



TTC exit strategy to raze homes

Homeowners confused by TTC's decision

By MELANIE SCHAWILL

Brian and Lisa Dymond's home is one of 10 to be partially expropriated for the TTC's second exit project at Donlands station. But they say they are baffled after finding out that the TTC has thrown out alternate options that would spare their neighbour's home from being fully expropriated.

"We've proposed I don't know how many alternatives," Brian Dymond said. "They're reluctant based on safety concerns they have, which are legitimate or non-legitimate, depending on which way you look at it."

Strathmore Boulevard residents had previously met with the TTC, suggesting alternate locations for the Donlands second exit. One option put on the table in September included a church property, Westminster Chapel, that was going to be sold later anyway.

Last week, the Dymonds attained documents regarding the Donlands second exit project, released after they



Observer, Melanie Schawill

HOMESICK: Brian and Lisa Dymond, with their daughter Isobel, stand in front of a row of Strathmore Boulevard homes that will be either partially or fully expropriated for construction at the TTC's Donlands station. The Dymonds' property, just off-camera, will have a large hole dug in the yard, and a wall built a few metres from their front door. Other homes will be demolished.

applied in early December under Ontario's Freedom of Information law.

Included was an official letter to the TTC project manager from the City of Toronto.

The letter stated that the "Toronto Water, Operations

and Maintenance will be able to maintain the sewer."

The sewer in question was one factor as to whether the TTC could use the church property at 14 Dewhurst Blvd. as an alternative, instead of the two family homes at 1 and 3

Strathmore Blvd.

Lisa Dymond said the church understood the neighbourhood's problem and so it sold its property to a developer.

"So the church, in good faith, sells to the developer," she said. "They think they're

doing something good for the community."

The TTC met with the developer and the local councillor on Dec. 6.

"We then met with the TTC again," she said. "All we knew was that the negotiations were continuing and we really thought this was where everything was going to end up."

On Jan. 20, the TTC met with Strathmore residents again.

According to Lisa Dymond, at the meeting, the TTC told residents that the city said crossing or rerouting that sewer would be a public health risk.

This confused residents, as they were told a month prior that everything was going through.

"It seems weird that we've been going along with this idea that the church is doable and now they're saying it's not," Lisa Dymond said.

The Dymonds then attained the letter from the city to the TTC involving the sewer.

It was dated Nov. 29.

"This is essentially the approval from the city that they can do it, but the TTC's telling us that the city said no," Lisa Dymond said. "It generates a lot of questions for us about why

See DONLANDS, page 8

E.Y. constituents could miss the bus

By DEEANNA CHARRION

Buses on routes with low ridership in East York are scheduled to be redirected starting this spring to those serving at-capacity elsewhere in Toronto.

Commuters taking the 8 Broadview, 62 Mortimer and 72A Pape buses will see reduced service, but route 56 through Leaside faces the most cuts.

The TTC's austerity plan was laid out at a public meeting on Jan. 24 at Metro Hall.

TTC chair Karen Stintz said that efficiencies are being looked at to keep people moving.

"One of the things we looked for, if there's a nearby route, is how far is it and how often does it run so that people can safely take the TTC," Stintz said.

East York Collegiate teacher Jean Darmanin said she thinks service cuts are a no-win situation.

Referring especially to route 56, she said, "they're in a catch-22 because it's not used very much and only runs every 30 minutes. If they cut it more, then no one will ride it."

Beginning in May, the 56 Leaside service will be cut after 10 p.m. weeknights and after 7 p.m. on weekends and holidays. On Sundays and holidays, there will be no service west of Laird Drive to Eglinton station during the day.

As a resident of Eglinton and Bayview, Darmanin has no above-ground alternative.

"It's a very important line for me because it goes past where I live on

Eglinton," Darmanin said. "Otherwise, I'd have to go through downtown via subway."

Some routes installed city-wide are new; others are being improved to promote reliance on public transit and use of the bus service offered.

TTC spokesperson Brad Ross said that \$7 million in savings will become available by eliminating the routes that pick up a handful of people in one hour.

"We know people will be affected but more people will be affected without service or a lack of quality in service," Ross said.

Ward 29 councillor Mary Fragedakis said that people with part-time jobs, and others out in the evening, often get home late at night.

"It was different in my day. People are out even later," she said. "It is a real issue, as parents will naturally worry about their kids but will worry more about them coming home later."

As it gets darker earlier next winter, Fragedakis said there will be increased security concerns for female riders.

"It's a really big cut. It's a safety issue and not realistic for working women," she said. "Sometimes they'll get home past 10 p.m. and essentially (be) put on a curfew."

Ward 26 councillor and TTC board-member John Parker believes most people will understand the TTC's rationale for cutting service.

"At a time where resources are limited, we need to put them where they're most needed," he said.



Observer, Geoffrey Mosher

ART IN THE STREET: Trevor Rogers creates a snow sculpture outside the Carrot Common on Danforth Avenue. Rogers is quickly becoming a fixture on the Danforth. He loves creating snow sculptures, among other street performance art he pursues. Story on page 7.

Are East Yorkers getting sick of flu shots?

Flu cases are on the rise this winter as people snub vaccine

By OCTAVIAN LACATUSU

Despite a surge in flu cases in recent weeks, public flu immunization clinics have closed in East York and the rest of Toronto following lacklustre demand for the shots.

But you can still get your needle from your family doctor and walk-in clinics.

Dr. Kathryn Healey, an East York physician, has been administering flu vaccines regularly.

"I actually prefer when patients come to my office to get the flu shot than go to clinics," she said. "I like to know who has had the flu shot and who hasn't."

But not everyone is rushing to get their shots. Alleged reactions to the vaccine and supposed ineffectiveness have created skepticism among some.

"When we're giving the flu shots, we're giving them out during a time

of year when there are lots of colds and flus, so some people coincidentally come down with a cold or flu shortly after they've had a flu shot, and they'll attribute it incorrectly to the vaccine," Healey said. "The vaccine is actually a killed virus, so it doesn't give you the flu. But it does take two weeks to kick in and start offering some protection for you."

On average, 40-50 per cent of people experience soreness in the area of the vaccination. About two per cent get fever and aches.

Another factor in public resistance to immunization may be memories of last year — when there were fears of a possible pandemic around the strain of flu virus called H1N1. That pandemic didn't materialize, but long lineups for immunizations did, and perceptions of wasted time and effort may still be discouraging some people from getting their shots.

"A lot of people don't bother with it anymore, and it may have to do with last year's mess of trying to get an H1N1 shot," Healey said. "There

were statistics showing there were significantly more people sick with the flu this year — and that people had chosen not to get their flu shot."

This year's "flunami" has had a noticeable effect at Toronto East General Hospital, with high numbers of flu patients streaming in.

