



COMMUNITY



Matthew Wocks /// Observer

**Sharing the harvest**

Amy Thiessen of Thiessen Farms sells her vegetables at the East York farmers' market on Tuesday. The market takes place at the East York Civic Centre every Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and runs until Oct. 30.

**Mishap spurs crosswalk concern**

Close call brings to light Thorncliffe's worries over pedestrian safety

By AKIHIKO TSE  
The Observer

Thorncliffe Park residents say more must be done to slow traffic and reduce jaywalking after a child was hit and pinned under a car last week.

"We want another crosswalk," said Lola Habib, 37, a parent of seven children. "I see a lot of kids jaywalking. It's dangerous."

A nine-year-old boy was struck by a car on Sept. 22 at about 1:30 p.m. on Thorncliffe Park Drive. Published reports say he'd mistakenly boarded the wrong bus and was attempting to cross the street to catch an oncoming bus on the opposite side.

The boy crossed in front of a sta-

tionary bus unloading passengers and was hit by an elderly woman who was trying to overtake the bus.

An online video shows approximately 20 bystanders quickly converging on the scene, lifting the car off the child.

The boy was admitted to the Hospital for Sick Children suffering serious but non-life-threatening injuries. Police continue to investigate and have yet to lay any charges.

Habib didn't blame the driver, but said, "Some drivers don't have the patience."

The accident is likely to reignite debate over jaywalking in the city. Currently, a combination of the On-

tario Highway Act and city bylaws stipulates that pedestrians crossing the street mid-block is legal, as long as they yield to traffic and aren't adjacent to a marked pedestrian crossing.

Ather Ali, 38, who has three children, calls moving between three crosswalks on Thorncliffe Park Drive "an inconvenience," saying the spacing prompts many to jaywalk.

The boy was struck approximately 150 metres from a crosswalk in front of a library.

However, additional crosswalks can't be installed, as the three currently in place are governed by strict city policies, says Councillor John Parker of

Don Valley West/Ward 26.

"A crosswalk isn't automatically safe just because it exists," he said.

Parker said factors such as minimum distances between signalized intersections, from stop signs and from driveways have to be considered to sufficiently attract drivers' attention and influence traffic activity, which limits the number of crosswalks that can be installed.

After consultation and review, Parker said an order will move the current crosswalk at the intersection of Thorncliffe Park Drive and Milepost and Grandstand south to align with the entrance to R.V. Burgess Park, and convert the existing crosswalk to a four-way stop.

"We in effect slip in an additional crosswalk that way, but we also break up the flow of traffic so we have two benefits out of that one move," he said, adding that work should be completed by the end of the year.



**Condo project ignites unease**

By JACLYN DUNHAM  
The Observer

Angry residents of East York's Crescent Town neighbourhood fear an impending high-rise development becoming a reality after a Toronto-East York community council meeting earlier this month.

The developer, the Preston Group, submitted an application to city council to build a 22-storey condominium tower directly west of the apartment building at 90 Eastdale Ave. four years ago.

City council failed to provide direction on the application and the developer appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board, which some accuse of siding with industry in such situations.

The Toronto-East York community council approved a recommendation by Beaches-East York Councillor Janet Davis to support an alternative building proposal called Option 2 during the Sept. 11 meeting this month.

Option 2 suggests building a 24-storey condo tower north of 90 Eastdale at the corner of Lumsden and Eastdale avenues, where the existing Eastdale Parkette is located. The Preston Group has been willing to co-operate with city staff and pursue the alternative plan.

"While we're not supportive of development in general, we accepted that Option 2 was preferable to Option 1 if there was going to be development on that site," Davis said. "The building in the proposed location at least will have a street presence and will be located where other tall buildings are."

In order for Option 2 to work, a land swap with the city for the park and demolition and replacement of 21 existing townhouses to make room for a new park located at the corner of Eastdale and Second avenues is also required.

Although more community residents favoured Option 2 over Option 1 at a July meeting, many people still oppose any development.

■ See PLANS, page 4



**POLICE BRIEFS**

**Man stabbed near Chapman**

Police are asking for public assistance in identifying a suspect in connection with an aggravated assault. Police found a 20-year-old male victim with stab wounds on Sept. 17 at around 7:55 p.m. The male was found around the area of Chapman Avenue and George Webster Road. The victim was transported to hospital, where he was treated for minor injuries. The suspect is described as male, black with a light complexion.

**Motorized scooter stolen**

On Sept. 9, police responded to a theft call at around 1:40 a.m. in the Danforth Avenue-Dawes Road area. The victim was alerted by his barking dog to activity at the front of the house, where he discovered his motorized assistance scooter had been taken. Anyone with information is asked to contact police or Crime Stoppers at 416-222-TIPS (8477).

~ Diana Faria



Matthew Wocks // Observer

**Canadian Fire**

A three-alarm fire broke out on Sept. 24 at the Canadian Tire located at the corner of Eglinton Avenue and Laird Drive. The store's garden centre went up in flames at around 5 p.m. The cause of the blaze was still under investigation at press time.

**Police crackdown on cyclists aims to save lives and promote safety**

By ALICIA FERRORO  
The Observer

Toronto police recently cracked down on unsafe cyclists, handing out 59 tickets during a blitz on the Danforth that ran from Sept. 10-14.

"With the increase in cyclists and sharing the roads with motorists and pedestrians, it becomes vital cyclists understand and obey all

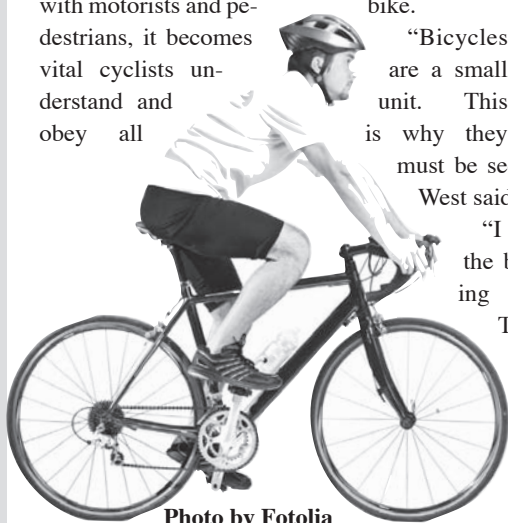


Photo by Fotolia

traffic rules for their safety and of others," Sgt. Jack West said.

He says bells and horns are important safety features on a bike.

"Bicycles are a small unit. This is why they must be seen and heard," West said.

"I wouldn't treat the bell as just being an ornament. There's a lot of noise out here and the bell or horn could save your life." Jeffrey Gold-

**Tickets by the numbers**

- 17 No horn or bell
- 15 Disobeying red lights
- 7 Riding in a crosswalk
- 5 Riding on the sidewalk
- 2 No light
- 1 Failing to identify self
- 1 Improper brakes
- 1 Not keeping both hands on handlebars

berg, president of the D'Ornellas Cycling Club in Toronto, doesn't think tickets are enough.

"The police ought to be located at strategic corners and intersections pulling cyclists over and giving them a stern talking to, reminding them that a car always wins in an accident," he said.

"Tickets for bells and lights does nothing but put more money into the coffers of the city," he added. "The police who ride bikes on patrol ought to be the ones doing it... cyclists can relate to them."

Police are also on the look-

out for unsafe drivers turning into, or opening car doors in, the path of cyclists.

"Obeying all traffic rules brings respect to our highways," West said. "It's all about co-operative driving."

