



East Yorkers march to honour mosque

Vigil commemorates six victims of mass shooting in Quebec City

By **MISHAAL JAMIL** and **VARAD MEHTA**
The Observer

In the wake of the massacre of worshippers at a mosque in Quebec City, East Yorkers gathered last week to show their respect for Islam and for inclusion in Canadian society. “Islamophobia is real,” Imam Shiraz Mohamed told the crowd gathered outside Madinah Masjid, the mosque at 1015 Danforth Ave., last Friday night.

Two days earlier, Don Valley West MPP and Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne helped lead about 250 people in a similar march in Thorncliffe Park.

Imam Mohamed addressed the Friday evening march and vigil honouring the six who were killed and the 19 who were wounded by a lone gunman on Jan. 29.

He told the crowd that had gathered on Danforth between Greenwood and Jones avenues to speak up against injustice and resist Islamophobia in particular. After prayers and

remarks, the marchers carried their candles around the block to symbolically encircle the mosque with community support.

“When incidents such as this happen, the few who have evil thoughts get ideas,” Mohamed said, “and that is our concern, because it creates an unease.”

The imam said that fear of a copycat killer has led him and mosque staff to take their own precautionary measures, such as locking the doors at certain times when youth are on-site. But at other times, he added — such as the five regular prayer meetings throughout each day — the mosque wants to continue to welcome everyone... and wants to label itself as a public place.

In response, the marchers gathered at Madinah Masjid chanted the words, “We are one!”

In interviews, they stressed the fact that inclusion ranks highly among Canadian values.

Among the attendees was

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Giorgio Lee /// The Observer

East York residents gathered together last week outside Madinah Masjid, a mosque on Danforth Avenue, to mourn the victims of the Quebec City terrorist attack.

■ **COMMUNITY**

Locals wait in line for new thrift store to open

A year after Goodwill closes, Salvation Army opens store in same building on Overlea

By **JORDAN BARRERA** and **GIORGIO LEE**
The Observer

An unexpected army of shoppers stood in the rain waiting for Thorncliffe Park’s new Salvation Army Thrift Store to open its doors on Jan. 26.

It was almost exactly a year ago that the Goodwill store in the same building at 60 Overlea Blvd. suddenly closed, along with most other Goodwills in southern Ontario.

So on this Thursday morning, the weather may have been dismal, but spirits were bright as the doors opened at 9 a.m. and staff greeted guests with applause.

Shoppers near the front of the line had started waiting as early as



Jordan Barrera /// The Observer

In spite of the gloomy weather, determined Thorncliffe Park shoppers stood in line waiting for the new local Salvation Army Thrift Store to open.

midnight to be first inside.

There was a live band and a ribbon-cutting and within 15 minutes, the store ran out of the 200 reusable bags that were set aside

as giveaways.

Shoppers like Lisa Dymond, who frequently visited the former Goodwill, said they want to see the Salvation Army learn from the

previous tenants.

“I hope it’s more effectively managed, so that it continues to provide jobs for the community,” Dymond said.

The Goodwill store in the building closed on Jan. 17, 2016 — one year and nine days previously.

This location marks the 109th Salvation Army store in Canada, according to national retail operations manager Michele Walker.

The Salvation Army usually holds a soft opening with a later grand opening for its stores, Walker said. But since there was such an urgent need in the community, the ribbon-cutting ceremony was scheduled immediately.

Carol Wiens, 71, travelled from Vancouver to attend the grand opening. She lived in Thorncliffe Park in her mid-20s and was excited to return to her old neighbourhood to show support. Her first apartment was in the Leaside Towers, down the street from the Salvation Army’s new store.

Wiens’ daughter informed her over Christmas that the Salvation Army, where she shops nearly

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POLICE & FIRE

Man, 21, dies after shooting

A 21-year-old male was shot near midnight Saturday evening on Langford Avenue north of Danforth Avenue, and died later in hospital. The victim has been identified as Tyrone Tomlinson, 21 years old, of Toronto. Police say they have no information yet on whether the victim was targeted or it was a random incident.

Police arrest bank suspect

Toronto police have arrested a 33-year-old man after two Danforth Avenue banks were approached with holdup notes on Jan. 24. The man entered Scotiabank at Danforth and Pape, then allegedly moved on to the Bank of Montreal four blocks down Danforth, at Ferrier Avenue. Police subsequently arrested Jesse Pelletier and charged him with two counts of robbery, two counts of disguise with intent, and five other counts.

Computer store robbed

Police are looking for more information about a robbery that took place at 3P Computer near Pape and Danforth Avenues at around 3:50 p.m. Jan. 31. A suspect entered the store, demanded cash and merchandise and produced a knife. Police say he fled the scene after the shopkeeper complied. Contact police or Crime Stoppers at 416-222-8477 with any information.

~ Olivia Blackmore



Giorgio Lee // Toronto Observer

East Yorkers took to the streets last Friday to show their respect for Islam and inclusion.

E.Y. residents march for peace

Cont'd. from page 1

Martin Aller-Stead, a teacher at nearby Monarch Park Collegiate Institute. He said peace is the tool to fight evil.

"Peace is if you make it,"

Aller-Stead said, adding that he had grown up in Quebec. "Peace is inside of each person. You can't impose it. It has to rise up."

Aller-Stead added that it's time the general public takes a

stand against the splits in society and declared that "we're one community."

Another participant, TTC driver Shoail Manjra, said he thinks the tragedy in Quebec City is a wakeup call.

Manjra marched with his family.

Referring to his children, he said, "They need to see this to understand what the world is all about and how they should unite."

Local shoppers welcome new thrift store

Cont'd. from page 1

every day, was opening a new location in her old neighbourhood. Her son-in-law then created a "mock letter" inviting her to the event, she said.

