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# THE EAST TORONTO OBSERVER



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## Fixing potholes a bumpy ride

KATRINA ROZAL  
The Observer

Several medium-sized potholes sit on Dean Park Rd. about 10 metres from the intersection with Meadowvale Rd. One *Observer* staff member reported the potholes to the city on March 31.

Last month the city encouraged residents to report potholes. They promised it would take four business days to repair them.

Four business days later the reported potholes were filled with water, not asphalt. But city records indicate they were filled on April 7 after an evaluation was done April 1.

A road services city worker said there are discrepancies between city records and actual pothole repairs. She said several residents complained they were standing beside a pothole they reported on several days before.

### Main vs. side streets

But some East Scarborough drivers are seeing improvements with the road repairs. It took the *Observer* reporter 40 minutes to find Scarborough potholes to report to the city. Some of the potholes familiar to the reporter, including those formerly on Morningside Road, were already paved.

"Main streets are better but side streets are still the same, side streets still have potholes," says Andrew Ng, a resident in the Highland Creek area. "I want all roads repaired properly."

Ng says potholes cause him to drive dangerously. He steers his car to avoid the potholes, causing his car to swerve or go on the opposite lane.

It costs around \$25 to fix a pothole. Each year it costs the city about \$6 million. The city repaired more than 275,000 potholes last year.

If you see a pothole call 416-599-9090, press the pound key, followed by 164.



PHILLIP SMALLEY/The Observer

Ed Flores serenades diners with a karaoke song during 'A Night Out With Zach Bandolin'. Flores and his wife are part of a karaoke singing team. See page 5.

## Teachers vote for strike action

MAXX SMITH  
The Observer

Eighty per cent of high school teachers from the Toronto district voted for strike action on March 31, but kids won't be rejoicing just yet.

"There is no strike at this point. The union only held a strike vote," confirms May Moore, a spokesman for the Toronto District School Board (TDSB).

The vote in favor is only a hint at what could come much later, not an immediate worry for parents, teachers, and students.

"The union is not in a legal position to strike at this time," Moore says. "Negotiations between the board and the union are on hold while the two parties await a ruling from the Ontario Labour Relations Board which could

take as long as two months. Negotiations will resume after that point."

The main point of contention between the two sides is how much supervision time will be required from each teacher during the year. The TDSB wants teachers to commit more time to supervising students outside of class time, with compensation for doing so.

Meanwhile, teachers are maintaining that they are trained in classroom management and not as hall monitors. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) issued a media release, which stated, "this

vote shows that Toronto high school teachers are very serious about getting a collective agreement and frustration with the Toronto District School Board's violation of the conditions stipulated in the Provincial Framework Agreement." At this rate a compromise is uncertain, according to Moore.

"If both sides agree," she says, "an arbitrator could be brought in to help hammer out a deal," in the event that neither side reaches an agreement.

For now there is no strike, but unless some cooperation starts happening between the parties, it remains a strong possibility

**There is no strike at this point. The union only held a strike vote.**  
- May Moore

## Pre-dawn raids sweep T.O. streets

Two major Scarborough gangs busted; guns and drugs seized

TEVY PILC  
The Observer

Two Scarborough gangs were the focus of a major crackdown by Toronto Police this week. A series of pre-dawn raids throughout the GTA on April 1 resulted in 125 arrests and the seizure of guns, street drugs, cash and cars. On the morning of the arrests, police dispatched more than a thousand police officers.

The raids were a part of Project Fusion, the newest program launched by Toronto Police in targeting organized crime. The program began back in September, immediately eyeing two Scarborough gangs.

"Both the MNE and the 400 Crew are involved in trafficking of firearms and drugs. The investigation further determined that both

of these criminal organizations had resorted to violence to advance and protect their criminal enterprise," Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair said.

MNE is an acronym for Markham Road and Eglinton Avenue while 400 Crew is a reference to an address on McCowan Road. Although the names represent the concentrated locations of the two groups, police clearly outlined the vastness of their operations beyond those areas.

A majority of the 161 warrants issued were in the Scarborough area, particularly at a four-apartment complex at Markham Road and Eglinton

Avenue. Police identified 46 of those arrested to be associated with the gangs.

"Today's operation has been one of unprecedented scale, exceeding even that of our previous gun and gang investigations," Blair said.

Police also tracked down those allegedly responsible for the supply of firearms and illegal drugs to these criminal organizations. This required the assistance of other units, particularly Durham Regional Police.

"It is the culmination of a complex and an obviously highly successful organized crime investigation which over many months has identified suspects and collected evidence."

This evidence not only led police to the street gangs' violent criminal activity, but also to persons and organizations responsible for supplying the guns and the drugs.

The day after the raid, police made three more arrests around Markham Road and Kingston Road in an unrelated incident, but a community alert identified the arrests as a follow-up to the April 1 raids.

Of those arrested 50 people were soon released with no charges laid. As of April 3, when police concluded laying all charges, 80 people remained in custody for 755 charges. Four of those are under the age of 18.

The list of the arrests can be found on the Toronto Police website.



BLAIR

### Items seized in Project Fusion

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| ■ Two AK-47 rifles         | ■ \$431,340 cash           |
| ■ One sawed-off shotgun    | ■ 344 grams of crack       |
| ■ 759 rounds of ammunition | ■ 19.39 kilos of cocaine   |
| ■ 30,000 tabs of ecstasy   | ■ 29.35 kilos of marijuana |

## NEWS

# If someone asks where you live...

## Homelessness survey to stop everyone out on April 15

**RIMA RAMOUL**  
The Observer

If you get stopped on April 15 and asked if you have a place to spend the night, don't be offended.

A citywide survey is sending dozens of volunteers out scouring the streets of Scarborough looking for the homeless.

Volunteers for the second Street Needs Assessment (SNA) are instructed to stop anyone that evening, whether they look homeless or not, and ask if they have a place.

The survey is to be carried out at emergency shelters and neighbourhood streets around the city, including Scarborough.

