



TEGH merger talks 'ended'

By ZENAIRA ALI
The Observer

Merger talks between Toronto East General Hospital (TEGH) and The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) are over, according to TEGH's chief executive.

TEGH president and CEO Rob Devitt says that East General was approached by TSH in May 2011 about a merger that could help the two institutions save money. In November, they jointly paid \$90,000 to Corpus Sanchez International (CSI) Consultancy to assess the potential risks and benefits. CSI's report projected savings of up to \$27.2 million in light of the administrative and operational changes that would result if the hospitals combined.

But while the original merger proposal involved only administrative changes to the way the two hospitals would operate, it evolved into a proposal for a merger of some clinical operations as well. At that point, the Central East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) — which the Scarborough Hospital is a part of — asked TSH to also explore other integration opportunities.

"In a nutshell, Central East LHIN had a meeting last Wednesday where they directed TSH to look at least four other options in detail," Devitt told the Observer. "We looked at that and said there are options in there that we're not interested in."

At a town hall meeting on Wednesday night at the East York Civic Centre, Devitt addressed the change in plans.

"On Friday, we announced that we've decided to end those discussions — and I want to be clear about the word 'end,'" he said. "It doesn't say 'suspend.' It says 'end,' and I really want to stress that."

A similar public meeting was held earlier this month in Scarborough at St. Paul's L'Amoreaux Center, hosted by the Friends of The Scarborough Hospital. More than 200 people showed up, and most spoke out against the merger.

Devitt said the decision to move on was made by the TEGH board after "due diligence."

"They looked at what was going on with LHIN. They listened to the feedback they had heard from our medical staff and they looked at the report," he said. "They looked at everything and decided to end the discussion and move on to other things."

Devitt said a major reason behind TEGH's decision to back out was how long the process would take.

"When you look at how long that it's taken us to get to a prototype document from the original option, considering other options would take many, many months," he said. "We thought the best thing for us to do is to say, 'Scarborough, you've got your thing to do, go do it. We'll go off and look at other options.'"

According to Central East LHIN spokesperson Katie Cronin-Wood, the health network had no problem with the merger.

"There's nothing wrong with what TSH and TEGH were doing," Cronin-Wood said. "We were just cautioning them that as they move forward, they need to engage the community and look at other options."

According to Devitt, TEGH now plans to work with its stakeholders to explore other ways of improving East York's health care.

"As we look at the long-term sustainability of the health-care system we all love, we need to lift our eyes to the horizon and think of different ways of doing things for the good of patient care," he said.



Aldis Brennan /// Observer

Interim Liberal Leader Bob Rae speaks to the media outside Liberal candidate Grant Gordon's Toronto-Danforth campaign office on Saturday. Rae was in the riding in anticipation of the March 19 byelection, and addressed the growing scandal around allegations of bogus phone calls made to voters during the last federal election by call centres affiliated with the Conservative party.

Riding in limelight

Press conference discusses the NDP 'Medicine for All' bill

By CORIANDRE LAWRENCE
The Observer

The official Opposition in the House of Commons chose a venue in the hotly contested riding of Toronto-Danforth for some high-level promotion of an international initiative last week.

So NDP byelection candidate Craig Scott shared the platform with the Opposition's foreign affairs critic, Hélène Laverdière, and the former president of Doctors Without Borders, James Orbinski.

The trio's Feb. 24 press conference at Eastminster United Church on Danforth Avenue was to show support for an NDP private member's bill, C-398, dubbed the Medicine for All Bill.

Orbinski, who accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of Doctors Without Borders in 1999, is now the chair of Global Health at the University of Toronto. He, Laverdière



■ Craig Scott

and Scott said the bill, if enacted into law, will improve access to life-saving medicine in developing countries. They said it would amend legislation affecting Canada's Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR).

Parliament unanimously implemented CAMR in 2004, allowing exports of generic drugs to developing countries to help battle HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other serious diseases. However, Laverdière, Scott and Orbinski say CAMR's process is too intricate for countries and pharmaceutical companies to be successful.

"Before, it was a very convoluted process and a burden for all the parties, including

the developing countries," said Laverdière. "It's not complicated to simplify it. This bill... tries to simplify the process and make it work."

She added: "We will need to count on votes from various Parliamentarians both in the House of Commons and the Senate and count deeply on civil society and actors who have been so involved in the issue in the past. But personally I am very confident that Parliamentarians will get behind this bill acknowledging that it's really the right thing to do."

Scott, a professor of international law at York University's Osgoode Hall Law School, gave the bill his full support and spoke to its relevance and what it represents.

"A child dies every three seconds around the world from lack of quality medicine," Scott said. "As Canadians, we have a responsibility to co-operate in this effort and protect human health as a human right. This is exactly what Bill C-398 seeks to do."

Orbinski provided insight on health issues dependent on the bill, stating that it is a serious opportunity to achieve improved results.

"The fact is that in terms of

access to medicines in the developing world, there are very clear market failures and this is one very good, clear example of that," Orbinski said. "The impact of this on children is profound... 250,000 children die each year from HIV/AIDS when in fact that is completely unnecessary. There is no viable market mechanism at this time that will allow for access to treatment.... The same is true for many adults and children with other diseases."



THE CHOICE
2012

■ Pre-election coverage continues: pages 4-6

POLICE BRIEFS

Sexual assault charges laid

A man is facing three charges of aggravated sexual assault after police were called to the area of Broadview and Cosburn avenues. A woman said a man met her downtown with promises of a modeling job, but when the pair arrived at an apartment, the man prevented her from leaving and sexually assaulted her. Errol Spooner, 33, was arrested on Feb. 20. He's also been charged with forcible confinement and carrying a concealed weapon.

Man faces 10 charges

A man faces 10 charges after men came forward to complain that they had been sexually assaulted as boys between 1969 and 1987. Ronald Lea, 61, was arrested on Feb. 22. Police say that Lea used the name Alexander Thow when he resided around the area of O'Connor Drive and Donlands Avenue.

Thieves break into two homes

Police are looking for suspects after separate burglaries. A resident on Astor Avenue said that on Feb. 25, entry was made into a premises by forcing a window. Jewelry was stolen from the house. That same day, someone forced a door at a home on Donlea Drive and took cosmetics, jewelry, computer equipment and a wallet.

~ Joshua Spence

AGNES MACPHAIL AWARD

Poverty speech captures contest

By TEONA BAETU
The Observer

And the winner is: Haris Babar.

Babar, a Grade 7 student from Gordon A. Brown Middle School, took home the Agnes Macphail public speaking trophy on Feb. 22 after delivering his speech on poverty.

