



Krystal Reynolds /// The Observer

Mayor John Tory (fifth from left) stands with some of the private donors and other officials at Tuesday's announcement regarding the planned 200-hectare Don River Valley Park. Tory says it will transform a portion of the Don Valley into the city's largest downtown park.

## New 'super-park' coming to Don Valley

Mayor announces \$5-million project that will create park stretching from Brick Works to Lake Ontario

By **KRYSTAL REYNOLDS**  
The Observer

The chair of a campaign to develop the Don River Valley super-park says that the project has unique potential.

At a media conference on Tuesday, Mayor John Tory introduced the six private donors who will provide funding for a 480-acre green space that will stretch from Evergreen Brick Works south to the mouth of the Don River on Lake Ontario. The project was launched last year by Evergreen and the City of Toronto, according to a press release, to improve open spaces, pro-

tect habitat, and restore the Lower Don River watershed.

Andy Chisholm chairs Evergreen and applauded the partnership at the conference. The donations will cover \$3.5 million of the projected \$5 million to complete the project.

"We (donors/fundraisers) believed that private money coming together with public money can achieve special things in the city," Chisholm said. "Together we are creating a true legacy project."

At the press conference, outdoors at the Brick Works off Bayview Avenue, Mayor Tory explained the rationale for the project.

"Toronto has been built around the ravines. (They have) given the city a real, but dramatically under appreciated special identity," Tory said. "The physical soul of the city comes from this very space and the other ravines that help."

The proposed new park area, which Evergreen says will become the centerpiece of Toronto's ravine system, comprises a "backyard" to more than 250,000 citizens, as well as 60,000 residents who live in the West Don Lands, East Bayfront, Central Waterfront and downtown.

Tory applauded the advocacy, the partnerships, the civic engagement and dedication of the people involved who are giving Toronto-

nians a newer perspective on the green space.

"It is pretty basic things, but very important things that will make the Lower Don more accessible, including the Belleville underpass, Pottery Road bridge and the Bayview multi-use trail," he said.

Next spring, The City of Toronto plans to augment a "way-finding signage," directing visitors around the park.

"We will have to be prudent in how we spend the money," Tory said. "But, parks, transit, housing are not options they are necessities if we're going to maintain a livable city."

— With files from Varad Mehta

## Local food bank's service 'at risk,' spokesperson says

By **EDEN DEBEBE**  
The Observer

With both money and food in short supply, a popular East York food bank is at serious risk, acknowledges one of its managers.

Amid reports that the Flemingdon Food Bank is \$90,000 behind in its rent at 10 Gateway Blvd. and may have to close, William Heslop, who helps run the food bank, issued a press release expressing concern for clients.

"We're getting six to eight new families a week now," he said. "It's a little too fast. We were having trouble getting them the necessities."

Heslop, who previously worked as a warehouse manager and is familiar with keeping track of inventory, is right. The number of people looking for food has increased to the point that even regular deliveries of food can't keep up. According to Heslop, an average of two to three families are turned away

each week.

Flemingdon Food Bank's resource depends on a number of regular suppliers, he said.

"Mondays we get Daily Bread (Food Bank's) load, Tuesdays are from the Metro located on Eglinton, Thursdays Cobs Bakery on Bayview bakes fresh bread just for us," Heslop said. "We also get drop-in donations every so often."

Gail Nyberg, executive director at Daily Bread Food Bank, said that weekly deliveries to sister food banks are made through a

carefully weighted system.

"We send them food based on how much we have, as well as how many clients they had the month before," she said.

Based on status reports obtained by the East York Observer, Flemingdon served 858 people in July. This is a decrease of nearly 70 per cent from previous years. According to Nyberg, this would explain their dramatic reduction in resources.

Despite the slow month, Flemingdon Community Food Bank has received over 98,000 pounds of food so far this year from Daily Bread, a steep increase from the 80,000 pounds received last

year.

