



■ TWO-ALARM BLAZE



Jason Sutcliffe /// The Observer

After the fire

Exhausted firefighters leave a highrise at Pape and Cosburn avenues after extinguishing a two-alarm blaze there just before 8 a.m. on Monday morning. The affected apartment suffered extensive damage, officials say, and building management is working to move the family that lives there into another unit. See story, page 2.

Electoral reform on the agenda at debate

Some candidates favour proportional representation

By PAULA LAST
The Observer

How Canadians actually choose their federal government got a full airing at Tuesday night's all-candidates meeting in the Toronto-Danforth riding.

Candidates contesting the riding offered their views about replacing the traditional "first-past-the-post" formula with proportional representation. The latter would see percentage divisions in the electorate represented in the House of Commons.

Green party candidate Chris Tolley minced no words on the topic.

"It's a given," he said, and was quick to add that under proportional representation, his party would currently have 30 seats in Parliament. His party favours a mixed-member system, which is used in New Zealand and Germany.

Tolley said he believes that the 2015 federal election will be the death knell for the first-past-the-post system in Canada.

Liberal candidate Julie Dabrusin echoed Tolley's view.

The Liberal party's plan is to table legislation on proportional representation within 18 months of being elected, but the party hasn't endorsed a specific system yet.

■ See DEBATE, page 2

Sex-ed protest all about consent, group says

Parents pull students from school as a sign of their frustration

By MELVIN GOMEZ
The Observer

An organizer of the Oct. 1 protest, pulling students out of classes at Thorncliffe Park Public School, says his group wants to send a strong message to the Ontario government regarding its new health curriculum.

About 200 parents and children gathered outside the school in East York on Oct. 1. Protesters formed human chains and marched with their picket signs on Thorncliffe Park Drive. They were protesting the new sex component of the health curriculum in Ontario's



Melvin Gomez /// The Observer

Thorncliffe Park Public School parents and students participated in a one-day protest on Oct. 1 to express their displeasure with the health curriculum.

public schools. The parents pulled more than half of the students, about 740 children, from the school for the day.

Khalid Mahood represents the

Thorncliffe Parents Association, spearheading the protest.

"We want to show our frustration with the premier's new sex-ed curriculum," Mahood said. "The

content is so explicit. What is the purpose of teaching our kids (about oral sex)?"

The Canadian Families Alliance organized the province-wide strike

"Empty School Campaign" after being inspired by the protest at Thorncliffe Park Public School when classes began in September. Protesters, such as Raul Jangda, a parent of three children attending Thorncliffe Park, argue that the new content – including homosexuality, transgender issues and masturbation – is not suitable for their children to learn.

"It's about consent. When the school wants to give my kids pizza or excursions, they send forms for my consent. Why am I not in the picture when they talk to my kids about sex?" Jangda asked.

In fact, there are only a handful of lessons per year dealing with sexual health and parents are given the outline of the curriculum and are made aware ahead of time when

■ See TRUSTEE, page 3

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Dining for a good cause

St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church at 1399 Bayview Ave. will hold its 13th annual women's dinner on Friday, Oct. 23. All proceeds from the dinner will go to the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund's maternal and newborn programs. Tickets, which are \$20 each, include dinner and wine. For more information, call 416-485-0329.

Is euchre win in the cards?

If you enjoy euchre, mark Friday, Oct. 23 on your calendar. That's when Northlea United Church, 125 Brentcliffe Rd., will hold its Lone Hand Euchre Tournament Fundraiser. From 7 to 9 p.m., participants can enjoy snacks and try their hand at winning prizes. Tickets are available at the Northlea United Church office and after church services. The price is \$20. For more information, call 416-425-5252.

3 simple steps to savvy blogs

Want to improve your blogging skills? The Leaside library will host a lecture called 'Zero to Blog in Three Simple Steps' on Wednesday, Oct. 21 from 7-8 p.m. This is a free event for entrepreneurs/business owners looking to sharpen their blogging skills. No signup is required.

~ Katherine Forte



Jason Sutcliffe // The Observer

Firefighters wait for the all-clear on Monday after battling a blaze on the seventh floor of an East York apartment building. One family was displaced as a result of the two-alarm fire.

Fire leaves family homeless

By JASON SUTCLIFFE
The Observer

A two-alarm fire has left an East York apartment burned out and a family displaced.

Firefighters responded to the fire at Pape and Cosburn avenues just after 7:30 a.m. on Monday. The seventh-floor apartment was engulfed in flames.

Firefighters evacuated the apartment and extinguished the fire before 8 a.m.

Sarah Rogers was one of the many residents forced from their apartments, after suddenly waking up to the blaring fire alarm.

"There was a fire on the seventh floor and we are just on the sixth floor, so we

could smell the smoke," she said. "We could hear the fire alarm going on and off ... so we ran down stairs to get out."

The apartment was burnt out, leaving the family's mother, father and two children displaced.

"Currently we checked with the Red Cross and the superintendent for the building because this family has been burnt out of their apartment now," said Platoon Chief Dan Cell.

"We have checked to ensure that they're going to have a place to stay tonight, because they have a couple of kids."

One firefighter suffered an injury to his finger. All tenants were examined for smoke inhalation at the scene.



Jason Sutcliffe // The Observer

The highrise tenants' living room windows were blown out by the blaze.

Debate focuses on electoral reform

Cont.d from page 1

"Our plan is to have an all-party consultation," Dabrusin said.

She said later that getting the electorate behind a new system just requires a commitment to educate the public.

"People are smart," she added. "They just have to have the information to make these decisions."

According to candidate Craig Scott, the NDP is pledg-

ing to make proportional representation a reality by 2019.