The stereotype of what a

homeless person looks like is an issue many participants from the 2006 SNA brought up.

"You cannot tell who is homeless," one team leader said then. "If we had not spoken to everyone we encountered, we would have missed the one interview we did. We would have overlooked this man because he looked like a university prof on his way to class."

So far 1,000 volunteers and 300 team leaders are signed up to participate in the 2009 survey, but more volunteers are needed.

### Funding decisions

The results of the SNA are intended to help the city decide what services to fund.

Data collected from the 2006 SNA revealed many things, one of which was that Aboriginal people were largely represented among the homeless.

As a result of this finding, 20 per cent of all Federal



**RIMA RAMOUL**/The Observer

A man passes by the Toronto Homeless Memorial near the Eaton Centre that was built to remind people of all those who died as a result of living on the streets.

Homelessness Partnership Initiative funding was invested directly into various Aboriginal organizations, project manager Iain De Jong says.

The City of Toronto

website states that the 2006 survey also revealed that one out of 10 homeless people did want permanent housing and help getting it.

They also said that drop-in centers were the top service

they used the most. Now the city is working to strengthen that area.

"The purpose of doing the 2009 Street Needs Assessment is to see how the population and needs have

changed since 2006," De Jong says.

A few volunteers on April 15 will also be asked to be part of control groups, to ensure that the data collected is dependable.

People who will take part in the control groups and those acting as team leaders will receive \$100. Team leaders need to have specific qualifications, however, as they are required to have a background in social services.

### Caring people needed

A team leader who participated in the 2006 SNA said that he was impressed by the number of volunteers who participated.

"Lots of good people still care about doing good work," the team leader said.

To take part in the second Street Needs Assessment program, call 416-397-5224, or visit [toronto.ca/housing](http://toronto.ca/housing).

The last day to sign up is April 14.

# There may be money in your basement

## Rebates for rental renovations

**MATTHEW ALLEYNE**  
The Observer

With the increased need for affordable housing in Scarborough, and a larger enrolment at U of T Scarborough, many families and students are looking for a "clean and quiet" place to call home, says Ryan Loy of Scarborough.

Homeowners looking for a way to bring in some extra income could stand to benefit from this, by using their basement as a rental property.

"With many apartments the rent is too high, and you have to worry about pests, whether it is clean and the noise level," said Loy.

"I know a lot of people who feel more comfortable in basement apartments because it feels more like a home, and frankly it is a lot cheaper than most other places."

Toronto homeowners must follow certain procedures when creating a basement

unit in their homes. Besides the general work permit that can be obtained at the Scarborough Civic Centre, homeowners must ensure the unit has separate tenant parking, outside entrance, bathroom and kitchen, and a fire barrier between the basement and the upper level.

"The various requirements of the city are not there to make it difficult for homeowners to create a second dwelling, but for the safety of the tenants and the landlord," says Theo Lawrence, of the City of Toronto.

### Tax rebate available

The government is offering an incentive for homeowners to spruce up their homes for themselves and possible tenants: a 15 per cent tax rebate for home renovations.

The Home Renovation Tax Credit (HRTC) is applicable on services and goods between \$1,000 and \$10,000 spent between January 27,



**MATTHEW ALLEYNE**/The Observer

A Scarborough basement has been renovated into a home for a second family.

2009 and February 1, 2010.

According to the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA), the work can be done on a home, cottage or condominium unit. It can range from kitchen renovations and new bathrooms to renovating and finishing a basement.

### Incentives offered

"The cost of renovating a basement can vary depending on several factors," says Tom Kentros of ATK General Construction Ltd. "It

can range from \$5,000 to \$50,000 depending on what needs to be done."

The 15 per cent means a maximum of \$1,350 cash back, but shopping around can reveal retailers and contractors offering incentives for your business. For example, Home Depot is offering up to a \$1,000 in gift cards to customers looking to take advantage of the HRTC

**For details on requirements, see [torontoobserver.ca](http://torontoobserver.ca).**

# Displaced residents sue over explosion

**COURTNEY ROBERTS**  
The Observer

Residents of 3650 Kingston Rd., still displaced after an electrical explosion more than three weeks ago, say they are filing a class action suit against Toronto Hydro.

Dolly Andrews, who has been moved three times since the explosion, said she is glad residents are taking action.

"All [Toronto Hydro is] saying is a couple more weeks," Andrews said. "We had to get that from them because nobody would tell us anything."

The residents are suing Toronto Hydro and the builder in hopes of gaining compensation for the time and money they have lost due to the explosion.

They have served the defendants and will go before a judge to see if the action can be certified as a class action suit.

How much they might receive if they are successful depends on a number of factors, said Ted Charney, one of the lawyers representing the residents.

"It's a combination of

emotional distress and the inconvenience of being displaced. Its an arbitrary figure that will have to be decided by the court."

The calculation also depends on how much longer residents are away from home.

According to Andrews, one good thing came out of the explosion.

"It's great to see how we all just came together in this time," said Andrews.

"We never thought we were going to be away for so long."

Andrews still hasn't been told when she'll be able to move back home.

After staying at a community center for a few days, residents were told to contact their insurance companies. Andrews was told her policy would cover only her hotel stay for two weeks, she said.

She buys all of her meals because there isn't much place to store and cook food and still doesn't have all of her clothing from her apartment.

Visit [kingstonroadclassaction.com](http://kingstonroadclassaction.com) for info.

**For an interview clip, see [torontoobserver.ca](http://torontoobserver.ca).**

**We never thought we were going to be away for so long.**  
- Dolly Andrews

# Building a business centre of health, hope



GESILAYEFA AZORBO/The Observer

Site supervisor Rick Sheppard, surveys the construction of a proposed medical business plaza near Morningside and Milner Avenues.

**GESILAYEFA AZORBO**  
The Observer

The medical retail plaza being built at 1145 Morningside Ave. has an innovative selling point for prospective business owners: rather than just leasing, they can buy their units outright.

"We give the opportunity for the business owners to become landlords themselves," said Hannif Highclass.