Keeping an eye on the developing situation has been Dr. James Downey, infection control officer at the hospital.

"For about four weeks we had enormous numbers of respiratory patients, far beyond what we were experienced with," Downey said. "We tracked the number of patients that came in with fever and lung infection symptoms and we started to notice the numbers went up by the end of November."

Unlike H1N1's preferred age group of young adults and middle-aged adults, the virus' main targets this year are again the very young and the very old.

"People do get the flu. They just don't get sick enough to really realize that it's the flu, but they're capable of passing it on," Downey said.



DR. JAMES DOWNEY
Keeping an eye on flu cases

"Sometimes they get that infection and it's very minor, but they give it to their mother, and their mother gets critically ill. That can be prevented by having a flu vaccination. Or at least reduced in severity."



Observer, Octavian Lacatusu

GENERATING HEAT: Twin diesel generators that grumbled away at the back of the St. Dennis complex kept its residents warm. The generators were brought in as a temporary solution when the buildings' electric circuit board broke down.

Tenants powerless over power loss

Firefighters called to help one resident on oxygen machine

By KRISTIN ANNABLE

On Wednesday, Jan. 19, residents of the apartments at 31-35 St. Dennis Ave. suddenly found themselves in the dark.

A major electrical panel breakdown left hundreds of people with no power, heat or working elevator system for more than 24 hours. The building manager, Bob Deb, said that the situation was unavoidable.

"The electric panel was over 60 years old. There was no indicators or signs," he said. "We did everything in our power to restore it as quick as possible."

The power was restored by Friday, but only thanks to a pair of power generators being brought in.

Resident Trish Walsh, however, said that despite the imported emergency equipment, power was not fully restored at first.

"My heat went off on Wednesday and it never really came back until Sunday. The generators worked very inconsistently," she said.

According to Deb, the out-of-date electric system could not be repaired



DIANA CHATZIKIRIKAOS
Frustrated with management

quickly because the company that installed it is no longer in business. He was left scrambling to find a company that understood the system and could repair it.

One tenant, who wished to remain anonymous, said her biggest fear was for her husband, who is in a wheelchair and uses an oxygen machine. With no working elevator and with his oxygen supply depleting, she turned to Toronto Fire Services and asked the department

to help her out.

"They knew our situation and the firefighters were monitoring his oxygen levels. Around 11 p.m. Thursday night he ran out of oxygen, so the firefighters carried him down the stairs," the woman recounted. "Then we stayed overnight at the Flemingdon Park Community Centre."

Many residents flocked to the community centre Thursday night, where the gym was stocked with floor mats.

Some of them were angry with the building management, which they perceived as reacting slowly to the situation.

Diana Chatzikirikaos was one of the frustrated residents.

"If you have no lights or backup generator for people, people feel like they are being taken advantage of," she said. "They wonder what the landlord is doing for them."

On the other hand, resident Alex Dobo felt that management had tried their best.

"Considering what they had to deal with, I don't think they did that bad of a job," she said.

By Sunday evening, Commercial Switchgear, a Thornhill electrical company based in Thornhill, had repaired the panel and full power was restored.

Police briefs

Home invaded

A 44-year-old woman's home was broken into last Tuesday around 8:30 p.m. The woman was in her apartment in the Don Mills and Eglinton Avenue East area when she answered a knock on the door. Two men wearing disguises forced their way into her home with handguns. They demanded money and jewelry from the female and she complied. The robbers forced the victim into her bathroom and then proceeded to ransack the rest of her home. The men fled the scene and the woman was transported to hospital shortly after. The two robbers are described as black males between 14 and 24 years of age, five-foot to five-foot-five tall.

Purse snatched

Police are looking for two men after a 39-year-old woman reported her purse being snatched. Around 8 p.m. last Tuesday in the Victoria Park and Danforth Avenue area, the men approached the victim. One of the muggers pulled a handgun and grabbed the victim's purse. An altercation occurred and one of the men struck the woman on her head. The victim did not sustain any injuries. The two men fled the scene in an unknown direction. The two men are described as 15-20 years old, five-foot-five tall, and one of them is described as being white.

Teens sought

Two muggers remain at large after two 12-year-old males were robbed at around 4 p.m. last Thursday. The victims were in the area of Bessborough Drive and Rolland Road when the men approached them. One of the robbers said that he had a handgun and proceeded to pat the victims down. After recovering a cellular phone from one of the victims, the pair fled the scene west of Bessborough Drive. The victims sustained no injuries. Both of the muggers are described as 15-16 years of age. One has a muscular build with short black hair, while the other is described as having a thin build.

—Kris Ali-Trotman



Observer, Kristin Annable

THE HUB: Linda Chang, Kaladevi Karunanathan, Shahle Lendegani, Jasmine Cui, Arezo Matiulleh (at back) are staff members at the new Community Hub at Victoria Park. The hub opened on Dec. 16, hoping to reach out to an underserved community.

Hubs helping communities

By KRISTIN ANNABLE

Omar Alazzawi came to Canada just three months ago from Iraq. Looking for a place to help him adapt in a new country and to help him get a job, he turned to the new Community Hub at Victoria Park.

"I am here to get experience and learn how I can work and get a job," he said. "I want to learn how to help out other people too."

The Working Women's Community Centre, in partnership with the United Way, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and six other organizations, helped launch the hub, located at Victoria Park and Eglinton avenues, on Dec. 16.

The manager of the hub, Luanne Rayvals, says it's here to provide the community with space to run activities, co-ordinate services, link people with existing networks and help the community meet its needs.

"Our mandate is to work with the neighbourhood," she said. "We have a good sense of who is in our neighbourhood: many

newcomers to Canada, senior citizens and families. We want to make sure we are meeting the needs of the people."

In 2005, the city and the United Way designated 13 Toronto neighbourhoods as "priorities" for improved social services — including two near Victoria Park Avenue: Flemingdon Park/Victoria Village and Crescent Town.

The hub project itself has been in the works for about two years. Adrian Beemans, the program director for the WWCC, said that it's a response to the lack of access to services.

"The community had a low access to community projects. There was a lack of space," Beemans said. "Now we have a space for them to work with — a kitchen, a child's play area, computers, and access to organizations that the community can work with."

The hub's partners — and their services — include:

- Better Living Health and Community Services, offering services for seniors in partner-

ship with Sunrise Towers, such as grocery dropoffs

- Family Service Toronto, providing services for families through counselling, community development, advocacy and public education programs

- Community Living Toronto, with programs for people with intellectual disabilities, to help them lead independent lives

- East York Chinese Baptist Church, which is active in providing access to the Early Years Centre drop-in, St. Jude's food bank and Action for Neighbourhood Change

- REH'MA Community Services, with a prime objective of improving the quality of life for Muslim seniors, women and newcomers to Canada

- Victoria Village Action for Neighbourhood Change, which provides opportunities for residents to meet and to identify and address neighbourhood priorities

- Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, which helps survivors of torture overcome the lasting effects

Graffiti tags around East York a common form of expression

By KRIS ALI TROTMAN

Toronto has been a city filled with graffiti for over 30 years. Many people consider graffiti to be just another form of vandalism, but an up and coming writer thinks otherwise.

