



## RECESSION HITS HOME

Tough times arrive in Scarborough - Page 4

## CHINESE NEW YEAR

Celebrating year of the Ox - Page 8



# THE EAST TORONTO OBSERVER

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# Special delivery at Centenary

New birthing centre opens with special 1-month-old guest

**MATTHEW ALLEYS**  
The Observer

Where do babies come from?

In east Scarborough, they'll be arriving from a new starting point from now on: the Birthing and Newborn Centre at Centenary Hospital.

The centre was unveiled on Dec. 10, replacing the old facility that had not been upgraded since the hospital's opening in 1967.

### 'Hard work'

"Many years of planning, fundraising and hard work have gone into this project," said Janet Ecker, chair of the Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS), in a press release. "The impact that this Birthing and Newborn Centre will have on this community is significant."

Among those attending the opening were health promotion minister Margaret Best, Scarborough-Guildwood MPP, Scarborough-



Courtesy Centenary Hospital

Pranavi Sivakanthan, first baby to be born in new centre, sleeps peacefully with proud father Sivakanthan Kandiah and Scarborough-Guildwood MPP Margaret Best.

Guildwood MP Tom McKay, and former Scarborough-East MPP Mary Anne Chambers.

But sleeping through most of the celebration was the guest of honour: Pranavi Sivakanthan.

Pranavi was born on Dec. 11, weighing six pounds 11

ounces. She was not only the first baby to be born at the new centre but also the first of her family to be born in Canada.

First-time parents Rajeeni Sivakanthan and Sivakanthan Kandiah, recently from Sri Lanka and now residing in

Scarborough, returned to the centre to be part of this special occasion.

"We both feel very happy," said Kandiah, with neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) nurse Kanthi Kamalachandran translating in a press release. "Our doctor and nurses

were excellent, and we had great service."

Last year Centenary Hospital delivered 2,106 babies. Those using the new centre can take advantage of one of the 16 private delivery rooms designed to help families feel at home and the state-of-the-

art equipment, including a level-two NICU.

"We recognize the diversity of the Scarborough community and our staff are direct reflection of that," said RVHS public affairs director David Brazeau.

### Big role

"We have staff that speak various languages, including Mandarin and Tamil, so that families can feel comfortable when using our facility."

The \$20.7-million facility was funded by both public and private donations, but the Scarborough community has played a big role in the construction of the new centre.

"The RVHS Foundation, through a lot of hard work and many volunteers, raised an unprecedented \$1 million through community donations alone, which went into buying much of the new equipment in the Birthing and Newborn Centre," says Brazeau.

In honour of Pranavi being the first newborn at the centre, Centennial College has pledged to allow her to attend a program of her choice tuition-free when she is old enough.

# Stolen passports becoming hot black market item



LAUREN HUMMEL/The Observer

Duplicated Canadian passports hold high value on the black market and can be sold for up to \$10,000.

**RIMA RAMOUL**  
The Observer

Three months ago, police responded to a break-and-enter at a house in the South Asian community on Upper Rouge Trail in Scarborough.

Items that were stolen from the house, they found, included two citizenship cards and a passport.

It's a trend that police have noticed recently: the loss and thefts of passports and other citizenship documents.

It is not uncommon for lost or stolen citizenship cards and passports to find their way onto the black market.

Once there, the various identification pieces can be sold underground for very high prices and used to

commit identity theft.

In 2005, it was reported that Toronto Police had dismantled an operation trafficking fake ID pieces, such as passports and citizenship cards.

Most of the pieces of identification belonged to people from the South Asian community, most being from Sri Lanka.

The fraudsters were able to create fake ID pieces that resembled the ones they stole - so much so that it is difficult to tell the fake ones apart from the real ones.

Canadian passports are hot sellers on the black market since Canada benefits from visa-free access to several countries.

This means that Canadian citizens can by-pass the visa requirements upon entering specific countries.

The Internet is a 'virtual black market' enabling people to exchange information on how and where they can acquire

fake passports.

Some openly advertise the sale of the highly sensitive documents, offering a variety

**Once [a passport] has been reported lost or stolen, it is no longer valid and is not to be used for any travel**  
- Passport Canada

of options in terms of nationalities.

A few daring ones have provided their email addresses on forums, asking that those interested in purchasing passports may contact them to discuss the matter privately.

Many postings on the Internet claim that the price for a passport can actually go as high as \$10,000.

"Once [a passport] has been reported lost or stolen, it is no longer valid and is not to be used for any travel," reveals a posting on Passport Canada's website.