The city councillor for the area, Ward 26/Don Valley West's Jon Burnside, praised the Salvation Army for addressing some of the challenges Thorncliffe Park faces and hiring members of the community.

"People waiting since midnight or coming at 7 a.m. reinforces what we've all been saying," Burnside said, and that is that the neighbourhood needs services like the Salvation Army.

"The Salvation Army is more than just a store, but an organization that helps the community and families," Burnside said. "They went through the Thorncliffe Neighborhood Office to ensure that it was local people they were employing, which is a clear indication that they are community-based organization."

Mareen Damer, a longtime resident of Thorncliffe Park, said she used her pension cheque to buy clothes at the old Goodwill.

"People who are unemployed can get



Jordan Barrera // Toronto Observer

(L-R) Rob Oliphant, Kevin McElcheran, Salvation Army commissioner Susan McMillan and Ward 26 councillor Jon Burnside cut the ribbon to officially open the new thrift store.

the stuff they need at a low price rather than going to Walmart and paying more," Damer said. "There are people struggling and this store offers a great start to a lot of people."

Commissioner Susan McMillan is the territorial commander of the Salvation Army for Canada and Bermuda. She attended the opening and talked about the

importance of making items affordable for customers.

"By offering used items at reasonably low prices we aid families and stretch their household budgets," McMillan said. "This is a place where people can buy goods at a reasonable cost and a place that can give the community hope for a better future."

Kids find crafty way to usher in new year

By RENA JONES
The Observer

It's a good thing Andrew McArten's favourite animal is the dog. It came in handy recently when he needed to create an image associated with the Chinese New Year.

With some help from his mom, Andrew, 3, created the image of a dog, in honour of 2018's Year of the Dog, during a lunar craft day at Todmorden Mills Her-

itage Site.

Colleen McArten, a music teacher at an East York elementary school, decided to put other things aside that day so that she could bring her son Andrew and his sibling to the heritage site.

"I'll do report cards tonight when the kids go to bed," she said.

From noon until 4 p.m. on Jan. 20, East York families developed crafts to celebrate animals associated with the Chinese New

Year. The children incorporated their creations into a lunar banner.

Elizabeth Novak is the site's historical interpreter.

She explained that the intention was to inspire the children to create images of animals celebrated each Chinese New Year. Most important, she added, was to ensure families had a fun outing.

"It's all about everyone coming and having a good time," she said.

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Story Arts Centre fetes black history

At 1:30 this afternoon, Feb. 10, Centennial College music professor Dr. Jesse Feyen will hold a lecture in the main lobby of the college's East York campus. This kicks off a series of free public events at the 951 Carlaw Ave. campus in observance of Black History Month. This Monday (Feb. 13), dance students will celebrate black history in the form of dance at 1:30 p.m. in the lobby. Next Friday, Feb. 17 at 1:30 p.m., music students take over the lobby to perform part one of their two-part series, "Still I Rise," describing the struggle of black people. Part Two follows on Friday, Feb. 24, at 1:30 p.m. And on Tuesday, Feb. 21, the lobby will be the venue for an all-day Africa Museum Display.

Game time at the library

The S. Walter Stewart library branch will be holding a free gaming event for teens on Feb. 22, March 8 and March 22. The gaming starts at 11:45 a.m. and ends at 12:30 p.m. Youth aged 11-18 are eligible to play.

Come hear speech finals

The finals of the Agnes Macphail Public Speaking Contest for students in grades 6-8 will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 22 at 7 p.m. in the council chambers of the East York Civic Centre, 850 Coxwell Ave.

~ Chelsie Ortiz Luis

Dispelling myths about midwifery

Lack of exposure and education about midwives 'still a problem' that affects profession today

By **SHERIKA HARRIS**
The Observer

The term “midwifery” may sound old-fashioned, but the practice is anything but — with boosts like a 2015 McMaster University study suggesting that home births with midwives are just as safe as hospital births in uncomplicated pregnancies... and the 2016 decision of New Brunswick’s provincial government to bring back midwives for a pilot project.

It was in that atmosphere of increasing acceptance that an intimate group gathered for an information session held last month by the Midwives Clinic of East York-Don Mills, a partnership of midwives with offices on Leaside Park Drive.

The Jan. 22 session at the North Movement Studio on Bayview Avenue focused on educating people about their choices for pregnancy and delivery care, and it addressed the many myths surrounding midwifery.

Midwife and obstetrician care have similarities. Many of the same tests and medications are administered. An epidural, which is a popular pain-relief option, is available to patients under midwife care. OHIP covers midwifery.

But there are also unique aspects to midwifery, and at the January information session, orga-



Sherika Harris // The Observer

Sarah Wilson (left) and Sarah Fallis, both fourth-year midwifery students, talk about their profession at an information session hosted by the Midwives Clinic of East York-Don Mills.

nizers and co-ordinators Sarah Fallis and Sarah Wilson — who are also fourth-year McMaster midwifery students — explained that autonomy is one of them.

“Being able to provide information and allow clients to make the decisions about their care

gives them a sense of empowerment and control over their health and health care,” Wilson said. “We as midwives see our clients as the primary decision-maker and we emphasize informed choice, while also including clinical recommendations.”

Fallis said she thinks people are not educated about midwifery care and therefore fall victim to the many myths that surround the profession. One common misconception that Fallis said she hears is that midwives cannot administer hospital births.

“Midwives are fully trained in management of out-of-hospital birth, but most of our clients deliver in the hospital while still in midwifery care,” Fallis said. “Our job is to support our clients in the care and birth experience they choose.”

Midwives are given hospital privileges in Ontario. This means that they are allowed to admit and discharge clients, use hospital equipment and consult a doctor. Generally, doctors and midwives have good working relationships.

Toronto Western Hospital registered nurse Melanie Fallis, who was among those attending the session, agreed that midwifery is a great option, but expectant parents are not adequately informed about it.