"We're going to have a special all-party task force that will be consulting broadly and extensively with Canadians," he said.

Scott said his party will work with experts to create a designed proposal for what an "adapted-to-Canada version" of mixed member proportional should look like.

During the debate, Scott criticized the Liberal party's plan.

"It's not a commitment to proportional representation," he said, adding that the public can look for the NDP's plan in an upcoming platform release.

"I don't know when exactly our platform is coming out, but central to it will be proportional representation," he said.

At one point in the discussion, a member of the audience commented that it was the Ontario Liberal government that had failed to bring in electoral reform in 2007.

That's when John Richardson of the Liberal party issued a challenge to all candidates to "make it visible."

Candidate Tolley responded to another member of the audience asking about the question of the obstacles to electoral reform.

"The obstacle is Harper," Tolley said.

Toronto-Danforth Conservative candidate Benjamin Dichter was not there to respond.

Police seek suspect after pair of robberies



Victims' cellphones taken at knifepoint

By KELSEY CHENG
The Observer

Toronto police have released images of a suspect wanted in two East York robberies.

One of the robberies occurred on Wednesday, Aug.

12 at 53 Thorncliffe Park Dr. The other happened on Friday, Aug. 28 at 27 Thorncliffe Park Dr. Both locations are apartment buildings.

Police say the victims of the robberies, a 33-year-old man and a 21-year-old woman, were followed by a man into the elevator of the apartment buildings. They were both threatened with a kitchen

knife and robbed of their cellphones.

No one was injured in the robberies.

The suspect is described as in his 20s with short black hair and a beard. He is around five feet eight inches to six feet tall with a thin build.

Anyone with information is asked to contact police at 416-808-5300.

POLICE & FIRE

Roads closed as police search for armed suspect

Police closed an area around Danforth and Coxwell avenues on Monday night to conduct a search for a suspect allegedly involved in a homicide in May 2014. A firearm was discovered in the area, prompting the search for Conrad Grizzle, 20, who is wanted for second-degree murder and two counts of attempted murder. Police say he is considered armed and dangerous.

Pedestrian hit by GO train

A pedestrian was struck and killed by a train just east of the Danforth GO station on Sept. 30 at around 4 p.m. GO train services were delayed for approximately three hours along the Lakeshore East and Stouffville lines.

Man charged in hit-and-run

An 80-year-old was charged last week with criminal negligence causing death, dangerous operation of a motor vehicle causing death and leaving the scene, after a fatal accident on Sept. 25 on Danforth Avenue near Donlands. Police say the elderly driver left the scene after he reversed into a fence, pinning a 49-year-old man. The victim was taken to the hospital where he later died. The motorist's scheduled court date is Nov. 9.

~ Alex Kamakaris

■ SUSPECT



Arifa Ratansi /// The Observer

Watermain woes

The commute was a slow one on Tuesday morning after a watermain broke at the intersection of O'Connor Drive and Glenwood Crescent, causing flooding and leading to a lane closure. City of Toronto workers and Toronto police were on the scene, blocking off the right lane on the north side of O'Connor until repairs could be completed.

Candidates put health care on the table

By AZIZA IBRAHIM
The Observer

There is a general consensus of opinion among the Beaches-East York candidates in the Oct. 19 federal election when it comes to the topic of pharmacare and the high costs of prescription drugs.

East York residents gathered in a conference room at Toronto East General Hospital on Tuesday to discuss a topic that everyone agreed is extremely important to the community: health care.

"There is an emphasis on reducing the cost of prescription drugs and making them more accessible, more affordable... to lower costs by up to 30 per cent," said Liberal candidate



File Photo /// The Observer

Liberal Nathaniel Erskine-Smith was among the candidates at Tuesday's TEGH debate.

Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, Erskine-Smith's main rival, New Democratic incumbent

MP Matthew Kellway, was also there — along with Green party candidate Randall Sach.

Conservative party candidate Bill Burrows declined the hospital's invitation.

Pharmacare, environmental health, social factors affecting health and home care were among the main topics covered during the debate.

"We are pledging in this election to spend \$2.6 billion over four years to bring pharmacare into this country," New Democrat Kellway said. "We're talking about hiring 7,000 health-care professionals across the country and building 200 healthcare clinics."

Questions were submitted by hospital staff and reviewed by an expert panel that included Sarah Downey, president and CEO of TEGH, Irene Andress, chief nursing executive

and Dr. Rajiv Singal, a urologist at the hospital.

"I can't disagree with the things my colleagues up here have said; our program is similar in a lot of ways," said the Green's Sach. "The federal government now just puts less and less money.... They don't ensure that there's the same quality of healthcare available across the country"

"On all of these issues we really need to change the governance in this country," Kellway said. "For too long, Stephen Harper's reign here has not been interaction between provinces and the federal government. But there needs to be regular interaction and negotiation of how these things are going to work."

Trustee wants children back in class

East York parents encouraged to send students to school

Cont.d from page 1

the topics will be discussed. Parents also have the opportunity to pull their children out of class during those lessons.

Jeff Crane, the principal at Thorncliffe Park Public School, says the protest is getting away from the curriculum.

"Thorncliffe Parents Association are a group that has strong opinions, but they're not always the right opinions," he said. "They've been sending misleading information."

During the first week of school, many of the students did not attend class, but since then most have returned; the school had only 150 fewer students when the current protest began.

The parents of some of those children have enrolled them in private schools or home schooling sessions.

Gerri Gershon, TDSB Trustee for Don Valley West, advises parents not to strike and to keep them in school despite the new curriculum.

"I think it's very harmful to the children to keep them out of school," she said.