In the case of a misplaced or stolen passport, you can report to Passport Canada at 1-800-567-6868, or visit their website at [www.passportcanada.gc.ca/](http://www.passportcanada.gc.ca/).



# Councillor: Speed plow

Debate on winter parking in Scarborough

**STEPHANIE LEUNG**  
The Observer

Sidestreet parking in the winter in Scarborough is "one of those laws that sound great but wouldn't work nowadays," Ward 40 councillor Norm Kelly says.

He was responding to a proposed ban on street parking raised by Ward 38 councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker at Scarborough Community Council on Jan. 13.

De Baeremaeker said residents had complained about winter street parking in Scarborough.

"It's most aggravating because when someone parks in front of your house ... and

when the snow plow comes, there's a big high mound of snow all the way around your car," De Baeremaeker said.

The proposal is to ban street parking in the winter between 2 and 6 a.m. from Dec. 1 to the end of March.

Kelly said he doesn't believe the bylaw would be effective and it should already be common sense to move your vehicle in the winter.

Scarborough's street parking bylaw has a three-hour limit any time of the day. After three hours, parking is considered illegal.

Police officers cannot ticket those cars right away because they have to follow a procedure that requires them



STEPHANIE LEUNG/The Observer

A ban on winter sidestreet parking is being debated among Scarborough city councillors.

to go back three hours later to give out a ticket.

"On those nights that snow, you really create a hazard and inconvenience to your neighbours," De Baeremaeker said. "And that's not right."

If the ban were to take place, De Baeremaeker would give officers "the discretion to ticket or tow the vehicle."

De Baeremaeker intends to put into the bylaw a clause

that would allow the general manager of transportation to grant exemptions on specific streets where people do not have driveways to park on.

## Supports ban

Peter Noehammer, director for transportation services in Scarborough, agrees with the ban.

"It would certainly help our crews to clear our streets

the first time," he said.

Noehammer has spoken to colleagues in the city of North York where there is a ban on sidestreet parking from 2 to 6 a.m., making it easier for the plows.

De Baeremaeker has not spoken to snow operators in Scarborough but the City of Toronto's transportation staff in charge of snow plowing have told him they have his support, he said.

"I want to give the message to people who know they will hardly ever get a ticket because it's hard for the police to come back and visit them twice," De Baeremaeker said.

"They know they are taking advantage of the situation and they shouldn't."

The proposed ban is to be brought up again between February and April. Until then, we'll have to shovel.

## Police Briefs

### Car chase ends on foot

A Toronto man faces 11 charges, including possession of a firearm, after a car and foot chase across Scarborough on Jan. 16.

The chase began when police saw a car disobey a traffic sign. The driver allegedly tried to avoid police by turning into a driveway on Lawrence Ave. E.

Afterwards a man threw away a handgun while running away before being arrested on a rooftop.

Orin Johnson, 23, of Toronto appeared in court Jan. 17.

### Summer jobs offered by police

Police have begun accepting applications for summer job opportunities for this year's Youth in Police initiative. The program targets youth from local areas and aims to help them face challenges to achieve success in life.

An information session is to be held on Feb. 11 from 5 to 8 p.m. at 43 Division, 4331 Lawrence Ave. E.

The program accepts 100 students a year and application packages can be picked up until Feb. 25 at police divisions across the city.

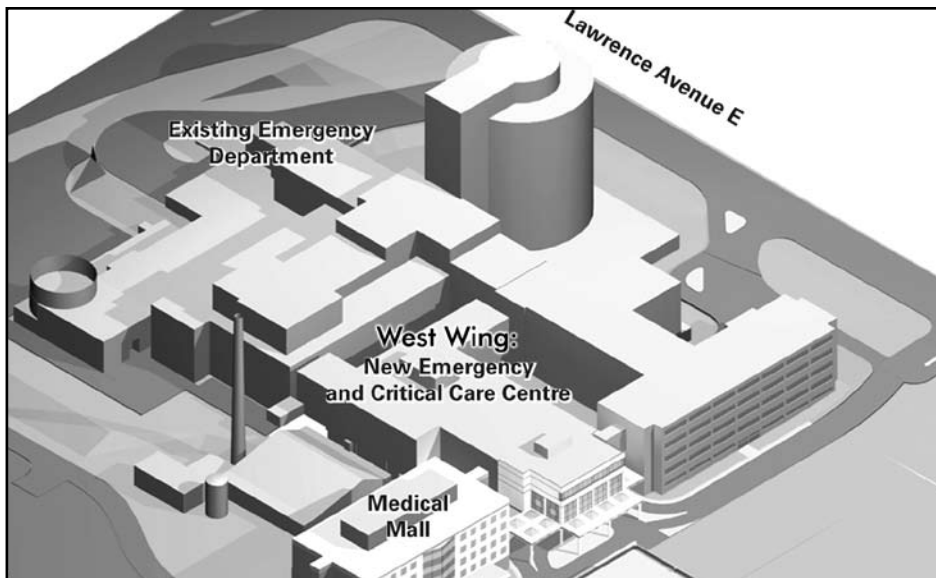


Image courtesy Scarborough Hospital

The new West Wing will help to reduce emergency wait times for patients.