"Today in my lunch I had a delicious slice of pizza, a chilled Coke and tasty fries. But while I was having my lunch, I never thought about those 12,342 children who will die today because of hunger," Babar said.

The annual speaking competition for students in grades 6-8 took place in the auditorium of the East York Civic Centre. Topics ranged from violence in the NHL to internet privacy.

"The speakers are a little

nervous and a little excited... and early in the year of 1922 was the first time Agnes Macphail, as the first female member of Parliament, walked into the Parliament Buildings. So I think she too was nervous and excited," said Bob Lister, co-ordinator of the contest and master of ceremonies, in his opening remarks.

Lister and his wife organized the contest, which celebrates its 15th anniversary this year.

Michael Prue, the MPP for Beaches-East York and the lead judge for the contest, said the judges were impressed by Babar's ability to talk about "something as mundane and ordinary" as a child having lunch at school and compare it to "what happens to 12,342 other children who didn't have that opportunity."

"It was an absolutely excellent way to start a speech; he

talked about what he had for lunch. We (the judges) were impressed that he could juxtapose those two things," Prue said.

Prue sat on the judging panel alongside Michael Smith and East York school board trustee Gerri Gershon.

Babar said he prepared for the contest for a month, and his teachers and mother were very supportive.

He also said the competing contestants did really well too — and he wished them luck next year.

Babar will offer an encore of his winning speech in three weeks, at the annual Agnes Macphail Award ceremony at the civic centre.

That occasion recognizes an East Yorker for outstanding volunteer work. It will be held on Saturday, March 24 at 7 p.m.



Teona Baetu // Observer

Haris Babar, winner of the Agnes Macphail Public Speaking Contest, shows off his trophy with his mother, Uzam Babar.

East General receives \$5-million donation

Money will fund new centre for patient care

By ZENAIRA ALI
The Observer

A \$5-million donation from Peter and Diana Thomson to Toronto East General Hospital (TEGH) will launch the Ken and Marilyn Thomson Patient Care Centre, in honour of Peter's parents.

According to Rob Devitt, CEO and president of TEGH, the care centre will have a prominent role in the hospital's upcoming \$211-million renovation and expansion project.

"The Ken and Marilyn

Thomson Patient Care Centre is a focal point for this redevelopment. It's going to bring to us a life-filled, multi-storey building, built at the corner of Coxwell and Sammon avenues," Devitt said. "It will be the cornerstone for an even higher standard of service and excellence here at Toronto East General."

Devitt said the Thomsons' donation will serve two purposes.

"It's transformational both in terms of helping us achieve the vision of that new building," he said. "But I think it's also transformational in terms of the message it will send to other donors to step up and I think it will be the catalyst for more giving."

Michael Burns, chairman of

the Toronto East General Hospital Board Foundation, said he feels the same way.

"Diana and Peter's inspirational support will raise awareness of our hospital and send a powerful message to Toronto's philanthropic and corporate communities about the importance of community hospitals, where 90 per cent of health care issues are addressed."

Thomson spoke of his family's previous experiences with TEGH as the motivation behind the donation.

"Our daughter was born here, and almost all of us have had some sort of treatment here over the years. We've always

■ (L-R) Peter, Caroline and Diana Thomson

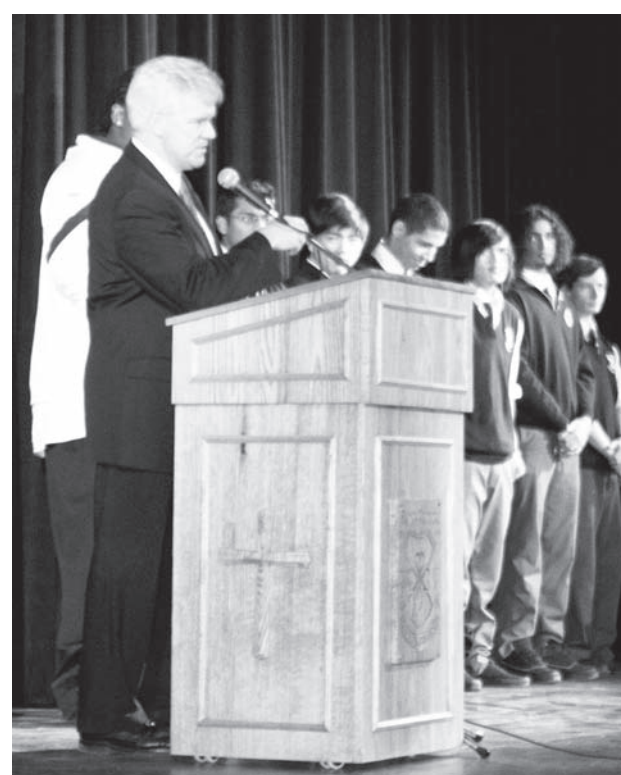
been impressed with the doctors and the staff," Thomson said. "We're very proud to be a part of it going forward."

His wife Diana agreed. "I think it's going to be a fantastic building," she said. "It'll mean a lot to the families that are served by the hospital."



WHAT IT MEANS

- Accommodation of advanced medical technology
- Better infection control
- Shorter lengths of stay for patients
- 280 medical surgical beds
- Greater privacy and comfort for patients and their families



Nicholas Prospero // Observer

John Shanahan speaks to his students during an assembly at St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School on Felstead Avenue.

'Outstanding' principal one of Canada's top 40

By NICHOLAS PROSPERO
The Observer

An East York-area high school principal was honoured on Tuesday night as one of "Canada's Outstanding Principals of 2012."

John Shanahan of St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School on Felstead Avenue was one of the honourees at a gala held at Toronto's Sheraton Centre.

He received the award from The Learning Partnership, an organization that aims to improve learning standards and acknowledge outstanding leaders in Canadian schools.

Shanahan, 54, was surprised when he first heard about his

nomination, but humbled that he was selected among the top 40 principals in the country.

"I got a call from the Learning Partnership, and they said you've been nominated, which I was surprised about. Then a day or two later they called back and said I'd won," Shanahan said.

"I just do my job. My thought is all about making a great community," he said. "It's about relationships, about working with the staff and working with the kids."

Shanahan took the reins at St. Patrick two years ago, after spending nine years as principal at Neil McNeil Catholic Secondary School.

In his time at St. Patrick,

Shanahan has brought leadership and tutoring programs to the school, as well as new uniforms.

Shanahan said in life, it's about taking good situations and improving upon them.

"I think the job of an administrator is to look at the whole picture and say, 'How do we make it better?'" he said.

"I think everybody's job in life is to try and leave a situation better than you came. So if you come to a good school, you try to make it even better."

