



Yeye Zhu /// The Observer

**Papito Wilson, who lost his leg in 1995, participated in his first Terry Fox Run on Sunday at Wilket Creek Park.**

## Running for a Canadian icon

By **YEYE ZHU**  
The Observer

Papito Wilson acknowledges that a 1995 accident “changed my life.”

But it didn’t slow him down. Now 51, Wilson has learned to play wheelchair basketball, sitting volleyball, para-rowing and wheelchair tennis.

On Sunday, for the first time, Wilson participated in the 36th annual Terry Fox Run at Wilket Creek Park, at the northwest tip of East York.

“It’s a great experience to do something to support others,” he said.

The Wilket Creek Terry Fox run is among the largest in the country. Since it began in 1980, it’s raised \$10 million.

“I think the memory is Terry Fox,” said Jonathan Selmen, one of the

organizers, “and the Canadian public continues to support (this) Canadian icon.”

Kinna Lin, 78, is a breast cancer survivor. She participated in the Terry Fox event as part of a team, the North America Taiwanese Women’s Association. Some members of the team are in their 70s and 80s and have taken part in the run for 12 years.

“We feel it’s very meaningful to show our support,” Lin said.

Lin added that the Terry Fox Run is also a good way to narrow cultural differences and “merge into the Canadian society.”

The Wilket Creek Park run organizers invited some inspiring guest speakers to share their stories about Terry Fox and cancer.

Justin Lewis, a survivor of colon

cancer, spoke about the importance of cancer research and fundraising.

“You can help someone else by what you went through,” he said. He thinks it’s a way to give back what he has received after being diagnosed with cancer four years ago.

Lewis brought his mother, his wife and his two children to the event. He pointed out that family gave him a great deal of support during his treatment.

“My parents made it to all my chemo sessions, except for one, which I tease them about,” Lewis said.

Don Valley West MPP — and Ontario Premier — Kathleen Wynne also participated in the Wilket Creek run.

“It’s a great community event,” the premier said.

### ■ COMMUNITY

## East York gets its chance to shine as a cultural hotspot

By **RAQUEL RUSSELL**  
The Observer

What makes East York East York?

That question will be answered next year when the Cultural Hotspot, a four-month summer program that launched in 2014, turns its attention to East York. In 2017, it will showcase heritage, businesses and community members that make the community unique.

“It’s to shine the cultural spotlight on a particular area and help spark new cultural activities within a community and share it with the rest of the city,” said Janet Davis, the city councillor for Ward 31/Beaches-East York. “What we hope to do is to help to support new artists and build on the infrastructure and capacity we already have for arts in the community.”

The Hotspot is an initiative put together by Toronto Arts and Cultural Services. The program works with other city divisions, local organizations and Tourism Toronto to bring more focus to an area. Since its 2014 launch in Scarborough, the Cultural Hotspot moved to Etobicoke in 2015 and North York in 2016.

Now it’s East York’s turn, as discussed at a public meeting held on Sept. 14 at the East York Civic Centre.

“Toronto’s more than just downtown,” said Tanya Oleksuik, communications manager for East York’s East End Arts. “We know that, but not everybody does.”

The Hotspot Connect event began with a “sound performance” in the centre’s council chamber. The performance gives an idea of the differ-

ent events and performances that will make up the Hotspot to come.

Groups worked together around large tables to brainstorm areas of interest. Representatives from organizations such as the Toronto Public Library and the Youth Council spoke of what specifically makes East York great.

“This is the kind of program we need that has the city’s support and all the peripheral partners coming together to really make a concerted effort to say, ‘Look in every single corner of our huge, beautiful city,’” Oleksuik said. “We’re more than the core. It takes all of us and everything going on to make Toronto Toronto.”

“Sometimes people are sort of comfortable in their little bubble and they traverse in certain areas. People make jokes about not going north of Bloor or over the Don. We want to give them reasons to do that.”

Projects that are highlighted for next year include SPARK, an initiative specifically for the Hotspot. SPARK helps new local artists and provides access to funding.

“It’s intended to provide small grants to new artists who may for the first time want to generate artistic and creative activity,” Davis said.

When asked if she sees this initiative continuing for a long time, the councillor was optimistic.

“It’s a tremendously successful program,” she said. “It brings a lot of new cultural and economic activity to communities and has been a tremendous success at highlighting areas in the city who have not had the attention that they ought to have.”



Raquel Russell /// The Observer

**‘Sound performers’ helped open the Cultural Hotspot Connect event at the East York Civic Centre on Sept. 14.**

## Police looking for missing E.Y. man, 67

By **OBSERVER STAFF**

Police are requesting the public’s assistance in finding a missing senior in the East York area.

Officers from 54 Division say that John McCarron, 67, was last seen at around 12:50 p.m. on Monday near the Coxwell and Mortimer avenues

area.

McCarron is described as 5’6”, weighing 160-165 pounds, clean shaven, with short, white hair and brown eyes. He was last seen wearing a



■ **MCCARRON**

beige and yellow short-sleeved dress shirt and black pants.

Police are concerned for McCarron’s safety.

They ask that anyone with information call 54 Division at 416-808-5400; or notify Crime Stoppers at 416-222-TIPS (8477) or online at www.222tips.com.

**POLICE & FIRE**

**Senior taken to hospital with burns after fire in Donlands Avenue building**

An elderly woman was taken to hospital with severe burns after an overnight fire in a high-rise building located on Donlands Avenue near Cosburn on Sept. 8. The fire occurred in a second-floor unit of the building at around 12:30 a.m. Firefighters and paramedics arrived and rushed the woman, in her 60s, to hospital. The woman is said to have been burned over possibly 30 per cent of her body. The cause of the fire is still yet to be determined, but fire officials are examining the possibility of careless smoking as a factor. No other injuries were reported.

**East Yorkers remember former police chief William McCormack**

East Yorkers were among those who paid tribute to the late Toronto police chief William McCormack after his death on Sept. 8. "He was a true man," said Keith Schultz of East York, adding that his former colleague was "always true to his word and always cared about the people of Toronto, especially his family." Schultz added: "You could tell he had massive respect from everyone he worked with — not just because of his rank, but people respected him for his positive attitude and who he was as a person in general."