"I strongly encourage parents to send their children into the school where professionals can teach them."

Climate change a hot topic at Toronto-Danforth debate

By MITCH McCLURE
The Observer

The Tuesday night debate among most of the major federal election candidates in Toronto-Danforth may have focused on electoral reform (see story on page 1), but there was also considerable discussion on other topics — especially climate change and the environment generally.

The contenders talked about transit, cycling, Canada Post, re-engaging voters and funding the CBC.

Conservative candidate Benjamin Dichter was the only no-show at the debate, held at the Applegrove Community Centre on Woodfield Road.

Incumbent New Democratic MP Craig Scott introduced the topic of climate change, saying global warming will be the first issue Canada will address if Thomas Mulcair becomes prime minister.

"I want to be part of a government that's taking climate change seriously," Scott said. "We need to have a system that reflects the fact that at

least 50 per cent of the MPs at any given time are almost certainly going to be committed on climate change."

Liberal Julie Dabrusin and Green party member Chris Tolley echoed Scott's points. The Greens have built their reputation on environmentalism, but Dabrusin let the audience know that it's high on her agenda as well.

"Improving transit and cycling will help with that issue," she said. "Toronto has a terrible transit system that needs to be improved."



Paula Last /// The Observer

Julie Dabrusin talks to Toronto-Danforth voters during an all-candidates meeting on Tuesday night at the Applegrove Community Centre.

Canvasser says it's simply a conversation

Torontoobserver.ca is the place for election night coverage from all corners of East York. With East York Observer reporters at strategic points in Toronto-Danforth as well as Beaches-East York and Don Valley West, we'll bring you the breaking news as the numbers roll in.

Liberal volunteer, 23, relishes 'knocking on strangers' doors'

By **MARCUS MEDFORD**
The Observer

He's done it municipally. Now Sam Dyson is doing it federally.

"Face-to-face interaction with people is by far the most effective way to convey our message," he said.

"Most importantly, (we) hear what people are concerned about."

Sam Dyson, 23, is a campaign aide to Liberal candidate Julie Dabrusin (in the Toronto-Danforth riding) in the campaign leading up to the Oct. 19 vote. Having lived in the area all his life, Dyson also volunteered for John Tory during his mayoral campaign in 2014.

Dabrusin realizes the value of her team of canvassers.

"It's important for them (the community) to see that I'm out there and I'm committed to working for them," she said.

A 2012 study from George

Mason University showed that potential voters who were visited by the candidate were 20 per cent more likely to vote for that candidate.

Dabrusin has been a resident of Toronto-Danforth since 1998, and she believes canvassing is the most effective way to learn what's going on with her neighbours.

Although Dyson thinks of canvassing as simply having conversations with voters, he admits that it's not always easy.

"Knocking on strangers' doors can definitely be an un-

comfortable feeling," he said.

A 2001 Stanford University study showed that having door-to-door canvassing teams increased voter turnout by 7.1 percentage points compared to mail or telephone calls. However, some people don't like to be visited by canvassers because they have already decided how they are going to vote or conversely because they have no interest in voting.

"Some people are genuinely not interested and do not want to be disturbed," Dyson said.



■ **SAM DYSON**

Green candidate hunting for votes in Don Valley West

British Columbia resident running to make sure all voters have a voice

By **BRANDAN KAJIOKA**
The Observer

The Green candidate in the Don Valley West riding of the Oct. 19 federal election has campaigned to give residents an alternative option... but from a distance.

Natalie Hunt admitted that she has never visited Edward Gardens nor seen the traffic congestion on the Don Valley Parkway.

A candidate for the Green Party, she is campaigning as a paper candidate only; that is, a standard-bearing name on a ballot, with no actual on-location campaign.

"We do think that every Canadian should have a voice," Hunt said in an interview from British Columbia.

"There are citizens, there are voters in Don Valley whose interests and values we represent."

"We want those people to send a message to Ottawa to help define their values and views (as well as) having that representation in Parliament."

Lawrence Leduc, a professor in the political science department at the University of Toronto, explained the risks involved in running as a paper candidate.

"In Canadian politics, local ties of some kind are generally considered important for a candidate," he said. "Without any, she is unlikely to be elected."

Natalie Hunt has worked as the West Coast operations manager at the Green party



■ **NATALIE HUNT**

headquarters in Vancouver. Despite the distance, Hunt says she fully understands the situation, attempting to familiarize herself with the Don Valley West community from B.C.

"Our priority would (be) having a candidate who lived in Don Valley (West)," she said.

But "I think that my background and my values, especially being a young person and being a woman, I can bring a voice and view that represent a lot of Canadians who are not necessarily heard."

Leduc said that occasionally so-called "star candidates" are recruited by a party from outside the riding, and they bring their name and reputation along with them.

"But these are also generally expected to make some connection to the locality over the course of the campaign. And even then, they often don't succeed," he said.

Hunt admits she may be unfamiliar with Toronto-based politics, but insists she is fully prepared to handle the political and social complexity that exists within the Don Valley West riding.

LGBTory.ca founder ready for move from municipal to national politics

Candidate also ran in last fall's municipal election

By **CHRIS DE MELO**
The Observer

Benjamin Dichter has shifted his sights since last fall.

The businessman and LGBT activist who ran for city council in Toronto Centre-Rosedale and garnered five per cent of the vote is now running for the House of Commons in Toronto-Danforth.

He replaces the original Conservative candidate, Tim Dutaud, who was dropped from the Tory bandwagon last month when YouTube videos came to light in which he makes distasteful prank phone calls.

Dichter has been unavailable for an Observer interview, but there are traces of his positions from last fall's municipal election campaign.