Shanahan was honoured by his students and faculty at an assembly on Feb. 17, and received both a standing ovation and a large cake.

COMMUNITY

Roaring out against exotic animal abuse

East York-based Zoocheck seeks legislation to control pet trade

By VALENTINA KRGOVIC
The Observer

In a nondescript building near O'Connor and St. Clair — with the modest address of 788 ½ O'Connor Drive — a high-profile animal rights organization is working on a campaign that has as much to do with people as it does with pets.

Zoocheck, an animal protection charity that regularly makes the news with concerns about the welfare of animals in settings like zoos, aquariums and circuses, has its national headquarters in East York.

And one of its current campaigns revolves around what it says is the danger to the public because of the lack of regulations involved in the exotic pet trade in Canada.

Zoocheck was established in 1984 to promote and protect the interests and well-being of wild animals. That includes working to regulate the wild animal pet trade in Canada.

Domestic breeding, importation and illegal poaching are some of the problems with Canada's wildlife pet trade.

According to July Woodyer, campaign organizer at Zoocheck, most wild animal pets end up in the hands of private individuals — where they suffer from inappropriate housing and care.

But Woodyer said there are significant obstacles to getting legislation implemented regarding the exotic pet trade and roadside zoos.

"There is no political will to deal with this huge problem of not only animal welfare but public safety," Woodyer said.

"The government doesn't want to deal with the burden of investigating these facilities."

Woodyer indicated that when it comes to legislation, Ontario is the worst province when it comes to the number of roadside zoos and the unregulated exotic pet trade.

"Ontario is still the only province that lacks laws or policies aimed at controlling the keeping of exotic animals," Woodyer said.

"This is a serious public safety problem as there have been a number of incidents of people being attacked and even killed by exotic pets."

Zoocheck is also involved in making changes in the way animals are treated in circuses.

Woodyer explained that most of these animals are moved from city to city with no opportunity to live according to their natural biology and behaviour.

Woodyer said that while a lot of people like to go to circuses with performing animals, they are in fact supporting an industry that abuses the performers.

"These animals endure severe confinement, deprivation and brutality," Woodyer said.

Zoocheck is working with the city of Toronto to reduce the use of tools such as bull hooks that are used to train elephants.

"These are not tools, but weapons," she said.

"The elephants are abused by these weapons at a young age and are frightened of them. It's like someone holding a gun to your head and asking you to do something."



Photo courtesy of Fotolia



Cortney Cook // Observer

Autism workshop participants (l-r) Shona Casola, Sarah Duhaime, Tiffany MacDonald and Erin Roza are all from Autism Ontario.

Parents, teachers benefit from workshop on autism

By CORTNEY COOK
The Observer

A workshop about autism held on East York's border in February concentrated on practical advice for parents, teachers and self-diagnosed individuals.

The event, which ran Feb. 17-18, drew more than 130 attendees. It was *From Diagnosis to Daily Living: A Lifelong Approach to Working with Individuals with an ASD* and was hosted by authors and sisters Barbara Doyle and Emily Doyle Illand at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, located at 6 Garamond Ct.

"We had some last-minute registrations, which brought our number up to over 130 people in total," said Tiffany MacDonald, the family support co-ordinator for Autism Ont "It's fantastic because we were aiming for between 100 and 150."

Doyle and Illand co-wrote the book *Autism Spectrum Disorders from A-Z* in 2004 and Illand personally translated it

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

- Involve peers through "inclusion" to spread autism awareness, allowing people who have autism to feel comfortable with those who do not
- What you do matters more than what you know

decode and understand the content.

Special education teacher Miriam O'Donnell said she can take a great deal from the workshop and use what she learned with her students. She also attended Doyle's session on changing behaviours.

"It's key to children I teach who have behavioural issues and have autism," O'Donnell said. "I'm always looking for ways to help them deal with their behaviours."

Scarborough resident Matt Green, 23, has been diagnosed on the mild end of the autism spectrum. Not only did he learn more about how to cope with his disability, he was also given more tools to follow through on his ambition to apply for journalism at Centennial College's East York campus, and to add more content to his motivational speaking seminars.

"I started motivational speaking about five years ago because I wanted to help people the way other people helped me get to where I am today," he said.

into Spanish.

Parents who have children with autism found what they learned opened up more options for helping their children.

"I just wanted to understand more and that I've covered all my basics so I can give my son what he needs," said Romina Barbieri, the mother of a three-year-old son with autism.

Barbieri found Illand's session about reading comprehension to be very useful, because she is trying to teach her son not only how to read, but to

East Yorkers take a trip to the milky way

By JIYOON ELLIE KIM
The Observer

"Who remembers the dairies in Toronto?"

After his first question, speaker Paul Huntley began throwing around the names of farmers.

The East Yorkers in his audience who were old enough to remember burst out in laughter as they raised their hands — and then turned to reminisce with other attendees.

At the East York Historical Society's discussion on Feb. 15, they vividly recalled memories of their childhood,

late family members and of the neighbourhood.

While Toronto was one of the first Canadian cities to begin pasteurizing dairy products — in 1903 — the discussion was mainly about the old Dentonia Farm (now the Dentonia park, near Victoria Park and Danforth avenues) and City Dairy, which Huntley has written about in his new book.

In his talk at the S. Walter Stewart library branch, Huntley blended his historical information with personal memories from the audience.

An old milkman shared tales of his younger days, while

another man with a long silver beard shared his mother's story of milk bottles. A University of Toronto alumnus from the 1960s shared her complaint about the sociology department building at the time being full of a milky stench. Everyone laughed when Huntley agreed — adding that he loved it when he visited there decades later... and he could still smell the milk.

Huntley first developed his interest in dairies and their history 18 years ago, when he was in university. He began buying old milk bottles from his neighbours one after another, and delved into old faded books at libraries.

Then he combined that accumulated knowledge of the dairies' historical context with the memories of East York



■ Huntley

seniors, allowing them to become a part of local history.

Lynne Brown looked at

Huntley's bottle collection and recalled a glass bottle of milk that she once enjoyed with friends.

"Back in the '40s, they would bring a metal basket and stick it outside of my classroom. My teacher

brought it in and put it on the desks," she said. "That had been so many years. Those little bottles reminded me of my childhood."

Herb Kingston is a first-generation immigrant from Scotland. He carried on his father's job as a milkman in Canada. After half a century, the occupation died out due to industrialization of dairies. He now collects old photos of the dairies.

"I miss the old days," Kingston said, "but someone like Huntley revitalizes the history of our job and community."

Meanwhile, Huntley is

a full-time salesman at an electrical company and a leisure-time author of several books on the history of Toronto's dairies. He said he plans to keep learning about dairies and trying to help his neighbours with his hobby by reconnecting them with their roots.