■ **MCCORMACK**

McCormack was chief of what was then the Metro Toronto Police from 1989 to 1995 — capping a 35-year tenure with the force. He was laid to rest after a funeral service held at St. Paul's Basilica downtown on Sept. 12. Among those attending were

the current chief, Mark Saunders, and Mayor John Tory, who issued a written statement saying that McCormack will be always be remembered for "his dedication to serving and protecting residents of Toronto". McCormack had five children, four of whom became police officers.

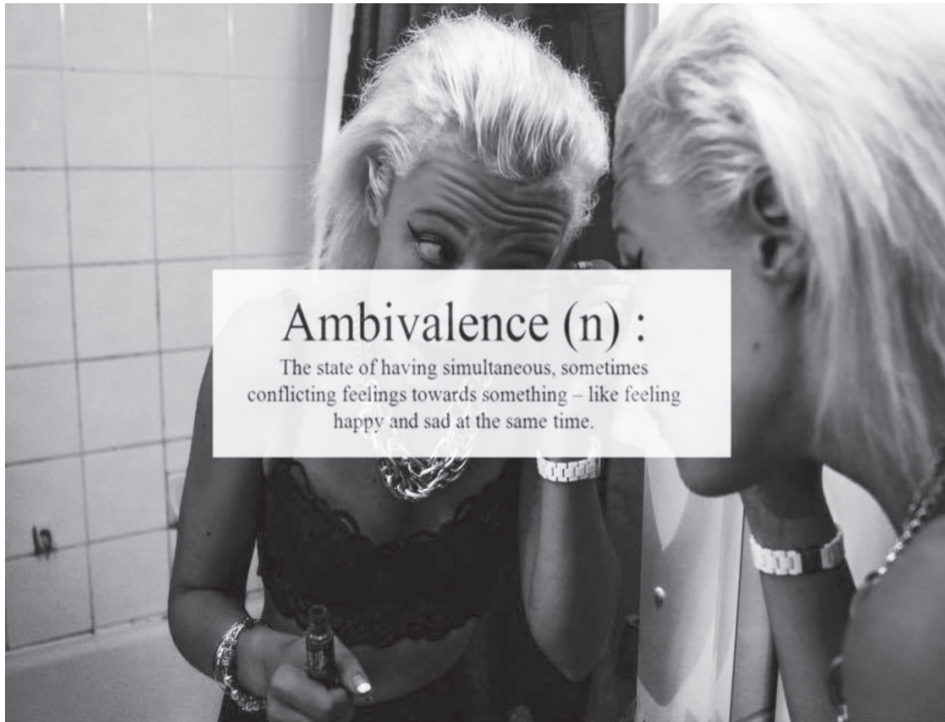
His son, Michael McCormack, is currently the president of the Toronto Police Association.

"It's not the position that you achieve in life," Michael said in his eulogy. "It is the person that you become that will define you. That was my dad's legacy."

**Early-morning fire wakes residents**

Two people were taken to hospital for smoke inhalation from a fire near Pape and Cosburn avenues early in the morning on Sept. 15. Firefighters were called to the scene of a house that was engulfed in flames. It is believed that the fire started in the basement. Officials say the fire originated at 7:45 a.m. It was contained by around 9 a.m. Neighbours were evacuated and taken to William Burgess Public School. The cause of the fire remains unknown, but police believe it was accidental.

~ Justin Vieira and Nathan Vaz



Courtesy of Liam Racine

A photograph from creative artist Liam Racine's exhibition, entitled "Logolepsy," which is showing in the second-floor Corridor Gallery of Centennial College's East York campus until this Sunday, Sept. 25.

**Student combines photos and obsession with words**

By **NATHAN VAZ**  
The Observer

A picture is worth a thousand words — or at least a couple of dozen for artist Liam Racine.

In his gallery exhibition entitled "Logolepsy," now showing at Centennial College's East York campus, Racine brings ordinary words to life by accompanying them with defining photos.

"The whole show is about my obsession with words and lust for knowledge," Racine said. "It's how each word, any individual word or a collection of words can impact you."

Racine is able to portray these words in an interesting way. Instead of just reading a particular word, guests are able to visualize the meaning of the word through the aid of his creative photographs.

The artist notes that he chose to display his photographs in black and white instead of in colour, to focus on the words and the story that they tell.

"I love the fact that with one simple click you can capture an emotion," Racine said. "You can tell a story in a photograph."

David McClyment, the coordinator of fine arts

at the Carlaw Avenue college campus, said he's in awe of Racine's work.

"I think it's fabulous," McClyment said. "Here he's taking the art of photography and layering it with a whole other interest. It's beyond the conventional photograph. The photographs become theatrical backdrops for the words he chose to use."



■ **RACINE**

his photographic pursuits.

"Photography is a career that I need to be in," he said. "It's more than a passion at this point. My next step is to continue to tell my story and other people's stories through a captured moment."

Logolepsy is open and free to the general public until this Sunday, Sept. 25. The exhibition is in the second-floor "Corridor Gallery" of the campus at 951 Carlaw Avenue.

**WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.**

**Lest we forget**

This Sunday, Sept. 25, there will be a candlelight service and memorial march in honour of Canadian soldiers who have taken their own lives. The march, begins at 6:30 p.m. at the intersection of Gamble Avenue and Todmorden Lane. The candle-lighting memorial will begin around 7:15 p.m.

**Gogh-ing to the drawing studio**

Feeling the urge to express yourself? "Open Drawing Studio" is back at Centennial College's East York campus, 951 Carlaw Avenue, every Monday from 6 to 9 p.m. Classes are open to the public and you can pay either \$5 per session or \$15 to attend all eight classes. Drop-ins welcome.

**(Board) game on**

Love a good challenge? Youth between 11-18 are invited to spend two Wednesdays a month playing board and video games at St. Walter Stewart branch of the public library, 170 Memorial Park Ave. The first gaming session is Oct. 5, 11:45 a.m. until 12:30p.m. Bring your game face!