"I am eager to join council to tackle the hard issues facing Toronto," says his LinkedIn profile. "Tight budgets, crumbling infrastructure, transit debates and unbearable congestion, all while the economy is stagnant, are problems that cannot be ignored any longer."

One newspaper covering his run in Ward 27 — just outside the southwest corner of East York — characterized his platform as one of avoiding partisanship.

"Council is a particularly extreme example of divisiveness and councillors' adherence to ideology, over what is best for the city," the paper quoted him as saying.

Toronto Sun city hall columnist Sue Ann Levy of the Toronto Sun called him "a breath of fresh air."

But Dichter still garnered only about 1,500 votes out of about 31,000 cast in his ward last fall.

Dichter's LinkedIn site says that he's a certified gemologist, having received his accreditation from George Brown College. It also says that he's currently president of Ink Port, a small business specializing in graphic design.

Dichter is also one of the founders of LGBTory.ca. A group whose website professes a need to break leftist control on the LGBT community, it strives to represent LGBT people who are also socially conservative.

The group has participated in pride parades despite a petition circulated recently calling on Capital Pride organizers to ban them from marching in the Ottawa pride parade.

Dichter has travelled and even lived in South America — an experience that he says has given him a broad perspective on life.



■ **BENJAMIN DICHTER**

Carmichael vs. Oliphant will be a race to watch on Oct. 19

Federal election marks third time these two candidates have run against each other

By **TARA FORTUNE**
The Observer

Conservative incumbent John Carmichael is one of the headliners in what may be East York's marquee matchup on Oct. 19.

Carmichael is seeking re-election in a tight contest against Liberal Rob Oliphant.

This marks the third time that the two have run against each other.

Oliphant won in 2008. Carmichael won in 2011. Some pundits give Oliphant the edge this time around; earlier this week, the poll-aggregating website threehundredeight.com was giving the challenger an 82-per-cent chance of winning the riding.

Carmichael has been unavailable for

an interview with the Observer, but in past campaigns, the grandfather and former car-dealer has emphasized several planks in his campaign platform: leadership, the economy, public safety and needed improvements to local infrastructure — especially transportation.

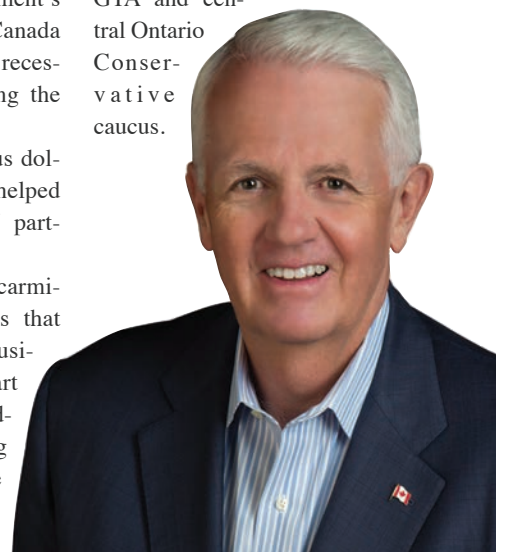
"The Conservative government's steady leadership has helped Canada emerge quickly from the global recession," he told the Observer during the last campaign.

"We injected billions of stimulus dollars into the economy, which has helped us emerge stronger than our G7 partners."

His campaign website is johncarmichael.conservative.ca, and it says that Carmichael considers his strong business skills as what sets him apart from the others running in the riding. It adds that he has a strong presence in the community, where

he has served on the North York General Hospital Foundation Board.

He has also been the president of Rowing Canada and a director of the Canadian Olympic Committee. Carmichael was appointed this year by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to be the chair of the GTA and central Ontario Conservative caucus.



■ **JOHN CARMICHAEL**

East York then and now

By **NOVEMBER CHERNICK**

The Observer

Even though the architectural landscape of East York has changed over time, hints of the past still remain.

Angela Mandalas, a real estate agent who specializes in the four neighbourhoods of East York, Danforth, Riverdale and Playter Estates, says she is not against the augmentation of old buildings with

new, modern features — as long as they don't tear apart what was originally there.

"(It) is really important to maintain and persevere what was there before," Mandalas says.

"We sometimes don't construct things in the same manner we did beforehand. For example, hand-cut crystal doorknobs — you can't just go buy one at the store."

Having purchased a peri-

od home in Playter Estates, Mandalas sees both the value and the challenges in restoring a historic building.

"Costs in new construction would be much cheaper than restoration. Restoration is preserving what's already there and it can be very difficult. If something hasn't been preserved, you have to duplicate what was there before."

She gave the example of the bricks found on the

100-year-old homes in Riverdale. Oftentimes bricks have not been preserved and they need to be replaced on the exterior of the home.

Problems can occur, as modern bricks are much larger and formed differently than those a century ago. This means that a simple exterior refinishing becomes a process of finding and sourcing 100-year-old bricks from other locations.

Moving forward, renovation and restoration will continue to be a vital part of the community, but new construction cannot be avoided.

As Mandalas puts it, "Some people don't see the value in what was there to begin with. They often don't understand the value of that. Or it's easier for them to tear it down and start all over."

Below is a photo gallery of buildings in the east-end

neighbourhood that have undergone transitions over the years.

While many of the structures still closely resemble their original form, some have gone through total reconstruction, making the locations almost recognizable.

The series of photos below demonstrates comparisons of locations in the East York community from the early 1900s to today.



Photo courtesy of the City of Toronto Archives



Jeffrey Sze /// The Observer



RIGHT: Looking east on Danforth Avenue at Logan Avenue.