Yvette Farkas has always been fascinated by graffiti and never looked at the art from a negative perspective.

Her book, *Toronto Graffiti*, gives readers an in-depth look at various graffiti tags around the city.

She is a resident of East York and features a few graffiti tags from the area in her book. Farkas took an arts foundation course at Centennial College's East York campus while she was working on her book.

She said that graffiti tags around East York are hidden in alleyways and inconspicuous areas, so she had to search for them.

"A lot of the graffiti in East York consists more of tagging than actual full-on wall art," Farkas said.

"There are a few artists from East York who tag all around the district."

Farkas explained that she loves the rebelliousness of graffiti and has the utmost respect for the artists who create it.

"I love graffiti art because it is vibrant, but most importantly, it is unapologetic," Farkas said. "I think it takes a lot of guts and talent to do what these graffiti artists do."

Growing up in Hungary under a communist state, Farkas was exposed to graffiti at a young age. She said that in her native country people used drawings and paintings to express political sentiments.

"Political graffiti was a way that the people were able to voice their true opinions in Hungary," she said. "People



YVETTE FARKAS
Loves graffiti art

were able to express their reprisal in a non-violent way."

Toronto Graffiti is the first Toronto-centric book discussing the history and evolution of graffiti in the city.

Various graffiti artists helped Farkas put the book together.

"When I first started the book I never really thought it would blow up to be this big a deal," Farkas said.

"There are people from around the world calling and asking about the project and it's amazing."

Farkas was able to speak with and interview 21 different Toronto graffiti artists. She said that it was a challenging, but fulfilling, experience.

"When I met all the artists they each taught me something spectacular," she said.

"They each made me look at the world from a different perspective and I cherished the information like a gift."

The book will be sold at The Mascot, The Labyrinth and at York University. Its launch party was held at The Mascot, at 1267 Queen St. W., on Jan. 28.

Specialty tea has become East York's 'it' drink

By NICOLE PULSINELLI

Few things are as healthy as they are appetizing. Tea is one of those things, and East Yorkers are embracing the popular beverage for the benefits to their health as well as for its taste.

Tea Emporium employee Matthew Emmett considers East York to be a very health-conscious part of the city. It boasts a number of yoga studios and organic grocers, he says, as well as more tea shops than ever before.

"We're definitely going through a health-awareness phase," he said. "So when everyone realized there are benefits with the tea plant itself, the drink became more popular."

The *Camellia Sinensis*, commonly known as the tea plant, has many properties that make it such a healthy choice, says Luellie Ramos, owner of the local Tsaa Tea Shop.

"That's why it's the 'it' drink now," she said.

Ramos said one of the benefits of drinking tea, especially the green varieties, is the dose of antioxidants it provides. Tea also has fluoride, which makes it good for your teeth. Rooibos, a

caffeine-free tea from South Africa, includes antioxidants, but also aids digestion and helps to clear up acne-prone skin if consumed regularly.

Emmett said rooibos is catching on in popularity at the Tea Emporium, located on Danforth Avenue near Chester. While green and white teas are the current bestsellers, he said East York customers are always willing to try something new.

"My clients vary, but all have a love and appreciation for tea," he noted.

Some of Emmett's customers are making the switch from coffee to tea. He says they often come into the shop wanting a healthier alternative.

East York resident John Barcken has been a tea drinker for 10 years. He used to drink coffee, but said it began to give him heart palpitations and "the jitters." That's when he made the switch to tea.

"I enjoy drinking tea now," Barcken said. "I feel healthy and relaxed when I drink it."

He says his favourite tea is rooibos. Not only is it healthy, but he also enjoys the variety of

flavours that are available.

Emmett says taste makes all the difference when it comes to people's choice of tea.

"You can tell someone all the different benefits teas have," he said. "Then having the added fruits and flavours that someone likes, they will be more inclined to continue to drink the tea."

Aside from its health benefits, Ramos believes, tea is such a popular beverage because it's a tradition many cultures share.

"East York is so multicultural and everyone loves tea," she said. "Lots of tea-drinking cultures come to Canada, such as Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Sri Lankan, the British, Iranians. These cultures have had tea embedded within them for thousands of years, and now they've come to Canada."

This theory is easily supported by tea drinker Maydianne Andrade, who has been consuming the beverage for 25 years.

"Tea has always appealed to me," she said. "My Jamaican background has influenced me. We always had tea around. I suppose it's from a British influence."



Observer, Nicole Pulsinelli

TIME FOR TEA: Tea Emporium employee Matthew Emmett says tea has become such a popular beverage in East York because locals are more aware of their overall health.

Andrade said she prefers strong black teas, but enjoys trying the different teas her husband, who is a tea connoisseur, brings home. She also has a

friend who is German, and happily samples the teas he brings back for her.

"I guess tea drinkers attract each other," she said.

Literacy Day helps readers turn the page

Emphasis is on parents reading to their children

By **CHERONNE THURAB**

The importance of literacy is stressed throughout the educational system, but at one East York school, it's celebrated on a daily basis.

Anna Chiesa, principal of Blessed John XXIII Catholic School, strongly believes that early learning and a strong literacy-based curriculum helps her students with their educational careers. Her love for literature is so well-known that she was chosen as the guest reader on Family Literacy Day to visit the Parent Family Literacy Centre (PFLC) at her school.

Family Literacy Day takes place on Jan. 27 every year. This year's theme was "Play for Literacy" and Chiesa kept right in the mix of this event by sharing a story she absolutely loves.

"I'm going to read the story *Mortimer* by Robert Munsch. That's one of my favourite stories," Chiesa said before the event. "I really enjoy literacy. I enjoy reading. I try to foster a love of literature as much as I can throughout our school and it's one of our main focuses."

The school, on Gateway Boulevard in the Flemingdon Park area, had a number of different activities planned for their students on this particular day.



Observer, Cheronne Thurab

AUDIENCE ALL EARS: Anna Chiesa, principal at Blessed John XXIII Catholic School in East York, reads *Mortimer* by Robert Munsch to parents and children. On Jan. 27, Family Literacy Day, Chiesa was the guest reader at the Parenting and Family Literacy Centre located at the school on 175 Grenoble Dr.

"Different grade levels are reading with their reading buddies," she said, "and we also plan to have the children in the older grades reading with our day care. They don't normally read with the day care, just on special occasions. We thought we'd have them reading today."