**All about that baste**

Tired of eating mac and cheese every night? Drop into St. Luke's Anglican Church, 904 Coxwell Ave., every Sunday at 4 p.m. for beginner's cooking classes. Learn to cook with the group and share a meal. All material and food provided are free.

~ Chelsea Ward



Evangelo Sipsas// The Observer

**Yellow is for hello**

Staff at the East York campus of Centennial College unveiled a new, bright yellow "friendship bench" in the courtyard of the Carlaw Avenue building on Wednesday. Friendship benches are popping up at schools around the world to promote friendly chats — and mental health.

# Artists display unique creations at Lynn Park

By **KAITLYN SMITH**  
The Observer

The Danforth East Arts Fair propped up its tents in East Lynn Park last weekend, and showcased some of the best local talent and artists.

Textile sellers, soap makers, jewellers, photographers and artists of different kinds came out to showcase and sell their products at the fair, which was held Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 17-18. It was sponsored by DECA, the Danforth East Community Association.

It was Kirk Prior's first time as a vendor at the fair. He's a local sculptor, using reclaimed wood from renovations and old houses to build his abstract pieces.

"I like aged things. There's a nice patina to them," said Prior. "I believe (the wood) deserves to live on instead of just going into a landfill."

The origins of each piece of wood aren't known, and pieces from different areas all go into one sculpture. But Prior thinks it might be a good idea to start cataloguing where they come from to add to the nos-

talgie touch.

The fair was set up into two "S" formations. Sliding down the line from Prior was Gord Falk, a wood carver. The retiree-to-be spends his time off whittling wood under the name "Re-turn Designs," and this is his sixth year at the fair.

"I release the inner beauty of the wood," said Falk. And the crafts are as quirky as their maker.

"I guess this could be used for pet ashes," he said, opening a slim, topped jar.

Melanie Ramsay and Melissa Peretti have been organizing events and coordinating vendors for the DECA fair since 2010. Each year they receive a list of artists' applications submitted as potential vendors, who are then chosen by a jury. This year, about 80 per cent of the artists are locals from the East York area — about 60 per cent of whom are returning vendors.

"What we find is artists are asked to donate their talents and not get paid for it," said Peretti. "We're very adamant in seeing artists paid for the value of their craft."



Kaitlyn Smith/// The Observer

Jenn Taylor and her daughter provide their rendition of the Bruno Mars song "Uptown Funk," at the Danforth East Arts Fair held last weekend.

# Local hospital provides dental care for low-income families

By **JACQUELINE THETSOMBANDITH**  
The Observer

A new program at Michael Garron Hospital (MGH) is giving children from low-income families a reason to smile.

Project O.R. Smile offers a variety of complex dental procedures — everything from cavity treatments to extractions to root canals — to local children between the ages of two and 18 whose families cannot easily afford such care. It's the first project of its kind in East York.

"What we've noticed is that there has been a preponderance of (tooth) decay in children," said Dr. Aisha Romain, a pediatric dentist participating in the project. "There's some incredibly long waiting times (for general

anesthesia)... because the presentation of cavities is so severe in this demographic."

Romain believes everyone should have the right to proper dental health care.

"Oral health is a part of general health," she said. "It is a vital part of health care."

Carmine Stumpo, vice-president of programs at MGH, said the East York community is "very diverse and includes some of the most impoverished areas of the city." Because of that, there was a need for a program that could make medical procedures available to families "that would otherwise struggle to have this happen." Under the program, pediatric dentists and the MGH operating room team work together to perform various surgeries under general anesthesia.

"Sometimes we say that this is my bubble gum mask," said Romain, describing the anesthesia mask. "Why don't you blow bubbles through my bubble gum mask?"

General anesthesia can benefit children undergoing dental procedures because it lessens the anxiety of going through multiple procedures at different times. In some cases, for example, children walk in with cavities in every tooth and having this dealt with under general anesthesia can alleviate some of the trauma.

"If you have to do a lot of work... if their case involves multiple extractions... that is something that would be very difficult for a two- or three-year-old to do," Romain said. "It is less traumatic (using general anesthesia) for

sure."

The program is still small, running only a few days each month. Stumpo said they're still working through the process of securing funding from the Ministry of Health and the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network.

"We aim to target about 150 kids per year," he said.

Since the program started, children have received faster care, which brings relief to a lot of parents. Romain talked about some children who were able to gain weight because they were finally able to eat properly again.

She said Project O.R. Smile allows pediatric dentists to support the more vulnerable members of the East York community.



Evangelos Sipsas/// The Observer

## Are your ears burning?

Some East York students observed a seasonal tradition on Wednesday: a campus corn roast at Centennial College on Carlaw Avenue. To help welcome the students back to school, staff tossed and turned the ears on big barbecues and then handed the cobs over to the students to munch.

# Young tenor does a tricky balancing act

## Charles Sy shares his experience of growing up in the GTA's music arts scene

By CHARLOTTE PUN  
The Observer

There's a rising opera star living in the East York area — but you probably wouldn't have predicted it from his youth.

And he wouldn't have either.

Charles Sy (pronounced “see”) moved over the summer from the Danforth-Woodbine neighbourhood to a home a few blocks southwest of Danforth and Jones. But his professional “home” is split between the Canadian Opera Company's non-performance headquarters on Front Street near Parliament, and the Four Seasons Centre on University Avenue.

It was there that he helped close out the COC's 2015-2016 season as Condulmiero in the Rossini opera *Maometto II*. But the stage of the grand auditorium and the good reviews that he and the production garnered aren't the situation that this young tenor — just over a year out of the University of Toronto — imagined himself in as a child and teenager.

He grew up in an extended family of doctors and lawyers, and as a youth, he was thinking of cardiology. So at Cawthra Park Secondary School in Mississauga, he focused on courses to prepare him for university science and an eventual career in medicine.

Looking back, he says he was a shy kid anyway, and he didn't picture himself in the spotlight.