Huntley proudly told his experience of finding a family's lost photo of their grandfather's last milk delivery.

"I know that people say they forget their family history," he said. "So it's good to try to find any traces for them. And you feel good when you know you help people out."



Sunnie Huang // The Observer

The East Side Players opened their second show of the season, *Rapture*, on Feb. 23. Scripted by Australian playwright Joanna Murray-Smith and directed by Heather Roberts, the production is a Canadian premiere, and will run until March 10.

'Rapture' reflects middle class

Australian playwright recreates life's moral tribulations

By SUNNIE HUANG
The Observer

Following a successful season opener with the Tony Award-winning play *Lettice and Lovage*, the East Side Players are ready to once again satiate the theatre appetite of East Yorkers with a sleek adaptation of *Rapture*.

The play, written by Australian playwright Joanna Murray-Smith, provides a snapshot of the lives of six close-knit friends. It unfolds as two couples find out their friends, Harry and Henny, stayed in the local Hyatt for seven months after their

house burned down, instead of travelling overseas as they thought.

This revelation turns the homecoming celebration into a night of confession and contention. Everything they know about friendship, marriage, career and life are challenged in this mixed tale of emotional vulnerability and powerful faith.

Murray-Smith, one of Australia's leading playwrights, offers her best in this 2002 play, recreating the intricacies and moral quandaries of middle-class life. Director Heather Roberts, with 25 years' experience both backstage and on stage, handles the nuances of the play with precision and deftness.

The cast is filled with familiar faces from local theatre, including Alyssa Quarts, Sean Killackey, Stephanie Morson and Paul Cotton.

Theatre student Marienne Busion is radiant as Henny, a charming and compassionate wife with a promising career. Noteworthy is Chris Coculuzzi, who commands the stage with wide-eyed energy and flair playing Tom, a cynical, unsympathetic writer who fails to win the hearts of his wife and friends with his literary awards.

Although the characters are all in their 40s, Roberts said all audiences can relate to the universality of the play and its themes.

"If people are older, they'll identify having been there at some point in their life. For people who may not yet be there, it might make them think how they are living their life now," she said. "It's about the people, the choices you make and what's meaningful to you as a person."

Roberts also gave ample

credit to the cast and crew who, like herself, contribute to the play as volunteers.

"They offered a lot and they were open to suggestions," she said. "It was a real joy."

Rapture opened on Feb. 23 at the Papermill Theatre, on Pottery Road between Bayview and Broadview avenues. It concludes on March 10.

Performances run tonight and tomorrow (March 2 and 3) and then Wednesday through Saturday — all at 8 p.m. The only remaining Sunday matinee is sold out. After this coming Wednesday's performance, theatre-goers are invited to a discussion with the director and cast.

Tickets are \$20, and \$15 for students. The box office is at 416-425-0917. For more information or online ticketing, go to www.eastsideplayers.ca and follow the links.

East York inspires 'Fauna' trauma

Setting reflects the author's love of nature, wildlife

By CLARISA PESSOA
The Observer

The author of the novel *Fauna* says that East York inspired her in the writing of it.

Allisa York is a six-year community resident and writer. The award-winner attended the North Leaside Women's Group at Leaside United Church on Feb. 21.

Her novel explores the life of six people who reveal their traumatic childhood experiences to each other.

The characters meet in a

junkyard located in the Don Valley ravine.

York said the woods of the Don Valley inspired her to make the main character of the story a resident of the community as well.

The setting of *Fauna* reflects York's love for wildlife. She lived in Winnipeg before moving to East York, but frequently stayed with friends in Riverdale when she had work in Toronto. The forest area under the Bloor viaduct, where she once explored and found campsites, became the setting for her novel.



■ Allisa York

"I was always crossing on the subway and I would always be looking down whenever we would go over. I used to always be thrilled in that moment," York said.

"When you come out of the dark tunnel, suddenly: Whoosh! There is a forest and a river and I would always be looking down long before I ever knew that there was a book there."

York also tackles dark and controversial subject matter in her other two books, *Mercy* and *Effigy*. *Effigy* is set in Utah

and touches on Mormon polygamy. However, York was not familiar with Utah, like she was when writing about her own community.

"It's terrifying to know that you're going to write a novel set in mid 19th-century Utah," she said.

"I had never even been to Utah in the present day. Research used to really annoy me. I would be like, 'I got to get this out of the way so I can get to my writing,' and now it's just such a huge part of how I write."

Principle, not power, guides candidates for fringe parties

By TRISHA LANCETA
The Observer

Like the other fringe candidates running in the Toronto-Danforth byelection, it's not the prospect of power that counts for Libertarian John Recker, it's the principle.

Recker, 31, wants to draw attention to the Libertarian platform of more freedom through less government. He's one of four candidates running in Toronto-Danforth whose candidacies had been confirmed by Elections Canada earlier this week and who are running from outside the mainstream parties.

"The purpose is to spread the message of liberty and freedom," Recker said in an interview. "Hopefully people will start exploring and wanting to learn more about the different options that are available."

In the previous two federal elections in Toronto-Danforth, fringe candidates garnered about 400 votes in total.

All 387 went to Marie Crawford of the Animal Alliance Environment Voters Party of Canada in the May 2011 election. But there were four fringe candidates who split 446 votes in the previous vote in October 2008.

Those vote shares are out of a total of more than 48,000 ballots cast last year, and 45,000 cast in 2008.

This time around, the other candidates from outside the mainstream running alongside Recker are independents Leslie Bory and Bahman Yazdanfar, as well as Brian Jedan, who represents the "United Party of Canada."

That party's website offers to

■ John Recker

"simplify and streamline government through a series of new programs ... such as a streamlined tax system that is fair and efficient and geared towards environmental sustainability, a guaranteed annual income to replace a series of income support programs and the public funding of post-secondary to develop the talents and skills of Canadians."

For his and the Libertarians' part, Recker said, his fellow party members "in general have a lot in common in terms of goals that are held by other parties. I just think we differ in the means of achieving those goals."

Some of the things Recker wants to do include improving health care and aiding vulnerable people. He said there is a substantial problem with homelessness and poverty in East York and he believes poverty can be linked to large corporations expanding and overshadowing small and medium-sized businesses.

"Big corporations are funding — one way or another — large parties and people with power in government so they can have their way," Recker said.

"I think addressing that is a significant concern for us."

Recker has studied psychology and sociology and is currently pursuing a certificate in criminal justice. He said running in Toronto-Danforth is difficult because people are loyal to the brand of the four major parties.