Highclass is one of the group of developers behind the construction of Chand Morningside Plaza. He said that using this business model gives hope to those people

who have either lost their jobs or fear for their job security.

Site superintendent Rick Sheppard can relate to these situations. He hasn't always worked in construction.

"My full-time job was in the manufacturing sector of the automotive market," Sheppard said. "The money was good, the benefits were good."

But when the factory closed, he decided to follow his true love, construction.

"In the economic times we're in now, people that have lost their jobs are forced to find other ways to make an

income, and if you can invest into something it's going to always be yours."

The plaza is also a good business investment because of several medical-related businesses planned, Highclass and Sheppard said. In addition to a pizza place, restaurants, and salons, the plaza is to include pharmacies, dentists and similar businesses not found in the area.

The multiculturalism of the area will also be represented in the businesses set to occupy the plaza.

It should be completed by August, after which tenants can move in..

## Blood typed at health fair

### Rouge Valley holds annual info session

**LAURA ROSS**  
The Observer

A prick of your finger could save your life.

The Canadian Blood Services showed how at the fourth annual Rouge Valley Centenary Health Fair at Rouge Valley Hospital on April 2.

The blood service was one of a dozen booths staffed by volunteers to inform the public on healthcare issues.

At the blood-typing booth, they pricked each visitor's finger, dropped three drops into various chemicals and within a minute could tell blood type and Rh factor — what determines whether the blood is positive or negative. This information could save your life if you need an emergency

transfusion.

Other booths presented private homecare services. These caregivers provide in-home assistance to patients. They provide help for pre- and post-natal care, palliative care and meal planning.

#### Raising awareness

April being Cancer Awareness Month, several booths were devoted to the subject. One booth's volunteer, registered nurse Lisa Owens, works in the Chemotherapy Clinic at Centenary.

Her booth had pamphlets about each kind of cancer and a model breast with four lumps in it. The model was used to give an example of what tumours feel like. The earlier cancer is found, the easier it is to treat before it has a chance to spread.

"That's why this fair is about awareness, prevention and promoting health, telling people how to stay healthy so they don't end up in hospital,"

Owens said.

The Look Good Feel Better booth was devoted to another aspect of cancer. It is a charity program that helps women with cancer rediscover their beauty. They offer a free workshop where beauty experts teach the women makeup tricks to hide the effects of chemotherapy. Courtesy of the Canadian Cosmetic.

There was also a reading of Like Fish Out of Water: Men Being Helpful to Women with Cancer, written by Dr. Ross Gray and Dr. Karen Fergus based on their research and interviews with real men whose wives have cancer.

The script's development was sponsored by the Canadian Cancer Society and was read by Patrick Black, Janet Canavan and Paul Soren. It aims to bring awareness to the struggles these men face and gives tips on how they can support their wives.

**For more on this story, visit [torontoobserver.ca](http://torontoobserver.ca).**



LAURA ROSS/The Observer

Registered nurse Lisa Owens displays a simulation breast intended to help women identify lumps.

## City ok's new hires

**STEPHANIE LEUNG**  
The Observer

East Scarborough unemployment may be eased by the hiring of more workers in the city's 2009 budget, Ward 44 councillor Ron Moeser says.

It should also provide more staff and funding for local facilities, he said.

"All the new staff will help East Scarborough improve our water facilities and recreation centres," Ron Moeser said.

The city passed an \$8.7-billion budget on March 31, including the hiring of more than 1,000 new city staff and a four per cent property tax increase. However, Ward 37 councillor Michael Thompson dislikes the proposal.

"I didn't support the hiring of new staff for the city because it wasn't necessary," Thompson said. "One needs to recognize that it isn't the time to bring in more staff."

## News Briefs

### Gun found after daytime robbery

Police arrested two teens and seized a firearm after receiving a call about a break-and-enter near Finch Avenue and Middlefield Road April 1. Police say two males fled the scene and hopped a fence around 12:40 p.m. Two males were arrested and a revolver was seized following a brief chase. The males, ages 15 and 16, were charged with breaking and entering.

### LRT still in the works

Provincial funding for the Sheppard East light rapid transit line is still in the works but the TTC is going ahead with work on the \$944-million project, says chief general manager Gary Webster. This week Dalton McGuinty announced the province would fund three projects in the LRT transit plan but Sheppard East wasn't one of them.

### Rouge Valley park expands

City and federal officials proposed a plan to triple the size of Rouge Valley Park and turn it into a national park. The proposal would increase Canada's largest urban park by 28,000 acres. City councillor Glenn De Baermaker and Conservative MP Michael Chong have strongly supported the idea which would create a natural landbank on the city's east side.

### Murder suspect named

Police released the identity of another suspect wanted in the Alexis Eracleous murder case. A male, identified as Verette Andrew Jno-Baptiste, 24, is wanted for second-degree murder. Baptiste is described as black with a dark complexion, five-foot-nine, with short hair, glasses, and jewelry on his teeth. Anyone with info is asked to call 416-808-7400.

### Local resident wins \$4 million

Waclaw Chwala of Scarborough recently won \$3,993,367 playing Lotto 6/49. The draw occurred on March 25 but Chwala didn't know about the win until April 1 and thought it was an April Fool's joke at first. The ticket was purchased at a hardware store on Markham Road. Chwala plans to use the winnings to purchase a house and help family members.

### Gunfight in park after party

A man, 23, was sent to hospital with an abdomen wound on April 5 after a fight at a house party turned into a gunfight at a nearby park, police report. Police were called to the park near Morningside Avenue and Lawrence Avenue East around midnight on Sunday. The fight allegedly began at a house near Danzig Street and continued outside.

# FEATURE

# Legion honours veterans

Soldiers from World War II and the Korean War share their wisdom and experiences



PHOTOS BY AMANDA LY/The Observer

War vets in uniform stand at attention at the Highland Creek Branch on April. 5 to commemorate their service in WWII and the Korean war.