Goldberg agrees that motorists and cyclists must work together on the road.

"Motorists have to be educated to give cyclists sufficient room to ride," he said.

"Until there are more bike lanes that actually connect routes throughout the city, cyclists and motorists have to learn to share the road."

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● For more stories on all things East York, please visit [torontoobserver.ca](http://torontoobserver.ca)

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

**Homeless youth exhibit photos**

The homeless and at-risk youth of East York's Touchstone Youth Shelter are presenting a photography exhibit with the help of the "Hearing Every Youth Through Youth" (HEY) support helpline. Youth aged 16-24 have captured what it means to be a homeless youth and the stereotypes that follow. The exhibition runs evenings until Oct. 7 at Beit Zatoun House, 612 Markham St. Admission is free. Information: 647-726-9500.

**'My Boy Jack' comes to E.Y.**

The East Side Players are presenting the play *My Boy Jack* — about Rudyard Kipling sending his myopic son to war. It premieres Oct. 25 and runs until Nov. 10 at the Papermill Theatre, 67 Pottery Rd. The show starts at 8 p.m. Wednesdays to Saturdays, and at 2 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students. You can purchase online at [www.eastsideplayers.ca](http://www.eastsideplayers.ca), or by phone at 416-425-0917.

~ Maya Akbay

**Local food banks stocking up for Thanksgiving**

By KATIE WRIGHT  
The Observer

The Daily Bread Food Bank's annual Thanksgiving food drive is in full swing, aiming to help struggling families enjoy not only a traditional holiday meal — but wholesome food in the days and weeks afterward as well.

Hundreds of East York residents access the half-dozen or so established community food banks, which include both affiliates of Daily Bread and independents. One of those is the Touchstone Youth Centre on Pape Avenue.

Richelle Hamilton, head cook at the youth centre, plans to put some of the centre's food

to special use for Thanksgiving.

"It is a special holiday so we need extra food to serve the extra people, and since it's a holiday, everybody likes to have good food at that time," she said.

For the fourth year in a row, food bank visits have topped 1.1 million across the GTA.

From April 2011 to March 2012, a Daily Bread Food Bank study determined numbers of food bank visits for individual city wards. Beaches-East York food banks were accessed 18,600 times during that time.

Next door, in Toronto-Danforth, the number was 56,300. Statistics for Don Valley West were unavailable.

"A lot of people don't know about the people who do go hungry in the GTA, so thinking about others at this time is really important," said Richard Matern, acting director of research.

He notes the most needed food items are baby formula, pea-

nut butter, canned fruit or vegetables, canned fish or meat, dried pasta, rice, lentils and soup or stew.

Non-perishable food donations can be made at any Valu-Mart, Sobeys, No Frills, Loblaws and local fire halls.

To contribute financially to families in need, you can donate online at [www.dailybread.ca](http://www.dailybread.ca) or call 416-203-0050. Daily Bread's Thanksgiving drive runs until Oct.14.

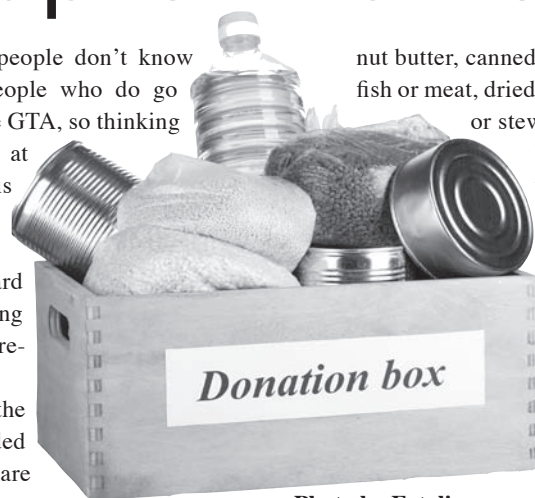


Photo by Fotolia



OUR ANNIVERSARY: 1972-2012

# A trip down memory lane

## Observer celebrates 40 years of covering East York

**EDITOR'S NOTE (A BRIEF HISTORY LESSON)**

The newspaper you're reading is marking a milestone this year: It's the Observer's 40th anniversary.

The Observer is published by the journalism students of Centennial College at their East York campus. And there's quite a heritage behind the paper.

Centennial has Ontario's longest-running college journalism program. It started in 1966 — one of the original 16 programs at the province's first official community college, which was then headquartered in the former Canadian Arsenals Ltd. radar factory on Warden Avenue in Scarborough. (That building is long gone, replaced by a townhouse development.)

Four years later, in 1970, the journalism program organized its first real publication, a magazine called Outlook. It was replaced the following year, in 1971, by a newspaper, the Times.

A year later, in 1972, the Observer was launched.

From the beginning, the Observer was relatively unique. Unlike the vast majority of journalism schools and their campus papers, the Observer is a true community newspaper, serving an audience outside the college. And it's free — free to readers, and free of advertising (after a couple of short-lived and mixed-result experiments involving ads).

But in the beginning, the Observer covered both East York and Scarborough. It wasn't until the mid-1980s that it began to focus coverage solely on East York. And it wasn't until 1994 that newsroom operations finally shifted from Warden Avenue to a refurbished campus of the college at 951 Carlaw.

(Continued next edition...)

**With this issue, we begin a series of retrospectives from each of the Observer's decades. This time: the '70s — March 17, 1978, to be precise — when reporters covered both East York and Scarborough (with film cameras and typewriters....)**

### Striptease: It's more than meets the eye

By Garry Forbes and John Moore  
"Stop the grinnin' and drop the linen."

The waiters' trays are empty as the anxious crowd begins to jostle for seats near the stage of the Knob Hill Hotel's Keg n' Pint Room.

Company men, union men, and unemployed men alike form into one homogeneous unit, chatting idly, waiting for the show to begin.

Upstairs, in a makeshift dressing room, the star of the show reviews her elaborate, personalized package. Standing in front of the mirror, she rehearses her latest step from an old Ginger Rogers movie.

It's noon. Downstairs, the first round is being served to the noisy, laughing crowd. Smoke follows the waiter as he weaves between the tables. A group near the hallway entrance clap and whistle as a blonde in a sleek red evening gown moves down the aisle toward the juke box. She deposits her quarter; it's showtime.

"Tonight's the Night" emanates from the speakers as Miss Puss N' Boots draws a hushed attention.

The audience, unaware of her carefully practiced steps, cajole the performer. But she smiles at their catcalls as a professional must.

Puss N' Boots seductively disrobes — slowly feeding the imagination of those before her, finally exposing her naked body to their critical judgment.

The music stops, and the men watch her body leave the stage.

Few of them, however, realize there is more to this woman than meets the eye.

"Really, nobody knows what's happening behind the scenes, they're judging too quickly," says Puss N' Boots. "People just think we're nothing."

Sweet Jane, who shared the bill with Puss N' Boots, agrees that not all audiences are

familiar enough with striptease to realize the professionalism involved: "I have to lie a lot about my occupation. I'm not going to say I'm a stripper because I don't want to jar people. I always say performer or dancer."

Although both girls refer to themselves as dancers, Puss N' Boots has in fact studied vaudeville, pantomime and theatre arts and constantly works on her choreography.

"I enjoy dancing. When I was a young girl I watched a lot of musicals," says the 21-year-old former secretary. "Ginger Rogers, Leslie Caron, Fred Astaire — I watched their footwork and technique. Soon I was doing it."