But, he added, "This isn't a race for leadership of the country. It's a race to represent the people of Toronto-Danforth. I think what I could bring to the people is representing them and not a big party in Ottawa."



● For more East York stories, please visit us online at torontoobserver.ca

Editor's note

On March 19, the Toronto-Danforth byelection will be held to fill the House of Commons seat vacated when MP Jack Layton died last August.

Information for voters can be accessed at www.elections.ca.

An all-candidates meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on March 15, at Don Mills United Church, 126 O'Connor Dr.

The Observer is published by journalism students at Centennial College, where March break begins today (March 2). So this is our last edition until March 23, when we'll have a wrap-up of the voting. But on election night, you can access breaking news coverage of the results at www.torontoobserver.ca

NDP hoping to hold the fort

By **TATIANA HERMAN**
The Observer

With the Toronto-Danforth federal byelection just over two weeks away, the New Democrat vying to succeed Jack Layton is hoping his background will put him in good stead with East York voters.

NDP candidate Craig Scott, 49, has lived in the riding for more than 20 years and says he will be a strong community voice in Parliament if elected.

"We need to hold the government to account and I think this riding has come to expect a very strong MP who not only takes the riding seriously, but makes a strong contribution nationally," he said.

"I'm hoping people see me that way."

In an interview, Scott said the current Conservative government is doing little to convince Canadians that they should remain in power, and the New Democrats are the alternative.

"I want to be part of making sure Canadians understand that this government does not deserve to stay in power after 2015," he said. "There are no



Tatiana Herman // Observer

NDP candidate Craig Scott runs into local resident Laura Shantz as he canvasses for votes.

other parties as strong as the NDP or who are in the right position to challenge the Tories."

Scott is a professor at the Osgoode Hall Law School of York University, specializing in international human rights. This is his first try at electoral politics, but he suggested that it's not far-removed from what he's been doing in his career to date.

"I felt a sense of urgency that emerged from a sense of

duty that this was my opportunity to make a contribution, and I don't think I could live with myself if I didn't take this step," he said.

If elected, Scott has a number of issues he would like to address, including government accountability and the global environment.

"I want to be one of the MPs that beats the drum on these kinds of issues. It doesn't need to be a partisan issue. In fact, for Canada to

take a leadership role, it has to become pretty non-partisan," he said.

"We actually need to have MPs and civil society working together on a very transformative agenda."

Scott says that so far, he's received positive feedback while canvassing the area on a daily basis.

"People are extraordinarily open and friendly at the door and they want to learn a bit more about me," he said.

New Democrat Jack Layton took the Toronto-Danforth seat from Liberal Dennis Mills in 2004.

In the May 2 general election, he won the last of his re-elections easily — with 61 per cent of the vote in a five-candidate field.

But Layton succumbed to cancer just three months later, and the seat was then declared vacant.

"I meet people every day and I am building on the reputation the NDP already has," Scott said. "The NDP is highly respected here."

Reflecting on the campaign experience overall, Scott said it's been "inspirational" and "exhilarating."

Keyes says he wants to help E.Y. immigrants

By **TEONA BAETU**
The Observer

Family Day could have been renamed Politics Day — as Conservative candidate Andrew Keyes and his son Daniel spent quality time canvassing in East York.

The pair took advantage of last week's holiday Monday to try to get residents to support him before the March 19 byelection in Toronto-Danforth.

"We've knocked on a lot of doors," Keyes said.

The Conservatives finished fourth and third in Toronto-Danforth in 2008 and 2011 respectively.

But while he acknowledged the riding "has been a challenge" this time too, Keyes said Toronto-Danforth residents have opened their doors to him with gratitude, regardless of their political inclination.

"A lot of people simply appreciate the fact that we are getting out there and stepping up for the sake of democracy," Keyes said.

"There are a lot of people who are undecided right now and are grateful for the opportunity to ask questions, read some literature and make an informed decision."

If elected, he wants to improve communication and co-operation between the three levels of government.

"That's something that's been lacking in the past," he said.

A first-generation Canadian, Keyes relates to the many new immigrants in the riding who start with little.

His Polish father and English mother moved to Canada after the Second World War.

He said he wants to help recent immigrants with professional qualifications back home earn their Canadian credentials faster.

Keyes bought his first home in East York in 1988, and lived there with his family for 11 years.

Grant's got game

Liberal candidate hopes to make some 'big plays' in Ottawa

By **ALDIS BRENNAN**
The Observer

After a game of hockey with friends, Liberal candidate Grant Gordon frequently finds himself accused of passing the puck too much.

He doesn't see it as a flaw. Instead, he wants to bring that playmaker attitude to Ottawa. But given his propensity for passing, choosing to run for office did not come easy.

"What made becoming a candidate so difficult for me is that I'm shooting the puck, that's what this is," Gordon said.

"In this case, the Liberals really need to score in this riding. Someone's got to get the job done for them. So I have to shoot and I'm going to pick the corner."

Gordon says he chose to run in the March 19 byelection in Toronto-Danforth for two reasons: one, Stephen, and the other, Harper. The advertising executive and 20-year resident of Toronto-Danforth does not like the



Grant Gordon

direction Canada is heading under its current prime minister.

"It doesn't reflect who we are as Canadians," Gordon said.

"Canadians are nice, decent people. We are exporting asbestos, something that has been banned here because it causes cancer. That's not the kind of people we are. That's wrong, it's morally wrong."

Having lived in and around the community for most of his life, Gordon is certain he knows the issues.

"I'm a small businessperson and I really care about the plight of small businesses in the riding, and a lot of small businesses are hurting," Gordon said.

"The first thing I would do is create a 'buy-local' campaign. I think that's

crucial," he said.

"It's a no-brainer. You know, a lower tax rate isn't going to do anything. We've got to help these people. We've got to turn our brains on and be innovative."

As the founder of Key Gordon Communications Inc., an advertising agency focused solely on branding socially and environmentally friendly companies, Gordon is an experienced communicator. Because of that, he isn't worried that disarray in the Liberal party will hurt his chances.

"My feeling is that there is a lot more to the role of the opposition MP than going to the House of Commons and standing and reading half-baked questions," Gordon said.

"You can be an activist, an advocate in your own riding. You can make stuff happen. An MP can advocate for anyone. They should advocate for everyone."

For Gordon, this includes a closer connection between the federal government and the city.

"People outside of Toronto don't want to hear this, but this is the most important city in Canada. We need a partner in Ottawa, not a hostile government," Gordon said.

Green candidate looks to future

By **SCOTT BARBER**
The Observer

Nearly a decade ago, Toronto-Danforth Green Party candidate Adriana Mugnatto-Hamu moved to Riverdale with her family. Shortly after settling into the community, Mugnatto-Hamu discovered her son was ill.