**Y**ou won't see their stories in textbooks, but the heroism of these men and women changed history. And the Royal Canadian Legion is making sure they are not forgotten.

On April 5, the Highland Creek Branch honoured over 300 World War II and Korean War veterans, many of whom recalled their wartime memories. Last year 400 attended. The number dwindles down every year as vets die.

Clifford B. Guest, 103, was the oldest vet in attendance, but didn't look a day over 80. The former wing commander of the Royal Canadian Air Force served in the military from 1940 to 1944 and credits his wife for convincing him to join the war.

"I'm very proud of the work Canadians did," Guest said.

But his greatest achievement is his 60-year marriage. He and his wife started with a combined income of \$1,500 a year, but when Guest's wife lost her job as a teacher, they never went into debt, he said. "She was a wonderful woman. You get the wrong girl, she can make you bankrupt."

To our troops in Afghanistan, Guest stressed the importance of finding the right partner to spend your life with.

Irizawa Takao, 79, a second-generation Japanese Canadian lived in Vancouver when the Korean War broke out. Discrimination made it impossible for Takao to have a white-collar job, so in 1950 he joined the military and worked in payroll, he said.

While in Korea and Japan, Takao saw things he still cannot get over.

"I found it very disconcerting. All the people were dislocated with-



Amanda Ly

**I'm very proud of the work Canadians did**

- Clifford B. Guest, RCAF veteran

out homes, no source of income, little kids poorly dressed, and very little food. It was very sad to see that. The whole country was blown apart. I never want to see that again."

War vets often don't want to recall violent and traumatizing experiences.

"I don't normally like talking about things like that because I put it out of mind and that's where I like to keep it," said Eric Pierson, a WWII navy mechanic.

But sometimes the story is written on their face.

A scar from a shrapnel marks Alyre Gallant's right cheek. Gallant was a tank gunner in the invasion of Normandy.

"I've seen a guy's head blown up, but you're not sure what you've done most of the time. A shell would explode and maybe 10, 15 people got killed, but you couldn't see because it was so far away," Gallant said.

"I came out of it pretty good, except for a little bit of arthritis and a sore ankle. Then I got home and got married."

When they came home there was no military or government support unless they were severely disabled. To be honoured and reconnect with their peers is something they won't forget, the vets said.

They also stressed the importance of supporting our troops in Afghanistan. The Wounded Warriors fund takes care of soldiers coming back from Afghanistan and around the world. Their next fundraising event will be a concert on April. 19 at Winston Churchill C.I. For ticket information call 416-759-0164.

For more photos visit [torontoobserver.ca](http://torontoobserver.ca)



Left to right: Clifford B. Guest, Irizawa Takao, Tom Storey, Eric Pierson, and the Gallant brothers proudly show off their medals and share their painful and sometimes funny stories of their war experiences.

# Silver screen calls out to amateurs

**ANTHONY GEREMIA**  
The Observer

Filmmakers are as important as bankers, Henry Wong is setting out to prove.

That's why he's organizing the first annual Toronto Youth Film Festival, seeking submissions from amateur filmmakers from universities across the GTA.

"Just because someone's made something, and it may not stimulate the economy as directly as, say, a banker would, that does not mean that the thoughts and perspectives of this person does not reflect society," Wong says.

He's looking for entries that "demonstrate both an art and a social commentary of some sort."

## Help for students

Wong wants the submissions from filmmakers age 18 to 26, with preference given to students. The goal is to motivate students to produce high-quality work, as opposed to "stuff that people like to put on YouTube simply for the sake of putting it up," Wong says.

"Just because it's cheap doesn't mean it has to suck."

Wong wants to encourage development of the craft, as many students end up pushing their filmmaking to the side, where it becomes more of a hobby.

The plan is to screen the submissions in June before a crowd of journalists and film scholars, so those who

submit will be able to "motivate themselves to go all the way out in terms of their filmmaking." By impressing a professional crowd, he says, participants will not only get to showcase their work but also get feedback, to help them improve on any future endeavours.

Wong has even struck a deal with Cineplex to show the films on one of their screens, charging half the normal admission.

## How to win

Submissions will be judged based on their storytelling prowess, and how the screenwriters, performers, editors, and cinematographers tell the tale. Aside from this, as long as the work is professional, anything goes.

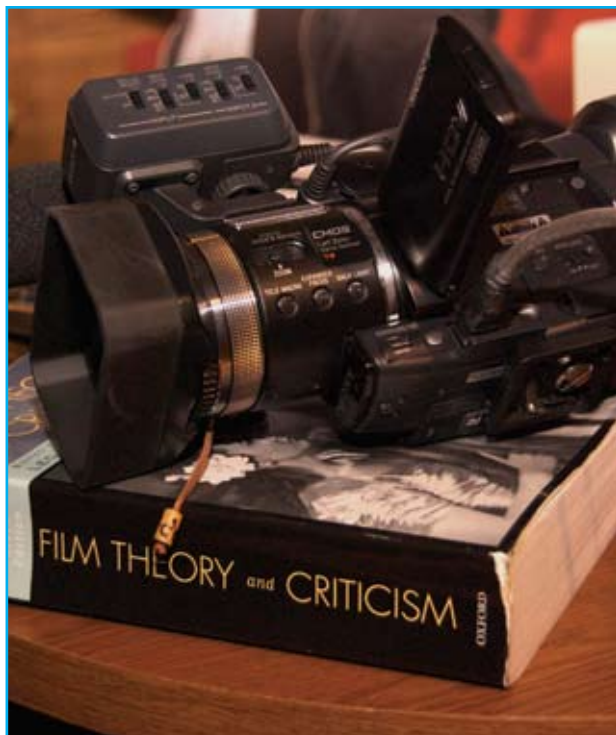
"Films could be as simple as demonstrating the value of friendship," Wong says. "Or they could talk about the meaning of life."

Subjects could be as simple as how videogames affect your life, or as profound as doctors being given the right to decide who lives and who dies.

Anything you can imagine can be made into a film. Participants are encouraged to be creative and stick to their vision

The grand prize will be presented at an awards ceremony at Centennial College on Progress Ave.