“I wish there was a better way to get the word out,” she said.

Sarah Fallis said that one of the greatest benefits in choosing midwifery care is the midwife-client connection.

“The strong therapeutic relationship that develops between midwives and their clients, as well as the excellent postpartum care, are two of the most compelling aspects of midwifery,” Fallis said.

“A lack of exposure and education about midwives and midwifery care is still a problem that affects the profession today. Even 24 years after midwifery’s regulation.”



Roland J. Inacay // The Observer

Former Argo Player Joe Epele (left), former Leafs player Mike Zigomanis, MGH’s Justin Van Dette, Miste Mourinho and John Papasterigou are all smiles.

‘Generous’ donation will support women’s health

By **ROLAND INACAY**
The Observer

Michael Garron Hospital got a late Christmas gift last month in the form of a \$37,000 donation

“The donation from the Growing Women’s Health is incredibly generous,” said Justin Van Dette, manager of corporate and community relations for the Michael Garron Hospital Foundation.

Van Dette received the cheque at a ceremony at the Coxwell Shoppers Drug Mart in East York on Jan. 17. The donation is to support women’s health programs at MGH, the former Toronto East General

Hospital. Shoppers Drug Mart and its customers are major supporters.

“It’s wonderful to see the local community, businesses, organizations that want to give back to important charities like the Michael Garron Hospital,” Van Dette said.

Among the hospital supporters attending the event were former Toronto Maple Leaf Mike Zigomanis and Joe Epele, a former Toronto Argonauts CFL player.

“It’s great to have opportunities to come out and help support the hospital,” Epele said. “Creating events like this is good to bring more awareness to the cause and bring the numbers up higher.”

There’s a new Observer in town

United Church Observer combines fresh content with move to East York

By **CHERYLDEAN PETERS**
The Observer

Jocelyn Bell’s work is figuratively and literally on the move. As the managing editor of The United Church Observer, she has seen both the content of her publication and its office location change.

Readers of the most recent editions of the venerable Canadian magazine have been treated to stories about becoming a vegan or about the daily meditations of First Nations traditions.

“(With) our tag line ‘ethical living, justice and faith,’ there’s a heavy emphasis on how we are in the world,” Bell said. “That’s kind of how we express our faith at this place.”

Bell has worked for The Observer for close to 11 years. These days its writers specialize in stories that are lifestyle-based rather than focused on religion only.

“Things like taking the Bible literally or saying, ‘The word of God must be followed,’ are not really a part of the United Church,” she said. “We’re more oriented towards social justice and care for the poor.”

And while the approach to writing and editing the publication has moved, so has its actual office space. The publication has recently relocated from its downtown digs at 478 Huron St. to a new home on East York’s southern boundary, at 177 Danforth Ave.



Cheryldean Peters // The Observer

Jocelyn Bell, the managing editor of the United Church Observer magazine, proudly displays some of the publication’s past issues.

Now professionally settled in her new community, Bell explores the area in her spare time.

“We’re really excited to be in this neighbourhood,” she said. “We’re discovering new restaurants and shops. Where should you get a quiche and that kind of stuff — it’s kind of been fun.”

The United Church Observer was founded in 1829 as a Methodist publication, The Christian Guardian. Then it changed its name in 1925 to The New Outlook when the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches merged to form the United Church of Canada. In 1939, it became the Observer.

It is North America’s oldest, con-

tinuously published English-language magazine. And its publishers have earned more writing awards than any other Canadian religious publication.

Bell wrote a story entitled, “Four Years, Nine Months.”

In it, she described her journey to fertility through intrauterine insemination, Chinese medicine and in vitro fertilization.

Bell said she learned how to cope with the whole process, eventually welcoming a baby into her life. The story proved to be a journey, but not necessarily a religious one.

“It’s not so much what you believe in,” she said, “but more about how you live.”



Sherika Harris /// The Observer

Bill Pashby poses with Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne at the event to honour his father and the renaming of one of the Leaside rinks.



Sherika Harris /// The Observer

A poster outside the event entrance shows Dr. Tom Pashby with a young hockey player. 'Rink A' has been renamed after Pashby.

Rink renamed for safety-conscious doctor

Leaside hockey rink gets new name in honour of \$500,000-donation from Dr. Tom Pashby safety fund

By SHERIKA HARRIS
The Observer

The former "Rink A" at Leaside Memorial Community Gardens will no longer have to carry that nondescript moniker. From now on, it's the "Dr. Tom Pashby Play Safely Rink."

A ceremony took place on Jan. 19 to officially rename one of the two pads at the rink, a community fixture for 60 years. The new name is in honour of a \$500,000 donation from the Dr. Tom Pashby Sports Safety Fund.

The facility's William Lea function room was filled with over 150 supporters who listened as Bill Pashby, chair of the Sports Safety Fund named for his late father, recounted his concussion story. At age 14, Bill was knocked unconscious during a hockey game. To this day,

he can recall very little from that night.

"I do remember waking up in the ambulance on my way down Mount Pleasant, on the way to Sick Kids Hospital and I had my hockey equipment on," Bill said. "I wondered why I had that on."

From that day forward, Bill's father made it his goal to make hockey a safer sport. His older son, Bob Pashby, explained that the rink's new name, the "Play Safely Rink," is based on the legacy of his father, who died in 2005.

"He'd be honoured to have the rink in his name, but it has to be named after the safety aspect," Bob said. "That's the primary thing."

Aside from being an ophthalmologist, Dr. Pashby dedicated four decades to advocating for sports safety. He supported mandatory helmet and face-guard rules. He sent handwritten letters to organizers of Canadian hockey at various levels to encourage penalties for players who hit other players in the head (also known as head-checking). Today, Hockey Canada, as well as the NHL, both have rules against head-checking in place.

But Pashby not only advocated for safety; he used his skills as a doctor to help injured players.

