Observer

Gatensby relaxes with his fellow firefighters at Station 214, awaiting his next call to action.

Going green is a lifestyle

Very little has been done by Scarborough residents about animal cruelty. On local issues like deer hunting in the Rouge Valley or bigger, wider issues beyond our borders like the seal hunt, no one takes a stand.

There are no prominent protests in Scarborough against animal cruelty. The only prominent animal activist from our community is Trey Smith of the Humane Society, known for his guest appearances on CityTV.

Some people will participate in Earth day events like local cleanups or tree-plantings. However, this does not make up for a year of polluting frivolously. The same people you find at a cleanup event are probably driving their cars the two blocks down the road to spend a few hours picking up garbage at a local park.

Being environmentally conscious should not be just for a day. It is a lifestyle.

People need to realize the planet is not so forgiving. Earth day is good, but it seems comparable to a maffiosa going to church and asking God for forgiveness. One day of praying cannot atone for a lifetime of evils.

Some people, like David Suzuki, local University of Toronto professor Nick Eyles, and Centennial College's Michael Gauthier, practise what they preach. The two environmental science instructors have made careers out of being green. They teach the science behind accelerating climate change and try to reduce their own carbon foot print.

One day of being green will help but it is not the be all and end all. People could be greener on an everyday basis. They could walk to their local convenience store instead of driving there. They could quit smoking, use public transportation or ride a bike. For some people it may not be easy to do these things or maybe they just like driving their cars for whatever reason.

Others may feel that it is too time consuming to live a green lifestyle. They are wrong.

— Selena Mann

Handgun ban misses target

The mayor's online campaign to ban handguns in Canada needs to go offline.

The message to support the ban started spreading through Facebook and YouTube last April. But since his campaign launched, the reality has been little actual change. Just recently guns were seized in a police raid from two locations in Scarborough.

While this action seems to be in good faith in enhancing citizen safety, the sad fact is there will always be criminals no matter the geographic scale or ethnic diversity of any municipality.

An all-out ban on the private ownership of handguns is an invitation for more illegal arms dealers to flood firearms into our city.

If the suggestion to restrict handgun manufacturing and assembly came into effect, those who want handguns will buy it from an underground market. Illegal gun traders would profit, instead of registered warehouses and distributors.

Illegal distributors will find ways to smuggle handguns across a loosely guarded Canadian border, leading to more handguns finding their way into our cities. An increase of handguns in a community results in the need for more resources to track down illegal weapon by all levels of government.

The mayor needs to remember that not all gun owners are criminals. Zoning bylaw to suppress local firing ranges and gun clubs only divides people who share an interest in avoiding tragic deaths by such a weapon.

Gun violence can decrease without a ban on handguns. Since 2005 shooting occurrences in the city have decreased from 359 to 239 last year.

Instead of wasting his efforts on a hopeless campaign, Miller should focus on fortifying community centres and social programs across Toronto.

Give communities the right tools to get youth interested and involved in positive community activities so they won't have the need to find a sense of support in friendships founded on guns and gangs.

— Katrina Rozal

SCORE ONE FOR THE NEW GUYS!



GESILAYEFA AZORBO/The Observer

Pope John Paul II team of first-time rugby players is starting the season with a winning record. See story on page 7.

Diversity in our community leads to greater understanding

If there's one word to describe the communities in Malvern, Highland Creek and West Hill, it would be diverse.

Looking back, all of our spring issues this year contained stories covering an array of ethnic cultures. Some of them include stories on the African heritage assembly at Woburn C.I., the Chinese New Year celebrations, the Sri Lankan conflict, the Jamaican Canadian Association awards and the opening of a youth immigration centre.

My observation, however, is not surprising. Statistics on the city's website show that the top visible minority groups in Ward 38, 43 and 44 are South Asian, Black, Filipino, Chinese, West Asian and Southeast Asian.

Clearly visible

But there's no need for statistics to prove the existence of multiculturalism in this area. A short walk along the local plaza will help someone notice the region's high cultural diversity. Not only can I shop at stores from various nationalities within minutes, I can also eat different ethnic dishes without switching restaurants. But diversity has a lot more to offer to the area than simply satisfying



Monica VALENCIA

consumers. Award ceremonies, musicals and community outreach give residents the opportunity to learn about other cultures while sharing their own.