Still, there were hints of what was to come — even when Sy was a very young child. Like singing along to children's television programs.

“My parents would play Barney tapes for me and I would always sing along,” he recalled in an interview, “and as soon as the Barney tapes were over, I would start screaming and crying instantly.”

A later childhood achievement was his thorough memorization of the entire Disney movie *Aladdin*, and his ability to speak and sing his own version of the entire soundtrack on long car rides. Sy now thinks that singing and piano lessons helped him get through some rough childhood patches, like his mom's serious illnesses and the separation of his parents.

It was later, as a teenager, that Sy's singing really began to take hold. One factor was the influence of the highly regarded music program at his Mississauga high school, Cawthra, one of the leading arts secondary schools in Canada. Another was the Ontario Youth Choir, in which he was the youngest chorister — a 15 year-old among 20-somethings with university degrees.

“It was through that experience that I met all these people at such a young age.... It actually



Courtesy of William Ford Photography

**Just 14 months out of the opera program at the University of Toronto, Charles Sy is now singing for the Canadian Opera Company, the nation's premier ensemble.**

really inspired me to catch a glimpse into this world of training to be a professional opera singer,” Sy said. “It was just seeing those young singers who were a step above me, and seeing their passion and drive that made me go.... ‘This is something I would really love to try.’”

The University of Toronto followed Cawthra, culminating in a master's degree from the Faculty of Music's opera performance program. But Sy hadn't even officially completed graduate school when he won first place in the Canadian Opera Company (COC) Centre Stage Ensemble Studio Competition, along with the competition's Audience Choice Award. It was a national competition that involved seven finalists participating in a weeklong boot camp and concert in Toronto, and Sy's win got him a place in the COC's Ensemble Studio.

“Members of the Ensemble Studio receive a blend of advanced study and practical experience,” explains the COC website. “In this one-to-three-year program, singers receive vocal, theatrical and practical career development.... understudying major roles, the annual Glencore Ensemble Studio School tour, art song recitals, and a special Ensemble Studio performance of

a COC mainstage production, as well as roles in COC mainstage productions.”

Sy said one word helps explain what makes opera unique compared to other forms of singing: resonance. He said opera singers spend years developing the vocal ability to create “optimum resonance.” Successful opera singers have learned to create beautiful sound that can be clearly heard, with no amplification, over an entire orchestra and across a cavernous opera house full of people.

“To me, it is the extremely visceral and full-body experience that makes me love opera,” Sy said. “It is interesting and moving that people push their voices to the extreme, but in a very healthy and beautiful way.”

But there's something else to opera, he added, and that's the component of musical theatre:

“The virtuosity and the Herculean nature of it is exciting, but opera singers also are storytellers and actors that must be able to have their techniques so lined up that they can communicate with an audience — while at the same time insisting on extreme particular demands from their instrument.” That “instrument” is, of course, the singer's voice.

Even with his considerable gifts, Sy acknowledges that the life of an opera singer — like many artists — can be difficult. For one thing, there are the countless hours of training and practice. Sy acknowledged that he sometimes feels overwhelmed by the amount of work that he has to put into his operatic career.

He added that besides the long hours, an operatic career involves a “nomadic lifestyle” that often requires travel, and that can also put a strain on relationships and personal life. But he's still hopeful of one day balancing his singing with settling down and having a family life.

“We live in a world now where there is so much pressure on focusing your efforts on either your personal life or your career,” Sy said. “To me, it's so inspiring to see successful people who have found a healthy balance between the two that really worked for them, and that's something I hope to one day achieve.”

And then there's the conflict between the on-stage life of Sy, the up-and-coming opera star, and the natural shyness of Charles, the youngster. He buffers those two contrary pulls with a very practical outlook.

“I like to joke sometimes that my job involves me being extremely vulnerable to the world and exposing myself and who I am to everyone around me, and having everyone tell me what I'm doing wrong,” Sy said. “At the end of the day, I have to put myself out there. I acknowledge that I'm a product and I have to make someone else money. As much as this is about art and as much as I am as an artist, I still need to make someone money. This is a business.”

But it's also personal.

“Like most experiences, you either benefit from it or it can hinder you. It's just like how adrenaline in a performance can hinder you like nerves or it can give you energy to give an exciting performance. It all depends on how you take it,” Sy said. “Unlike other instruments, singing is something very personal, because it's your voice and it's your body. Your instrument is your body. When someone tells you, ‘I don't like your voice,’ it is very easy to take it as ‘I don't like you.’”

As for that shyness:

“At heart, I wouldn't consider myself as shy anymore, but I am a person who likes to keep to himself. My natural instincts aren't to take huge risks and put myself out there,” Sy said. But when he competed for that spot in the COC Ensemble Studio, “I wasn't scared at all. I felt so comfortable up on-stage. I was so happy — not because I'd won, but because I was so comfortable with myself and being a singer.”

## Local gaming store owners refuse to follow digital trends

By CARMEN TORTORELLI  
The Observer

The video game industry may be transitioning toward a digital environment, but that doesn't mean every local gaming store is following suit.

Nader Kachmar and Damien Whiteley have known each other since they were 10 years old. Now 34, they work with each other at Gameswap, a store on Danforth Avenue in East York that sells new and retro video games, as well as collectibles.

“Music is how we found each other after 10 years,” Whiteley recalled. “I moved away, and I was looking for him for a while. One day, he popped up on my ReverbNation as an artist and I was like, ‘No way!’ Then he started coming by my studio and we made music for a while.”

Now they're concentrating on Gameswap. The store is organized by genre: its vinyl collection is in the back, while elsewhere you'll find comics, limited-edition collectibles and hundreds of video games representing decades of different console generations.

It was designed this way on purpose. “We took a long time decorating this place,” said Kachmar, who owns Gameswap. “We don't hire anybody. We do this ourselves because we're artists at heart.”

Whiteley notes that the “shop isn't just a place for people to come by or look. It's an entertainment hub. It's this guy's (Kachmar's) dream.”