Since she began dancing professionally two years ago, Puss N' Boots has become accustomed to the stage and aspires to a singing career. She looks forward to practicing with her brother — one of Canada's top drummers, currently a studio musician in Los Angeles — in the near future.

"My striptease act gives me an incentive to do other things, once you can take the stage and handle the audience you can pretty well do anything. The doors are open."

However, not all strippers have a particular goal in mind. Sweet Jane, a honey blonde who never tells her age, works as a stripper occasionally to finance her other interests. In the past she has raced motorcycles, tried her hand at painting and been involved in stage design. She has travelled extensively throughout Europe and North America and worked as a singer and mime artist in New York.

An Ontario Scholar, in her early twenties, Sweet Jane has attended four Canadian universities, various art schools and the Royal Academy of London.

"It was all very flippant," she says. "The minute life catches up with me, I change to something else."

Like Puss N' Boots, Sweet Jane is not the only member of her family in the entertainment business; her father is a pianist and her brother is a piano teacher.

She enjoys dancing and, like any other entertainer, finds reward in the feedback she gets from her audience; "I want my audience to love me; I want to give them what they want, to see the response and fantasies in their eyes."

Sweet Jane is not bothered by the heckling from the audience during her performance. "Sure, I hear comments I wouldn't want my father to hear; but to my face, I'm usually treated with respect."

Overcoming comments from the audience is an occupational necessity according to Puss N' Boots. When the audience pass snide remarks to her, she ignores them.

"I get it all the time; it doesn't bother me. I know what I'm doing, and I don't let them get me down. If I did, I might as well pack it in."

The audiences are, of course, mainly males, and she says their remarks are merely faceious — it's the women's comments that really hurt.

"If there are some wives or girlfriends watching, they often feel threatened and insecure — they'll either call you a tramp or claim they can do the same thing. They're jealous and afraid, they envy me because I've got the guts to do it when they couldn't."

A major misconception about strippers is that they're likely to be prostitutes. Both Sweet Jane and Puss N' Boots agree that some girls give striptease a bad name by engaging in prostitution. Sweet Jane estimates that as many as half of her co-workers are prostitutes.

"People think because you take your clothes off on stage that you're easy, which really isn't fair," says Puss N' Boots. "A lot of strippers make it bad for the rest of us — the ones that are trying to do something with their lives."

Propositions are standard, Sweet Jane admits. "I'm propositioned all the time — I'm just not in the business. I don't think it's immoral or awful; it's just that I'm making all the money I need by dancing."

Puss N' Boots agrees the money that can be made by dancing — usually between \$350 — \$500 a week — is enough that the women don't need the extra income.

The money acts as a buffer to the loneliness of the occupation. The women put in a six-day week, with Sundays reserved for travelling.

"It's a lonely life, really," says Puss N'



Boots. "When the night has ended, you go up the stairs and sleep alone. In this business you can't afford to have a boyfriend unless he's fairly open-minded or an entertainer on the road. I would need someone who understands, who can trust me — one thing I wouldn't need is a jealous man."

Whatever social limitations may be involved, Sweet Jane still enjoys the travel and adventure that is part of a stripper's life.

"After all," she says, "every week you're in a different place, a different tavern — you can be a different person every week. It's an episodic life — I love it."

### Genealogist gives 'roots' talk

By Judi Armstrong

The growing interest in genealogy was evident with the large turnout at Agincourt Library to hear a talk on the subject on March 9.

Alan E. Hayne, vice-president of the Ontario Genealogical Society (OGS), instructed the audience on how to go about tracing their family tree. He said, "the easiest way to trace your family tree is to run for public office."

For those interested in the more difficult do-it-yourself method, he advised them first to talk to all their relatives especially the older ones. The older ones should be spoken to soon, as they might not be around much longer. He suggested that the information be written down with pencil and paper and if the relative doesn't mind, the information could also be taped on a tape recorder. All the information should be dated.

After the relatives have been spoken to, Hayne suggested attics and basements be searched for trunks, boxes and any other container in which family information and mementos might be found. He said that a Family Bible is usually a good source of information, but not every family has one and some of the information recorded in the Bible may have been written many years after the event took place and may be, for this reason, incorrect.

Other sources of information that might be found in attics and basements include: diaries, which tells about the person and helps fill out

the picture about the person; land deeds, if they owned property; letters, which give details about people; war medals, which have the name and number around the edge and may be traced through the defence department; photographs; demobilization certificates; military records; birth, marriage and death certificates; and passports.

Places where more information can be found include: libraries, go to all the local branches and wander around as different books will be found at different branches; the OGS library, located at the Fairview Mall branch library in North York, it is not a lending library, but the books can be examined on the premises; Metro Toronto Library, especially the Baldwin Room; and Roberts Library at the University of Toronto.

Hayne recommended that family searchers also study the local history of where their families came from in order to get an idea of where the records of the area would be kept. Records have been kept in each of Canada's provinces since the time that each joined Confederation and in England and Wales they have been kept since 1837.

Hayne said that most searchers cannot go farther back with their families than 300 to 400 years. "No one can trace with certainty the male line back to anyone fighting at the Battle of Hastings." However, two families have been able to trace back to Saxon ancestors before 1066, but they did not fight in the Battle of Hastings.

### LETTERS

Dear Sir:  
I should like to comment briefly on the article by your Paul MacDonald in The Observer's February 24th, 1978, issue. The statement was made that "(Ray) Argyle's nomination was presented by members of the Liberal Riding Association..." and the inference was made that Paul Cosgrove's was not. Paul Cosgrove was nominated by Gerry Phillips a Trustee on the Scarborough Board of Education and Chairman of the Metropolitan School Board who is a riding resident and member. It was seconded first by Mr. Norman MacLeod, although correctly identified as the Past President of the Toronto and District Liberal Association is also a resident and member of the Riding Association. Second by The Honourable Martin O'Connell, while the Member of Parliament for Scarborough-East, still represents a sizable portion of the future Riding of York-Scarborough east of Markham Road and north of Ellesmere Road, which does not come into being until a Writ of Election is issued. Omitted in the report was the information that third seconder was Mrs. Maureen Prinsloo, of the Bridlewood Community Association, and also a resident of the riding.

Perhaps, I should not close until I bring to your attention one other inaccuracy — the present Member of Parliament is not Robert Stanbury as reported; he resigned his office last November and the seat is vacant.

I bring this to your attention to point out how such inaccuracies tend to slant an otherwise good piece of reporting.

Frank J. Faubert, Alderman, Ward 5.

We invite readers to send in any letters or comments. Send to the Editor, 651 Warden Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario, M1L 3Z6. Letters must include the full name and address of sender. The Observer reserves the right to edit all letters submitted.



# New plans could mean overcrowding

Cont'd. from page 1

Lynne Plumley and her daughter Adrienne have lived in the area for almost 28 years. The yard behind their townhouse would be directly west of the Option 2 tower, only 70 feet away from the base of their house.

"We're not thrilled. All the units on the west side of the building will be able to look down in to our yard," Adrienne said.

The new building would also cast shadows on their property, blanketing their sun garden in shady gloom. If Option 2 comes to pass, the Plumleys said they'll move out of the neighbourhood they've called home for so many years.

"We can't stay here," Lynne said. "We have to move. We have no choice."

The development in Option 2 would create 208 units and attract about 500 more people to the neighbourhood. Community residents have raised concerns about the high volume of traffic on residential streets.