"For years, on Saturday night, Dad would come down here and he would sew up players that got cuts from hockey sticks and pucks," Bill said. Then, a couple of years before he died, Dr. Pashby opened the Dr. Tom Pashby Sports Safety Fund.

"The fund's mission for the last 28 years has been to eliminate catastrophic injuries in sports and recreation in Canada," Bill said.

Raising and donating money to improve safety at Leaside Gardens was a signature project taken on by the fund. Bill said he hopes the improvements made to the Leaside rink will encourage facilities all over the world.

"We thought that this might be the (project) that might have the most success in producing a safer sport down the road," Bill said. "Hopefully other arenas can learn from whatever we develop here."

Some specific improvements and safety initiatives are special glass cases for safety displays, a safety bulletin board informing kids and parents of current safety messages and an annual safety day or event. Supporter and community member Susan Wright is sure the money will be spent wisely.

"I have complete faith in the arena board. I trust their judgment on where this money goes," Wright said. "They have not misspent one dollar since this arena was built."

Ray White, chair of the Leaside Memorial Community Gardens board, said the money will also be used to educate people, especially on one of hockey's biggest issues: concussion management.

"Canadians love hockey, they love skating, they love being in rinks and doing winter sports. But we also know there's a lot of dangers associated with falling and having body-checks," White said. "We're going to sponsor or conduct regular public education seminar and programs about ice and sports safety."

Kathleen Wynne was in attendance at the naming ceremony, in her capacities as Ontario premier and MPP for the riding, Don Valley West. She thanked the Pashby family for their contribution to the community.

"We are blessed to have people with open hearts and generous spirits. There are many of those people; the Pashby family is a special example of that," Wynne said. "Government without community is nothing."

Local history expert loves to talk about Toronto's past

Northlea United Church audience held rapt by colourful tour guide's rendition of local history

By VARAD MEHTA
The Observer

A Toronto tour guide believes nostalgia and history are interconnected.

Bruce Bell, an expert in local history, spoke at the Jan. 19 meeting of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) Leaside-East York about "Ten Influential People Who Changed Toronto's History."

In his presentation at Northlea United Church on Brentcliffe Road, he traced Elizabeth Arden's journey toward building a cosmetic empire, Enrico Caruso's charismatic tenor voice filling Massey Hall and Rocco Perri smuggling alcohol during prohibition era in Ontario.

"What I love doing is giving speeches

(about Toronto's history) to people who live in our city, because they have fond memories of it," Bell said, adding that Toronto's history is just as fascinating as that of London, England or Rome, Italy.

Janice Mitchell, membership co-ordinator for CFUW Leaside-East York, explained why guest speakers such as Bell are important additions to the organization's general meetings.

"We (group members) look forward to the general meetings and enjoy the speakers because it's filled with a variety of topics where we can learn," she said.

At the group's next meeting, this coming Thursday, Feb. 16, guest speakers will include Olivia Walsh and Joanne Doucette. Walsh is a past winner of the Agnes Macphail Public Speaking Contest and Doucette is a historian.

CFUW is a self-funded organization which works to improve education and rights for women and girls around the world and in local communities.

Every year, the Leaside-East York branch gives three scholarships to girls in East York high schools.



Varad Mehta /// The Observer

Bruce Bell speaks to members of Canadian Federation of University Women Leaside-East York about Toronto's past at Northlea United Church.

■ COMMUNITY



Elizabeth Oloidi // The Observer

(Above, left) The anatomically correct sculpture of an orca skeleton created from cedar wood by artist Ken Hall is part of the group of new installations on display at the Ontario Science Centre for “Canada 150.” (Above, right) CEO Maurice Bitran (left) stands with young scientist Emma Mogus, MPP Reza Moridi and Science Centre chair Brian Chu in front of the display illustrating Mogus’s mouth-operated computer mouse.

Installations celebrate young scientists

Ontario Science Centre wants to reach out to future generations while embracing past inventors

By ELIZABETH OLOIDI
The Observer

Canada’s 150th birthday is cause for celebration for the whole country, and the Ontario Science Centre is not missing out on the opportunity to fete Canada’s past and future generations.

Under the banner “Canada 150,” the centre on Don Mills Road has three new installations to add to the other Canadian innovations on display, including that of McMaster student Emma Mogus.

Mogus was the recipient of the 2016 Weston Youth Innovation Award for her Tongue Interface Communication (TIC), a mouth-operated

computer mouse that can be connected to a computer via USB and acts as a keyboard.

“I never thought this would be the result of my project,” she said. “Honestly, when I started it, it was because I was motivated to help people with ALS and it’s really amazing to see my project take on a life of its own at the Ontario Science Centre.”

She came up with the idea for the invention when she was in Grade 10.

“I was inspired to create TIC to help a friend of mine named Tim, who had been battling ALS for a number of years,” she said.

As the neurodegenerative disorder commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s disease made communication more difficult for her friend, she began working on her innovation.

“I wanted to provide that right, that fundamental part of society, back to people like my friend Tim,” she said.

The new installations also include an Energy Show, which is a family-friendly performance showcasing different forms of energy, including a seven-foot Tesla coil, and Legacy, an anatomically correct sculpture of the skeleton of an orca named Hope. The piece hangs in the main lobby of the Science Centre and was created by Canadian artist Ken Hall to memorialize the killer whale that died due to contaminated waters.

And finally there’s Canada 150: Discovery Way, which is where visitors will find Mogus’s TIC invention, alongside other Canadian innovations — including peanut butter.

Maurice Bitran, the centre’s CEO and chief science officer, explained that the new installations were a way for the Science Centre to reach out to future generations while embracing past generations for their great inventions.