# New ER coming soon

Scarborough Hospital to get state-of-the-art facility

**MONICA VALENCIA**  
The Observer

As more patients complain about emergency room wait-times, the construction of the new West Wing at The Scarborough Hospital General Campus aims to alleviate the congestion.

"The new West Wing will serve emergency patients and critical care patients, including intensive care and coronary care," says hospital spokesman Dave Bourne.

The project's total cost was around \$70 million of which \$55 million was provided by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the rest was raised by the hospital's local foundation. It is

expected to open this summer. Bourne said the expansion is expected to expedite diagnostic tests and reduce wait times for the 55,000 emergency patients that visit the hospital each year.

"Improvements such as a pediatric fast track waiting room and a rapid admission unit will help alleviate some of the wait times," he added.

## Accessibility

The public entrance on the west side provides easier access to the emergency and critical care units.

"The entrance is much better because it's easier to drop off and pick up patients," said taxi driver Haminder Singh.

Singh, however, said that he does not think the hospital's expansion will have any impact on the residents of the local community.

"People end up going to the hospital that is closest to their homes," Singh said.

Adil Syed, another local resident, agreed with Singh saying that in an emergency he would choose to go to the nearest emergency unit.

"When you are sick, it's all about proximity," Syed said. "It's not the facilities that matter because at the end of the day there is still a doctors' shortage."

The hospital's redevelopment, however, will help to enhance the services provided to the urban community.

# Black history on centre stage

Students take initiative to boost culture

**AMANDA LY**  
The Observer

The Caribbean African Student Association (CASA) at Woburn C.I. is producing an African heritage assembly to honour black history in Canada.

This is the first time in four years a student group has taken the initiative to give black history month any prominence in the school, said Woburn student Shaunte Parkin, CASA president.

The assembly is to highlight the achievements and hardships in black culture.

"Some people don't know it's black history month," said CASA vice-president Renee Campbell. "We want to bring more awareness. Finding information on black Canadians was difficult though."

Jason Monteith, who teaches African studies, said he had to scour university libraries

for literary texts on black Canadians because there was no textbook.

He found his students were familiar with the American civil rights movement of the 1960s, but knew little about their own history.

African Canadians have been in this country for more than 400 years, but little has been said about their settlement and contributions in mainstream discourse. Entire black communities have been displaced and buried by new settlements. Recently buildings were overturned to reveal cemeteries that belonged to the black community, something students haven't learned about.

Parkin said she was moved when Woburn showed Barack Obama's inauguration speech this month. "It's very empowering to see yourself represented. We have come so far."



AMANDA LY/The Observer

Woburn students put the spotlight on black history.



# Bluffers unmoved by wind energy

Toronto Hydro proposes a project that would move it closer to building 60 wind turbines at the Bluffs

**MONICA VALENCIA**  
The Observer

Residents at a public meeting on Jan. 20 expressed outrage at the Toronto Hydro proposal to install a wind measurement device offshore near the Scarborough Bluffs.

Many of the 500 people at the meeting questioned Hydro's presenters, arguing against the plan's feasibility and purpose.

One of the main doubts residents had was over the reason for choosing the Bluffs as an "appropriate" location.

"I don't know why they want to do it right here," John

Stehmann said. "I'm from Holland and there, the windmills are away from the population. I'm not against windmills, just against to them being on the lake."

Jack Simpson of Toronto Hydro said the site is suitable because that part of the lake has a unique geological feature where at four kilometres offshore the water level is still very shallow.

The open house meeting at Sir Wilfrid Laurier attracted about 500 people.

The audience had two and a half hours for questions concerning the plan of placing 60 windmills between

Scarborough and Ajax over an area of 25 kilometres near Lake Ontario.

The turbines could generate about 200 megawatts — one megawatt can power about 300 homes.

## Viability?

Another concern residents had is whether Toronto Hydro had done enough research to determine if the project was viable.

"First, we have to find out just how effective they are," Ingrid Inselsbacher said, who lives in the Guildwood area. "If there's not enough wind...

we would have just spent too much money and it would be too late to take them down."

Most residents worry the turbines might ruin the Bluffs' scenery. The area is well known as a natural landmark.