In terms of the digital video game industry, Kachmar and Whiteley are bucking the trend. According to the Entertainment Software Association's 2016 ‘Essential Facts’ report, sales of digital games increased from 29 per

cent in 2010 to 56 per cent in 2015.

Those numbers don't faze Kachmar.

“I'm not a supporter of digital whatsoever because it's not a physical item anymore. You can't feel or see it. I believe that's why it ruined the PC world,” he said.

“The next systems will be digital and online only because they have the next generation of kids used to it. They're all on their laptops and tablets downloading games.”

Digital video games can be installed directly to your PC or console and played as soon as they're released. Digital stores such as Steam have sales on games throughout the year.

However, depending on your Internet plan, downloading games online can be a problem.

“The more video games go online, the more businesses like this will succeed because they're talking about capping your Internet bandwidth,” Whiteley explained.

David Davidovic, 21, is a university student who prefers to buy his games as a physical copy.

“I don't see the point in paying the same price for something that isn't tangible,” he said. “If you're lowering the cost by cutting out shipping and production of the disc itself, then why am I still paying the same price for it?”

Kachmar and Whiteley aren't worried about the increase in digital sales because they focus on retro games.

“True gamers will always go back to playing the old stuff. If you're just buying systems and waiting for that one game to come out, you aren't a true gamer,” Kachmar said. “You have to know the history; you have to know everything about gaming. You have to at least play Mario, because all of those games I've been playing are based on that.”

## ■ MEDIA

# You can call this station 'Radio Phoenix'

Community of East York at the epicentre of new 'hyper-local' radio station featuring shows such as Neighbourly News

By **JOHN MORTA**  
The Observer

The community's media landscape has become more interesting since the flip of a switch on a transmitter that's located on Toronto's lakeshore, due south of East York.

The East York community is at the epicenter of the coverage area of the city's newest radio station, CJRU, which just transitioned from test to regular broadcasts at 1280 on the AM dial. The transmitter is 99 watts — compared to powerhouses like CFRB at 1010 AM with its 50,000 watts — but station manager Jacky Tuinstra Harrison says that relatively low power is actually to East York's advantage, and to the advantage of Toronto's southeast corner generally.

"It makes us a really hyper-local station," Tuinstra Harrison said in an interview. "It's a (geographically) small community and it's in the densest part of the city."

So she and program director Elissa Matthews are programming CJRU accordingly, with shows like "Neighbourly News" — highlights from the pages of the East York Observer newspaper. During the station's designated "test" broadcasts last spring, that newscast aired two days a week, on Wednesday mornings and Friday afternoons.

The fall scheduling of Neighbourly News will be released in the coming days, following CJRU's switchover from test to regular broadcasting in August — and the ramping-up of Observer publication after the student newspaper's summer hiatus.

Students anchor the newscast, just like they prepare the stories and pages of the hard-copy edition of the newspaper.

"Having community newspapers is a way for us to get into the neighbourhoods where we're broadcasting," said Tuinstra Harrison, "and our signal is stronger in East York, so that doesn't hurt either."

It could be said that CJRU-AM is the phoenix that's arisen from the ashes of a previous radio station, CKLN-FM. That Ryerson University-based FM station lost its license from the federal broadcast regulator, the CRTC, five years ago.

Advocates for a new Ryerson radio station asked the CRTC for another chance with the former frequency, 88.1, but that went to an indie rock station instead.



John Morta/// The Observer

**The official test period ended in August, and now CJRU has begun regular broadcasting at 1280 AM. Bryce Turner (above) is one of the on-air personalities at the station — which beams to Toronto's southeast corner.**

"Students wanted a campus radio station and after missing out on one station we found a nice frequency on 1280 AM," said Tuinstra Harrison. She and her Ryerson radio colleagues programmed an Internet radio station called The Scope in the meantime. The Scope has been online for three years, while Tuinstra Harrison and her colleagues applied for 1280, got permission, and organized to put the station actually on the air.

For the station manager, CJRU's return to the airwaves means all's well that ends well.

"All those things were good things," Tuinstra Harrison said — including the near-thousand people who turned out for the promotional events around her station's sign-on in the spring.

Tuinstra Harrison is a community broadcasting veteran with an educational background in non-profit management. While the 1280

transmitter and antenna are in the Toronto Port Lands neighbourhood, her CJRU offices and studios are at the Ryerson Student Centre, on Gould Street downtown. She and her staff work with a board of directors drawn from the community, the station's volunteer ranks, and the university.

The terms of CJRU's license specify a wide variety of music originating in Canada — especially in Toronto, and especially from new artists. The licence also calls for extensive spoken-word programming with the coverage area's specific communities in mind.

So there are shows like "Morning Mixtape" with Ram Raj, "Urban Spotlight" with Paula Too Much and "Word on the Street" with Jennifer Rawley and Jesse George. Those on-air personalities are the proverbial tip of the iceberg — a staff of more than 100 volunteers who pitch in at CJRU both in front of the mic and behind it.

"We love our volunteers," said Tuinstra Harrison. "They help make it possible for students, faculty, and the neighbours at Ryerson to get to share their hobbies with the community."

In a pitch to other prospective volunteers, she added: "Whatever you're doing, we have a program for you." And to listeners: "Whether it's the music you love, or your passion for dogs and cats, or astronomy, we have all kinds of programs.... It's fun, it's sort of like the voice of your life and it carries you through your day."

Tuinstra Harrison even had a term for her programming that one doesn't often hear associated with her medium in the age of mass-marketed radio: artisanal.

"Content is what's important now," she said. "If you're in East York, you can get the station.... It's fun, it's artisanal and it's the voices of your friends and neighbours."

## Author's new book explores what it means to be brown

By **CHELSEA WARD**  
The Observer

For Kamal Al-Solaylee, being brown is his identity — not his race. But he says that news media around the world just can't seem to understand that.

"To be brown is to be on the cusp of whiteness and on the edge of blackness," Al-Solaylee explained during a speech to students at Centennial College's East York campus on Monday.