“I think that the Ontario Science Centre has a huge role to play in inspiring the younger gener-

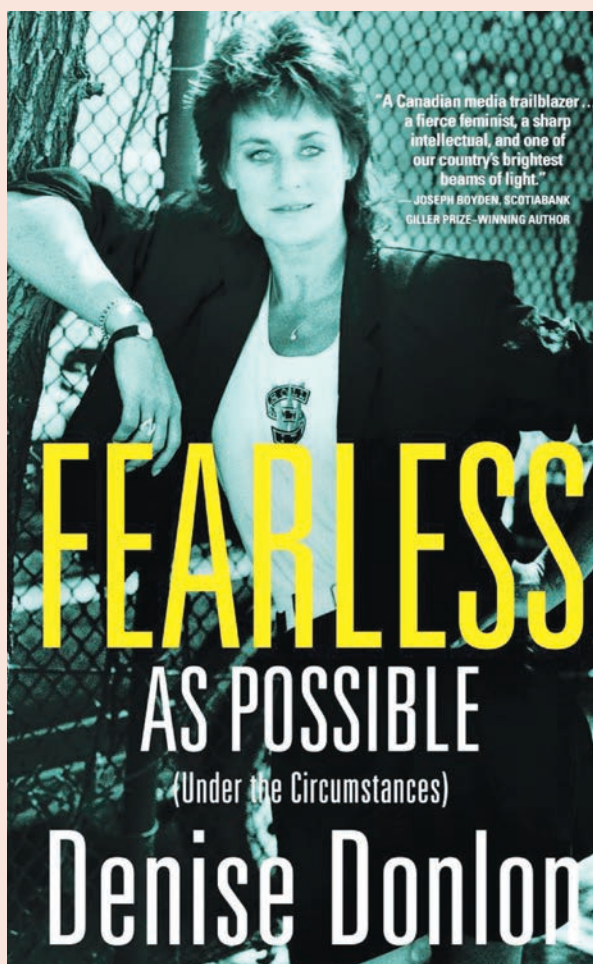
ations to appreciate science,” he said.

Mogus is part of that younger generation inspired to use science to help society. She said she hopes her innovation will lead others to appreciate science as much as she has and result in more inventions that help improve society.

“I think that it’s really important that any aspiring scientist continues to develop their talents and also continue to look for ways to which they can apply those talents to solve a real-world problem,” she said.

Bitran sees the Canada 150 installations at the Science Centre as a perfect opportunity to embrace the future of science.

“To have people coming here celebrating Canada 150 and thinking about the past and the future, it gives us ideas to make better choices towards the future and we hope that is what people will get out of it,” he said.



Leaning in with Denise Donlon

Media legend shares her stories and strategies for shattering the glass ceiling

By VINEETA PATEL
The Observer

When Denise Donlon faces a challenge, she sometimes thinks of her father’s words of encouragement.

“Just stand up for yourself,” he would tell her. “It’s hard to do and it’s scary to do, but at the end of the day it’s the only thing to do.”

Donlon, who lives in East York, participated in Toronto’s Women’s March a few weeks ago. As well as a way of honouring her father’s advice, she considers joining such actions a privilege and a means of self-improvement.

“We’ve only got this one time on Earth,” she said. “So challenge yourself. Get out of your comfort zone and live your best life.”

During her career, Donlon has

gone from concert promotion at the University of Waterloo to hosting at MuchMusic to working as the first female president of Sony Music Canada to being an executive director at CBC. Now, she’s a published author.

In her new book, *Fearless as Possible: Under the Circumstances*, she shares her stories of adversity in business — breaking the so-called glass ceiling — as well as coping with personal hardships.

“It was particularly tough because... I was trying to learn the business when the business was severely under fire,” she said. “So going to international meetings where I was the only female president in a room, it was a daunting thing.”

When she joined MuchMusic, Donlon began as a host, but that evolved into hour-long specials addressing contentious issues in the 1990s, such as racism and gender equality.

“I found out what makes me happy and most fulfilled... is when I came to

use whatever position that I’m in to be a force for good,” she said.

Among a number of community initiatives, Donlon ran a Kumbaya event for HIV/AIDS in 1993 and was responsible for making MuchMusic the first mainstream broadcaster to put a float in Toronto’s Pride parade.

Donlon lives in East York with her husband, singer/songwriter Murray McLauchlan, and son Duncan.

When she looks at life in her published memoir, she quotes one of her husband’s lyrics: “The second half of life is where the fun begins.” But then she adds, “Though I have to admit, I’ve had a fair bit of fun in the first half.”

As a media pioneer, philanthropist and feminist, Donlon has accomplished much in her lifetime. Here’s the way she views the experience.

“People would ask me, ‘Did you lean in?’” she said, “and I would say, ‘I leaned in so far my feet were off the ground.’”

EDITORIALS

Light up legally

Marijuana dispensaries seem to be popping up from the east to the west ends of Toronto — and everywhere in between.

Look at any neighbourhood and a dispensary is within a short driving distance (and in many cases, easy walking distance), even though marijuana is still illegal in Canada.

However, legalizing marijuana remains part of the Liberal Party platform and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau seems to be slowly moving toward keeping that campaign promise.

Marijuana was legalized in 2014 in Colorado — and the results have generally been positive. The number of drug-related crimes has dramatically decreased. After one year of legalization, burglaries in the city of Denver had dropped by almost 10 per cent. Overall crime was down by almost nine per cent. (And according to the Colorado Department of Revenue, the price of marijuana has decreased by 22 per cent since legalization.)

But while the legalization of marijuana in the state of Colorado has had positive effects, will the same be true for the community of East York?

There have been a string of marijuana dispensary robberies in recent months, including a robbery at the Green Leaf at 2145 Danforth Ave. on Jan. 16

As the Toronto police have made clear, robberies like this are not uncommon in the city, but owners and employees of marijuana dispensaries are too often unwilling to co-operate with police investigations out of fear that the police will turn around and charge them with illegality in their basic enterprise.