Residents say property values will decrease and fewer tourists will visit.

"I'm not happy with this project. I'd been living in Guildwood for 16 years and I love to walk by the lake twice a week," Monica Kinsman said, another resident of the area. "It would not only spoil a scenic site but also the flight of birds."

Residents say the windmills will not be cost-effective and that the revenue will not justify the construction expenses.

"Windmills on lakes are quite expensive and their maintenance costs more than for windmills on land," Stehmann said.

Stehmann said he thinks the drop on energy bills will not be significant and that in summer there will not be enough power to propel the windmills.

For the residents, however, the Bluffs is part of their homes and they are not ready to give that up.

# Snow removal law irks local resident

**MATT ALLEYNE**  
The Observer

Scarborough resident Roy Ward wants to know what responsibility the City of Toronto has for clearing its own property.

"If I have to clean the sidewalk in front of my house, then why shouldn't the city have to clean the sidewalks surrounding parks and community centres that they own?" says Ward.

Ward is a 63-year-old retiree who worked for GM for over 40 years and has lived in Scarborough for over 30 years. In his retirement he has taken up walking everyday with his dog, sometimes up to 40 kilometres. Throughout his neighbourhood of Port Union and Lawrence Avenue East, Ward finds many pedestrian obstacles due to improper snow clearing by the city around city owned properties.

Toronto requires all private residents and businesses to clear their sidewalks within 12 hours after a snow fall.

Ward frequently walks by parks and finds himself having to traverse paths that are

covered in ice or hard packed snow and some paths that have not been cleaned at all.

Zephine Wailoo, recreational programmer at the Port Union Community Centre, says turnout for seniors is a bit down, although the centre is still running all programs. Wailoo says the low numbers are more about seniors being cautious about venturing out in bad weather, than the street conditions.

"I think the city does a good job," says Wailoo. "They are here first thing in the morning and clear both the paths leading to the centre and the parking lot."

Ward agrees with Wailoo that the paths leading to the centre are perfectly clear, but it is the sidewalks adjacent to the street that are not.

The city's parks department is responsible for snow removal and salting on their properties including parking lots. The city's transportation department is responsible for the sidewalks.

Ward says he has been trying to voice his concerns to Mayor Miller and local Scarborough East city councillor Ron Moeser since January



MATT ALLEYNE/The Observer

Scarborough resident Roy Ward questions Toronto's responsibility for clearing snow.

2008, and has written emails and made phone calls.

"I do not disagree with Mr. Ward — we have to do better," said Moeser in response to the problem raised

by Ward.

Moeser says his office gets up to 120 calls a day concerning snow clearing, adding that these snow issues are taken care of within one

to two hours from when the call is received. This is in contrast to the city's request that residents wait at least 24 hours for a snow issue to be resolved.

# Armed thief attempts jewelry store robbery in Malvern

**RIMA RAMOUL**  
The Observer

A gun-wielding, would-be robber fled a Malvern jewelry store empty-handed after fighting with the owner on Jan. 13, police say.

Toronto Police reported a man wearing a balaclava entered Luxe Jewellery store in Malvern Town Centre shortly

after 7 p.m.

Armed with a shotgun, the man is said to have demanded the store owner hand over jewelry.

As the owner went to comply, the robber used the gun to shatter a display case to remove a quantity of jewelry.

A fight ensued between the two men and the suspect fled the store, police say.

The 54-year-old store owner suffered minor injuries.

The security desk at Malvern Town Centre is remaining tight-lipped.

"At this point and time, the matter is still under investigation and we are not able to give any details about what happened," Natasha Tiessen said, the mall's marketing director.

Luxe Jewellery was equipped with security cameras that were rolling while the robbery was in progress. Police have since retrieved the tapes but are not yet revealing if the suspect was captured on the images.

CP24 previously reported that police are looking for two suspects in connection to the robbery. However,

the store owner and Const. Wendy Drummond have confirmed to *The Observer* only one male entered the store.

He is described as a black male, between 19 and 27 years old, with brown eyes and a medium build. He is between 5-foot-7 and 5-foot-9 tall, and weighs 141 to 161 pounds. If you have any information, contact police.

## News Briefs

### Centennial to buy Guild Inn

Centennial College is in discussion with the City of Toronto to buy the Guild Inn for \$30 million.

The Guild Inn is to become a part of the college for training in the hotel and hospitality sector, according to Mark Toljagic said, communications officer for Centennial College. There are plans to repair the gatehouse, which was damaged recently in a fire.