More information can be found on the festival's website [torontoyouthshorts.com](http://torontoyouthshorts.com).



**ANTHONY GEREMIA**/The Observer

Aspiring filmmakers get a chance to screen their films at the first annual Toronto Youth Film Festival.



**PHILLIP SMALLEY**/The Observer

"A night out with Bandolin and friends," concert headliner Zach Bandolin entertains the audience with his guitar.

# Music sets the mood

Out-of-town supporters groove to Bandolin's jazzy guitar tunes

**PHILLIP SMALLEY**  
The Observer

*Oh Canada* is playing, but it's not the version you would expect. More of a Jimi Hendrix take, with the regular ensemble replaced by a single guitarist.

The man with the guitar looks up with his eyes closed as he hits the notes more from instinct than from practice.

His name is Zach Bandolin and he is the headliner. Bandolin has played his moody style of instrumental music on stages in Japan and Germany, and now he's playing to Scarborough.

## A huge success

The Burrows Hall Community Center was host to "A night out with Zach Bandolin and friends" Saturday evening.

It was a first for newly formed Your Night Out Entertainment, and rep Jen Paragas was pleased with the result.

"Overall, it was successful.

We learned a lot and the experience and feedback will definitely help us to improve our future events."

The spectacle began just after 7 p.m. as a nice roast beef dinner was served, while the husband-wife team of Ed and Judith Flores serenaded diners with renditions of Celine Dion, Frank Sinatra and other classics.

Bandolin's keyboard player Ken Jones had rehearsed with him only a couple of times before and was unaware of what to expect from the evening.

"It will be interesting to see what this is like," he said, right before the music started.

He was referring to the other two acts: Peter Mangaser, and Joshua Lopez and his band.

"Sometimes they are just

opening acts, but in this case, I'm not sure," Jones said.

Well, the openers did not disappoint, with equally impressive amounts of talent and skill between them.

Also, Abby de Guzman sang with Bandolin on a couple of his tunes and really got the crowd's attention with her soulful voice.

But the highlight of the night was definitely at the end when Mangaser, Lopez and Bandolin all took turns flipping hammer-ons and pull-offs.

They had all joined together for a big solo-exchanging finale.

"By what we have heard here tonight, these guys have a lot of potential," Bandolin said.

Bandolin, a man of few words but very many notes, graciously thanked the audience before he made his

rounds. But he did make sure to plug his next gig at the Augusta House in Kensington Market on May 29 before everyone emptied out.

That too will be represented by Your Night Out Entertainment Company, and they are looking forward to doing more shows with local talent.

While the talent is there, it is in need of more local support in order to flourish.

## Local fans miss out

"Surprisingly, there weren't that many Scarborough locals that attended the show," Paragas said.

"Most people were from Mississauga, Brampton, downtown and even as far as Sarnia. It's nice to know that people are willing to travel to enjoy the event.

"We hope this will continue in the future, and that more people from Scarborough will join us too."

**To view more photos of the concert, visit [torontoobserver.ca](http://torontoobserver.ca)**

**We learned a lot and the experience and feedback will definitely help us to improve our future events**  
- Jen Paragas

## East Scarborough crime overblown

The *East Toronto Observer* is written, produced, and distributed by journalism students. While studying the media we have noticed trends in the way it reports crimes. As a locally based publication we are responsible for covering events in east Scarborough, specifically, the communities east of Markham Road and south of Finch Avenue, home to beautiful areas like the Scarborough Bluffs and the Rouge River Valley. However, the reputations of some of its other neighbourhoods are not so flattering. Malvern, Galloway, Tuxedo Court, Mornelle Court, and Markham and Eglinton also fall within our coverage area.

As students of journalism we have a unique perspective into how the media selects stories and gives them priority in the news. From covering stories of all types in these areas we also see that there is more going on than just gang violence.

Major news entities are not misconstruing the facts though. Crimes do occur and major news outlets, just like us, have a duty to inform citizens about what is happening in their city. But why do editors seem to insist on giving precedence to certain types of crimes in certain neighbourhoods?

From day one we have been told "if it bleeds, it leads." Violent stories tend to attract attention and thus, maximize readership. However, the public relies on the media as a means of gaining an understanding of their surroundings. Maybe it's because almost all of the major papers are based in Toronto, but a murder in this city often makes the front page country-wide.

Conversely, crime in Manitoba tends not to get national media coverage. That province, which has a population of over 1.2 million people, recorded 62 homicides in 2007. In the same year, Toronto, with a population of about 2.5 million people recorded 84 homicides. Only 11 of those murders occurred in our coverage area.

As journalists, we travel across east Scarborough at all hours of the day and night. We go to areas we are unfamiliar with and talk to complete strangers, all the while carrying expensive camera equipment in full view.

We have never had any problems and have found the people of this area to be friendly, helpful, and sometimes a bit shy. We are not accusing the mass media of any wrong-doing.

If a homicide happens here, then by all means, report it. It is just rare to hear or read "Scarborough" in the news without some sort of crime being mentioned in the same sentence. With all the negative press being given to the area, we just thought it was right to set the record straight.

- Tristan Carter

## Trail to nowhere

As spring approaches, litter on the ground around us is revealed. Meanwhile, the Toronto Region and Conservation Authority is using tax dollars to build a waterfront trail around the city of Toronto. They call it erosion control. However, it's really a waste of money.

Instead of building a waterfront trail, the city should be cleaning up the beaches that surround the city, especially in Scarborough.