The Preston Group already owns two apartment buildings at 2 Secord Ave. and 90 Eastdale Ave. in the middle of a low-density

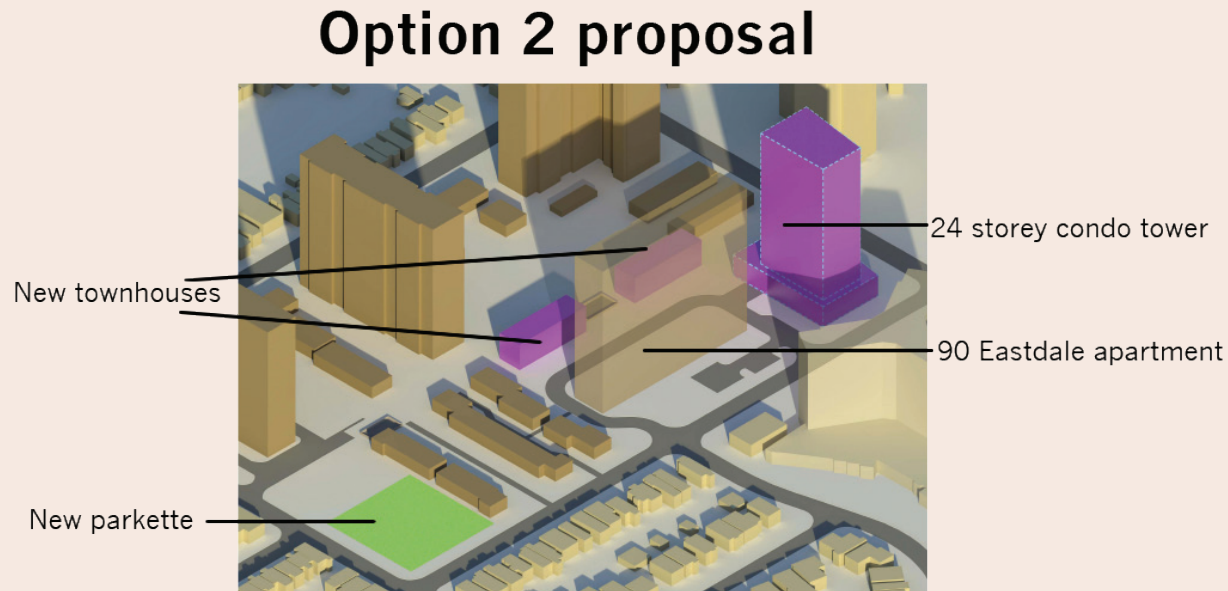


Photo courtesy of Councillor Janet Davis

**A rendering of what the Option 2 proposal created by city staff could look like if Toronto city council and the Preston Group can work out a settlement at the OMB hearings in late November.**

residential area.

Jon Stewart lives on Main Street near the proposed development site and has resided in the community for almost 30 years. He cites traffic as a major concern because of a string of related accidents in the area over the past decade.

"The most frustrating part is that we have elementary children walking streets which already have crazy amounts of traffic," Stewart said. "The city is know-

ingly creating a hazardous situation and adding to it. It's pathetic."

The Preston Group has conducted traffic studies of the area which city staff will review before carrying out their own analysis

"It's going to produce, they (Preston Group) believe, 55 additional cars at rush hour that would be moving in a dispersed way in different directions," Davis said. Stewart and the Plumleys also said neighbour-

hood schools cannot support additional students, noting children are already being bused to other areas.

"The schools are overflowing now and the developers could care less because that's the Toronto District School Board's problem," Stewart said.

Davis said she is not worried about crowding in area schools.

"Right now, Secord School is being considered for a major capital project

to expand it," she said.

"The school is going to be expanded to accommodate changes."

Under the Option 2 plan, the city requires the Preston Group to make significant improvements to its existing sites at 2 Secord and 90 Eastdale avenues.

"It could be replacing and improving the swimming pool, pathways, the public areas, getting a new park, getting better fences and improved garbage areas,"

Davis said.

Adrienne and Lynne Plumley said the improvements won't apply to people living in the surrounding area.

Stewart said forcing the company to maintain its own property should not be considered a benefit of the new proposal.

"Preston Group should be doing those improvements anyway without having to justify a new building to do it," he said.

The Preston Group could not be reached for comment by press time.

The Option 2 plan could happen if a settlement is reached between the city and the Preston Group at an OMB hearing commencing Nov. 26.

Davis' motion for the city to support Option 2 at the OMB comes before city council this coming Tuesday.

Stewart said he will continue to fight the development for as long as it takes.

"Hopefully we can convince the OMB that we're not just a bunch of 'not in my backyard' types and that we have real arguments," Stewart said. "One thing I know for sure is this is not the way to build a great city."

## Survivor inspired to run for Terry

By JENNIFER PANG  
The Observer

Thalia Michalarias embodies the spirit of young determination.

The nine-year-old brain cancer survivor attended the 32nd annual Terry Fox Run at Wilket Creek Park on Sept. 16 with a team she recruited via email.

"She is a kid who sends out emails and tells us this is what we're doing," said Effie Katsis, Michalarias's aunt. "She was an inspiration before and is even more of an inspiration now."

This is the second time Michalarias has rallied family and friends to Team Thalbert, coined after Thalia's nickname, to celebrate the legacy of Terry Fox.

After her mother told her Fox's story, Michalarias was moved and decided to follow in his footsteps.

The legacy of Terry Fox, a Canadian cancer activist who ran across the country on an artificial leg in 1980, brings people across the globe together in hopes of curing the disease.

"It was amazing," Micha-

larias said.

Michalarias was diagnosed with cancer at the age of seven.

She underwent chemotherapy and radiation therapy at the Hospital for Sick Children and was released in May 2011.

The following September, she organized her family to participate in the Terry Fox Run for the first time.

"Last year there were about 4,000 people taking part here in the run. Be about the same number this year," said Gord Martineau, the CityNews anchor who served as the event's emcee. "They raised almost \$500,000 last year and they're hoping for a little bit more this year."

In addition to individual participants and family teams like Thalbert, a number of corporate teams took part in the event.

Greg Dick, a corporate team registration volunteer, said there were more teams participating this year than in the last few years.

"I think there are over 50 teams that registered for the run," he said.



Jennifer Pang // Observer

**Thalia Michalarias, a nine-year-old brain cancer survivor, participated in this year's Terry Fox Run at Wilket Creek Park.**

## Munch program hones math skills

By ALI DAR  
The Observer

What's on the lunch menu at St. Patrick's Catholic Secondary School these days?

Math, and it seems to be a tasty way of helping students strengthen their skills, if the latest round of Education Quality Academic Office tests is any indication. It's called the Munch program, and it pairs Grade 9 students in need of tutoring with senior students – over lunch.

Gino Di Pede, a math teacher at St. Patrick's for 21 years, said Munch is one of several initiatives helping students flourish during EQAO testing.

"The senior students get to do a service for the community and they're also seeing if they can improve on their own math skills," he explained.

While more than 80 per cent of Grade 9 academic math students are scoring at or above the province's B-grade standard, their applied math counterparts are struggling to reach that goal.

In the 2008/2009 school year, only 17 per cent of St. Patrick's applied math students and 42

per cent of their academic students met or exceeded the provincial standard.

Toronto Catholic District School Board trustee Angela Kennedy said she believes the reconstruction of the front of the school and its designation as an Arts, Media and Technology Centre by the board have played a role in helping students.

"There's a new motivation and self-esteem from students because of the changes they're trying to make at the school," she said.