This idea of being brown is something he realized after researching the concept of 'shadeism' across 10 different countries, including the Philippines, United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, Qatar, the United States and Canada. The findings of this research

became the basis of his new book, *Brown: What Being Brown in the World Today Means (to Everyone)*.

"It (shadeism) means that persons of the same community have sort of assigned worth on the skin tones within that community," Al-Solaylee explained. "So the lighter you are, you are probably the more privileged colour, more desired."

This is something that he finds true not only in communities across the world's oceans but here in Canada as well, specifically in our country's newsrooms.

Media outlets across the nation can often be seen sending out casting calls for hosts of colour to join their programming in an effort to better reflect Canada's cultural makeup. But Al-Solaylee believes that the real change

lies not just in decisions like having Peter Mansbridge replaced with a woman of colour to anchor the national news, but also by making room for programming that speaks to the issues of non-white communities.

Al-Solaylee's shining example of this is CBC Radio's Metro Morning hosted by Matt Galloway. He believes Galloway's inclusive programming changed the tone of Metro Morning to better reflect the many communities within the city of Toronto.

"(But) the decision-making process still remains rooted in older generations who have what is called white privilege," he explained. "There's not a place at the table for people who look like me. If media want to survive until even the middle of the century, media outlets need to wake up."



Yvano Wickham/// The Observer

**Journalism student Davika Singh (left) holds a copy of Kamal Al-Solaylee's new book.**

EDITORIALS

# School bus blues

It's been a rocky school startup for some children in East York and the rest of Toronto.

The buses that they take to school have been showing up very late — or not at all. The Toronto District School Board says it's the result of an "unprecedented" shortage of school bus drivers.

Some students found themselves waiting for their buses for more than an hour, only to discover that they were on one of the 60 routes across the city that had been left without a driver altogether. The TDSB says that the situation is better now than it was last week, but it may be next week — or later — before things are back to the way they should be.

The board says that it only found out about a driver shortage a week before classes started — and even then, it wasn't told how bad the shortage was. It's pointed to three of its contracted companies as the origin of the problem: Attridge Transportation, Wheelchair Accessible Transit and Sharp Bus Lines.

But perhaps there's enough blame to go around here.

Often the company that offers its services for the lowest price will win the contracts from public bodies. That lowest bid trickles down to things like compensation for the frontline workers... like the drivers behind the wheels of those buses.

What's a typical wage for a school bus driver in Toronto? The Ontario Safety League, which trains them, says it's around \$65 per day for four hours work. In other words: \$325 a week. The OSL says that's low enough to push some drivers to Uber, where they can make more money.

The president of the drivers' union, Debbie Montgomery of Unifor Local 4268, says this fall's fiasco was entirely predictable, because of Ontario's shortsighted procurement program for driver contracts.

She says drivers deserve more respect for all of their extra work, including supervising children, navigating traffic and ensuring everyone's safety. The lack of respect, and compensation, leads to high turnover rates.

So even when the TDSB is outfitted with newly hired and trained bus drivers, the question arises: How long will *they* last in the driver's seat?

~ Chelsea Ward

# Stop throwing money at Hydro One problem

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne's attempt to repair the relationship between the province and its voters with an electricity rebate lacks sincerity. When you go to a Hallmark store and peruse the 'I'm sorry' cards, you may notice that they don't have a sleeve for cash. But our premier — and the MPP for Don Valley West — doesn't seem to get that.

Although the provincial Liberal government says it will spend a billion dollars a year to rebate Ontario electricity consumers an average of \$128 (or eight per cent), this scheme fails to address what seems like a sure thing: the continued increase in rates.

Over the last eight years, Ontarians have seen a cumulative 140 per cent increase in electricity rates.

And the factors that are driving that increase remain in place. So it isn't enough to just throw short-term money at the problem.

In fact, you could call this a kind of hush money. Money meant to quiet voters, to distract them from Wynne's political stagnation. In the meantime, the government continues its privatization of Hydro One — a political initiative that Peter Tabuns says will render any tax break insignificant.

"If she actually felt that we needed to do something substantial about hydro prices, she would cancel the privatization of Hydro One," said Tabuns — the Toronto-Danforth MPP and provincial NDP energy critic.

"Rate increases over the next 12 months will probably wipe out this eight per cent."

Tabuns' grim prediction isn't far-fetched. So far, private power companies have added about a billion dollars a year to our hydro bills.

Put in simple terms, privatization prioritizes profits as private power companies lobby for increased investment.

Privatization also contradicts the notion that this tax break was meant to convey. Wynne is willing to cede public control over a utility that she nevertheless says is of utmost importance.

It appears that soaring hydro rates are not an "urgent issue" for Kathleen Wynne. Her waning popularity is. This hydro bill rebate seems like a cynical ploy to feign compassion for Ontarians.

~ Andrew Wright

COLUMNS

# New year, big changes

School bells across the country have been ringing with renewed energy as classes have resumed.

Some of us are nearing the end of our time as students, as we head into our last undergrad year. When approaching the conclusion of anything, anxious thoughts sometimes arise. In our case: thoughts of internships, full-time jobs and future responsibilities. But that's nothing, compared to, say, students in Fort McMurray — or students newly arrived in Canada from places like Syria. Their concerns surely differ from average back-to-school anticipation.

In Fort McMurray, some school staff are still clearing damage and restoring teaching resources. Mental health specialists are on-site to help with the transition.

For many students, school was the last place they were before the call to evacuate was put out.

For Syrian refugee students, the transition must be even more dramatic. Becoming better acquainted with English, getting to know their new homes — while minds undoubtedly return to thoughts of their shattered homes on the other side of the ocean.

What kind of a world awaits them — and the rest of us — as the change of season brings its own renewal? There's a sense of relative political and social stability in Ontario and the rest of Canada.