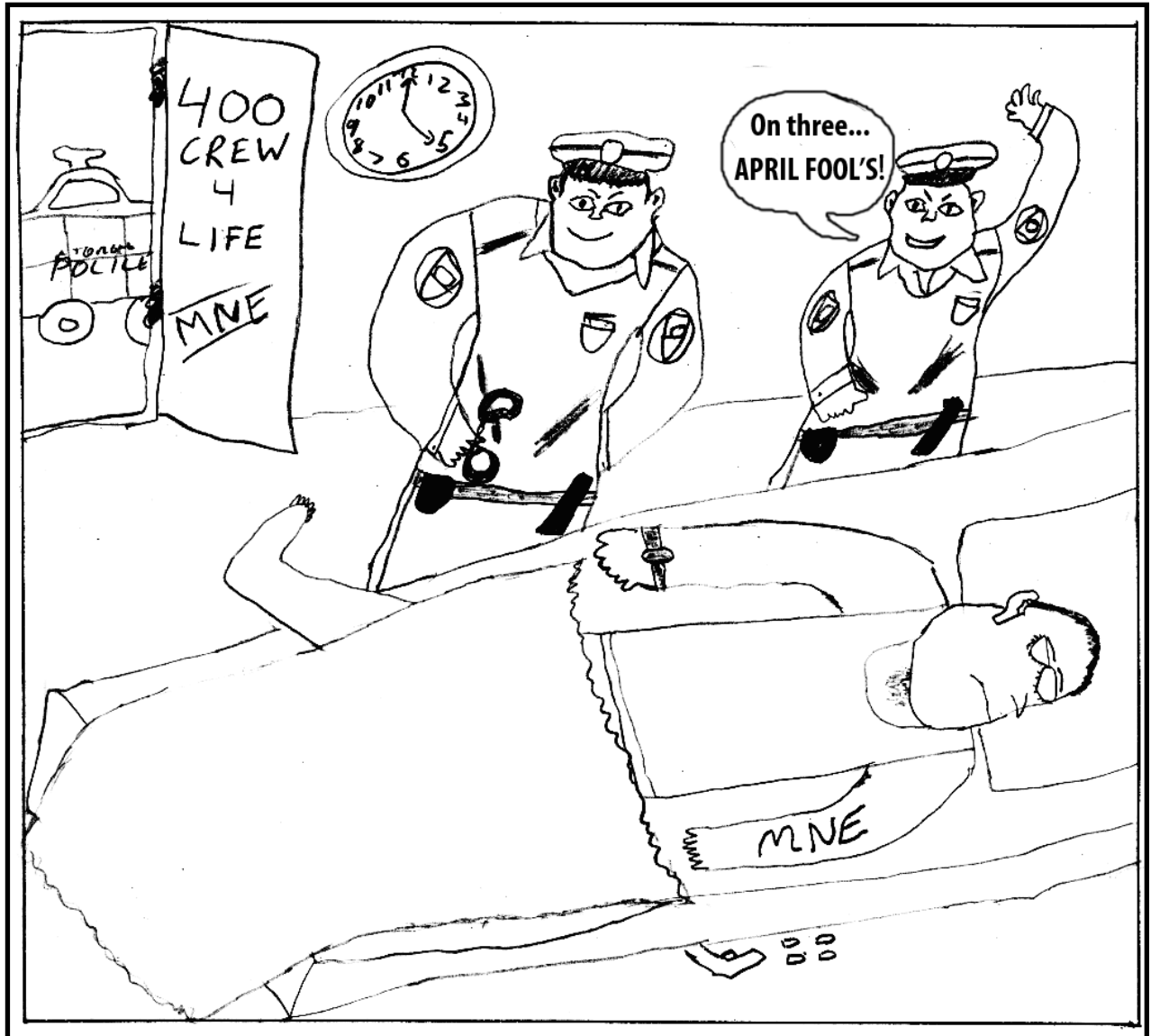
One of the most neglected and polluted beaches is the one at Galloway and Guildwood beneath the bluffs. The beach is littered with beer bottles and graffiti, and the water is full of *E. coli*. Moreover, there is a chemical plant nearby, which could easily be dumping chemicals into the water.

People fear to swim in Lake Ontario because of the water pollution. This is highly unfortunate, especially during the hot summer. It would be energy efficient and environmentally friendly to clean up the beaches and treat the water, rather than have people go swimming in chlorine-filled pools.

Freshwater lakes are theoretically less harmful. However, with all the pollutants dumped in the lake and along beaches, they are even more harmful to humans and wildlife. And fewer people can even use public pools anymore, since so many of them are closing down permanently as a way to save money.

The city is wasting money building useless concrete waterfront trails. If the city wants to use taxes to protect the environment they should actively employ workers to clean up Toronto's beaches. By doing so, they would also be helping the economy by creating more jobs, greener jobs.

- Selena Mann



TEVY PILC/The Observer

## Taking the worry out of purchasing

### Car producers need to give consumers economic assurance

I recently came across a television commercial advertising Kia's "Worry-Free Purchasing" incentive. The concept is based on offering security when everything is insecure. It is a warranty of sorts that allows a buyer to return their vehicles if they suffer job loss 12 months following the purchase. It got me thinking about the current fearful buyer's market that has forced major industries to take a step back and evaluate their long-term circumstances. But today, inside many Canadian homes, big ticket purchases are unlikely to be scribbled onto the average grocery list.

#### Fear and hesitation

So naturally, fear and hesitation is a major concern for the auto industry. The sales manager at a Ford dealership didn't seem to think so when I spoke to him though. He actually tried to tell me sales are going "very well". Funny, since Ford Motor Company's stocks just fell last week.

Apparently, Ford "isn't interested in gimmicky bails.. With all the bailouts the auto industry has been asking for, it sounds like someone is not telling the



Karen AWADALLA

truth. For the most part, auto executives have been sitting in their offices wondering how on earth they can make a pitch to the public, and convince them that financing a new vehicle is a good idea.

I challenge them to sell this idea to those who haven't already damaged their credit enough in the wake of the recession. If I am one of the lucky ones hanging on to a job right now, who's to say that won't change? This would not come as a shock, because I've always felt that there is so much more that we, as the working class middlemen, will continually be restricted from being privy to.