"Just after we moved here, my son developed a cough and we thought he had a touch of asthma," she said. "He's fine, but I looked into it at the time and realized that we have very serious air quality issues here in Toronto-Danforth because of the Don Valley Parkway."

The discovery gave Mugnatto-Hamu perspective on environmental politics.

"It's climate change, but it's also having tremendous health impacts on us as we burn fossil fuels," she said.

Mugnatto-Hamu received over 3,100 Toronto-Danforth votes (six per cent) in the 2011 federal election. She believes the upcoming byelection offers a unique opportunity for her party to improve its fortunes.

"Only one seat is in play here, so the composition of the government will not change fundamentally," she said. "While the other parties can't do much with one seat, I would be side-by-side with Elizabeth May and encouraged to speak



Adriana Mugnatto-Hamu

loud and strong for the people of Toronto-Danforth."

But to join the Green party leader in Parliament, Mugnatto-Hamu must change voters' perception that Green candidates cannot win.

"You would not believe how many people tell me that if they thought I could win, they would vote for me," Mugnatto-Hamu said. "If they all voted for me, I would be the MP."

Mugnatto-Hamu's strategy is to engage voters on Canada's need for sustainable economic policies.

"It would be an extremely valuable experience for Canada to have a voice for our children and a voice for an economy that works for future generations as well as this generation," she said. "The other parties miss how we can make the economy work for future generations."

EDITORIALS

TORONTO-DANFORTH'S BYELECTION: TWO VIEWS

NDP stays strong

Some people are already calling him the NDP's new Jack Layton. Of course, no one can ever replace Toronto-Danforth's late member of Parliament — who, as leader of the New Democrats, led the party to the Opposition benches in the general election last year. But someone is going to succeed Layton as MP, and Craig Scott seems a worthy choice.

After Layton's August death opened his seat to a byelection set for just over two weeks from now, Scott was nominated by the NDP riding association over two other contenders on Jan. 9. Since then, he's been canvassing and otherwise getting to know Toronto-Danforth residents on a personal level.

While addressing touchy issues such as the Harper government's proposal to "reform" (translation: reduce) Canada's pensions, Scott displays a potent honesty that is refreshing and relatable to constituents.

And Scott is also the beneficiary of about the most persuasive endorsement he could garner: that of Layton's widow and the MP for Trinity-Spadina, Olivia Chow.

Human rights and environmental protection are near the top of his priority list. But Scott is also keenly interested in issues that are closer to home — like holding the official retirement age at 65 years, rather than the 67 that it seems the Conservatives are hinting at. Affordable housing within the riding is another top concern for the former Osgoode Hall law professor.

Almost everyone expects this byelection race in Toronto-Danforth to resolve into a two-man contest: Scott for the NDP versus Grant Gordon for the Liberals.

After yesterday's scheduled all-candidates meeting at Duke of Connaught school (just as the Observer was going to press), East Yorkers will have at least one more opportunity to compare these two frontrunners head-to-head: Thursday, March 15 at Don Mills United Church, 126 O'Connor Dr.

Hopefully voters will see that a thoughtful social democrat taking his place among the ranks of the official Opposition is the appropriate choice for the southwestern third of East York. The right choice here is continuity, with a representative from a party that has proven it has this community's interests at heart.

~ Clarisa Pessoa

Gordon's good fit

East Yorkers living in the riding of Toronto-Danforth have an important decision to make as the federal byelection closes in.

And as you consider whom to cast your ballot for on March 19, Liberal Grant Gordon merits serious consideration.

Gordon chose to stand for election because of how the Conservative government is running the country. Like many in Toronto-Danforth, he doesn't like it. And as voters look Gordon over, it's easy to see how qualified and passionate he is. And that passion extends beyond Canada's national game (one of the first things that people notice about Gordon). He's deeply interested in the environment, boosting local businesses, and other issues dear to Toronto-Danforth.

But it's one thing to be passionate about the job; it's another to have the right background for it. Gordon does.

He started the successful viral ad campaign, "Flick Off," which was about global warming. Gordon points out that the current government pays lip service only to environmental protection (while it does things like promoting the oil sands and protecting the export of asbestos to other countries).

His company, Key Gordon Communications, is an advertising firm where the primary focus is environmentally friendly causes and products.

A small business owner and Toronto-Danforth resident, Gordon also understands the concerns facing local enterprises, and how some are suffering. He wants to promote patronage of small business owners, and the boost that will give to our community. (If we support our local businesses, we're supporting our community.)

His business management and his hockey coaching have taught him about leading. And with his experience in advertising, Gordon certainly has the skills to communicate. Isn't that what we in East York need? A communicator who leads and cares about the community?

The Liberals have always stood for progressive policies around the environment and social and economic justice. Gordon's values fit well with that — and they'll fit well with Toronto-Danforth.

~ Nikki Pulsone

COLUMN

One month not enough

After taking in the Black History Month event at the Pape-Danforth library branch hosted by Antiguan-Canadian author Althea Prince, the lyric of a popular song by reggae superstar Ziggy Marley immediately came to mind.

"Not his-tory, black my story."

I've always believed that the most eloquent teachers of black history are those who have first-hand knowledge of the struggle. After listening to such compelling conversation at the library, that sentiment was strongly reinforced.

Being a Jamaican who's lived in the multicultural GTA for two years now, I assumed that some significant knowledge regarding African-Caribbean culture and settlement would be quite apparent in a large community filled with Trinidadians, Barbadians and "yardies" like myself.

But my eyes bulged when a young woman of African-Caribbean descent spoke out, saying, "The reason I'm here today is because I never learned any of this in school; this was never taught when I was in high school, public school, college, nothing."

She and others who share my colour were unfamiliar with the Maroons — the descendants of escaped Jamaican slaves who immigrated to Canada. They didn't

know that the Domestic Workers Scheme recruited women from the Caribbean to live in Canadian homes as domestics, and that allowed Canadian women to enter the labour force. Teachers and educators were awed by the stories of various Caribbean descendants in the school system, literature and to the economy. Many were only vaguely familiar with Caribana, Toronto's huge Caribbean street festival — which generates over \$400 million yearly.

It's somewhat disheartening to me that young Canadians with Caribbean backgrounds are offered such a diluted understanding of our heritage. I happen to agree with a teacher's suggestion at the event about introducing verbal illustrations, similar to the one at the Toronto Public Library, across our educational institutions. The most logical way to clarify long-confused myths regarding immigration and settlement is by hearing and reading

the spoken word of black teachers and poets who truly can relate to what we've went through as a people.