But our southern neighbours seem roiled by deep divisions, and we can only hope that there will some healing there after the votes are counted — not only for the sake of the people in the most powerful nation on earth, but for the sake of the rest of us who inhabit this small planet alongside them. And in the meantime, the terrible turmoil that seems to afflict much of the world seems

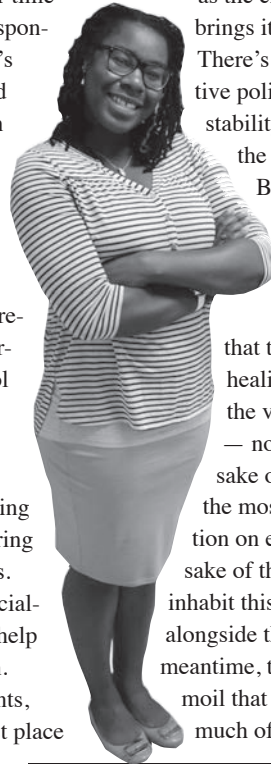
bound to continue unabated.

Here, meanwhile, more mundane concerns: Bills come in. Children need to be babysat. There will be highlights and there will be 'lowlights.' And some personal challenges that may not seem like newsworthy events will be battles just the same. This is particularly true for young people, who are, after all, figuring out their place in the world.

Fortunately, there are resources that they can access — in their schools, and in the community at-large — to help deal with any crisis that might arise. Let's hope that they tap into those resources; after all, they've been set up as safe spaces for inquiries about mental health and the other trials and tribulations of youth. So to those students, we say: get connected. Don't fight alone.

Helpful Numbers: Mental Health Helpline — 1-866-531-2600; Good2Talk Post-Secondary Student Helpline — 1-866-925-5454; Kids Help Phone — 416-586-5437; Distress Centers of Toronto — 416-408-4357.

Here's to the 2016-2017 school year.



Raquel Russell

# Make council efficient

Remember those classes in high school when you or your classmates created chaos by making noise and throwing paper airplanes and spitballs at each other?

Well forgive me, but my recent assignment to cover a Toronto city council meeting reminded me of that. Of course, the paper planes and spitballs were replaced by cellphones and bags of chips. But beyond that, the parallels were startling.

First, large groups of people working together can become dysfunctional. We all know of committees of multiple members that get nothing done. Well, imagine a committee of 40. Maybe that explains why they simply seemed to avoid making tangible decisions.

No wonder some Torontonians have come to regard city council as a bit of a do-nothing circus. Even without Rob or Doug Ford as ringmasters.

A quick refresher. Technically, there are 45 members of council; 44 councillors (two councillors for every federal/

provincial riding, since 2006) and the mayor. But attendance at meetings varies. On the positive side, Mayor John Tory is a steady presence.

That 2006 increase in the number of councillors may have seemed appropriate for what is now one of the largest and most diverse cities in North America. But I can't help but feel that it is also unnecessarily complicated how council tackles issues.

Yes, council is diverse. And issues are well-aired in the discussions around that big table. That's the problem, in fact: My recent visit suggests that what the councillors are best at is talking about an issue... and talking... and talking. But making decisions and resolving issues? Not so much.

Many issues that are brought up during city coun-

cil get pushed to other council meetings. Maybe it's an agenda problem; that list of items to be taken up is just too long. And when you put too much on your plate, it's just impossible to eat it all.

So, one quick solution may be shorter agendas. But that may require more meetings. And who wants those?

Another, more dramatic solution might be fewer councillors. But just imagine the protests that would arise — including in East York, which some say is underrepresented now. And yet, after my visit to Toronto city council, I can't help but think: More councillors, more problems.



Evangelos Sipsas

# Hospital's 'little sister' grows up



Courtesy of City of Toronto Archives

The Observer resumes its look back on East York history through photographs from the City of Toronto Archives. These two pictures span less than six months — from March 21, 1932 to Sept. 7 that same year... but what an eventful half-year. This is the construction of the “nurses home” (as the city’s photo archive calls it) on Coxwell Avenue near Mortimer. This building accompanied a larger one that had opened next door in 1929: Toronto East General Hospital, now known as Michael Garron Hospital.



Jacqueline Thetsombandith /// The Observer

Centennial College Sports Journalism students work behind the scenes of their nightly broadcast covering the 2016 Paralympic Games.

## Students have Rio covered

By SARAH SAMWEL  
The Observer

The para-athletes were on their game in Rio. And so were some sports journalism students from East York who were covering them.

From Sept. 7 until this past Monday, students from the Sports Journalism program at Centennial College’s Carlaw Avenue campus reported on the Paralympic Games in Brazil.

About a dozen were on-scene in Rio; another dozen worked from the television newsroom at the East York campus.

Under the direction of Malcolm Kelly, the founder and coordinator of the program who accompanied the Rio contingent, the students on the ground covered all aspects of the Games, from interviews with athletes to the fan experience.

Five of them also worked with the Canadian Paralympic Committee to produce content for the international media. Kelly and a small team of college staff accompanied and

mentored the students through the process.

Meanwhile, the newsroom contingent back on Carlaw combed through “highlight reels” and kept up to date with each day’s events, which all had to be packaged for a streamed television sportscast each night.

For Mark Staniusz, one of the student journalists working in the newsroom, covering the Paralympics has helped him garner a new respect for the athletes.

“I always had a fascination with (para-sports) and my knowledge of it wasn’t anywhere where it is now, but I was inspired by the efforts,” he said.

There were challenges, though, such as waiting for footage or reports from colleagues in Brazil.

However, according to Kelly, current technology certainly made things easier.

“In the digital age, (it’s) not hard at all,” he said.

Staniusz said it’s been a learning process.

“Every day is something new. The first days were challenging because (we) had to manage our expectations,” he said. “It’s really going with the flow.”

The students had been preparing for the Games for months beforehand. The first half of their full-time, post-graduate program focused on writing sports and conducting interviews. The second half focused on broadcasting skills. They put those skills to good use during the intensive couple of weeks of the Paralympics.

Ryan Andrews, one of the students reporting from Rio, said that last year at this time, he never would have imagined that he would actually be covering the Paralympic Games. He was living in Nova Scotia, wondering what he wanted to do for a living. He applied to Centennial’s sports journalism program, got in, and for him, the whole Rio experience was overwhelming.

“I don’t know what the best part is,” he said. “Maybe when I get home it will sink in.”