Haruko Nishimura, the PFLC facilitator at Blessed John XXIII, invited Chiesa to read on Family Literacy Day.

Nishimura understands the feeling of aloneness that a new parent may feel, and thinks that the centre is a good forum for them to come together and meet one another. The PFLC at Blessed John XXIII is one of a network of 145 centres across Ontario designed to get pre-schoolers and their families ready for school with fun educational activities.

"It can be incredibly isolating to be at home with your

child and under-stimulating for both parent and child, so it's a great place for them to come," she said. "We have a lot of great activities and toys for them to engage in, not just today but every day."

Though the focus of the program is literacy, the children in Nishimura's group are quite young — but this doesn't stop her from creating a warm, comfortable atmosphere for all attendees.

"We have children between the ages of zero and six," Nishimura said. "I consider myself kind of like a party host; I greet people when they come in. I get to know the parents by name and I think they really appreciate that."

Nishimura's program is also a platform for newcomer parents to get familiar with the neighbourhood they now live in.

"There are a lot of newcomer parents and so they're looking for ways that they can upgrade their skills, looking for employment, looking for child care... and so we provide a board... for that," Nishimura said. "(This) is an opportunity for parents who get out and socialize and network and find resources for themselves."

"They feel it's a place they can come and feel welcome and see a familiar face," she said.

"A lot of these families are here without their extended families and so it's a great place to make friends, which otherwise you may not have the opportunity to."

The PFLC isn't just for parents with young children though. Grace Bala is a caregiver that visits the PFLC on a daily basis.

She says she enjoys the environment for a number of reasons.

"I've been coming for four years. I like the sharing, the children are playing, they do the circle time, reading time," Bala said. "They get to learn how to do everything."

Guard signals neighbours to sign petition

Busy corner sparks safety concerns

By **MICHELLE GRACE**

It's been five years since the Toronto police honoured Jack Aldred with its Crossing Guard of the Year award... and almost a quarter-century since Aldred took up his post at the corner of Carlaw and Mortimer avenues.

Now Aldred is bringing those credentials — and a fighting spirit honed during service in the Second World War — to a cause he's advocating with a neighbourhood petition. He wants Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth councillor Mary Fragedakis to bring a proposal to the city that would see the corner "re-evaluated as a pedestrian crosswalk, with appropriate signage."

As things stand, Aldred observes, "pedestrians have safe access over the crosswalk only when the school crossing guard is on duty. At other times of the day and evening... pedestrians are invisible."

Aldred says he's especially worried about children attending after-school activities at the neighbourhood schools, and about students at Centennial College's East York campus — located at the corner.

Since Aldred is only at the crosswalk three times a day for one-hour intervals, he fears that when he is not there someone could get hurt or not feel able to safely cross.

He's hoping the petition may lead to his being assigned to the crosswalk for more hours each day.

"People have been using this crossing for years, and everybody crosses here," he said. "Cars go really fast and nobody seems to care to stop to allow people to cross when I am not here."

Another crosswalk petition spearheaded by Aldred worked once before.

"Many years ago, I had started a petition for a crosswalk," he remembered. "It went through East York council, and now the school has a crossing."

The current petition has about 80 names on it already, and is available for signing in the main office, room 101, of the Centennial building at 951 Carlaw.

Aldred said he's also leaving petitions at the neighbourhood schools for parent-teacher nights.

Aldred, now in his late 80s, has become a fixture to nearby residents — and to those who drive along Carlaw and Mortimer avenues to reach the lights at Pape or Logan.

"I wanted something to do after I retired, so I went to Chester school and asked if they needed any volunteers," he said. "I then asked if they needed crossing guards, and I started working at this corner Jan. 15, 1988."

Aldred is also recognized in the community for his high profile at local Remembrance Day observances and other veterans' events.

He served in the navy during



Observer, Michelle Grace

STOP, LOOK, LISTEN: Jack Aldred, crossing guard at Carlaw and Mortimer avenues for more than 22 years, has started a neighbourhood petition to increase the amount of supervision at the busy intersection.

the Second World War. After the war, he worked in the local post office for 40 years.

Since then, almost every weekday for the last 23 years, Aldred has kept his eyes open for pedestrians and for cars, stopping the latter so that the former can cross the intersection safely.

He's endured numbing

cold, pouring rain or scorching heat, but he's also developed relationships with residents and watched local children grow up as they've progressed through the neighbourhood schools.

"I've got them well-trained," he laughed — as one young lady crossed, smiling and saying: "It's OK, Jack. You are busy being interviewed. I can cross myself."

There are no cars coming."

And don't forget about the four-legged pedestrians. Aldred also keeps dog treats in his pockets for when he helps their owners cross safely.

"I've been told when I'm off... and another guard is here, all the dogs look for me and wonder where their treats are," he chuckled.

Remembering slavery in Canada

By ANETA TASHEVA

Hilary Dawson's first museum job was at Wilberforce House, the former home of English abolitionist William Wilberforce in Hull, England.

Recognized as leader of the movement to abolish the transatlantic slave trade, Wilberforce supported a successful campaign that led to the Slavery Abolition Act 1833. The act abolished slavery throughout most of the British Empire, including colonial territory we now know as Canada.

There have been blacks in Canada from the moment Europeans arrived. They've had a big part in making the country what it is today, so I think that's something that needs to be included.'

—Hilary Dawson

"By the 1830s there was no place for slavery in Canada," Dawson said.

She considers Wilberforce to be more than just a historical figure. Dawson says the abolitionist inspired her to pursue extensive research on the history of slave communities. Having authored articles on African-Canadian history, Dawson's expertise in the field led her to the S. Walter Stewart Library on Jan. 25, where the East York Historical Society honoured her as its speaker of the month.

In anticipation of Black History Month in February, Dawson led a meeting examining "Slavery in the Town of York" at the library's auditorium. Members of the historical society, including new member and Ward 29 councillor Mary Fragedakis, gathered to learn about African-Canadian slaves in the Town of York (present-day Toronto).

"I think it's really important that we see black faces in Canadian history because the

people were certainly there," Dawson said.

She didn't limit the extent of her lecture to the history of slaves brought up in the Town of York. Dawson also described the impact that the American Revolution had in resettling many slaves in Canada. She explained that as the Thirteen Colonies went to war with Britain in the 18th Century, people loyal to the Crown found it increasingly difficult to remain in the American colonies.

Many Loyalists gathered their families and valuables, fleeing to British North America and especially Upper Canada, Dawson said. They often brought African-American slaves as part of their personal property.

Dawson described how during the early years of the Loyalist Period, prior to the Slavery Abolition Act, most white Canadians considered it common to have slaves working in their houses. She went on to explain that many slave-owners didn't have high regard for their slaves. Because of that, even manuscripts and personal records written about slaves don't always contain detailed information about the African-Canadians, Dawson said.