Photo courtesy of the City of Toronto Archives



Jeffrey Sze /// The Observer

RIGHT: This church was once called the Danforth Baptist Church. It is now the Danforth Church.



Photo courtesy of the City of Toronto Archives



Jeffrey Sze /// The Observer

BOTTOM RIGHT: The bank at the northwest corner of Pape and Danforth avenues still exists today.



Photo courtesy of the City of Toronto Archives



Jeffrey Sze /// The Observer

BELOW: The northeast corner of Pape and Lipton avenues. The Pape subway station is now located on this corner.



Photo courtesy of the City of Toronto Archives



Jeffrey Sze /// The Observer



For more East York stories, please check us out online at torontoobserver.ca

EDITORIALS

Sach the right choice

In an election where four parties chose women to manage their campaigns, women's issues have still been pushed to the side.

If anything, the Conservatives have distracted voters from the real issues by using a woman's niqab as a veil of their own.

Women comprise 50.4 per cent of Canada's population — a key electoral demographic.

Despite every party's dependence on women voters to be elected, the only prominent issue on the table that disproportionately impacts women is child care.

That's why the East York Observer is endorsing Green party representative Randall Sach for Beaches-East York. Female leadership, awareness of women's issues and commitment to reinstate a national subsidized daycare program makes a vote for the Green party the best vote for women.

The absence of women's issues in this election has been a factor from the start, judging by the last-minute cancellation of an August debate on women's issues organized by Up for Debate.

Stephen Harper refused to participate. Thomas Mulcair then pulled out, saying that he wouldn't attend a debate where Harper was absent. But Mulcair did participate in Up for Debate's Sept. 21 live stream panel discussion at the University of Toronto.

But the scarcely mentioned issue that could explain the status quo is unequal political representation.

According to Equal Voice, 33 per cent of candidates this year are women, up from 31 per cent in 2011. The NDP has the highest percentage at 43 per cent, with the Green party in second at 39 per cent. The Conservative party has the least representation from women at 20 per cent.

In a first-past-the-post electoral system where the candidate with the most votes wins, these numbers mean little.

Green party Leader Elizabeth May pointed out the disadvantage of the first-past-the-post for women candidates in her Up for Debate interview.

Her view is supported by a report from the Fawcett Society, a U.K. charity supporting gender equality. It says that proportional representation provides more opportunity for political gender equality.

For this election, women in the Beaches-East York riding still cannot vote directly for a representative of their gender.

But they can vote for a candidate with international development experience.

Sachs was working for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) when the Conservatives were first elected. In an interview with the Observer, he recalled his impressions of the new government during a CIDA staff meeting.

"I heard that the new Conservative government wasn't as interested in environmental or gender issues as they should be."

~ Paula Last

Riaz's time to shine

Once again, Don Valley West appears to be a dead heat between two familiar faces: Conservative incumbent John Carmichael and Liberal Rob Oliphant — who also happens to be Carmichael's predecessor, having represented the riding from 2008 to 2011. Because of the recycled nature of the two major candidates, the Observer believes it is time for a new political voice in Don Valley West, and has chosen to endorse the NDP's Syeda Riaz as that voice.

The Liberals and Conservatives have combined for more than 80 per cent of the votes in Don Valley West in all but one election since 1997. It is clear that this is a red versus blue riding, but the Grits and the Tories seem a little too comfortable in offering up the same candidates time and time again. Constituents should send a message to Messieurs Harper and Trudeau that if they want to control the riding, they will at least have to find some new names with new ideas to go on the ballot.

This is not to say that dissatisfaction with the Liberals and Conservatives is the only reason to vote for Riaz: she is a dedicated member of her community and takes part in a number of charitable causes. She has helped organize the Danforth Multi-faith Community Walk since 2008, a biannual event dedicated to bringing together local religious communities. She also helped lead the Sister To Sister Campaign, a fundraiser dedicated to helping women affected by the 2010 Pakistan floods. In the past, she served as executive director for the Asian Communities Council of Canada and the Pakistani Community Centre. Since Don Valley West is one of the most ethnically diverse ridings in Ontario, Riaz's involvement in minority communities should appeal to a great number of its constituents.

Her opposition to the controversial 'security' Bill C-51, which was supported by both the Liberals and Conservatives, should also endear her to many voters in the riding. Likewise, the NDP's stances on child care and youth job creation also make her an attractive candidate in Don Valley West, which is home to an above-average number of residents aged 18 or under.

Don Valley West is in need of a change. For residents who want to send a message to the establishment and bring fresh ideas to the riding, Syeda Riaz is the best option.

~ Daniel Goldsmith

COLUMNS

NDP puts child care first

A vote for the New Democratic Party is a vote for moving Toronto-Danforth forward economically while strengthening traditional Canadian values.

East York is a community made up of people from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds — all hoping to establish a home here. Running in a federal riding in one of the most diverse parts of the city, Toronto-Danforth candidates need to pay attention to the unique needs of East York residents.

For instance: many residents in this riding are hard-working people who are planning or are starting new families. So an important topic being discussed by residents and party representatives is child care.

Liberal candidate Julie Dabrusin has spoken of her challenges in securing daycare spaces for her daughters. The problem is that the Liberal party says it will focus on providing middle-class Canadians with affordable and quality child-care spaces — while not giving due emphasis to low-income families who may be struggling to balance child care with work.

Contrary to that, the NDP is planning to create an affordable national child-care

program. And the Toronto-Danforth incumbent, New Democrat Craig Scott, said that there will be a cap on fees "so the parents would not have to pay more than \$15 a day per child."