"I feel for them, I really do," Nyberg said. "(But) they're not supposed to get all their food from us. Members are expected to hold their own food drives and collections. ... (Flemingdon) has yet to reach out."

According to Heslop, a large barrier in the way of servicing families is the time it takes to process food requests with Daily Bread.

"It takes Daily Bread about a month to adjust our deliveries" he said. "So we're always behind.... A month is just too long for each cycle. They're giving us the same amount of food, but our demand is skyrocketing."

Nevertheless, Flemingdon's distress call is being heard.

"Tilley Endurables on Don Mills donated cash and food just last week," Heslop said. "Sobey's at Laird gave 200 bags over the past two weeks, and we're expecting a large can drive drop-off from local churches later on this month."



## POLICE & FIRE

### Power out in Thorncliffe

Toronto police were still on-scene at press time yesterday after power went out overnight in a Thorncliffe Park neighbourhood. The electricity failed at about 3:30 a.m. Thursday in five buildings, including a school and business. By day-break, the outage was confined to Leaside Towers, the high-rise apartments at Overlea Boulevard and Thorncliffe Park Drive, but there was no word from Toronto Hydro on when power would be restored.

### Fire badly damages store

Noor's Fine Foods, on Broadview Avenue just north of Danforth, suffered about \$50,000 in damage in a fire early Wednesday morning. A spokesperson for the Toronto Fire Service said that the 3 a.m. blaze may have started in the wiring of a refrigerator. There were no injuries.

### Arrests follow stabbing, shots

One person was arrested after an Oct. 9 stabbing near the intersection of Cosburn Avenue and Todmorden Lane on Oct. 9. The victim had non-life-threatening injuries. Separately, police arrested one individual the following day after a report from Gowan and Logan avenues of shots and broken windows that may have been from a pellet gun.

~ Ummema Chutani



Courtesy of the City of Toronto

This is a prototype of an eight-storey building proposed for Danforth Avenue, east of Donlands.

# Danforth may get new look

By **ASHLEY BRUZAS**  
The Observer

A new look for a stretch of the east Danforth is closer to reality after last week's meeting of the Toronto and East York community council.

At city hall on Oct. 13, councillors discussed the final report on a zoning amendment affecting 1030 Danforth Ave. that would permit an eight-storey residential tower to be built there.

"This has been a collaborative exercise. We've worked very hard with the residents and staff to produce what is an application to rezone the site," said Bob Dragicevic, a member of the planning consultants, Walker, Nott, Dragicevic Associates. "The ultimate result will be a building that is slightly less than the width of the Danforth."

The proposed 53-unit residential building will be built on the north side of Danforth Avenue, east of Donlands Avenue. The ground level would include at least

two retail stores. A total of 41 vehicle parking spaces are also proposed on two levels of underground parking that would be accessible from a public laneway at the rear of the site.

One member of the public who has participated in working group sessions around the zoning amendment spoke at the meeting and said she was concerned about time restrictions for the loading and unloading of cargo from vehicles, as well as vehicle idling. She said she hopes the adopted agreement will include specific time limits applying to idling and loading, and that those limits will be built into both the site plan agreement and apartment applications.

"That would be acceptable in a context of everyone having to meet the same expectations for loading," Dragicevic responded. "This is a 24-hour city, this is an avenue, this is within a couple hundred metres of a subway station and the building is serviced by a lane that extends between

the two city blocks. It should be used in a normal fashion for businesses as it is for residences."

In a motion brought forward by councillor Mary Fradedakis, amendments to the final report sought to address the public laneway at the rear of the property and acknowledge the conversations that took place over the course of five meetings that led to the staff report — four of which included working groups and one with public consultation.

"It's been hard work, but I think it is something that the majority of the community can live with, and I think it will actually blend in nicely and rejuvenate a part of the Danforth that could certainly use it," Fradedakis said. "Many people in the neighbourhood think that it could as well."