In one of my recent interviews, Lori Metcalfe of West Hill Community Services and Iain Duncan of Action

Diversity has a lot more to offer to the area than simply satisfying customers

for Neighbourhood Change explained that the Kingston-Galloway community is mainly composed of minorities. They said many newcomers visit their offices

to find information on the area and services available to them.

All of this confirms that *the Observer's* coverage on diversity is no coincidence. Malvern, Highland Creek and West Hill are composed of communities with different ethnic backgrounds. Their events and engagement become the content of news stories.

Beyond concepts

I knew this district was multicultural and thought it would be easy for anyone to realize it. But, there's a difference between knowing and understanding. It's only now that I understand the composition of the area. It's not merely a diversity of cultures—it's a diversity of perspectives, customs and stories.

It's through the process of hearing and telling the stories of these communities that I have acquired a greater understanding of the region. The objective of communicating their stories is to allow readers to go beyond concepts such as diversity and expose them to what they truly signify.

To view photos of stories covering the area's multicultural communities, visit torontoobserver.ca

The East Toronto OBSERVER

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Soccer stars return home

Toronto FC hopes its new pair of Scarborough players produce on and off the field

Briefs

Mowat squads win big time

The Sir Oliver Mowat senior and junior boys soccer teams were both successful in defeating Albert Campbell CI squads on April 22. The senior team won 3-1, while the junior team won 3-0. The Oliver Mowat senior soccer team is 2-0 so far this season while junior team is 1-1.

Laurier defeats rugby rivals

The Sir Wilfred Laurier senior boys rugby team won their first game of the year in a tight game against Scarborough rivals Cedarbrae by a score of 26-22. Daniel Jankulovski, David Scott, Jordan Meyler, and Munim Butt each scored tries for Laurier.

Sharks in tough in Calgary

The Scarborough Sharks hockey squad recently began their Esso Cup adventure with a tough 1-0 loss against the host Calgary Flyers. The Sharks are the lone Ontario team represented in the inaugural female midget AAA tournament.

Archer wins world cup silver

Olympian archer and Scarborough resident Crispin Duenas won a silver medal at the first World Cup meet of the year in the Dominican Republic last week.

TEVY PILC
The Observer

For two Scarborough soccer players, it was the chance of a lifetime when they reunited to play professional soccer for their hometown.

Toronto FC made headlines when acquiring midfielder Dwayne De Rosario and defender Adrian Serieux. Both players were born and raised in east Scarborough where they honed their soccer skills while attending local high schools. De Rosario went to Winston Churchill C.I. and Serieux attended Pope John Paul II. They both excelled in multiple sports, but soccer won both their hearts. They even played in the Malvern Soccer Club together before making it big.

"It's funny the way things work themselves out," De Rosario said on his website after Toronto acquired Serieux. "It wasn't too long ago that Adrian and I played for the same club team, Malvern, and I had to babysit him as part of the Older Malvern team. Now we're both with TFC in our home town, but the babysitting business done."

De Rosario, 30, has established himself as an elite MLS player. In eight seasons, he is a three-time all-star and scored over 50 career goals. He's won multiple MLS championships with San Jose and Houston.

De Rosario will be given a

star on the Scarborough Walk of Fame on May 28.

"It's a great honour that the people from your hometown have taken the time to acknowledge the things I've done," De Rosario said. "It's very gratifying."

Serieux, 29, is in his fourth year in the MLS after playing two years in Europe and starting his career with the Toronto Lynx in A-League.

It finally feels like it's time that I'm home near family and friends

- Adrian Serieux

Both are veterans of the Canadian National Soccer team and still have several family and friends still living in Toronto.

"It feels like home," Serieux says. "I've been travelling around for the couple few years on different teams, it finally feels like it's time that I'm home near family and friends."

With a 2-2-2 record, both players are primarily focused on improving the team.

"Your job first is your first priority," Serieux said. "I try to make time when I can to see people but I came back here to do a job, and they understand that."

Just as they are focused on making their hometown a winner on the soccer pitch, they have the same commitment when devoting themselves to their communities.

In 2008, De Rosario helped create DeRo Entertainment, a promotional group geared towards working with charities to spread awareness for local and global issues.

It recently launched



TEVY PILC PHOTOS/The Observer

Dwayne De Rosario looks on during a Toronto FC practice while teammate Adrian Serieux (inside) catches a quick breather in the middle of a scrimmage.