I really hope that schools and other institutions and groups across East York and the GTA that are aimed at education will make history a more wholesome topic by introducing lectures, seminars and discussions explaining our origin. Given that 72 per cent of Canada's black population hails from the Caribbean, we're entitled to know the full movement for freedom. Many centuries worth of material cannot simply be contextualized in textbooks and condensed in the 28-day (occasionally 29-day) celebration called Black History Month. It's not right.

The best way of celebrating African-Caribbean culture and black culture in general would be to have our own share stories pertinent to our progress as a people. Should this happen, future generations would gauge an understanding of their true identities, even when they're thousands of miles away from home.



Jodee Brown

Not technology-driven

Getting into a car with a stranger — like a tow truck driver — is already awkward. When my car died, I called CAA. It was a standard procedure: hooking up the car, taking down my information, putting the dropoff address into the GPS... and off we went.

The DVP is mere minutes away from Centennial College's East York campus, and I knew the parkway was the quickest way to the Gardiner and home in Mississauga. But the GPS had other plans. It wanted us to take city streets to the Gardiner. The driver and I were puzzled every time it "recalculated" the route. Then, it hit us. The GPS was looking for the shortest route to the Gardiner, regardless of local traffic and the many stoplights in between. Despite the complicated technology involved, my driver called the little black box "dumb."

"Whoever made this thing is smart," he said. "But we have to be smarter than this thing."

I agree with him.

Up until the start of the millennium, society was taking baby steps toward the future. Then the Internet broke out and we've made leaps. The world is privy to mp3 players that can hold thousands of portable cabinets laptops access to



Trisha Lanceta

infinite knowledge via cell-phones. Everyone has the same things because we've been convinced they are necessary for the world to operate.

It scares me to know I am smarter than a computer mainly because it can't tell itself what to do. For example, hand-colouring an image using Photoshop software is simple. Just select the settings and the program figures out the rest. If there's a mistake, the "undo" button erases it. But hand-colouring 30 years ago was literally colouring by hand. If the photographer wasn't precise enough, the picture was scrapped and the process restarted. It was more intensive, but it brought the satisfaction of a job well done.

We can't let the growth of the human race be dictated by technology. They're tools to help us, not do things for us. We must understand the "why" and the "how" before technology can be used properly. We should be smarter than these "things."

— Sent from my Smartphone

Patio hours debate heats up

By SARAH DAYAL
The Observer

Some patio hours have been extended on the Danforth, but one business owner says it means a double-standard for neighbouring establishments.

The owner of the Court Jester Pub near Pape and Danforth, Steve Siuta, says he would like to see uniform patio hours for business owners across the city.

"Having a patio on the busy Danforth is essential during the summer, because it is like a big business of its own," the 17-year owner said. But he added, "It would be unfair if we stayed open until 2 a.m. and other places throughout the city had to close their patio at midnight."

A pilot project for businesses on the Danforth to extend patio hours as a reflection of the street's reputation as an entertainment district was launched in 2011, but after inspections and numerous residential complaints, some establishments were cited for violating municipal licensing standards.

The city says that more than half of participating businesses were fail-

ing to comply with the new 12 a.m. curfew.

Siuta thinks residential homes near side-street patios have a right to complain. However, being one business building away from houses with a small, seven-seater patio, Siuta says he has only ever received noise complaints from tenants renting above the restaurant.

"We have a good relationship with the people upstairs, but they sometimes complain about the music being too loud when they are trying to sleep on a busy Friday night," he said. "They are such good neighbours, despite the times, I even had to tell my bartender to turn it down."

Janet Davis, councillor for Ward 31/Beaches-East York, said councillors work directly with businesses and residents to ensure there is a balance between the two.

"Councillors work with both to make sure everyone is being a good neighbour," she said. "We have to work together to create an economically successful and vibrant area that local neighbourhoods support."

Davis said no music on patios, hour restrictions, reduction on patio seat numbers and "buffering" designs



Sarah Dayal // Observer

Court Jester Pub owner Steve Siuta says his front patio, which is an extension of the pub itself, will re-open as soon as weather permits. The pub is located at 609 Danforth Ave.

will help reduce the impact on adjacent neighbours.

She also defended the policy of allowing specially extended hours in some entertainment districts of the city.

"There needs to be flexibility in

hours of operation," Davis said.

Mary Fragedakis, councillor for Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth, said at the February meeting of Toronto and East York Community Council that discussions on the pilot project will resume sometime in March.

The city's MLS office is recommending that the Toronto and East York Community Council deny continuation of the pilot project for extended "flankage" patio hours — despite the inconsistency it may create between businesses.



Trisha Lanceta // Observer

The cast and crew of The Odd Couple pose for the audience at their final performance.

Teachers get A+ for acting

By TRISHA LANCETA
The Observer

The roles were reversed, in a number of ways when Catholic school teachers took the stage at St. Patrick Catholic secondary school in February to perform a female version of the classic comedy, *The Odd Couple*.

It was part of the school board's "staff arts" program, which educates teachers in performance arts so they can take those skills back to the classroom. The *Odd Couple*'s cast consisted of teachers coming from schools across the system, teaching kindergarten to high school.

The show only ran one weekend in mid-February, but its three performances attracted 400-500 people, according to producer Mary Jane McKeen — herself

a veteran of the staff arts program.

"As a result of being involved with Staff Arts, I learned all about putting on a production," she said. "So for many years I did productions for the school where I taught."

The *Odd Couple* was just the first of the program's usual three productions per year. Participants will also perform in *The Sound of Music* later this year, and in a choral concert to close their season.

Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple* is an iconic Broadway play from 1965 about mismatched roommates. It spawned a hit movie and television series... and a female version written by Simon in 1985.

Nicole Toogood, the

show's director, said the audience reaction at St. Patrick was how she measured the production's success.

"Really, that's it," she said. "It's the audience laughing and how they've appreciated the show."

Part of that success, she said, was because of the onstage chemistry that results from the offstage friendship between participants.

"Off-set they were amazing. They get along really, really well," she said. "The two main leads are very, very good friends. It's really a big love-fest backstage."

Proceeds from ticket sales are reinvested in the staff arts program.

"We're really a self-supporting organization," McKeen said. "We don't hold a big bank balance."

Photojournalist looks at both sides of lens

Lecturer talks to students about the power of visual documents

By JESSICA VELLA
The Observer

A photojournalist known for his coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict visited East York in February to tell students that photojournalism can be a powerful medium.

Italian photographer Ruben Salvadori, 23, says he uses still photography and video to give viewers insight into what's going on both in front of the camera and behind it.

He presented some of his work and interpretations to photography students at Centennial College's East York campus, as part of a tour he's making of colleges and universities.