One has to wonder if these robberies will eventually decrease if and when marijuana is legalized. The price of marijuana will not only drop, but the government will make millions in taxes. People will no longer need to steal marijuana if they can buy it legally without having a medical prescription.

The new Liberal MP for Beaches-East York, Nate Erskine-Smith, has been very vocal recently about wanting to decriminalize all drugs in Canada, including marijuana.

In one piece he penned, he said: “We could save even more life by regulating all drugs according to their respective harms.”

~ Emilie Must

Housing in crisis

The Toronto Community Housing Corporation — supported by various levels of government — may be forced to close units due to the lack of funding for capital repairs, says Mayor John Tory. That’s even though just this past December, the corporation’s board of directors approved a total of \$970.3 million for capital repairs.

A billion dollars is a lot of money. But it’s not enough to address this problem.

So, according to published reports, an estimated 425 units are slated for closure this year. And that’s with more than 177,000 people already on the waiting list of community housing.

According to Lisa Murray, a spokesperson for Toronto Community Housing, there is still a long list of capital repairs waiting to be addressed, due to the lack of funding.

And this applies to community housing in East York neighbourhoods, just as it applies across the rest of the city. Let’s not forget that the Overlea apartment building on Thorncliffe Park Drive, just as an example, contains Toronto Community Housing units.

Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park next door are already severely stressed. These neighbourhoods are home to many new Canadians, single parents, some who work intermittently and some who aren’t employed at all. (No wonder that the area earned this descriptor in the Toronto Star last year: “one of the poorest and most densely populated neighbourhoods of Toronto.”)

So, to the poverty and lack of services and other hurdles already faced by residents in these areas, add inadequate housing standards.

And now, if Mayor Tory and his colleagues in neighbouring municipalities can’t secure the rest of the funding that Toronto needs from the federal and provincial governments, more than 7,500 social housing units across the GTA could be forced to close by 2023.

But there are issues within Toronto Community Housing too. Let’s not forget that last year, it was actually \$40 million under-budget... because repairs weren’t finished on time.

There are various city projects where governments’ participation doesn’t go unnoticed, such as the TTC. When it comes to these sorts of things — city services with a mainstream presence — governments seem willing to fund repairs (or to hike user-fees) to keep them running reasonably well.

But, as usual, our low-income citizens are de-prioritized when it comes to public resources. And further marginalized.

Mayor Tory is right to draw attention to the need for repairs and construction of new, affordable housing units. But it remains to be seen whether Queen’s Park or Ottawa is listening.

~ Cheryldean Peters

COLUMNS

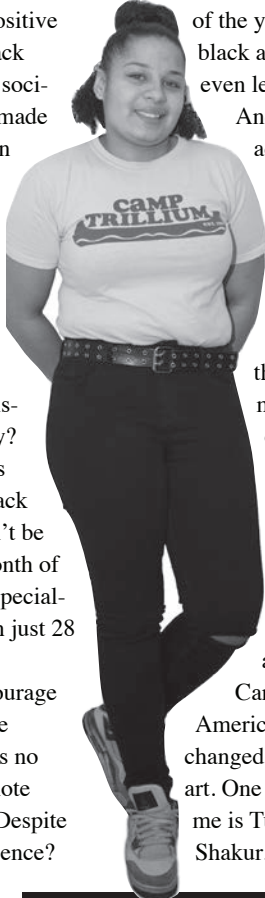
A month is not enough

February is Black History Month. It’s a month when we celebrate all of the positive contributions that black people have made to society — contributions made despite discrimination and worse (including much worse).

But having acknowledged those contributions and that oppression, allow me to pose the question: Is Black History Month necessary?

I actually mean this in a positive way. Black achievement shouldn’t be segregated to one month of the calendar. (And especially not the month with just 28 days in it!)

Doesn’t it just encourage the view that once the month has passed, it’s no longer necessary to note black achievement? Despite slavery? Despite violence? Despite segregation and discrimination?



Rena Jones

By walling black history off into the shortest month of the year, I think black achievement is even less appreciated.

And black achievement is something to be appreciated every day. Especially considering that many of the achievements affect our lives every day. Think of streetlights. Mailboxes. (Potato chips!)

Then there are the black Canadians and Americans who have changed the world of art. One that speaks to me is Tupac Amaru Shakur, the rapper whose message revolved

around what’s happening in the world and in his immediate surroundings. He connected with young African-Americans (and Canadians) through those powerful beats and words. (And still does.)

Of course, there was Jackie Robinson, known as the man who broke the colour line in baseball.

And legends like Rosa Parks, who wouldn’t give up her seat on the bus... and Martin Luther King, whose dream was that one day we would unite as one people, instead of trying to dominate one another.

Yes, we need reminders of giants like Dr. King, Rosa and 42. But let’s also agree that there’s more to the history than these towering figures. But I really think that the exercise of Black History Month just isn’t enough.

We shouldn’t settle for just one month. Let’s free black history from February and observe it as a matter of course.

No sugar-coating here

Enquiring minds want to know: What’s worse? Sugar or fat?

In the 1980s, so nutritional history goes, the U.S. government suggested that fat was the enemy. Consumers were told to cut back on bacon, beef and cheese — by up to 30 per cent.

And for more than 30 years, the public has believed it. But now there’s a bit of a backlash.

For instance: On a recent episode of “The Doctors,” a CBS daytime show, nutritionist Dr. Jonny Bowden claimed that sugar was the real culprit.

“At one point, there (were) two competing theories about what really caused heart disease. One was that it was fat and cholesterol; the other was that it was sugar,” Bowden said. “The wrong theory won. It was never fat and cholesterol.”

So is sugar really the enemy?