### Call centre seeks employees

A research data collection company is recruiting 400 part-time employees at a new call centre set to open in Scarborough, according to the website [torontocommunitynews.com](http://torontocommunitynews.com).

Consumer Contact ULC said its new call centre in the McCowan Road and Hwy. 401 area is expected to open next month and recruiting has started for the research interviewer positions. For job inquiries, visit [www.consumercontact.com/career\\_cc.html](http://www.consumercontact.com/career_cc.html).

### Buffer to be built for bluffers

Erosion control work is underway in the Guildwood area, says Morranne McDonnell, a planning supervisor for the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

The TRCA is constructing a rock buffer between the bluffs and the lake to prevent erosion, she said. The area is under construction during the week and is closed to the public. However, it remains open on the weekend. The project started last summer and is to be finished in March, McDonnell said.

### Rec Centre to host Winterfest

A day of free winter fun will be held at the Port Union Recreation Centre. The centre is located at 5450 Lawrence Ave. E. The festival will be held on Jan. 31 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free activities, entertainment and inexpensive refreshments are planned.



FEATURE STORY

# Global recession hits home

## As the economy worsens, local businesses struggle to stay afloat while real estate market plummets

Empty parking lots speak a thousand words for small business owners in the community.

For residents, so do "For sale" signs which are now buried in the snow, overlooked like an old book collecting dust on a shelf. Since the recession has taken root in the global economy, this community in particular is beginning to see its effects.

As the unemployment rate continues to rise, it has sparked a chain reaction for privately owned local businesses like that of Jose De Leon. De Leon hears complaints from many of his customers who have lost their jobs. This has had a real impact on De Leon who owns and runs Joe's Pizza and Wings on Morningside Ave. and Sewells Rd. with his wife.

### Laid off

"Business is not good ... My regular customers used to come in three or four times a week, and buy three pizzas. Now they might come in once if at all, and only buy one pizza," said De Leon. "One of my customers was laid off from his job after 30 years working there. They cannot afford to buy as much as before."

After moving to Canada 13 years ago from Guatemala, De Leon took over 2-4-1 Pizza when they went bankrupt. He then took out a loan to open his own pizza place, and eight years later, he is struggling to make ends meet.

Unable to hire anyone, De Leon said he tries to cut costs by using one light and one oven which is difficult,



Karen AWADALLA

especially if they get busy as those types of ovens can take up to an hour to heat up. If the government were to help him hire someone, De Leon feels his business could improve by giving him time to do other things.

"They are focusing too much on big businesses," he said, referring to large company bailouts. "They forget about the small business being affected. Why not think about them?"

Saving the small businesses makes more sense to De Leon because there are more jobs to be had, he said.

"If they think about it, they have thousands of small businesses. So why bail out big auto companies, if no one can even afford to buy a car right now?"

In an effort to avoid considering the alternative, De Leon remains optimistic for the future of Joe's Pizza and Wings. His tired expression clearly shows he is unable to make time for anything else, as running the restaurant consumes all of his time. Like many private business owners in the area, De Leon depends on the survival of his store.

"If we go bankrupt, I don't know what we will do," he said.

In light of the current state of the economy, it's no surprise the areas of E8 to E11 (as shown on the map) from the east Scarborough area have seen an impact on the real estate scale. The zones' year-to-date figures published in the December 2008 edition of *Market Watch* reported only 46% of property which was listed actually sold. This is a nearly 10 per cent decline from sales in 2007 which the Toronto Real Estate Board called "the best year ever."

With the province's unemployment rate hitting 7.2% in December according to Statistics Canada, it is no wonder confidence in the current market is dwindling.

### Lack of security

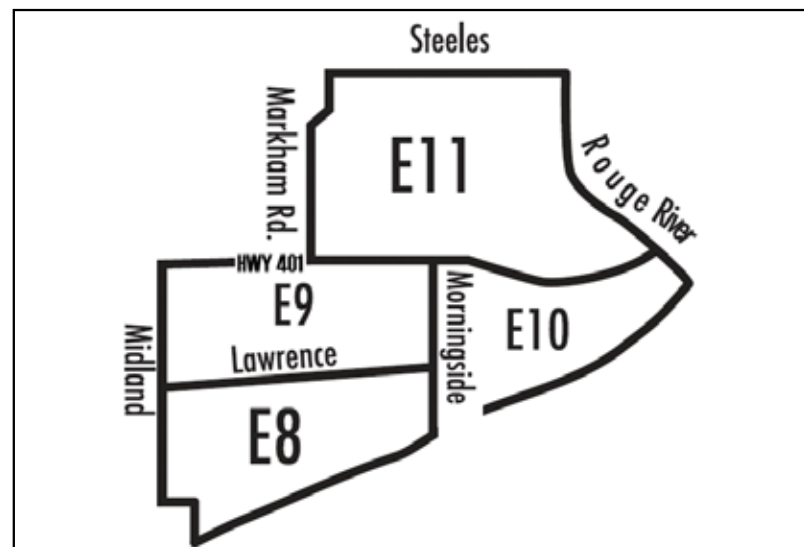
In an interview with the *National Post*, Jason Mercer, senior manager of market analysis for the Toronto Real Estate Board, said it is this lack of security which is keeping prospective buyers at bay.