## Olympian says ‘medal or not, you can’t be disappointed in yourself’

By JONATHAN YUE  
The Observer

The Olympic Games is one of the ultimate celebrations of sport and human achievement. It gives many athletes an experience that they won’t find anywhere else. For shot put — and East Yorker — Brittany Crew, the August Olympics in Rio de Janeiro were also a huge learning experience.

“Gaining this experience, competing against some of the most decorated shot putters in the world is enough to motivate and inspire me to achieve my own goal of being on the podium one day,” Crew said.

Competing in the shot put, Crew threw a distance of 17.45 metres in Rio, ranking her 18th in the competition. Even though she didn’t reach her personal goal of finishing in the top 12, she said that comes with being in such elite company.

“Medal or not, you as an athlete can’t be disappointed in yourself,” Crew said.

“Only a small sample of the population can say that they have made it to the Olympics and even fewer can say they are an Olympic medallist.”

Prior to this summer, Crew’s coach, Richard Parkinson said that he believed that Crew had found the sport for her to excel in.

“She has chosen the right sport for her,” Parkinson said, “a sport and event that she loves to do. She has found her passion.”

Crew enjoyed her learning experience so much that after the Games, she continued competing in Europe — where she met the three medallists from Rio, adding to her eventful summer.

There are many stories coming out of East York following the Games, including the swimming success and multiple medals that 17-year old Penny Oleksiak garnered.



Jonathan Yue /// The Observer

**Brittany Crew competes at the Ontario University Athletics championship.**

Crew said that she isn’t bothered that Oleksiak is getting all the attention. In fact, she’s smiling just as much as Penny.

“As a teammate, I am just really proud of all the medallists, including Penny,” Crew said. “I’m smiling because at the next Olympics, that will be me.”

Coming back to Toronto for school and the off-season, Crew was able to attend the Olympic celebration hosted by the Toronto Argos at BMO Field.

She said that the recognition after a long season is what makes it worth it.

“It’s awesome to have so many people supporting us. The Olympics only comes around every four years and it’s a long exhausting journey,” Crew said. “(The) road to 2020 has already begun.”

## Farmers market in full swing

Rain or shine on Saturday mornings, many people can be seen participating at the weekly farmers market at Withrow Park. Live music, fresh fruits and vegetables are some of the attractions. Get to know your local farmers between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. The Withrow Park farmers market will run until the Thanksgiving weekend.



Jonathan Yue/// The Observer



## Centennial hosts workshop to 'ACCEL' success

Interested in starting your own business? Free session is open to the community

By YEYE ZHU  
The Observer

An expert in starting up a business says most prospective business owners need to start with a question directed at themselves.

That question will come up this coming Wednesday, Sept. 28, at a workshop at the East York campus of Centennial College — called The Accelerating Entrepreneurs and Leaders (ACCEL) program.

It's the question that one of the ACCEL business coaches, David Cowdery, believes is key for would-be entrepreneurs.

"I ask them all.... 'When was the last time you bought or paid for the thing you are about to do?'" he said. "If they say, 'Never,' then we need to think about it."

The organizers of next week's ACCEL workshop invite anyone aged 18-29 who

wants to work on a planned business to register. Registrants need not be Centennial students. ACCEL program co-ordinator Jennifer Mellroy explained the process for joining the workshop.

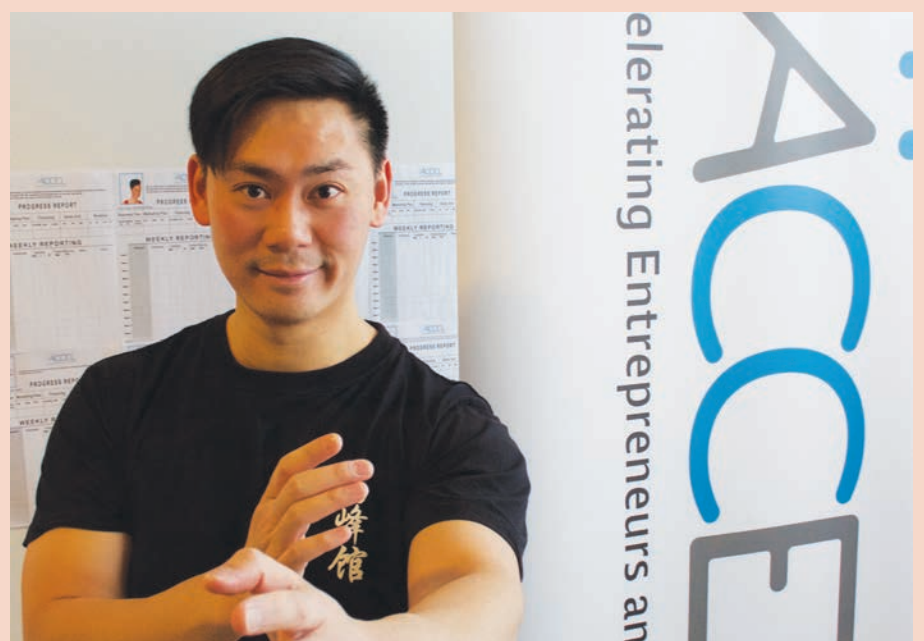
"We will have an initial discussion to find out if they want to go any further," she said. "Then they will be invited to workshops or to one-on-one sessions, depending on where they are at in their business cycle."

ACCEL is sponsored by the Ontario government through the Ontario Centres of Excellence, a free consulting service for young entrepreneurs.

It is designed to help potential entrepreneurs cope with the difficulties they are going to face after the business starts.

ACCEL has already assisted such businesses as The Come Up Show, Detailing Knights and Ko Fung Martial Arts get up and running.

Prospective ACCEL registrants can register online at anytime. The Wednesday workshop will be held in room 105 at 1 p.m. at Centennial's 951 Carlaw Ave. campus.



Andrew Wright/// The Observer

**Derek Chan, an ACCEL graduate, owns Ko Fung Martial Arts. He provides personal martial arts training directly to his clients in their homes.**