An emphasis on added literacy and longer solving problems within the EQAO test also played a part in the school's preparation.

"A couple of years ago, we began to focus on some literacy strategies because students need to know how to read in order to understand the problem, something which wasn't the case years back," said Chiara Gallow, another teacher in charge of the Munch program.

Both Di Pede and Gallow find the jump in test scores adds pressure to the school and the students.



# Artists shine at Todmorden

Don Valley Art Club exhibit saw 120 works and 65 artists

By DIANA FARIA  
The Observer

Katherine Brown couldn't believe her eyes when, at age 13, she was approached by Walt Disney at Disneyland in California.

Looking over Brown's sketch of the castle towers, Disney asked if she would like a critique. Thinking the word 'critique' meant free tickets, Brown accepted.

"He (Disney) said that all the towers on the castles were leaning to the left," she remembers.

Since then, Brown has illustrated countless artistic works, from children's books to product packaging and print ads. Most recently, she submitted two paintings to the Don



Diana Faria // Observer

**Katherine Brown found her rolled-up sketch, signed by Walt Disney, in the back of an old drawer. It's now on display in her studio.**

Valley Art Club's (DVAC) fall show and sale.

This year's autumn exhibit opened Sept. 14 at the Todmorden Mills heritage site's Papermill Gallery at 67 Pottery Rd. Depending on the painting size, contributing artists could submit up to two works of art.

In total, approximately 120 works were entered.

"Sixty-five artists are involved in this show, and many of them are veterans so they have many, many good paintings out there," said Vince Luong, co-ordinator of this year's show and sale.

Luong offered two still life

paintings of his own, noting the variety of art available for viewing and purchase.

"(The work) is very good in terms of colour, composition and the subject matter," Luong said. "We have all sorts of landscapes, floral paintings, portraits, as well as abstract."

For this showcase, the American-born Brown submitted "Loves Me, Loves Me Not" and "Right of Way." Both are acrylic paintings and sold for \$200 each. But for Brown, a member of DVAC since June 2011, it's commercial art that really pays.

"There's a lot of difference in the price," she said. "If this painting went for an ad, it would be worth about \$7,000... and for an art show, you get \$200. A big difference."

Brown has participated in four previous DVAC shows. The club hosts three a year.

The club's pre-holiday large and small picture show is scheduled for Nov. 28-Dec. 9.

# A historic walk down Broadview heritage trail

By MOHAMMED ARSHAD  
The Observer

It started as a small trail in the wilderness, but today Broadview Avenue is a major road in East York connecting several diverse neighbourhoods and containing many landmarks.

Originally built as a wagon track for transporting lumber through the underbrush, the street has come a long way to what it is now. Learning more about that transformation over the years was the focus of a two-hour walk called "Exploring Broadview: From Todmorden to East Chinatown" on Sept. 15. It started at the intersection of Broadview Avenue and Pottery Road and concluded at the Riverdale Public Library.

The walk was organized by Heritage Toronto, an agency of the city that promotes Toronto's history and culture. Evan McMurtry, a historical interpreter for the Todmorden Mills Heritage Site historical museum, served as the walk leader, providing historical and geographical information about the evolution of Broadview Avenue to roughly 25 participants.

He believes it's important for everyone in the community, both newcomers and established residents, to understand its history.

"The walk brings awareness to the new people to the city, what their environment is all about and their history," he said. "But this walk

also benefits the older residents who are already very knowledgeable, since it allows them to talk to other people and exchange information."

Participant Stanley Gao, who lives on Danforth Avenue, agreed with McMurtry about the benefits of the walk to new residents of the city.

"For me, this is the first time I've seen a lot of these places," said Gao, who moved to the area in June. "It (the walk) is good for people new to the area to learn more information about where they live."

Starting from the area's humble beginning as a small settlement known as Todmorden Mills, McMurtry explained the history of several landmarks during the walk. These included the old Chester High School building and its unique architectural design; the former house of Toronto's first African-Canadian politician, William Peyton Hubbard; the Don Jail; the suspected location of Castle Frank, which was destroyed in 1829; and the Prince Edward Viaduct.

Ward 19/Toronto-Danforth Councillor Mary Fragedakis, who also participated in the event, stressed the importance of knowing the area's history.

"It is important for people to know because this is where the city started," she said.

That's not the only advantage, McMurtry noted jokingly.

"The walk is a good opportunity for people who just want to walk."

# Man's best friend gets starring role

Movie about a stolen dog walks viewers through the world of animal cruelty

By CARLEIGH O'CONNELL  
The Observer

The Animal Alliance of Canada is raising awareness of pet neglect in a dramatic way — literally.

They're creating a movie called *Saving Dinah*. It's the story of a family of three whose comfortable life is disrupted when their border-collie mix, Dinah, is stolen.

Along with her husband and 16-year-old daughter, mayoral candidate Caroline Sheppard sets out to rescue her beloved dog. Unfortunately, during her mission, Caroline encounters horrific societal issues such as corrupt officials, animal cruelty, puppy mills, research labs, and finally, a dog-fighting ring.

"The draw of this story is that something like this has

never been done before," said Liz White, executive producer of *Saving Dinah* and executive director of the Animal Alliance. The organization is headquartered on Broadview Avenue just outside East York's southwest corner.

The movie touches on such issues as irresponsible pet ownership and pound seizure. White says that by harnessing film's power of persuasion, the Animal Alliance will be able to galvanize people and compel politicians to change the archaic laws that exist to protect companion animals.

According to the Criminal Code of Canada, causing unnecessary suffering or death to an animal is punishable by no more than five years imprisonment, or no more than a fine of \$10,000 in conjunction with

no more than 18 months imprisonment.

The creators of *Saving Dinah* believe these outdated laws are unfair to animals.

"Walt Disney's *Bambi* changed how people viewed sport hunters, and *Free Willy* helped raise over \$20 million to actually free Keiko, the orca who played Willy," White said.

She believes when people are able to visualize the suffering that an animal may encounter, people are more inspired to help.

The film was produced entirely by volunteers, by acting, filming or helping onstage.

Volunteer Bruce Palmer commissioned the *Saving Dinah* screenplay written by Stephen Best. The cast is composed of Whitby Courthouse

Theatre actors, who also provided a crew and original music for the film.

All of the animals that participated in the filming of *Saving Dinah*, including Sally (who plays Dinah), were rescued through "Project Jessie" — a network for adopting stray or abandoned dogs and cats.

"It's a nice story. The animals had humans to advocate for them," White said. "The movie production was set up so there would be no stress on the animals."

*Saving Dinah* is currently in the post-production phase, and is expected in theatres toward the end of the year.

To learn more about the project and to watch the official *Saving Dinah* trailers, visit [www.savingdinah.com](http://www.savingdinah.com)

# Friendly competition grows at E.Y. Garden Club

By MELISSA LOPARCO  
The Observer

Members of the East York Garden Club gathered at the Stan Wadlow Clubhouse on Sept. 20 for their monthly meeting and last show of the season.

The show featured contributions from different members in multiple categories, including flower arrangements based on a theme: this contest

was the 200th birthday of Charles Dickens.

"We have some people that are super-competitive," said Barbara Piercey, co-ordinator of the show.

Piercey said it is difficult finding younger people to join the club and compete in the shows.

"You have to get the bug to do it," she said. "Once they get their first, second or third ribbon, usually

they are hooked."

Although repeat competitors face new challengers, it doesn't mean they are losing out on ribbons.