"Most of the records were written by white people; most of them were written by men," she said. "In many cases, they were written by those men who saw themselves as owners of human chattels and the account... often tells more about the white writers than... about the African-Canadians they were writing about."

Even so, Dawson continues to search for African-Canadian history in primary sources. She believes that history books and especially school textbooks don't incorporate enough African-Canadian history.

"There have been blacks in Canada from the moment Europeans arrived," Dawson said. "They've had a big part in making the country what it is today, so I think that's something that needs to be included. We need to have some changes and some improvements."

Dawson recognizes the role that Black History Month plays in teaching Canadians about African-Canadian history. She



Observer, Aneta Tasheva

DIGGING UP HISTORY: Hilary Dawson, who researches the genealogy and history of Ontario, speaks to members of the East York Historical Society about slavery. During the Jan. 25 lecture held at the S. Walter Stewart library, Dawson expressed the importance of learning about the "black faces in Canadian history."

believes that many Canadians don't acknowledge it because they haven't learned much about African-Canadian history.

The audience at the S. Walter Stewart Library showed interest and understanding of African-Canadian history. However, Dawson said that she often speaks to people who are astonished at the extent to which that history exists.

"If you ask most people over 60, they would have said that there weren't any blacks in Canada until they came from the Caribbean in the 1960s," she said. However, she believes that Black History Month is helping Canadians learn more about African-Canadian history.

"I think it's helped white Canadians focus on the fact that black history exists and I think that's really important," Dawson said. "We're making changes; it's just very, very slow."

Black History Month events in East York

When:
Wednesday,
Feb. 9
10:30-
11:30 a.m.
Where:
Pape/
Danforth
library



Photo: Toronto Public Library

McLEAN



Photo: Toronto Public Library

BADOE

When:
Wednesday,
Feb. 9,
2-3 p.m.
Where:
Flemingdon
Park library

Dirk McLean, who hails from Trinidad, came to Toronto as a teenager. His love for theatre has led to his involvement in the field, as an actor and playwright, for most of his life. He is the author of *Curtain Up!* and *Play Mas! A Carnival ABC*.

Adwoa Badoe, who wrote *Between Sisters and Crabs for Dinner*, hails from Ghana and currently lives in Guelph, where she is an author, storyteller, educator and African dance instructor. Her first children's book was published in 1995.

Danforth gift shop directs trade to Africa

By BETH FORD

There are some things in life that many of us will never experience.

Despite the "things to do before exiting this world" list many have attempted at one point or another, family, work and daily survival take precedence. Therefore, it's safe to say that having a conversation with a Kalahari Bushman is an experience reserved for few. If a safari to Africa isn't on the horizon, the chances of meeting a Bushman are slim, to say the least.

Still, picturesque sunsets, warm breezes and tribal celebrations are comforting thoughts, especially in the dead of winter. But who would imagine crossing paths with a Kalahari Bushman on the Danforth? Importers Paul Wellhauser and Yemi Laoten have crossed paths with many Bushmen in Africa — and have even brought indigenous Africans back to Canada to visit

their fair trade gift shop on the Danforth, *Nharo*, named to honour the Nharo San, Kalahari Bushmen from Botswana.

What sets *Nharo* apart from other fair trade shops is Wellhauser's approach to trade. He says that he and Laoten prefer a hands-on approach, meaning that they pay a deposit to artists using money-gram slips from Canada Post.

"We like to put an emphasis on saying direct trade, because it is about going and putting money in the hands of the people that make the crafts," Wellhauser said. "Fair trade can be a stamp like a certification; the crafts we buy have more to do with the direct relationship."

Waterloo-born Wellhauser quit his desk job out of boredom, and travelled abroad looking for internships. After working with an NGO in Africa for several years, he started buying crafts from locals and bringing them

back to Canada in 2002. He sold them on a piecemeal basis, eventually applying for a vending licence. Though Laoten is originally from Africa, Wellhauser met her in Toronto while vending at Dundas Square.

Nharo's inventory includes a variety of treasures reflecting the varied customs of Africa's tribal peoples. Hand-crafted jewelry, stone sculptures and masks are made by tribes from Botswana (San or Kalahari Bushmen), Zambia, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The charm and allure of Africa is certainly present inside the tiny store.

Wellhauser keeps several pocket-sized photo albums of artisans and their families behind the counter. He brings them out to show customers a group of San women from Botswana who make delicate beaded bracelets and necklaces from ostrich egg shells and other local materials such as porcupine quills and

Talbot wood.

Wellhauser says customers enjoy learning about the people behind the crafts, adding that it links them to the artists. Educating people about the meaning and process behind the crafts isn't limited to the store. Wellhauser shares his knowledge with the community by giving presentations at local schools and events.

On Feb. 1, he spoke to a Grade 6 class about fair trade at Jackman Avenue Public School. Teacher Alesha Mohammed said social responsibility is a principle she introduces in her classroom.

"I'm hoping the students will learn that trade doesn't have to be largely decided by governments," she said. "It can be fair and treat the people who produce the goods in a socially-just manner."

Wellhauser introduced himself to the class as a "neighbour," followed by a humorous story

about a cow hitting and denting his car while driving along rural roads in Africa. The children listened attentively as he read a letter from a Himba woman who makes bracelets to earn income for her family.

Wellhauser passed the bracelets around so the children could see and touch a piece of Himba culture. He told the class he enjoys bringing his experiences and knowledge to classrooms.

"I like being able to give the kids a perspective from someone who goes there (Africa)," he said.

Wellhauser and Laoten often look for creative, engaging ways to sell large quantities of crafts. Wellhauser said selling indigenous African art to fundraise for schools provides students with alternatives to the conventional goods usually sold. He says it also makes more sense to sell to fundraisers, parting with significant inventory instead of trying to sell items one at a time.

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TTC's rough ride

Rob Ford, a mayor elected on promises of ending the “war on the car” and eliminating wasteful spending, has already begun to run into problems. Despite the fact that TTC users were granted a temporary reprieve from proposed service cuts and a 10-cent fare increase, Ford has made it clear which side he has chosen in the battle. And this has left many feeling ignored in the policy-making process.

There are conflicting messages coming out of city hall. In Ford's mayoral campaign, he first promised that there would be no service cuts... and then no “major” service cuts. Now cuts have been proposed before the first budget is even passed.

Ford has also pushed to make the TTC an essential service, while simultaneously looking to cut bus routes and discussing a TTC fare raise to replace lost revenue. (Ford even decided to cut \$100,000 from the city's tenant defence fund — a program that could not be more necessary for apartment-dwellers in tough economic times.)

These contradictions are beginning to pile up.