**I challenge them to sell this idea to those who haven't already damaged their credit...**

My sister is one of the few in the market for a car. She told me she never would have considered even looking at a Kia until seeing this commercial. This made me wonder, why aren't all auto companies offering this kind of assurance? When it's clear that assurance is what consumers are really looking for, why not give it to them, especially if it means keeping your dealership from going under? For example, take a look at Davidson Chrysler or Bob Johnson Chevrolet (both formerly on Kingston Road closed their doors).

What you probably aren't aware of is that each and every dealership has the capacity to offer a service that of-

fers programs like that of "Worry-Free Purchasing" through a financing company called Walkaway. My suggestion is if you are feeling the slightest need to purchase a car, go to walkawayprotection.com and look through a list of authorized Walkaway retailers near you.

Maybe showing other auto companies they are lacking will save them from going under, too.

## The East Toronto OBSERVER

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# iRobbed

iPod thefts increasing in Scarborough

**TEVY PILC**  
The Observer

Police are warning residents about a recent rise in iPod thefts.

"School-age youths" are targeting other young people with handheld electronic devices, according to 43 Division police.

"It's not just iPods, but all types of electronic devices are such items getting stolen frequently," Const. Bill Campbell says. "There seems to be a fear from those robbed to report them to either their parents or police. If people aren't reporting the incident, police are left unable to help."

The last report of a stolen iPod in 43 Division was on March 22, nearly a week before the community alert was sent out.

In that report, four youths approached a 17-year-old man near Ellesmere and Bellamy Rds. around 10 p.m. The victim was pushed against a fence but has no injuries.

They stole an iPod and a metropass before fleeing the scene southbound, behind the Centennial Arena.

The four youths are between 16 and 18 years old.

Police have received reports of stolen iPods almost every day in the past two months. Most victims report being attacked by more than one person.

Campbell says victims are not inclined to report these thefts to either the police or their parents because they are afraid of getting into trouble.

Police advise youth to refrain from displaying these devices when out on the streets.



## Minimums Upped

The Ontario minimum wage jumps to \$10.25 by March 31 2010.



## Wage increase troubles local businesses

**KATRINA ROZAL**  
The Observer

Ontario's plan to continue increasing the minimum wage is finding opposition among local businesses.

"Desperate times call for desperate measures and right now with the economy I don't think it's such a good idea," says Sam Abbas, manager at Markville Video Superstore in the Port Union area.

The store recently let staff go due to lower revenues. The hike in minimum wage would just increase their difficulties by increasing expenses, he says.

The minimum wage jumped from \$8.75 to \$9.50 an hour on March 31. Next

year's scheduled raise will climb to \$10.25 an hour.

Other businesses say they are concerned about the extra work they have to do because they've been unable to take on staff in the past year.

"We just can't hire the way we used to," says Donna Paterson at the Highland Creek Supermarket. "But it's not like we can do anything about it. There's just a lot more work to do around here.

I only have one girl working for me now."

Morningside Health Foods is finding its customers are

**Desperate times call for desperate measures and right now with the economy I don't think it's such a good idea**

**- Sam Abbas, Markville Video Superstore**

complaining more about the rise in prices these days, says manager Sylvia Kim, who also disapproves the minimum wage increase.

Scarborough has 1,800 small businesses. They make up 60 per cent of the area's total business establishments.

But some small business workers who still have their jobs welcome the wage increase.

"I think people who work minimum wage deserve it because they often put in long and odd hours, so I think it's justified," says Maria Tsuruda at Highland Creek Pharmacy.

Others offer mixed feelings towards the changing pay rate.

Several young adults who live in the Rouge Valley area and attend U of T's Scarborough campus say they are glad to have an increased salary but they are skeptical about the impact it will have on small businesses and on inflation.

## SPORTS

# Whistle blows on another season

**CELESTE de MUELENAERE**  
The Observer

As spring arrives, high school winter sports in Scarborough have come to a close.

The Sir Oliver Mowat Collegiate boy's hockey team made it to the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) quad-A hockey semi-finals only to be defeated by Upper Canada College in a 3-2 loss.

The Birchmount Park quad-A girls team suffered a similar loss in the semi-finals, when Bishop Tonnos of Ancaster beat them 2-0. Birchmount Park went on to win of 2-1 over East York Collegiate in the consolation quarterfinals.

In curling Scarborough teams didn't fare well, with

### Mowat season highlights

- Senior girls Tier II hockey champs
- Girls city curling champs
- Girls AAA volleyball champs
- Senior boys Tier I city hockey champs

the Mowat girl's team failing to make it to the playoffs.

Their preliminary round record of 3-1 failed to save them in a three-way tie, with North Park and Centennial also vying to compete in the

OFSAA curling Championship.

Two other Scarborough schools, Cardinal Newman Catholic Secondary School and R.H. King Academy failed to advance in the championship.

The bright light at OFSAA championships for Scarborough teams was in hoops.

Two Scarborough schools, West Hill and Mother Teresa Catholic High School, both qualified for the quad-A championships.

The Mother Teresa Titans managed to make it all the way to the finals after an impressive 60-44 victory over defending OFSAA gold medalists, Pickering High School. The Eastern Commerce Saints of east Toronto narrowly defeated the Titans 50-49 in the final.



PHILLIP SMALLEY/The Observer

Mowat senior girls in action at last month's semi-finals. They won Tier II at OFSAA.

## Sports Briefs

### Figure skaters soar in L.A.

Vanessa Crone and Paul Poirier of the Scarborough Figure Skating Club placed 12th at the world championships in L.A. The results determine the spots available for each country in the 2010 Winter Olympics.

### Umpiring for the Blue Hawks

The West Hill Baseball League is looking for umpires. If you are 13 or older and are interested in finding a summer job, call Peter Mathews at 416-283-6088. Umpire training will happen in early May.

### Midget girls go to nationals

Scarborough Sharks Midget AA girls hockey are the first Ontario team to go to national championships. The Sharks beat the Whitby Wolves at the provincials on March 29. They go to Calgary for the finals.

### B-ballers head out west

Scarborough Basketball Association hosts its 10th summer camp at Hoopdome at Downsview Park. Coaches from Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II will attend. Pick up is at Centennial's Progress campus.