Working Together to Build a Better Tomorrow, a program that visits schools in the GTA to raise awareness for World Malaria Day on April 25. De Rosario travelled to Mali in December 2007 and witnessed the debilitating effects of malaria.

"At a school in Ajax, we presented in front of 300 children, who raised more than \$300 on that day alone for bed nets to help protect those affected by malaria."

Serieux says that one of his main goals is to work with the Malvern Soccer Club, where

he started playing soccer.

"Coming from that background, you learn to look at things from those perspectives [and] understand how important it is to give back."

Watch a video clip of the Adrian Serieux interview at torontoobserver.ca

First-time rugby players taking league by storm

GESILA AZORBO
The Observer

Pope John Paul II began the rugby season with a 3-1 record, including a 31-6 win over Vanier in a home game on April 14.

While a few of the boys were on last year's team, many of the players have never played rugby before. Some had only seen the game played on film, according to coach Dr. Christopher Clovis.

Early practices were held in the gym or the parking lot

to avoid damaging the frozen field, so Tuesday's game was the first real field game for most of the team.

"Most of them this is their first game, their first time," Clovis said.

PJP's rugby success is also significant because the game is only in its third season at the school.

Against Vanier, Adrian "Chief" Heath scored the first try and captain Paul Pakulis made the two point conversion.

"It's a lot of fun so far," said team captain Paul

Pakulis after the game.

"We were running it really well, passing could have been a bit better, I thought. We've got a lot to work on still, but it's good to get the first game down."

He said he hopes the team does well this season and expressed confidence in the current set of players.

For Clovis, however, it's all about the game.

"Right now, as long as they're enjoying the game, I'm quite happy," he said. "But they're winning, so that's a good thing."



GESILA AZORBO/The Observer

A PJP II player plows through multiple Jean Vanier CHS tacklers in a strong victory.

NEWS



ANTHONY GEREMIA PHOTOS/The Observer

Stepping into spring

Residents get outdoors and walk to find a cure for multiple sclerosis



ANTHONY GEREMIA
The Observer

"It's a nice morning for a stroll, isn't it?" mused CTV anchor Bill Hutchinson to the crowd inside the Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute gym.

With these words, he kicked off the 2009 Scarborough MS walk.

Thronges of people set out through the nearby park for a 10-kilometre walk to raise funds for multiple sclerosis research and therapy.

It's the 14th year, as a "family-oriented non-competitive walk" in Scarborough, says supervisor Caroline Horcher,

By the time the walk kicked off at 10 a.m. there was quite the crowd, despite early fears of a bad turnout. Barely 45 minutes before the

start of the walk, the room was in a lull, at least according to two of the stranger attendees, a pair of clowns.

"Usually this place is teeming," one of them calling herself June Bug said. "You can hardly get by. There are usually more children."

Bug is from the Scarborough Corps of Clowns, and she and her partner have been volunteering at the walk for 12 years, out of a "sense of community and community events," as well as in hope for a cure.

Linda Quigley is participating in the MS walk for the first time as part of a group from Curves fitness. Joining her were her four

dogs which she'd rescued.

"If I'm walking, they're walking," Quigley says with a smile. "They love the exercise."

Kelly has been struggling with it, but doesn't let it get her down

- Linda Glover

For Linda Glover, the walk is a lot more personal. This is her third year. Glover is part of a group called Kelly's angels, so named because they walk for Kelly Glover, Linda's half-

sister.

"She found out she had MS in her early 20s," Glover said about the mother of two. "She's been struggling with it, but she doesn't let it get her down."

Eventually, Kelly herself arrives to take part in the

walk, despite her MS.

She's been doing it since 1998, and eventually, her best friend founded Kelly's Angels. "Now it's a family affair," she says, "and my neighbours and friends all support me."

After the speech from Bill Hutchinson and a warmup, the crowds took to the dusty trail, led by signs.

Fortunately, it was an unusually warm, sunny day, and everyone seemed to be in good spirits.

After about an hour, there was a free lunch waiting for their return.

"One thing that's exciting in the world of fundraising is that we're doing more online making it easier to raise pledges," Horcher said.

At the end of the day, almost \$53,000 was raised to find the cure.



Counterclockwise from top: Linda Quigley brings her dogs with walkers through Cedarbrae Park; members from Curves Fitness join the effort; the walkers warm up; and June Bug and Tripper entertain the young walkers, while people incapacitated by MS come along for the walk, right.