By removing the only direct contribution that drivers make to the city — the \$60 vehicle registration tax — Ford's first move as mayor solidified the notion that he is more than just “car-friendly.” The resulting loss of \$64 million has left a hole in the budget, and Ford's solution to replace that lost income looks like a further burden on TTC riders.

The TTC proposed a 10-cent fare increase and will cut 41 bus routes, including four important routes in East York: the number 8 Broadview, the 72A Pape, the 62 Mortimer and the 56 Leaside. TTC riders and other Torontonians reacted with anger, and the Ford administration reacted by saying the route cuts won't take effect until May... and it has miraculously found \$24 million to prevent the fare increase. Torontonians could rest assured that Mayor Ford had come to the rescue — and would hopefully forget that Ford had instigated the crisis.

But while some may see this as a victory for Ford's opposition, little has actually been accomplished. Toronto has not found a solution to the budget gap. This is simply a temporary reprieve.

Citizens are also left with a council that voted overwhelmingly for the elimination of the car tax, a proposition that lost the city a large amount of revenue, while providing little benefit to citizens. The tax was intended to be the first step in Toronto's ability to create its own revenue streams. The city is instead left to search for cuts and reductions to replace this lost revenue, with initial proposals not coming from roads, property owners or businesses, but from the pockets of those who can least afford it — transit riders, renters and others on the lower rungs of the city ladder.

—Geoff Mosher

Resolutions need not be confined to the New Year

It's been just over a month since New Year's Day — and a month since I gave up sweets. But when I look around my kitchen, I see an empty box of Timbits and a batch of freshly baked cookies. Another New Year's resolution down the drain.

But it didn't start out that way. It never does.

Every year I gear up for Jan. 1. I carefully evaluate my life, pinpoint the habits I could live without or the habits I need to pick up. I choose the most pressing problem and prepare to resolve it. I know that with a little willpower, I can stop biting my nails or jog instead of walk to work.

This year, I decided it was time to stop eating dessert and candy every day. Yes, every day. I figured it's not only going to save my teeth, but it might stop my sugar highs and accompanying heart palpitations.

And I did it. I held on for three weeks without a lapse. On

Jennifer

Romano



the first day of 2011, I threw out all of my cookies, ice cream and my stash of Mars bars.

But then life's stresses got in the way and I was too busy to stay on track. It's easier to eat a chocolate-covered granola bar or a bowl of sugar-coated cereal for breakfast than it is oatmeal. I eventually found myself at the Euro Crepe Café on the Danforth, indulging in the red velvet cake. I fell off the wagon... and into a pile of sugar.

It happens every year. If you're like me, resolutions begin with so much promise. Expectations are high and January starts off strong. You buy that gym membership and go every day. Until you start rewarding your hard work with a

day off. One day turns into two days... and before you know it, it's February and you're sleeping in every morning.

So, we continue to make resolutions (sometimes the same ones) even though, chances are, it won't last more than a month.

And I have no plans to change my ways.

When 2011 comes to an end, I'll be waiting with another list of habits to give up. Because it's not the resolution I'm after, it's the prospect of a fresh start.

It's important to get excited, because once the holidays are over, it's common to feel a little blue. Why not distract yourself with a challenge, and fill those weeks with a little desire?

Try something new, or have another go at your original plan.

I went ahead and packed up my baked cookies to give to my sister... even if it was after I ate the first batch.

Menu system hard to swallow

There's a Vietnamese restaurant near my home that I've visited a few times with friends.

I've always had a sensitive stomach and I try to keep my food choices reasonably priced, so sometimes my options can be pretty slim.

At this establishment, the servers don't write down the food orders. Instead, they leave an order sheet on the table for you to write the meal's name, the amount you want and an alpha-numeric code to identify your choice.

One day, I decided I'd take a closer look at the menu and try something different. I quickly realized it wasn't going to work out, so I wrote down “chicken wings.”

Not 15 minutes later, the waitress arrived with a platter of spring and shrimp rolls. I told her what I ordered and even examined the ticket. Sure enough,

Braydon

Keddie



I wrote down chicken wings, but I'd also mistakenly put the code “A11” down.

The restaurant staff were only paying attention to the code, and were ignoring the food's name.

I hate playing the “customer's-always-right” card, so I ate my spring and shrimp rolls. I discovered three things: one, the first bite told me that my taste buds and these rolls weren't going to get along; two, the amount of food provided was more than I could eat and my friends already had big dishes themselves; and three, this new meal was more than twice the price of the chicken

wings I originally wanted.

Other restaurants I've gone to have this same ordering system. I have to wonder why. If the server just asked customers what they'd like to eat, they wouldn't need some bizarre coding system and it would give the impression that they actually cared enough to get the orders right.

Servers have been taking orders verbally for decades. It's a system that works. And then people with bad penmanship, like me, don't need to chicken-scratch out their request for chicken wings, only to be misinterpreted anyway.

It may be old-fashioned, but it means less hassle and embarrassment for the restaurant staff and the customer walks away satisfied.

When I go out for a meal, I'm looking to eat and relax — not play a game of Battleship.

Beyond the curb: E. Y. cycling solutions

A recent proposal put forward by the city's public works committee chair, Denzil Minnan-Wong, has reopened the bike lanes debate and brought the topic back to the attention of East York's avid bicycling community and other Torontonians. His plan suggests enhancing existing bike lanes by building a curb to separate cyclists from automobile traffic.

The two major routes initially affected would be the north-south lanes along Sherbourne Street and the east-west lanes along Wellesley Street. In combination with a two-way bicycle lane along Richmond Street, the enhancement of downtown routes would eventually connect, creating one large cycling network.

The plan has surprised some bicycling advocates, considering the Ford administration's car-friendly reputation. Minnan-Wong stresses that the plan is not about political partisanship; he's even been quoted as saying that “the mayor is in favour of safe bike routes.”

But cyclists can be forgiven for continued skepticism. During last fall's election campaign, Rob Ford made his position on bike lanes quite clear —

stating that the place for them is in city parks and ravines. He had previously argued at council that roads are for motor vehicles.

And Ford's vision of “safe bike routes” still overlooks the thousands of people who commute by bike outside the downtown core on a daily basis.

Segregated bike lanes are not only a reasonable solution for keeping some cyclists out of harm's way; they also prevent drivers from having to jockey around cyclists.

But we have to go well beyond adding a curb to protect cyclists. We need to follow through on the City of Toronto's official bike plan, which aims to link smaller bike routes to the main ones by branching them together.

Vancouver recently completed a plan to separate cyclists from cars by adding curbs and boulevards between bike lanes and roads. The plan, similar to Toronto's official bike plan, also includes connecting the exterior bike routes to the downtown area.