The Conservative party fares much worse on this issue; child care is not even on the Tory agenda. They're wishfully proposing "affordable" housing instead. Stephen Harper says he hopes to raise the number of Canadian homeowners to 700,000 by 2020. He expects to do this by establishing a "First-Time Homeowners Tax Credit," so eligible buyers can claim a \$5,000 non-refundable tax credit to cover costs associated with home purchases.

But how are people going to manage mortgage payments after they purchase their homes? Providing tax credits would indeed allow first-time homeowners to buy a house, but would not allow them to continue

to finance it.

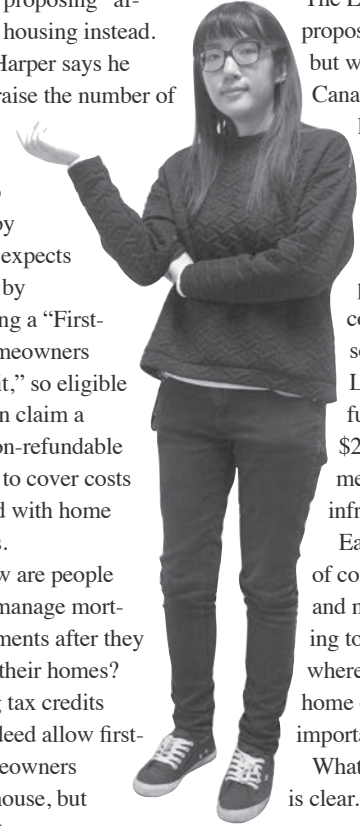
NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair said most of the funding for his party's plans will come from an increase in corporate taxes. With this hike, along with new tax incentives, the NDP is committed to balancing skyrocketing Toronto home prices by building affordable rental units.

The Liberal party proposes similar ideas, but we worry that Canadians will only be left with broken promises in a Justin Trudeau government.

There are no plans to increase corporate taxes, so where will the Liberals get their \$20-billion investment in "social infrastructure?"

East York is a hub of communal activity and new families hoping to establish homes where child care and home ownership are important issues.

What residents need is clear. And the NDP can provide it. Can the others?



Kei Lam

Under 25? Get out and vote

There are few things in this nation to which we are truly entitled and the right to vote is one of them.

Sadly, it is a right that the 18-24 demographic rarely chooses to exercise. This group comprises many first-time voters whose apathy towards politics and government terrifies me. It terrifies me, and I am a part of the demographic, because we should care.

Instead, we're a generation where social and civic responsibility has taken a back seat to self-interest. We're a generation where we somehow collectively agree that our individual votes do not matter.

Voter turnout for

this age group in the past two federal elections has been abysmal.

The record shows that only 37.4 per cent of 18- to 24-year-olds voted in the 2008 federal election, increasing only marginally in 2011, to 38.8 per cent.

In 2011, overall voter turnout was only 61 per cent, with the victorious Conservative party collecting only 39 per cent of the popular vote.

Those absent 18- to 24-year-olds could have made a difference. It's one thing to believe that one vote doesn't matter, but when you have a generation that almost collectively

believes it is powerless to shape Canada's future, you have a major concern.

The fact is, as a demographic, we have the power to bring about change through exercising our right to vote.

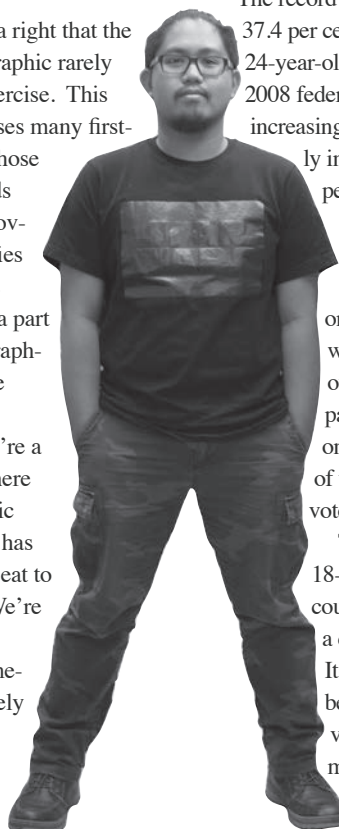
We have a civic responsibility to vote, and not only because it is our future. More importantly, we must show that we care about what goes on in this country beyond taxes on Netflix.

We are a sleeping demographic that has been heavily sedated by the cynicism of our times - and now is the time to wake up and be heard.

As the CBC's resident ranter Rick Mercer put it, "If you're between the age of 18 and 25 and you want to scare the hell out of the people that run this country, this time around do the unexpected. Take 20 minutes out of your day and do what young people all around the world are dying to do."

So go out on Oct. 19, and scare the older generations with your vote.

That's what I'll be doing.



Paolo Maquiraya



Deidra Barton /// The Observer

Charlotte Schwartz's son Isaiah suffers from galactosemia, a metabolic disorder with no cure.

Parents raising funds for research into rare disorder

By **DEIDRA BARTON**
The Observer

Nine days after having their second child, East York parents Charlotte and Seth Schwartz received a phone call from the Ontario Newborn Screening Program that would change their lives forever. They were told that the results for their newborn son, Isaiah, came back with a positive screen. The very same day, Isaiah began to show symptoms and was later diagnosed with having a rare disorder called galactosemia.

Galactosemia is an inherited disease that affects the body's ability to metabolize the sugar galactose, which is found in dairy products. As a result of this, Isaiah was immediately switched to a soy-based diet.

"There's no way to treat it other than acutely, like life or death. You have to follow the diet because if they ingest the toxic sugars, they can die of liver failure, brain damage or a combination of the two," Charlotte explained.