Betty Meyers and Vera Stoyanoff, both seasoned gardeners, won in many different categories.

Meyers won the judges' choice, and Stoyanoff won best-cut specimen, best potted plant and best design for her piece based on A Tale of

Two Cities.

"I've been in the competition since '89," Stoyanoff said. "I try to find lots of different plants to enter that I grow in my garden."

Meyers said she's been competing for 25 years.

"When I first started, I put one thing into the show, and it won," she said.

The club holds its competitions four times a year.



Melissa LoParco // Observer

**Competitors' flowers recently filled the Stan Wadlow Clubhouse in East York.**



## ■ EDITORIALS

## Community divided over redrawn ridings

Voting is our civic duty, but finding your candidates' platforms and your designated polling station is often an exercise in patience. And now that the federal electoral boundaries commission has taken the latest census data and concluded that Ontario needs 15 new electoral ridings, getting our bearings for the next election may be a bigger headache than usual. Here in Toronto, the city's booming population means a redraw of constituencies near the city centre — including around East York's northwest corner.

The southern two-thirds of East York remain in familiar electoral territory: the untouched ridings of Toronto-Danforth and Beaches-East York. But East Yorkers living in the northwest third of the community — in neighbourhoods including Thorncliffe Park, Leaside and Flemingdon Park — won't be voting for an MP in "Don Valley West" anymore. The commission is calling for the replacement of Don Valley West with a redrawn riding called Toronto North.

And that redrawing includes stripping the eastern edge of the riding from top to bottom. Above Eglinton, for instance, the eastern boundary will be Leslie Street, instead of Don Mills Road. (This edition of the Observer carries a map with the changes, on page 8.)

So some distinct neighbourhoods are going to be partitioned between Toronto North and the neighbouring riding, Don Valley East. People in Thorncliffe Park see the danger in that already. The president of the community's tenants' association is threatening protest marches. He says that the political power of the community is surely going to be divided (and diluted) if this new line is drawn through it. And it's hard to argue with that.

It's interesting to note that the redistribution commission that has been meeting since February consists of only three members — a retired judge and two voting experts — and none are members of the community. But those who are members of the community will get their chance to comment at public hearings scheduled for mid-November. The North York Civic Centre is hosting the first, on Nov. 14, and Metro Hall will be the venue for the second, the following day.

There are few opportunities beyond the ballot box for voters to have a say on how they are governed. This is an opportunity for people in Thorncliffe Park and elsewhere to voice their opinions on how electoral districts are divided. So let's hope for good turnouts — and vigorous discussions.

~ Georgia Williams

## All-day kindergarten a risk to child-care centres

All-day kindergarten is rapidly being introduced to schools across Toronto. By 2014, all schools, including those in East York, will have this new program implemented. Families whose children are already attending schools with this program are starting to adapt to the change.

The decision to universalize all-day kindergarten may have failed to recognize the impact it will have on child-care centres. With the loss of business from four- and five-year-olds, it will likely cause some centres to raise their prices or even potentially close down.

More funding is needed for these child-care centres from the government or as 2014 starts to near, and all schools have full-time kindergarten in effect, families may be struggling to find affordable care for their children.

Helen Bettencourt, the site supervisor of Child's Nest daycare centre on Cosburn Avenue, explains how there is already one school in the area that has full-day kindergarten and two others will have the program implemented by 2014.

There is a fair amount of low-income housing in the area and she stresses that she can't really offset a decline in business with higher fees; that will only drive more business away.

As a result, she says, she may well see the centre close down in the coming years due to insufficient enrolment.

In the City of Toronto 2010 Poverty Profile report, the 10 neighbourhoods with the highest rates of low income among families include three areas in and around East York: Thorncliffe Park placing at third, Flemingdon Park fourth and Crescent Town at eighth.

Anna Milenovic, who has been the supervisor and owner of Our Happiness Day Nursery on Carlaw Avenue for over 40 years, says she is tired of child-care centres being underfunded.

She points to the recent vote at Peel Region council to close down a dozen regional child-care centres. Milenovic says she wouldn't be surprised if a similar wave of closures rolled over East York in the near future.

The government needs to allocate more funding for child-care centres that are on the verge of collapsing as full-day kindergarten is fully implemented. Those centres have to pay for their operations somehow, but the other families using them in many cases won't be able to afford to take up the financial slack.

~ Rebecca Raveendran

## ■ COLUMNS

## Taste the food, not the rain

With global warming and the resulting climate change, it's no secret that Toronto has been experiencing unpredictable and adverse weather, especially during the summer we've just concluded.

The city reached record-high temperatures of 36 C in July, and on other days, only strong rainstorms provided relief from the heat and humidity.

I remember going to the Luminato festival to see Deltron 3030 live on King Street East — and did we get rained on. There weren't any tents, so some of the equipment on stage got soaked, and things got very messy with the audience standing on what was essentially a soaking wet carpet of grass.

Festival season, however, doesn't only encompass the downtown area. East York is the home of one of the biggest cultural festivals in the city: The Taste of the Danforth. According to its

website, about 1.3 million people attend the food festival annually to get both a taste of Greek cuisine and Mediterranean culture.

The last time I went to a Taste of the Danforth was many years ago, but this past summer, I had just came back from Greece — so I thought it would be appropriate to check it out.

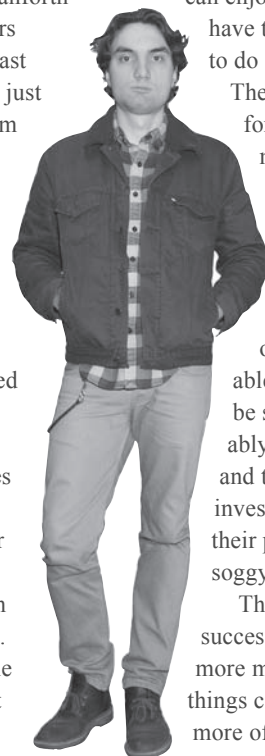
Unfortunately, that event got rained on too, which resulted in many attendees scrambling to get indoors (or to the closest subway station to head home).

Although the weather didn't put a total

damper on the event, some tents providing shelter could have been bigger. Perhaps restaurants and other food vendors could cover slightly bigger areas where people can enjoy their food and not have to run to a dry place to do it.

The Taste of the Danforth is one of the many great things that makes Toronto worth visiting in the summer. Setting up a massive tent over the entire stretch of the event is not viable, but vendors could be set up to sell (reasonably priced!) umbrellas, and the restaurants could invest in larger tents so their patrons aren't eating soggy food.

The event this year was successful, but becoming more mindful of the small things could make it even more of a hit.



Ani Hajderaj

## Cute critters need donations

The Toronto Wildlife Centre is a place that gives wildlife a second chance. I found that out recently, when I found two orphaned baby squirrels.

As an animal-lover, I tried to keep them alive and help them until I could find a suitable place for them.

But the day I found them was a Sunday, and no animal shelters were open. I called the OSPCA and they told me all the centres were full anyway. And I was adamant that they not go anywhere where they would be put down.

My cousin suggested I try the Wildlife Centre. I called and left a message. They returned my call on Monday morning, telling me they had only four spots left for squirrels.

They held two

of the spots for me and I took them there that afternoon.

The Wildlife Centre turned out to be better than just a shelter. They have a certified veterinarian on staff who assesses the health of the animals and then determines the next course of

action — whether it be a humane end in the case of animals who are beyond help, or nursing them back to health until they can be released back into the wild.