This is a reasonable idea and deserves examination by councillors across the city. East York would make a great cycling thoroughway to the downtown core. Viewed as a suburb, separated from downtown by the Don Valley, East York is eligible for a bike lane enhancement. In 2004, the city gave approval for construction of the bike lane along Cosburn Street. For anyone commuting by bicycle along the southernmost part of East York, the Cosburn lane covers

enough ground to take them across the perimeter. However, once cyclists travelling west along Cosburn hit Broadview Avenue, they reach the heavy traffic.

It would make sense to have bike lanes running north-south along Broadview to protect cyclists from busy vehicular traffic. These lanes would then connect the Cosburn bike lane to the one that runs along the Bloor Viaduct into the downtown core.

Having a series of protected bike routes in Toronto would encourage less dependency on automobiles, and would show support for the need for bike lanes. This way motorists and cyclists can truly share the road.

—Beth Ford

We welcome your input

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Local fundraiser a laughing matter

By BRAYDON KEDDIE

Food, comedy and prizes were rewards for attending Laugh Out Loud at Leaside Act 2, a comedy night fundraiser. It was held last Friday at the On the Park Events and Conference Centre.

Over \$40,000 was raised to establish a second ice pad at Leaside Memorial Community Gardens. The night's entertainment featured comedians from Yuk Yuk's, with actor David Sparrow as emcee.

"I think these recreational facilities are a wonderful thing for developing the next generation of healthy Canadians, athletes and even Olympians," Sparrow said.

"This is where they start out. If we don't provide a space for them to 'learn to walk,' then they're never going to be able to run."

There has been a push for a second ice rink in Leaside for 12 years.

Charlene Kalia, a local realtor, resident and Leaside arena board-member, has been passionately spreading awareness of the expansion project. This was her second time hosting a comedy fundraiser for the cause.

"I don't think you can get enough of laughter," she said. "When people think about comedy, there's no one that doesn't want to laugh."

Prominent Toronto residents also joined the event.

AM640 talk show host John Oakley helped Sparrow during the live auction.

Don Valley West MP Rob Oliphant and councillor John Parker also attended the comedy show. Even Mayor Rob Ford, who briefly took the stage alongside the city's



MAYOR ROB FORD
Got standing ovation

budget chief Mike Del Grande, received a standing ovation for his appearance.

"I just wanted to come here to show you my support,"

Ford said. "This is absolutely fantastic what you're doing and I'm trying to support your project as best as I can."

A second rink would help answer the shortage of ice-time for Leaside residents.

According to Brooke Biscoe, chairman of the Leaside Board of Management, the City of Toronto negotiated buying the property of the former Ontario Film Review Board building as the site of the second ice rink.

The new rink will also be easier on their budget because of planned features.

"We're using the city's bylaws to ensure that the building meets certain green initiatives," Biscoe said.

"One of the other things we're looking at is using some of the excess heat to both the arenas and possibly use some of it to heat the pool which

would make it more energy efficient and cost effective."

According to Kalia, Leaside Gardens has three main user groups that take up a lot of ice time.

The second ice pad would not only give skaters the time needed now, but throughout the year.

"The current pad doesn't run in the summer, but this would be a pad that runs 12 months out of the year," Kalia said. "This will be a community-built arena; the city's going to loan us the money, but they're not paying for (it). This (fundraiser) is an example of what happens when you get enough people to rally around a cause in one community."

Construction of the second ice pad at Leaside Memorial Community Gardens is scheduled to commence in September 2011.



Observer, Dennis Wu

THE BIG CLEANUP: Westwood Avenue resident Rocco Addorisio blows away the snowbank at the end of his driveway on Thursday morning. East York got 10-15 cm of snow on Wednesday — about half of what was expected, but still enough.

'Big Game' a big deal for local bars

By RYAN KAVANAGH

People love a spectacle.

Bright lights, music, screaming fans of all ages, good food, good spirits — and maybe even a prize at the end of the night.

These are things one expects to see and hear while watching a Super Bowl, whether sitting in a warm, over-capacity Texas dome or standing inside a local Toronto bar crammed with hundreds of eyes glued to a large TV screen on a cold February night.

East York business owners say the game means dramatically increased revenue, simply because of its legendary reputation.

Xeno Borsas, manager of the Fox and Fiddle pub on Danforth Avenue, said there's no comparison between the crowds the establishment gets for a typical sporting event on television and what it gets for the "Big Game."

"We have some regulars who are here every week, but during the 'Big Game' we hit capacity," he said. "It gets to the point where we have to turn a lot of people away."

Borsas said that there are a few reasons why some might not go to the pub these days as much as they used to, including cold weather and financial difficulties — so he cherishes those occasions when the pub is full.

"It's so nice to have one day a year where we know we'll do good business. We make sure people get their money's worth with music, prizes, decorations, everything," he said. "They make the effort to come out, so it's important to make it special for them."

George Starfas, who owns Sophie's Sports Bar on Cosburn Avenue, feels the same way.

"We usually have raffles where we give out cash prizes and everyone gets free chicken wings as well," Starfas said.

Like Borsas, he believes this Sunday's Pittsburgh Steelers and Green Bay Packers encounter will be a big draw. "We'll have three or four times the customers we normally have, which is obviously great for us. It's always a diverse group of people, too," Borsas said.

When the snow falls, a local iceman sculpteth

By GEOFFREY MOSHER

Snow, for most people, evokes images of cold winter days and spending hours inside. Trevor Rogers sees snow as an exciting opportunity. For Rogers, snow is a chance to unleash his creativity and get out in the community.

Rogers has been creating snow sculptures at businesses along Danforth Avenue for the last month, garnering attention from residents throughout the area.

His notable local works can be found at the Carrot Common and the Starbucks at Gough Avenue.

Rogers, a Cosburn Avenue resident, began snow sculpting about a month ago.

"One day I woke up and looked out the window and said, 'Ooooh snow!' I just had to get out there."

Rogers began simply by

warming snow and creating snowballs, before he decided he wanted to create art out of this new medium.

His first attempt at creating sculptures began near Kew Gardens in the Beach. Rogers formed large piles of snow and used tools to carve out shapes.

The first shapes he experimented with were gnomes and hands, including creating a large, cupped hand that was about four-feet tall.

He has since moved on to more complex designs including birds, fountains, hearts, human forms and faces. Rogers says that creating has brought him great joy.

"It is such a great stress reliever and brings such positive energy," he said. "You enjoy the company of yourself and the process. You get lost in it. It's passion."

Rogers says he was drawn to the Danforth from the Beach because his art did not get destroyed as much at night.

"It is so hard to find places you can do it, whether it's people getting angry or wrecking it or not being allowed to because of lack of access," he said.

Rogers came to Ontario from Newfoundland in 1985 and has lived in East York for almost nine years. He hurt his back at work and, to combat the pain, decided to pursue a life of activity.

"I'm a time-millionaire," he said. "What would you do if you could live outside the limits of time?"