"We have definitely seen a real shift over the last year or so in economic conditions... You weren't seeing as many people out there looking at purchasing a home," said Mercer.

While these programs may help some businesses find an out, for others it may be too late to qualify. For those like De Leon who are waiting for government action, neighbourly support may be enough to help his and such small businesses stay afloat.

Between desperate business owners needing to hire, and eager job seekers needing to be hired, employers can explore the City of Toronto's Employment and Social Services program. The program offers financial incentives for hiring a person that receives Ontario Works benefits. The YMCA also works with employers through their Targeted Wage Subsidy program. If eligible, they will help finance the employer's cost of hiring by giving out as much as a 60% wage subsidy.

Local business support means keeping money within home base. Since these businesses are invested in our community, their success reflects positively in the community's economy. It doesn't take much - in fact, De Leon proves that a couple pizzas can make all the difference.



Year-to-Date: December 2008							
Area	Listed	Sales	\$ Volume	Avg Price	Med Price	Avg DOM	Avg %List
E08	1,770	841	\$243,750,211	\$289,834	\$279,000	35	97
E09	2,100	1,069	\$256,202,384	\$239,665	\$226,900	35	97
E10	1,104	486	\$170,897,213	\$351,640	\$340,000	28	97
E11	2,233	907	\$235,672,439	\$259,837	\$253,000	42	97

*Market Watch* reported in December that only 46% of houses listed in east Scarborough were actually sold.



KAREN AWADALLA/The Observer

Jose De Leon, owner of Joe's Pizza & Wings on Morningside Avenue, is uncertain of the future of his restaurant.



KAREN AWADALLA/The Observer

For sale signs line the street in a new development at Staines and Tapscott Rd. Below, prices are being reduced to entice buyers. At bottom, a casualty of the auto sector downturn is the Johnston car dealership on Kingston Rd. near Guildwood Station.



KAREN AWADALLA/The Observer



COURTNEY ROBERTS/The Observer



## An observer's purpose

A newspaper is a reflection of a community. For *The Observer*, that community is the East Toronto area between Markham Road and the Metro Toronto Zoo. We can't be everywhere or report everything, so stories are run based on their potential impact on the community.

An outsider looking into a community sees its statistics and achievements, the kinds of things our paper covers, like community and sporting events and, more often than not, crime.

Let's be honest here. Our community isn't known for being safe and peaceful. It's known for robberies, muggings and murders. These are the kinds of things you inevitably read about in the paper, the stories with the most impact.

This reflection of the community, which you're holding in your hands now, is both opening your eyes to what's happening around you, while perpetuating what you already know.

At what point does what we're writing and what you're reading stop informing you and start enforcing stereotypes?

It's hard not to think that you're enforcing the negative image of east Toronto, when you cover crimes — the subject our community is most known for. The hard truth is that these things are happening. Turning a blind eye might appease our conscience, but it won't make us any safer.

We at *The Observer* aim for a balanced reflection of our community. Our coverage shows both what we should be proud of, while highlighting areas we need to focus on. Our negative stories are more than just stories, they're vital links in a chain of consequences that help stop crimes going on around us. They show that our community is aware and we're willing to share our experiences with each other to put a stop to it.

It is our job not just to inform but to inspire change, be that in your perceptions of a culture or in pressuring the city to stop ignoring your snowed-in streets. We hope after informing and inspiring that we can change those statistics and focus on our community's achievements. So that outsiders looking in won't have a negative perception, and so we can become known for our strengths rather than our weaknesses.

- Maxx Smith

## Through the looking glass

Modern technology has been developed to simplify our lives, but it's also driving us apart. We use technology like cell phones, satellites and robots every day. We create software to make thinking tasks easier and hardware to make physical jobs easier. But at what cost?

People once had no choice but to go to someone's house to speak with them, lest they have to send a letter. Telephones arrived, and we no longer need to see someone to talk to them.