### Soccer sign-up kicks off

Registration for the Scarborough Azzurri Soccer Club starts on April 18 at 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Agincourt Recreation Centre. For more information, contact 416-754-4307 or visit scarboro-azzurri.com.

### High school season on deck

The high school baseball season opens up April 27. Mowat squares off against David & Mary Thomson at Heron Park at 1 p.m. West Hill and Bethune will follow that game at 3 p.m. on the same field.

## NEWS

## Awards celebrate local volunteers

**GESILAYEFA AZORBO**  
The Observer

When Rena Wang told her friends she had been nominated for a volunteer award, their first question was "What are you wearing?"

She remembered asking, "Don't you want to know what award I got?" but her friends were more interested in her fashion.

Not that the Grade 11 student really minded. She said her reason for volunteering was not to get an award, but to help.

She was nominated by the Scarborough branch of the Hong Fook Mental Health Association, where she helps at events and mentors other youth.

#### Enjoys it

"I don't think it affects me," she said. "It's a little boost on the way but, no matter what, I'll always be volunteering because it's what I enjoy doing."

The Ontario Volunteer Service Awards were started by the Ministry of Citizenship

and Immigration to recognize individuals who are long-time volunteers. Youth recipients are under 24 and have volunteered for at least two consecutive years.

"Community is all about giving back, and the Scarborough area has a tremendous contingent of youth that were recognized," said Colleen Moran, the MC.

#### Giving back

Also awarded on March 31 was Sybil Mitchell, who said volunteering at the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), which nominated her, is just her way of giving back to the organization that helped her ailing mother in her time of need.

"My mother had a VON worker when she was terminally ill and I liked what she was doing for my mum. So I just joined up with the same organization."

She didn't expect the award but said it felt good to be recognized by both VON and the province. Delfina Laranang was also drawn into volunteering through a



GESILAYEFA AZORBO/The Observer

David Muthurajah, 18, and Sele Akioyamen, 15, of Mary Ward Catholic Secondary School sang the national anthem to kick off the volunteer awards on March 31.

family member.

"I have a nephew who's mentally challenged. Some people volunteered with my nephew — I wanted to return back the good things they do for my nephew." Chris MacDonald and wife Dena Rogers

received 20- and 25-year volunteer awards for their service to the Scouts.

Clarita Ariz and Erlinda Jimenez were nominated by Living Waters Residence.

"I think it's not so much an accomplishment, more of

a fulfillment," said Jimenez. "If we can be of service it's good to help."

In addition, Scarborough MPPs Khalil Ramal, Gerry Phillips, Helena Jaczek and Wayne Arthurs were also in attendance.

## Centre to bring people, groups together

**MONICA VALENCIA**  
The Observer

Residents in the Kingston-Galloway area who want to improve their communities can now hook up with local organizations at the new centre, The Point, to get help.

"They can come together and be empowered as they make a difference in their community," Ward 43 councillor Paul Ainslie said.

The Point opened on March 23, bringing together The United Way, East Scarborough Storefront, Residents Rising, and U of T Scarborough.

"The partnership will help to break down a lot of barriers between community groups and residents," Ainslie said.

The Point will serve as a meeting place where local groups can listen to the concerns of the residents. By working together, Ainslie says, they can better understand the neighbourhood's issues and propose practical solutions.

#### Get funding

"Instead of having two different agencies asking for the same funding, they can now unite and get funding for the same program," Ainslie said. "Governmental and private groups can collaborate and get done a lot more."

The centre, at 4117 Lawrence Ave. East, has a classroom, a meeting room, library resources and offices.

The Kingston-Galloway neighbourhood was identified by United Way as one of the 13 priority neighbourhoods in Toronto. It's a transit-based neighbourhood with a large population of newcomers and a low employment rate.

In 2005, United Way started an initiative called Action for Neighbourhood Change to develop priority neighbourhoods. Through the ANC program, United Way funds local agencies that deliver services and organize community events.

"Our main focus for the first three months is to talk to people and draw their ideas as we do a study of the community," ANC representative Iain Duncan said. "Nobody knows better what the problems and the solutions are than the residents themselves."

## Riders receive TTC bus-tracking system

**MATTHEW ALLEYNE**  
The Observer

A new TTC project will answer the question on every user's mind: When will my ride get here?

But some Scarborough riders are also wondering when that system will actually get here.

"It isn't people downtown who have access to subways and street cars who need this service," resident Michael Thorpe said.

"It's us in the suburbs trying to get to work and school who need to know how long we are going to be left stranded on the side of the road waiting for a bus."

On Dec. 15 the TTC launched Next Vehicle Arrivals (NVA) services downtown on the 510 Spadina streetcar line, with digital displays at both Union and Spadina stations.

It gives riders real-time information on when the next street car is due to arrive.

NVA uses global positioning satellite technology inside the vehicles to relay to digital displays en route its current position.

It then approximates the vehicle's arrival at a particular stop.

The \$5.2-million system was to roll out in early 2009



MATTHEW ALLEYNE/The Observer

Next Vehicle announcement at Spadina station is one of the two signs for the TTC system, informing commuters when their ride will arrive. Other stations still wonder if they will be next to receive bus tracking signs.

with the 510 Spadina, expanding to downtown streetcars and subway stations, and then to suburban areas like Scarborough toward the end of the year, according to the TTC press release.

It will then be installed with new street furniture and bus shelters.

But to date the only route with this service remains the 510 Spadina. "The project is still ongoing," says Danny Nicholson, TTC media relations.

"There is still no date yet for the system to be implemented in Scarborough."

"The TTC has always

lagged behind," says Kevin Branigan, co-creator of myt-tc.ca.

"It has not been the most progressive when it comes to technology."

Branigan's site is independent of the TTC.

The long-awaited official TTC version of the site is due

to be released this summer.

"Trip planning and GPS aren't new innovations," Branigan says.

"VIVA in York Region has used them for years. Riders just want to know if they are able to grab a double-double and come back out in time for their bus."