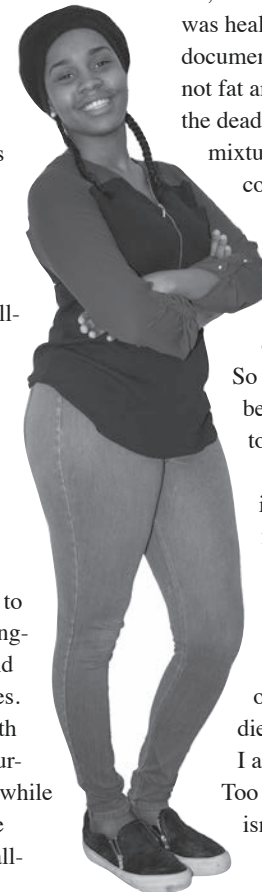
Some studies have shown that it’s extremely addictive and causes weight gain and heart disease. And Bowden (sometimes called “the nutrition myth-buster”) has said all along that sugar, not fat, is the problem.

“(Sugar) raises insulin, raises insulin resistance. (It) causes heart disease (and) increases diabetes.”

In 2014, the BBC aired a documentary called “Horizon: Sugar vs. Fat,” putting both to the test. The documentary featured twin doctors Chris and Xand van Tulleken. Chris went on an all-sugar diet for a month, while Xand consumed an all-fat diet.

Chris learned that using the sugar diet short-term meant that his body and brain had enough energy to perform challenging physical and mental activities.

However, both doctors were surprised to learn while Xand lost more weight on his all-fat diet, he was also



Sherika Harris

pre-diabetic. Chris’s body, meanwhile, had learned to produce more insulin, leaving his blood sugar at a normal level.

Their bottom line was that although sugar looked healthier, neither of these diets was healthy long-term. The documentary concluded: “It’s not fat and it’s not sugar. It’s the deadly addictive delicious mixture of fat and sugar combined.”

This combination is often found in processed food, such as ice cream, doughnuts and chips. So processed food could be considered an enemy to good health.

But British nutritionist Susan Jebb, also featured in the BBC documentary, suggested that no “one item is a saviour or a sinner. It’s about the overall balance of the diet.”

I agree. Too much of anything isn’t good for you. My advice? Eat healthy, exercise and indulge... sometimes.

A look back at E.Y.'s historic churches



Courtesy of the City of Toronto Archives

The Observer continues its look back on East York history through photographs from the City of Toronto Archives. Elsewhere in this edition is a story about the United Church Observer magazine having relocated to the East York area.... just the latest chapter in an impressive publication history dating all the way back to 1829. With these photos, we revisit two other pieces of local church heritage. On the left is a picture that was taken on Sept. 14, 1925. It shows the construction of Holy Name Church at Danforth and Gough avenues finally nearing completion after an 11-year build (extended by, among other things, the shortage of construction workers during the First World War). On the right is a photo snapped four years later, on Nov. 17, 1929. It depicts the then-brand new Woodbine Heights Baptist Church, on Woodbine Avenue near Mortimer Avenue.

Dogs take a walk on the wild side at off-leash zone

New off-leash area to serve E.Y. residents and their four-legged friends

By RYAN ORLECKI
The Observer

You could call it ‘a spot for Spot.’ Or put another way: some land west of the Toronto Transit Commission’s Greenwood Yards has gone to the dogs.

The land, just southwest of Danforth and Greenwood avenues, was designated as a dog off-leash zone just before Christmas. Toronto city council voted to approve the “regularization” of the land — putting an end to the illegal use of the property by dog-owners who were walking their pets off-leash there anyway.

“People have walked their dogs there for 20 years,” said city councillor Paula Fletcher. “Everybody goes, probably 50 dogs a day, here and there.”

And some who have acted on that impulse have been suffering the consequences.

“They have been getting fined, I be-



Ryan Orlecki /// The Observer

Residents of the Danforth-Greenwood community watch their dogs run loose in their newly identified off-leash zone.

lieve, \$250,” Fletcher said.

The new off-leash area will still be excluded from use by commercial dog-walkers.

“Many dog parks in the city are neighbourhood dog parks,” Fletcher

said, but “they are not dog parks for dog-walkers.” This one, she said, is for those living in the neighbourhood south of East York’s Danforth Avenue boundary. It joins other off-leash zones for families living in the south-

ern end of East York. Those dogs and their walkers may also want to go to Riverdale or Withrow parks, which are just south of the eastern stretch of the Danforth — or, for those along Danforth’s western stretch, Monarch

Park or the cluster of off-leash zones in playgrounds around Danforth and Woodbine.

Other public dog-free zones in or around East York are at Sunnybrook Park, Sandy Bruce Park, Evergreen Brick Works, Coxwell Ravine Park, Linkwood Lane Park and Stan Wadlow Park.

According to councillor Mike Layton, there have been conflicts with commercial dog-walkers in the past, and that led to the decision to not allow commercial dog-walkers in any neighbourhood parks.

“We have had issues on occasion with commercial dog-walkers that show up with four to seven dogs and let them all go,” Layton said. “You can’t really watch seven dogs at the same time.”

Layton added that there should be more off-leash areas for dogs.

“You look at the condo neighborhoods specifically at the rate that they are growing in Toronto, and I don’t think anyone expected that dogs would almost outnumber people in those areas,” he said. “We need to make sure there are infrastructure available to them or we run the risk of conflicts in our parks.”



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NEIGHBOURLY NEWS

Highlights from the pages of the East York Observer.
Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. and Fridays at 4 p.m.
On CJRU/AM 1280.



James Dalgarno// The Observer

Liliana Vera shows off a neon creation at the opening of her gallery show, *Indelible*. The show is free and open to the public, in the Corridor Gallery of Centennial College's East York campus.

Art student leaves her mark

Creator of 'Indelible' art exhibit examines impact people have on others

By **JAMES DALGARNO**
The Observer

Liliana Vera's interactive art exhibit will change and grow every day during its three-week life in the art gallery at Centennial College's East York campus.