Rogers continues pursuing his passion for street performance, motivated by the belief that, "When you love yourself you create beauty and when you create beauty you create heaven on Earth."



Observer, Geoffrey Mosher

ART ON THE DANFORTH: Trevor Rogers shares his passion for snow, as his ice sculpture takes shape at the Carrot Common.



Photo courtesy of Gary Grant

DANGEROUS DRIVING: Connor Malone of Team Chinook blasts through the Cordoba mountains. The 450-horsepower Chevy pushed through deserts and jungles for a noble cause.

Race for MIS charity

By OCTAVIAN LACATUSU

On Jan. 2, Glenna Chestnutt embarked on the 23rd annual Dakar Rally, regarded by many as the world's most dangerous and largest motor-sporting event. Chestnutt, an avid rally enthusiast, used her participation to help raise money for the Minimally Invasive Surgery (MIS) program at Toronto East General Hospital (TEGH).

Her Team Chinook raced from Argentina to Chile, facing dangerous mountain paths, tall dunes and the Atacama Desert, the driest on the planet. Having combined two of her passions, Chestnutt felt confident.

"The MIS program is what I feel most passionately about and whatever support people can provide for an outstanding hospital in Ontario is greatly appreciated," said Chestnutt.

Kicking off in Buenos Aires, millions lined the streets for miles to catch a glimpse of this

year's brave drivers. It was no walk in the park for Team Chinook's driver, Conor Malone. "The sheer number of kilometres they throw at you is mind-boggling," he said.

The team completed around 650 km per day, though on some days pushed nearly 800. "You finish the stage and then you realize you got another 200 kilometres to go just to get back to the camp site," Malone said.

The race continued through the lifeless Atacama, with its unique perils to crew and competitors.

"Some days we were out in fields of rock as far as the eye can see," Malone said. "On other days the rocks were bigger and farther apart, so we were weaving our way through them."

Atacama's changing landscape wasn't the only problem for Malone and company. Travelling several thousand feet above sea level, the oxygen was very thin, leaving man and machine

literally gasping for breath.

For every litre of fuel vapour that goes into the engine, it needs 14 litres of air to keep going.

"Just getting out of the truck and walking to the back of it I felt almost winded, like I was light-headed," Malone said.

The team only made it to the eighth of 15 stages. Radiator and fuel delivery issues plagued the truck throughout the race, frustrating the team.

But TEGH president Teresa Vasilopoulos said the effort was not in vain, as Team Chinook's contribution to the MIS program echoes on.

The program focuses on minimizing patients' pain and frustration by utilizing better, safer medical alternatives.

"It means less infection, quicker recovery time, less time in hospital and better recuperation. It's amazing what the MIS era means to the patient," Vasilopoulos said.

Critical mass: Indie author keeps focus on local musicians

By TARA LOSINSKI

He listened to it. He watched it. He loved it. So, he started writing about it — and even ended up playing it. Journalist Stuart Berman spoke about balancing both a passion for and career writing about music during a recent visit to East York.

"I think as long as you come clean and state your associations and financial conflicts of interest, that's good enough," he said. "I think critical objectivity is an impossible standard to achieve."

Berman talked about his career as a music critic and about being a fan of Toronto's "indie" scene at a holiday season talk for about 30 people at the Danforth-Coxwell branch of the public library.

Music aficionados came out to get Berman's thoughts on the industry and his book, *This Book is Broken: The Broken Social Scene Story*.

Berman said he felt like an advocate for the band Broken Social Scene early in their career, as well as for the Toronto indie music scene as a whole. But times have changed and he doesn't have to be such a cheerleader anymore.

"Through the success of bands like Broken Social Scene, record companies from around the world and music fans from around the world know that Toronto can produce great bands," he said.

Berman began his career writing for *The Varsity*, a University of Toronto student paper.

He interned at *Eye Weekly* after graduating and is currently the online editor for *eyeweekly*.

com. Berman says the Internet has changed the music business and allowed indie bands to get their sound out, although the amount of music can be overwhelming.

"You can still fill up your iTunes very quickly with a lot of different stuff and you don't know where it comes from, you don't know who the band is," he said.

"Some people think that's a good thing because they're just evaluating it on whether the song hits them. But at the same time, it's harder to make sense of what you're going to like.

Berman and some friends formed their own band, The Two Koreas, in 2003. Berman sings and feels much freer to critique other bands now that he has been on the other side of the stage. However, he's still careful to write "airtight" reviews that keep things about the craft, not the personas. The reality, he said, is that he doesn't have a personal affinity for every musician he critiques.

"A lot of idiots... make great music and a lot of very nice people make not so great music," he said. "I try not to let my opinion of them as public figures affect what I write."

Fans of Berman's first book will be happy to know that he's been writing another, this time about Toronto indie rock musician, Danko Jones.

Jones plays to stadiums in Europe but only to small concert venues back home in Canada. Berman thinks that he warrants more attention on this side of the Atlantic.

It seems the journalist's days of advocacy for indie music aren't over quite yet.



Observer, Alexandra Ward

A WINTER INCONVENIENCE: Doug Anderson, 52, cleans up the debris left behind from a broken water main at Pape and Cosburn avenues on Tuesday. City of Toronto workers expected to finish the cleanup later that day.

Donlands design plan causes discontent for neighbouring homes

Cont'd from page 1

the church was really taken off the table."

The TTC hired an urban design firm called Design firm du Toit Allsopp Hillier (DTAH) to review options for the second exit. On Dec. 16, the DTAH had completed its final assessment. In it, the firm wrote that, "Non-residential sites are most preferred, especially vacant and under-used sites."

It also wrote that building the exit at 1 and 3 Strathmore Blvd. "impacts residential continuity along Strathmore" and "impacts the corner site that serves as a bookend to the street and extends the residential fabric around the corner."

"They (DTAH) said that the church is a much better option than any of these homes," Lisa Dymond said. "So from the TTC criteria, from the design firm's criteria, from the community's intuition and from the church's position, it sounded like a good thing."

The Dymonds received a notice in June from the TTC informing them that their proper-

ty will be partially expropriated.

Houses at 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 Strathmore Blvd. will also be partially expropriated.

Houses at 1 and 3 Strathmore Blvd. will be fully expropriated.

The notice was first addressed to the homeowners in general, then a second notice was sent, addressed with their actual names.

"They will be taking property out of our front yard underneath," Brian Dymond said. "During the construction, we will have a 36-foot hole in our front yard and an eight-foot hoarding wall probably 15 feet from our front door."

Construction is supposed to begin later this year and end in 2014.

The TTC did a Fire and Life Safety Assessment study in 2002 to make subway stations safer.

It organized all stations into four categories, ranging from high priority to no modifications required. Donlands was one of 14 stations in the high priority category.

TTC spokespeople were unavailable for comment.