Computers soon followed, and now we don't even need to leave the room to interact with others. We chat, send e-mail, and network with others through the Internet, sharing thoughts, pictures and videos. Even finding dates no longer requires going out to the bar or club. Online dating sites are soaring in number and even have prime-time commercials on television. Everything can be done from a safe haven. Today's society is built so that social interactions happen through a screen; our generation's looking glass is the computer monitor.

That's where the dilemma lies. Immediate communication lets us make superficial decisions and choose some people and ideas over others. This medium doesn't allow us to gauge people as they really are or learn from them. With our dependence on technology we can't live and interact with others socially.

Without e-mail or telephones we couldn't have the buffer that allows us to hide what we truly think and feel. We are so used to having the time to decide what we want to say in an e-mail, that it shocks us to realize we might have to think on the fly in order to co-exist with the people around us.

However, technology serves us well if we have family and friends around the world, or if we want a question answered.

What we're left with is a costly paradox. In a society where we have the capability to talk to anyone in the world, we don't even know our own neighbours.

- Phillip Smalley



TEVY PILC/The Observer

## Teachers need wake-up call

After hearing what the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) needed to accomplish in order to avoid a province-wide elementary school teacher strike, one has to wonder if someone forgot to set the alarm in the morning. Better yet, who hit the snooze button?

Unless "significant progress" is made in contract talks with school boards by Feb. 13, the ETFO is threatening a strike vote that could put almost 73,000 public elementary school teachers on the picket lines by the end of March. This comes after the union rejected a generous \$800 million offer that included a 12 per cent pay increase over four years, more "prep time" between classes, and smaller classrooms for Grades 4 to 8.

### Not about money

This failure was due to unsuccessful negotiations with the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA). The association couldn't come to an agreement on how to spend that \$800 million.

ETFO President David Clegg argues the big issue is not all about money, but about providing equal resources that secondary schools receive and increasing supervision times before classes and lunch breaks. The OPSBA agrees, saying the money is necessary for what the ETFO requests.

The ineptitude of the union is apparent,



Tevy PILC

based on the issues they have proposed. For one, the rejected offer had a catch, a Dec. 15 deadline after which the offer would decrease to \$268 million — which is precisely what happened.

Even if the union found a way to receive more equal resources, there would be less money available to do so, especially with Ontario's stagnant economy. If the union and the board couldn't even decide how to divide \$800 million, wouldn't it have made more sense to accept the offer rather than have less usable money?

You don't have to search far to grasp the negative impacts of an educational union strike in Ontario. York University students can relate to what potential problems elementary students may encounter, not to mention the empathy they share with worried parents.

Many of those York students were probably caught up in a very similar strike earlier in their lives. Twelve years ago 126,000 Ontario elementary school teachers staged the largest strike in Canadian history. All public and Catholic

elementary schools in Ontario were closed with approximately 2.1 million students out of class. That strike was a protest against a government proposal to overhaul the education system by weakening local school boards, which led the union and board to work together.

Conversely, this strike seems to go against that partnership, which has gradually progressed since the bitter strike.

Indeed the relationship between the provincial government and the teachers' union has come a long way since the days of the Harris government in the mid-1990s. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government have been more than gracious and responsible for nurturing that relationship. A strike would completely offset that progress.

### Unable to work

Ultimately, children and their parents should not have to deal with the possibility of extensive labour disruptions in elementary schools come March, when families are already confronted with a recession. If a strike does take place, many parents will not be able to go to work, or will have to pay someone to watch and care for their children — a substantial financial burden.

Both sides have to give in, and garner significant losses — self-inflicted by EFTO — but if the teachers go on strike, it will be the students and their parents who will lose the most.

### The East Toronto OBSERVER

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## Sports Briefs

### B-ballers bring home the win

Scarborough boys basketball teams dominated the competition with impressive victories on Jan. 22.

Mother Teresa's senior and junior boys basketball teams flexed their muscles with victories over Yeshivat Ohr Chaim. The seniors won 90-36 with Ashton Khan's 19 points leading the way and the juniors won 92-32 with Stevie Squires scoring 28 points.

Pope John Paul II's senior and junior boys basketball teams were also victorious in their games over St. Patrick.

The seniors won 73-33 with Negus Webster scoring 16 points. The juniors won 74-27 with Hassan Abdullahi scoring 17 points.

The victories came only three days after Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II's varsity teams squared off, with the Titans winning with a score of 79-53.

### PJP II girls victorious

Pope John Paul II's junior and senior girls volleyball teams both triumphed over Cardinal Newman's teams on Jan. 21. The seniors team won 2-0 and the juniors team fought back from a set down to win with a score of 2-1.

### Varsity boys skate to win

Malvern Collegiate Institute's varsity boys hockey team defeated Humber College Collegiate Institute 2-1 on Jan. 20. Dylan Carter and Allister Warren scored the goals for Malvern.