"Photojournalists and photojournalist students need to know what the implications of their work are," Salvadori said. "Our society is extremely visual, and visual documents have a great power on people."

"As a superhero once said, 'With great power come great responsibilities.' We need to be aware of our power and take responsibility for our actions, even though we are not



■ Ruben Salvadori

superheroes."

But Salvadori said that his work isn't just for the benefit of professionals in the medium — and those who aspire to join their ranks.

He said he wants the public to also consider his proposition that photojournalists sometimes "spin" reality a certain way with the images they choose to capture and present.

"I'm glad that people are interested in my experience and the target audience of my project is not just other photojournalists," Salvadori said.

"It is mostly the general public, which needs to understand the importance of being an active viewer of the photographs that are shown."

Salvadori said that for a photographer, new or old, mistakes are common, but practitioners must move forward and learn from them, while never forgetting what's important.

"You will make mistakes. It's inevitable. That's how you learn," he said. "It is essential that you think and discuss your work with others. And by others, I don't mean just other photographers, but with the public as well," Salvadori said.

"We often tend to produce material that would please other photographers and editors, but forget that our main target should be the public, which isn't familiar with the behind-the-scenes of many situations."

When asked about his tour, Salvadori said he's happy to see that people are taking an interest in what he does.

"The tour is going really well," Salvadori said. "The public seems interested and the most important thing is that people so far seem to understand the anthropological approach of the project without entering the usual political debate that often shadows any other debate when the environment is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."



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Africentric schools important, speaker says



Rosemary Sadlier speaks to Centennial College students as part of Black History Month observances at the East York campus last month.

By LILIAN ASANTE
The Observer

The president of the Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) says Africentric schools are important because they represent a philosophy that is vital to the African-Canadian community.

Rosemary Sadlier spoke to students at the East York campus of Centennial College on Feb. 15 about her experiences as an author and as the leader of Ontario's only organization devoted to black history and heritage.

Sadlier said she supports the Africentric alternative schools because they provide a philosophy and curriculum that many African-Canadian youth can relate to.

The Toronto District School Board opened an Africentric elementary school in 2009 at the Sheppard Public School in

Toronto's west end and this past November the TDSB agreed to work toward establishing an Africentric high school. East York trustee Gerri Gershon was among those opposing the move, saying it's a mistake to separate children.

But Sadlier disagrees. "It is not about segregation. What we consider to be normal is European. It does not include Asian ideology, it does not include African ideology. It includes European ideology," Sadlier said. "The Africentric School is an opportunity to include and work from another ideology."

In 1995, under Sadlier's leadership, the OBHS helped get February proclaimed as Black History Month across Canada — following similar observances in the United States and United Kingdom.

Sadlier, who is also the

author of *Harriet Tubman: Freedom Seeker, Freedom Leader*, said she fought for the proclamation because she felt the history of African slaves and settlers was not being covered in Canadian literature.

Sadlier said Africentric schools are an important option that should be available to those wishing to learn more about African-Canadian culture and legacy.

"Just like there are schools for gay, lesbian and transgendered and schools for First Nations; Africentricism is another ideology that is expressed through a school," Sadlier said. "The OBHS supports it not because every black kid should be going to the Africentric school, but because if a black kid, or any kid, wants to go to this school, then it should be available to them."

East Yorker sets Canadian basketball scoring record

Boris Bakovic overcame injury to get 24 points, win game

By JOSHUA SPENCE
The Observer

An East Yorker wound down his regular season last month as the unofficial highest-scoring university basketball player in Canadian history.

Boris Bakovic, 23, broke the record in a victory for the University of Calgary Dinos over the Alberta Golden Bears. He finished the

game with 24 points, happy about his huge accomplishment.

"I knew about the record beforehand. People told me about it when I was getting close," Bakovic said. "It's great to know I have the record now. I like it. It is a really big accomplishment."

A knee injury kept Bakovic out of action earlier this season, and making his record more remarkable.

"At first everything was up in the air. We took it day by day," he said. "We weren't sure if we could get my knee back to how it was before, but all the staff did a great job to help get me back into

shape." With the record in the bag, Bakovic says his attention is now on the playoffs.

"We've already made the playoffs, so the goal now is to make it as far as possible. Now what we need to do is beat teams that we have already beaten previously," he said.

Bakovic is in his final year of university, and has already started planning his future.

"After I'm done here I plan to go play pro basketball over in Europe for as long as I can," he said. "Then I'll come back and see where it goes from there."



Rebecca Steckham ///Observer

St. Nicholas Catholic School and St. Brigid Catholic School boys battle it out on the courts in the TCDSB Elementary School Basketball Tournament, which ran all day Feb. 14 at St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School on Felstead Avenue.

Transplanted artist displays African paintings in college gallery



Jane Igharo ///Observer

Jude Ifesieh's paintings are among those being presented until March 10 as part of a Black History Month art gallery show.

By JANE IGHARO
The Observer

Although Black History Month is officially over, an East York art gallery is still offering an observance with art students expressing their visions through canvas and paint.

The Corridor Gallery, at the north end of the second floor of Centennial College's East York campus at 951 Carlaw Ave., is keeping its Black History Month exhibition open until March 10, and the public is welcome.

Seven student painters have contributed work to the show, called "Glow." One of them is 41-year-old Jude Ifesieh who, after exploring places like Australia, New York, Boston and Texas, has

settled in Toronto for a two-year period in order to study animation at Centennial.

As an artist in Nigeria, Ifesieh said, he dedicated his time to educating children who did not have other means to learn art.

"I wanted to help the kids bring out what was in them by showing them how to express themselves through art," he said. "They were good kids; they were sweet, smart and open to learning."

Ifesieh eventually partnered with a friend in Australia who was also involved in art education for children. The pair began an "art exchange" program, where paintings by children in Nigeria were exhibited in a gallery in Australia and paintings by children in Australia

were exhibited in Nigeria. The program was called "Play on Play."

Ifesieh said he enjoys working with children tremendously and hopes to volunteer in community centres in Canada to educate, assist and inspire.

His contributions to the Corridor Gallery exhibition contain vivid drops of colours in the form of leaves and dots that lightly cover the pictures of African



Jude Ifesieh

women dancing in the background or carrying babies.

Ifesieh said his appreciation for the strong African females in his life is what inspires his art. These include his mother, who passed away, and the assertive females in his past romantic relationships.

While Ifesieh's artistic creativity has driven him to many places, he is content with — although exhausted by — his current pursuit of a diploma in animation at Centennial.

"Come, so I can show you some of the things we do," Ifesieh told a visitor as he motioned toward his computer.

"This assignment can take three weeks. It's really hectic. It's very stressful."