They help feed the animals and then slowly wean them away from assisted feeding so they'll learn how to eat on their own.

Human contact with them is minimal, and the process they use is lifesaving.

The centre's services are offered to the

entire GTA.

Once the animals are independent enough to be on their own, they are returned to the wild. Rouge Park is where they are released.

Since the beginning of this year, the staff have admitted 3,630 animals (my two squirrels included).

The sad aspect of this otherwise uplifting story is that the centre's building at Downsview Park is currently set for demolition.

So the centre is urgently seeking donations and asking the community for any other help to get them resettled somewhere else. They're funded solely through charitable donations.

There are thousands of wild animals in Toronto whose encounters with urban life have left them in desperate need of help.

It hardly seems fair that this organization has to struggle to save their lives with what little funding they receive. These animals deserves a second chance at life... and the Toronto Wildlife Centre gives them just that.



Katie Wright



## Do-it-yourselfers reminded to call before they dig

By DENNIS WU  
The Observer

In the wake of a natural gas leak that forced the evacuation of homes on Greenwood Avenue, the gas company is reminding residents of a simple rule: Call before you dig.

On Sept. 11, eight houses on Greenwood Avenue near Danforth Ave were evacuated due to a gas leak that was reportedly the result of homeowner renovations at one of the residences.

The leak was stopped in about an hour.

The vast majority of leaks are due to damages to the natural gas distribution system, according to Lisa McCarney-Warus, manager of customer relations and external communications at Enbridge Gas Distribution.

"It is the law in Ontario to call before you dig. People are required to obtain the location of underground utilities before they initiate any digging projects," McCarney-Warus said. "There could be wires, natural gas pipes or cables buried under a property and there could be serious consequences if those are

damaged."

When deciding to do home renovations involving gas lines in the home, it's important to work with a licensed gas contractor, says Noel Ferraro, a Home Depot sales associate working in the plumbing section.

For older homes, there is a higher chance of a leak due to the age and condition of those gas pipes.

"If exposed to water and salt, it will rust and all it takes is a small touch somewhere for a hole to be created," Ferraro said. "Now if a person comes along and lights a cigarette, then what happens? Boom!"

However, natural gas is a very safe energy source if it is well-maintained, says McCarney-Warus.

"One of the things that we strongly encourage people to do is have a gas technician do an annual checkup on their furnace and all fuel-burning equipment," McCarney-Warus said. "This will make sure that they will continue to run efficiently and safely. We also strongly encourage people to install a carbon monoxide alarm."

**Before doing any excavation work, call Ontario One Call at 1-800-400-2255. In case of an emergency or if you detect the smell of gas, call 1-866-763-5427 (1-866-SMEL-GAS). If the situation presents immediate danger, call 911.**



Matthew Wocks // Observer

**Henry S., 29, lives two doors down from the Coxwell trunk construction site. Like many neighbours, he just wants the construction work to be done as quickly as possible.**

By AKIHIKO TSE  
The Observer

After multiple delays that left reconstruction of the Coxwell Sanitary Trunk Sewer almost two years behind schedule, city staff anticipate the full installation of a permanent bypass tunnel to be completed by late November of this year.

Workers at the Coxwell Avenue and O'Connor Drive site are nearing the end of sealing the exit shaft by grouting, or injecting mortar mixture, into the soil to push it underneath the existing sewer to create a foundation base to work from and to seal out the infiltration of groundwater—a process that has taken three months to perform.

"It's been a complicated and slow process to get completed," said Lou Di Gironimo, general manager of Toronto Water.

While construction of the

entry shaft, located at the confluence of the Don River and Taylor Creek Park, and the 510-metre long tunnel to bypass a 60-metre crack in the sewer were completed in October 2011, workers initially encountered difficulties at the exit shaft — where a pressurized aquifer directly beneath the existing sewer had stalled efforts to install a dry, watertight seal. But staffers now expect this process to be completed within "a week or two of work."

Di Gironimo said that once the seal is complete, the top portion of the old sewer will be cut away to accommodate a temporary flume that allows for sewage flow to continue. Workers will then cut away the bottom portion and build the concrete base to accept the new permanent bypass tunnel.

If the tunnel flow were shut off by disruptive blockages or by damage, the sewage would

discharge into the Don River.

"This is one of the most challenging (projects) because you have to work on a large, live sewer that you can't take out of service," Di Gironimo said. "It is the most critical sewer section we have in the city."

Numerous complications with the \$40-million project to repair the sewer, which services approximately 750,000 people, have delayed the original completion date of March 2011. These included mechanical failures, the removal of a deeper-than-expected buried sewage pumping station and a defect in one of the wall panels of the exit shaft, which let through water and sand after being excavated.

While a supervisor at the work site, Brent Dubblestyn, 59, called it "the toughest job I've ever been on" in his 43 years of experience, he expressed confidence the project would be done on time.

Others, though, are cautiously optimistic.

"Every completion date I've heard I'm taking with a grain of salt," said Councillor Janet Davis (Ward 31/Beaches-East York). "This project has had several unanticipated contingencies that have emerged and I'm hesitant to rely on this date. As we get closer, we'll know better whether that's a solid date."

Councillor Mary Fragedakis (Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth) said she is also reluctant to commit herself to that timeframe.

"I want to be optimistic, but I don't know if I can be in all of the other delays we've had on this project," she said.

Henry S. (he asked that his last name not be published) lives near the site.

"It's terrible," he said. "I can barely sleep (because of the noise) ... It's been going on for too long now."

## Fodder for hungry eyes

By LESLIE EMMONS  
The Observer

For one hour every Tuesday, the East York East Toronto (EYET) Family Resources and Ontario Early Years room turns into a reading oasis for young children and their families.

Located inside the AccessPoint at Danforth and Victoria Park avenues, the EYET Book Corner is a program that gives away free books in an effort to promote literacy among children who may not have otherwise been exposed to it.

EYET executive director Caroline Ball said the communities the Book Corner caters to, like Crescent Town, are feeling the impact.

"The neighbourhoods surrounding the AccessPoint on Danforth have some of the most diverse ethno-cultural communities and newcomer families in Toronto," she said. "One of the key benefits of the EYET Book Corner is supporting family literacy, and really helping these families

to practise not only reading in terms of learning the English language.... It's helping families to integrate into their neighbourhoods."

The Book Corner, which was launched in February, receives its books from the Children's Book Bank (CBB), an organization in Regent Park that identifies low-income neighbourhoods that could benefit from its services.

The partnership with CBB is something the two organizations have been working on since late 2011.

"We were looking for critical areas of the city," said Jane Crist, assistant director of the CBB. "We partnered first with The Macaulay Child Development Centre, who made us aware of the other hubs in Toronto. (We made) a quick phone call and here we are."

Crist said her organization donates about a thousand books a month to the EYET Book Corner, after receiving them from both corporate donors and individuals.

Although the target age for the program

ranges from babies to 11-year-olds, the cutoff point is not set in stone.

"There are books for every kind of age gap," said Josie Myers, an early learning and care worker at EYET.

Myers said they tend to get between 60 to 125 visitors every Tuesday. The doors open at 4:30 p.m. and most of the families line up 15 minutes before that.

Genevieve Gilardeau, a EYET Book Corner regular, brings her toddler Daphnée Harris in to read a few books before choosing which one to take home.

"I was walking around one day and found the centre," Gilardeau said. "I used the facility for Thursday's baby classes. When I come here, I always find a good book."