The artist, a student in the college's fine arts program, says she will replace some works daily, and visitors can take some pieces home with them.

The show, which she calls 'Indelible,' runs this month in the Corridor Gallery, on the second floor of the campus at 951 Carlaw Ave.

At the exhibit's opening on Feb. 2, Vera, 29, said she always tries to live in the present. Her art speaks to the impact a person can leave on a moment, a situation and another person, she added.

"(Indelible) means a mark that cannot be erased," she explained. "All the feelings that I have from people — and thoughts — they are with me forever. Every moment you are here, you are indelible to it."

Vera, whose home country is Mexico, is in her second year of the fine arts program. She says her background and family life influence her art.

"The pictures are personal — those are family photos," she said. "Hopefully, someone can connect with those and see themselves reflected. These family experiences, and what it means to be Mexican — this is what I want to showcase in my art."

David McClyment is the co-ordinator of Centennial's fine arts studio program. He says Vera's exhibit is "more than just a row of paintings."

"These are objects," he said. "There are small Polaroids and a big charcoal drawing. It's all lit by a neon sign."

The large, bright white neon sign bearing the show's title, 'Indelible,' is the first

thing visitors to the gallery see.

Vera describes her art as mixed media. She uses a variety of materials in each piece, including chalk, string, fabric and neon light.

She says she put the exhibit together in just one month.

"Some pieces were done in the moment," Vera said. "But some I continue to go back to and make changes — still now."

Vera doesn't play favourites when it comes to her art. But she said one of her best pieces is a self-portrait.

The portrait is simple — using blue and black ink and white paper, Vera draws herself, eyes covered, with a simple flower over her heart.

This portrait will be replaced with a new one each day the show runs.

McClyment says the exhibit is something that needs to be experienced.

"It's a visceral thing," he said. "From my point of view, this is one of the most successful and ambitious exhibitions we have had."

COMMUNITY

Expert celebrates forgotten pieces of black history

By **MICHAEL LINENNEN**
The Observer

"Black history, generally speaking in Canada, is kind of a lost history," said William Humber. "There's many names and people who actually had extraordinary lives and achievements — that virtually no one knows anything about, and that's such a great tragedy."

Humber proved his point at the Jan. 31 meeting of the East York Historical Society — a presentation on the eve of February's observance of Black History Month.

Humber is a PhD, an environmental educator at Seneca College and a historian specializing in sports history. His seminar for the historical society was about three great Canadian athletes whose achievements seem forgotten.

Humber thinks that one reason they're overlooked is that the vast majority of African-Americans

who came to Canada to avoid slavery before the American Civil War and racism afterward eventually returned to the United States.

"As a result, certainly until the 1960s (and) '70s, the black population of Canada was quite tiny. It was probably one-fifth of one per cent of the population of Canada," Humber said. "So other than isolated settlements... black people weren't seen."

As a result, "We have lost a lot of that history."

Philip Granville was one of the Canadian athletes whose story was recounted by Humber. He was born in Jamaica and came to Canada when he was 24. He first started competitive snowshoeing and slowly make his mark competing in marathons.

Humber said one of the main events he competed in was the 1928 race across America. There were half-a-dozen African-American athletes that were part of a group of 200 athletes who competed in the race.

"When they reached Texas and Oklahoma, however, the Ku Klux Klan came out and threatened to kill any black athletes who passed a white runner," Humber said. So Granville "starts calling himself a Jamaican Indian, and the problem stopped immediately. He just changed his identity for the sake of the competition itself."

Humber said he has tried to nominate Granville for Canada's Sports Hall of Fame. But he acknowledged that Granville's story is just one of many concerning black athletes pre-1950 who haven't received the recognition they deserve.

"They've been forgotten, and they are never going to get in now," Humber said, "because now they are having to compete with contemporary athletes."



■ **HUMBER**

Reward LCBO customers with safety, not Air Miles: MPP

East York politician questions connection between Air Miles program and alcohol

By **CHELSEA ORTIZ LUIS**
The Observer

One of East York's MPPs thinks that LCBO customers should be rewarded with safe trips home and not Air Miles points.

Arthur Potts, MPP for Beach-

es-East York, questions the connection between alcohol consumption — even at moderate, healthy levels — and things like free vacations. He believes that LCBO stores should reward loyalty with safety instead.

"How do free flights to Florida incentivize responsible drinking?" Potts asked in an opinion piece in the Toronto Star, entitled "Why Air Miles?"

"Maybe, if the liquor store is going to reward us for loyalty," he said, "it should be a safe trip home when we shouldn't be driving."

Statistics from the Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere (RIDE) program suggest that there are still



■ **POTTS**

"LCBO cashiers (and bartenders) should be asking: 'Do you have Presto?' Ontario's transit systems would benefit hugely if everyone had a pass, so alcohol incen-

people who are convinced that they're able to drive competently after drinking.

"Rather than Air Miles," Potts wrote in the Star,

She said that while it still makes sense that LCBO customers' loyalty should be rewarded with prizes that benefit them, that system could co-exist with a scheme like Potts'.

Statistics from the Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere (RIDE) program suggest that there are still people who are convinced that they're able to drive competently after drinking.

"Rather than Air Miles," Potts wrote in the Star,

She said that while it still makes sense that LCBO customers' loyalty should be rewarded with prizes that benefit them, that system could co-exist with a scheme like Potts'.

"Imagine how many lives this

type of rewarding system could save," Borges said.

Valeria Mendez, a customer interviewed at an East York LCBO, was also receptive to Potts' idea.

"I've actually never thought of Air Miles being so pointless until now," Mendez said.

"With safe rides home, life would be easier."

Potts has tangled with Air Miles before. A year ago, he pushed a private member's bill through the Ontario legislature to stop loyalty programs from expiring unused points.