### Cricket camp starts Feb. 1

A youth indoor cricket camp is to begin on Feb. 1 for ages five to 19. Participants learn coaching, batting, bowling and fielding. The cost is \$10 per session and runs Sundays, noon to 2 p.m., until April at North Star Community Centre.

To register for the program call Musa Patel at 647-289-9130, or visit [scarboroughdivingclub.com](http://scarboroughdivingclub.com).

# Mother Teresa dominates



TRISTAN CARTER/The Observer

Maurice Walker powers his way to the basket to score for the Mother Teresa Titans.

## Boys basketball team defeats Henry Carr

TRISTAN CARTER  
The Observer

The Mother Teresa Titans successfully defended their home court against Henry Carr at the third annual Blessed Mother Teresa invitational basketball tournament which ended Jan 17.

Competition at the 16-team, three-day tournament was fierce. Both play-off games involved teams among the city's top 10 and were decided by single digits.

"We had to play a hard game in the semi-finals to get to the finals," said Ashton Khan, Titans' point guard, who was also named a tournament all-star. "It was two big wins for us."

Tournament MVP Maurice Walker scored 29 points against West Hill to lead the Titans into the finals. Walker contributed 18 points in the championship game and Ashton Khan scored a game high of 19 points. This included a pair of threes that sparked a 10-0 run for the Titans at the end of the third quarter. Mother Teresa led 53-40

heading into the final eight minutes of the game but let Henry Carr climb within four points with under a minute left. However, with a crucial possession in hand, the Crusader's coach mistakenly called a timeout when his team had none remaining, which resulted in a technical foul call.

This season has been a good one for Gallacher. Mother Teresa is currently ranked second in the city according to HoopTownGTA.com. They were ranked fourth entering the tournament.

After earning a 38-6 record, taking home a TDCAA silver medal and coming in fourth at OFSAA last year, the goals for this season are clear.

"A success for us would be winning a TDCAA championship and winning a medal at OFSAA, being one of the top three teams in the province," said Khan.

This victory is sweet payback. Mother Teresa lost last year's TDCAA final in an overtime game against the Henry Carr Crusaders.

**We had to play a hard game**

- Ashton Khan

# Ottawa curler takes provincial title

PHILLIP SMALLEY  
The Observer

For the 12th time in 28 years, Bruce Delaney's team has swept to victory at the Ontario provincial senior curling championships. He defeated Kirk Ziola of Chatham Granite Club 10-1 Jan. 18 at the Scarboro Golf and Country Club.

Delaney was definitely not expecting such a big difference in scoring.

"We expected this to be last rock," he said. "Kirk Ziola's is a world-class team. To get a game like this where it ends 10-1 is really an anomaly and you don't see that very often."

Delaney's team, the RCN (Navy) Curling Club, hails from the Ottawa region and many hometown supporters made the long trip to Scarborough to cheer his team on.

Delaney and teammates have been a large presence in curling, especially in the Ottawa region, with more than 12 wins between them in the City of Ottawa bonspiels since 1980.

Kirk Ziola recently moved



PHILLIP SMALLEY/The Observer

Bruce Delaney (behind) looks on as Kirk Ziola tries to sweep away the victory. Delaney's team went on to win 10-1.

up to the senior division after having success in other competitions and was considered a tournament favourite going in.

Over 150 people were packed into the viewing gallery on semi-final day, but crowds got thinner as local favourite Bob Turcotte was knocked out before the final game.

"This is arguably the largest crowd that the senior

provincials has had," Gregg Truscott said, co-chair of the organizing committee at Scarboro Golf Club.

All the teams had to first make it out of a zone play down, and then had to defeat others in a regional qualification before making it to the tournament in Scarborough. The tournament began round robin play on Wednesday, Jan. 14.

In preparation for his

victory Delaney stressed the experience that comes with playing the game day in and day out.

"Really it's a whole chess game on ice, you have to study all the scenarios and possibilities and you play the percentages. When you play it long enough, you know them when you see them," he said.

The senior's championship has helped to bring some light

on a sport that many people may not have had a chance to play or involve themselves with.

The provincial finals, along with other events have "helped to raise the profile of curling in Scarborough," Truscotte said.

"I think although it's a senior tournament it is still quality curling, and there's an awful lot of quality curling on TV," Delaney said.





About 100 people gathered at the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto to ring in the New Year last week.



# Scarborough celebrates **YEAR of the OX**



There were dancers and singers on hand to join in the celebrations and booths selling traditional good luck charms for the year ahead.



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