Outreach is at the forefront of the minds of both charities' employees, Crist said.

"We're a recycling organization and we want to put books in the hands of kids that couldn't afford them otherwise," she said. "Books may outgrow kids, but kids don't outgrow books."



Leslie Emmons // Observer

**Chidera Chiagozie Uhiara looks through some picture books at East York's East Toronto Book Corner.**





Sarah Taguam /// Observer

The president of the Thorncliffe Park Tenants Association, Abbas Kolia, says the residents will march if Thorncliffe Park doesn't stay in one riding.

## Redraw of riding splits neighbours

By SARAH TAGUAM  
The Observer

Thorncliffe Park resident Abbas Kolia was listening to the radio on a quiet weekend afternoon when he caught wind of something that really hit home.

Federal electoral districts are being reassessed — and his neighbourhood of 32 years is in danger of being split into two ridings.

Every 10 years, after new census data is released, the number of electoral districts and their boundaries are revised to reflect population shifts. So the 4.5-per-cent population growth in Toronto (111,779 residents) has led to the proposed transformation of Don Valley West, which includes Thorncliffe Park, into a new riding called Toronto North. And homes just inside Don Valley West's eastern boundary would transfer to the next riding over: Don Valley East.

"It doesn't make sense," said Kolia, who is also president of the Thorncliffe Park Tenant's Association. "If you divide five buildings from the rest of the community, some people are going to be left out."

Having two MPs representing the area could also prevent residents from receiving the same services across the neighbourhood, he added.

According to 2011 census data, Thorncliffe Park's population grown by 7.4 per cent, to 19,275.

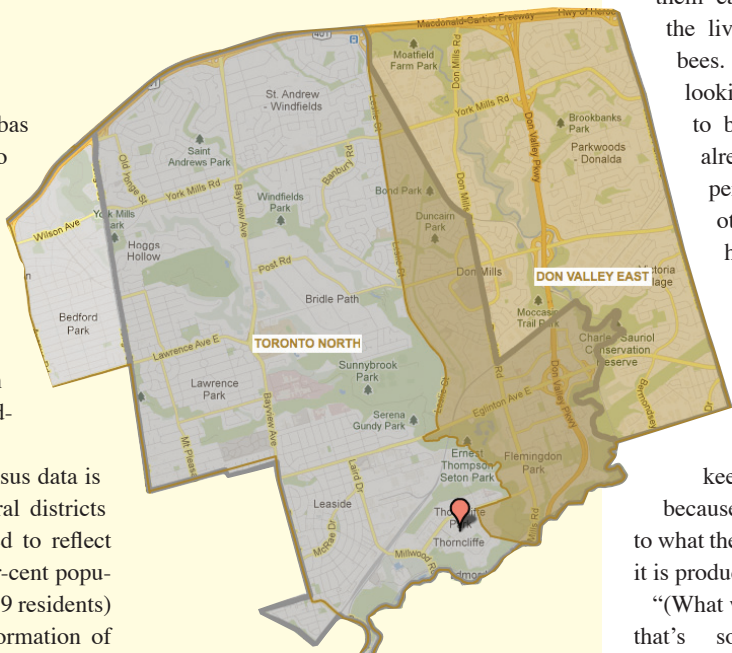
"We have a lot of the same issues in the community, and having one person represent us is more efficient for the residents and the government," said Kolia. He said that it doesn't matter what riding the neighbourhood is placed in, as long as it stays together.

Doug Colbourne, of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario, said there's a reason for this.

"We wanted to make sure that there is equal distribution of population, meaning equal votes all over during elections," he said.

Colbourne, an arbitrator and mediator of land-use planning, and two other commission members are tasked with keeping the number of riding residents as close to 106,000 — Ontario's total population divided by the number of its ridings — as possible.

While East York's southern two-thirds —



**The proposed revision in federal boundaries for the current riding of Don Valley West. Neighbourhoods along the current riding's eastern edge would join Don Valley East and the rest, with the addition of Bedford Park, would be transformed into a riding called Toronto North. (Redistribution commission map)**

the ridings of Toronto-Danforth and Beaches-East York — are unaffected, Toronto's population boom also caused a ripple effect that led to ridings like Don Valley West being redrawn, Colbourne said.

Like Kolia, Don Valley West Conservative MP John Carmichael was caught off-guard by the changes, calling it a "fairly dramatic shift."

"I can't tell whether this will present a problem for governance," he said. He also noted that the boundaries have yet to be finalized.

Kolia, on the other hand, is ready to begin protesting now.

"If this government doesn't understand, we will march and demand on the street that they help Thorncliffe become one riding," he said. "We're worried that if this gets finalized federally, the province and the city will follow."

A public hearing reviewing the proposals will take place at the North York Civic Centre on Nov. 14 at 10 a.m., and at Metro Hall the next day.

## East York residents are abuzz about beekeeping

City-dwelling bees a hit at workshop on beekeeping

By SHANTAL OTCHERE  
The Observer

Two longtime bee lovers are hoping to spread the joy of beekeeping to East York residents.

To that end, they held a workshop on beekeeping on Sept. 22 to provide insight into the risks and rewards of urban beekeeping. The workshop was the second in an ongoing series presented by co-host Gurushabd Khalsa's honey-producing bee-lovers' organization, Hogtown Honey.

The workshop attracted about 25 attendees, all of them eager to learn about the lives of city-dwelling bees. Some guests were looking for tips on how to better care for their already established personal hives, while others wanted to learn how to build and maintain a hive for themselves.

Co-host Zack Shaw said one reason people should consider keeping hives is because of the connection to what they consume and how it is produced.

"(What we eat is) something that's so important that people just don't even notice. It's just not a part of their consciousness," Shaw said. "I think the same goes with



Shantal Otchere /// Observer

A busy beehive was on display at a recent workshop on urban beekeeping.

a lot of urban agriculture and agriculture and the food system in general. How do we get our food and how does it work? I just think it's a pretty important part."

For Ibukun Aisha Yusuf, a workshop attendee and future beekeeper, this was reason enough for her to consider keeping a hive of her own.

"I want to take a part in what I eat," she said. "I would love to have a bee hive so I can get my own honey, instead of wondering where my food comes from."

Being food-conscious isn't the only draw for Khalsa's workshops. Some people attend simply because they love bees.

"(Khalsa) definitely passed on the love of bees to me," explained Renee Lemieux, who has attended several bee-centric events, including Hogtown Honey's workshop. "It's almost like a fever — once you experience the beehive and are near to it and are able to observe it so closely you just feel this energy from them. Just on that level, bees

are really cool."

The two-and-a-half-hour workshops take guests through a brief history of bees and bee breeding. Everything from the biology and family life of a brood to the history and anthropology of beekeeping is covered.

On the goals of the workshops, he hopes to "whet the appetite of people who are curious."

Shaw encourages all those who are interested to continue to do their research. He says being underprepared for the responsibilities of bee breeding may result in a frustrating experience.

"It's better to do your research and to know what you're doing. To go headfirst into it, for one thing it's frustrating for people, but also I think it's good to be really educated about disease and pests and the state of bee keeping," Shaw said. "It makes it more interesting and sort of makes you think twice about the techniques that you use, so I think that's really important."



Maya Akbay /// Observer

## Harvesting history

Robert Butler has been a historical exhibitor at the Todmorden Mills Harvest Festival for the past 10 years. Butler shared historical information with onlookers at the heritage site on Pottery Road on Sept. 22.