"Even if you follow the diet to the letter of the law, it doesn't mean that your kid is going to

speak on time and walk on time. It doesn't mean that they'll ever be an average member of society."

There is no cure for galactosemia and very little information is available on the disease, which led the family to raise \$15,000 last year. This was enough to establish a Galactosemia Research Fund at Sick Kids Hospital.

Roughly \$12,500 was raised on Sept. 25 at the first annual Soy Boy Soirée. Over 200 guests enjoyed a fun-filled night including a comedy show, an auction and a brief talk by Dr. Andreas Schulze, director of the Newborn Screening Program and leader of the Galactosemia Research Fund. Schulze explained the importance of the research fund and what it is working towards.

"Research in galactosemia worldwide works at a very slow pace," she said. "There's almost nobody doing research on it and the way we treat it hasn't changed over the last 20 or 30 years."

The Schwartz family has set a goal to raise \$50,000 before the end of the year. To donate, visit www.sickkidsfoundation.com/page/runningforsoyboy.

Jasun's cat photos just keep on giving

Proceeds from 2016 calendar featuring late journalist's work to go to Toronto Cat Rescue

By **STEPHANIE HINDS**
The Observer

She never met the photographer behind the camera, but Leigh Cavanaugh can see Jasun Singh's familiarity with his subjects.

"There was a very personal tie to (the photos)," she said.

Centennial College journalism student Jasun Singh died almost a year ago. In his memory, the family has assembled some of Singh's photographs of cats housed at the Toronto Cat Rescue (TCR) and published them in a calendar. Cavanaugh created the graphic design for the project.

"It wasn't like a normal job ... because I felt the passion," she said. "I felt connected to it."

Last year, TCR celebrated its 20th anniversary. Since 1994, the registered, no-kill charity has helped thousands of cats find loving homes and families.

But the organization has provided solace to more than just cats. Executive officer Nalini Ramroop described Jasun Singh's unique relationship with TCR's principal clients.

"Jasun volunteered at the Pet Smart Kennedy Commons adoption centre as a caregiver for the cats," she said.

"He was responsible for feeding, cleaning cages and entertaining the cats. But it quickly became apparent that his true talent was capturing their beauty in his photography."

For Leigh Cavanaugh, despite never meeting Jasun, the interactions she shared with his family throughout the process made the project extremely personal and important.

And it turns out that Singh's support for TCR — publishing the photos on social media — came along at just the right time. He assisted in a record-breaking year for the charity. In 2014, TCR found homes for 2,163 cats, the highest number of annual adoptions in the history of the Toronto Cat Rescue.

"(Of) all the photographs that were there, all the cats have been adopted," Cavanaugh said.



Daniel Goldsmith /// The Observer

Graphic designer Leigh Cavanaugh played a big role in the creation of Toronto Cat Rescue's 2016 calendar.

But the work doesn't stop there. Funds raised from the calendar, which sells for \$10 per copy, will help TCR provide housing for even more cats.

"The 2,000 copies that were printed will generate over \$20,000 of fundraising for Toronto Cat Rescue," Ramroop said.

"The executives (will) use those funds towards training space in a new rescue centre we are planning to open."

She added that the calendars will keep the memory of Jasun Singh alive, as well as help homeless cats find "forever" homes.

"The rescue centre will be called the Jasun Singh Memorial Training Centre and it will strengthen the TCR to keep up the good work that Jasun so wholeheartedly believed in," Ramroop said.

"We will put some of his photographs in the centre and the spirit of Jasun Singh will be immortal."

For more information or to order a calendar, go to <http://torontocatrescue.ca>.

It's a brand new game at local tennis club



Eric Pember /// The Observer

Christine Barachina cuts the ribbon to mark the grand reopening.

By **ERIC PEMBER**
The Observer

The Thorncliffe Park Tennis Club was in very poor shape when current president Christine Barachina joined.

In fact, that's why she was able to join — it was easy to get in because there was no waiting list.

Barachina was originally on the waiting list for the Leaside Tennis Club, but "their email bounced back and they basically said to feel free to join the other club — Thorncliffe Park Tennis Club — that doesn't have a waiting list," she recalled.

"As a result, I joined the tennis club and ended up on the board."

She took the board position after two years of being a member and immediately embarked on an initiative to rebuild the tennis court so that more people would want to join.

"The only thing that was stipulating for us

was that we didn't have the financial resources to do that, so we had to build a reserve to do this," Barachina said.

They ultimately raised \$70,000 for the renovations.

They did this both with donations from the members of the club and by renting out the park to other clubs.

"A lot of other groups came to use our court, such as the Toronto Gay and Lesbian Tennis Club (and) the Toronto Tennis Academy ... so we were able to raise money by essentially having them use our court," Barachina said.

The association with the Toronto Tennis Academy, in particular, has come in handy for the club.

It connected them with tennis pro Branko Stamenic, who now regularly trains people there.

"One of the great things about working at Thorncliffe is that it gives me the opportunity to introduce the game of tennis to kids who

wouldn't normally be introduced to a sport like tennis, because they come from a different culture where tennis is not popular," Stamenic said.

Kids and adults both abounded at the grand reopening of the tennis courts recently.

Stamenic was present to work with the attendees on their tennis games. There was also a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by MPs John Carmichael and Rob Oliphant.

Once they had raised the money, the tennis courts took about three weeks in total to resurface.

They were slightly delayed because of the rain, which pushed the reopening back by a day.

"You can't really do it in April because underneath the surface of the club, the ground is basically still frozen from the winter," Barachina said. "It's recommended that you do it at the end of August when the ground is warm and pretty much settled."

■ COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

Boyes raises a leaf to women's health

By **BRAYDON HOLMYARD**
The Observer

It didn't take long for newly signed Toronto Maple Leafs forward Brad Boyes to contribute to the city that drafted him.

Boyes joined the Shoppers Drug Mart team Oct. 1 to help raise money for Toronto East General Hospital (TEGH).

Shoppers Drug Mart's "Growing Women's Health Campaign" has aided women in the East York community for the last seven years, raising more than \$180,000 in that time. With the help of customers, 12 local Shoppers locations will be raising money at their counters until today (Oct. 9), with 100 per cent of the proceeds going toward cancer care and women's health at TEGH.

Mississauga native Boyes is no stranger to the East York community and Toronto East General Hospital.



Braydon Holmyard // The Observer

Toronto Maple Leafs forward Brad Boyes places his leaf as part of the 'Growing Women's Health Campaign.'

He worked at a local McDonald's during McHappy Day in 2013, an event that raised over \$74,000 for the hospital. In 2012, he played Santa

with his wife and daughter, bringing toys to the sick children at Christmas. He also participated in the TEGH Danforth Dash Bed Race.

Although he grew up in the west end, there is something about the East York hospital that continues to call Boyes' name.

"The preparation that goes into everything and the reach of this hospital is great. The hospital factors into a number of different areas, from pediatric to women's health and the ER, so it touches a lot of different people," Boyes said after Thursday's presentation.

"The events have been great. They put them all over the east side of town and up at the Danforth, and I think that sticking to a charity like this and this hospital, it's nice that we can focus all our energy towards it."

The annual fundraiser gives the East York community a chance to make a difference for women's health at their local hospital. Customers can purchase a "leaf" for \$1, a "butterfly" for \$5 or a "cardinal" for \$50. Each decoration can be personalized and

will be displayed on the Tree of Life in the store.

As Shoppers Drug Mart pharmacy owner Jayesh Tailor says, every donation makes a difference.

"Each leaf, one dollar at a time, is collected over the years and we can see its impact," he says, adding that "200,000 goes a long way in supporting the hospital with all the resources that they need."

Boyes' return home to Toronto is not only great news for the Maple Leafs, but also for the East York community. And while his commitment to improving Toronto East General Hospital is admirable, he's not the only one who can make a difference. When asked why customers should donate, he put it into perspective.

"It's really important," he said. "Everyone has a mother; everybody in some way is going to be affected by a woman in their life who has health issues."

Your commute just got a little artsier, thanks to new mural

By **SIDRA SHEIKH**
The Observer

A Toronto artist has given commuters on their way to the Coxwell TTC station a reason to pause to view an outdoor exhibit.

Sean Martindale has created a community mural called 'Transitions'.

"We really wanted to make this something that the community could be proud of," he said.

"It's an area that's really (experienced) a lot of change... so I wanted to recognize that with the word Transitions."

Martindale explained that he and East End Arts were approached by

StreetARToronto to solve a problem. They discovered that the wall on which the mural was to be created really needed attention and that the neighbourhood wanted to see some colour. It appears some who live in the area, including resident Luis Caballero, are pleased with the result.

"It's priceless," Caballero said. "The combination of colours is so attractive and I think it's a really good project. It's excellent. I wish they could do more."

Some community members did more than just pay compliments. Assistant artist Vero Diaz said some citizens want to join in.

"We've have had more than 20 volunteers," she said.



Paula Last // The Observer

Rebecca Baird and Phil Cote of Tecumseh Arts designed the 'Gathering of the Clans' mosaic now on permanent display at Todmorden Mills.

Mosaic honours the history of local indigenous peoples

By **PAULA LAST**
The Observer

Over the summer of 2015, First Nations in Toronto reclaimed a piece of their history in the Don Valley.

On Sept. 28, local politicians, community members and arts and indigenous culture supporters witnessed the unveiling of The Gathering of the Clans Community Mosaic Project on the north lawn of Todmorden Mills.

After an opening prayer by local Anishnaabe elder Dorothy Parker, Todmorden Mills museum administrator Ulana Baluk spoke about the role the Don River played in the 11,000-year history of indigenous peoples in southern Ontario.

"The river provided food and materials for subsistence, served as a transportation corridor and was an important expression for cultural and spiritual values," Baluk said.

The mosaic came about through a collaboration between the Tecumseh Collective and Red Pepper Spectacle Arts.

Gabriella Caruso, of Red Pepper Spectacle Arts, talked about the mosaic technique.

"Each piece is hand-cut and hand sanded to fit in its exact specific location," Caruso said.

The mosaic started with small drawings of animals, which were then filled in with mosaics. The artists worked together installing the final pieces.

"It was truly a gathering of many, many disparate and creative energies," Caruso said. "I hope we can continue to gather around the table."

The mosaic, like a large circular table, illustrated the various clans, represented by animals and birds. First Nation School's Ojibwe language teacher Marie Gaudet outlined what each clan represents. The

loons and the cranes are the chief clans. The deer clan people are loving and nurturing. The marten clan is the warrior, and the bird clan carry spiritual knowledge. Medicine is represented by the bear clan. The turtle and fish are the intellectuals, the planners and the educators who share information among clans.

Gaudet said she became familiar with these stories in order to teach her students.

"First I went to ceremonies ... but there's a lot of written material out there, like the Mishomis Book," she said

"I'm always researching information to bring to our kids from all nations so that we may have children that represent those nations."

Gaudet added that with issues facing the indigenous community such as residential schools and missing and murdered women, the mosaic can also become a space for healing.



Sidra Sheikh // The Observer

Sean Martindale's community mural, 'Transitions,' is now available for the viewing pleasure of people on their way to the Coxwell TTC station.