In the end, community council voted unanimously in favour of the report. Now the issue goes to the full city council, where it is scheduled to be considered at the Nov. 8 meeting.

# Joyful Noise a tale for all the outcasts

REVIEW by **SCOTT DELL**  
The Observer

What's that sound? Did she drop that baby? Oh god, where are her clothes? Good idea; I would like a throat lozenge!

The opening of the East Side Players' *Joyful Noise*, onstage at the PaperMill Theatre on Pottery Road tonight through Nov. 5, is as comically dark and full of wit as it is surprising. But the play starts with a joyous bang and struggles a bit to reach that height again.

This is a story revolving around a blasphemous oratory and the church's struggle to repress it.

It thematically resonates with the story of sexual violence and "slut shaming," as Susannah Cibber is forced into adultery by a scheming husband and cast from society.

While the first half is a joy of comic and dramatic interplay, teeming with great



Scott Dell // The Observer

The East Side Players rehearse for *Joyful Noise*, premiering tonight at the Papermill Theatre.

one-liners and a cocktail of top-shelf characters mixed into a fine theatrical martini, the second half begins to drag somewhat as the story fails to raise the stakes enough to carry it to its climax.

But besides the story's obsession with the trivial, the East Side Players put on a performance that's carried at a strong clip — strong enough to win this theatrical derby.

Kitty Clive, the tough-talking Londoner, is played with such dry, cool wit that she could win your heart with a mid-dinner hiccup. Coupled with a voice from the gods, she makes the religious music sing like something that is finally worthy of the term "heavenly."

The role is modulated so well that she remains endlessly endearing despite being a

pompous... what's another word for donkey?

Meanwhile, our heroine Susannah Cibber's emotional range is borderline mystifying, and her ability to switch seamlessly between forlorn singing, Christmas joy and good old-fashioned bloodlust bring much-needed freshness to the second half.

While the play is replete with heroes, they are offset by the scheming Bishop, peeping in the king's ear with desires so uncharitable he may have gone on to single-handedly cause the great witch-hunt.

When Cibber finally makes her stand against a society that has rejected her, a tear fell from the eye of this reviewer, as I watched her defiance and remembered the day that I took a deep breath, curled my first, and stood up against my bully.

This is a story for the outcast, letting us remember the day we drew a line in the sand and became our own hero.

## WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

### Legion throwing a Halloween party complete with karaoke

This Halloween, come celebrate at the Legion's Todmorden Branch at 1083 Pape Ave. The family-friendly event is 2-6 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 30. The party has a DJ and costumes are recommended. If not in costume, guests are asked to pay \$5 toward the kid's party. Karaoke will also be happening from 2-6 pm that day.

### Holly Berry Fair back with lots of holiday crafts and baking

St. Luke's Anglican Church is helping to kick off the Christmas craft fair season with its annual Holly Berry Fair. It's Saturday, Nov. 19. There will be crafts, books, baked goods and more available for sale. There will also be a quilt raffle and tea room. The fair will run from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., at 904 Coxwell Ave. For more information, call 416-421-6878.

### Not too early to start thinking about spring

Help Taylor Creek Park get a jump on the next growing season with a planting blitz tomorrow, Oct. 22. Between 10 a.m. and noon, volunteers will dig native trees and shrubs into the earth along Taylor Massey Creek. Just come to the parking lot off Dawes Road and follow the signs.

~ Rose Hetherington

# Community mural to tell stories of East York

Organizers hope finished art will be included in summer's 'Cultural Hotspot' program

By **RAQUEL RUSSELL**

The Observer

There's lots happening on the inside of the building with the unlikely address of 1081 1/2 Pape Ave., south of O'Connor Drive.

But the exterior of the East York Community Centre could be said to be nondescript — even institutional.

That may be about to change, however.

On Sept. 22, the centre was the venue for an "East York Mural Community Consultation."

The participants talked about turning the big south wall of the building into a colourful — and meaningful — work of art.

The organizers included East York Neighbourhood Initiatives, VIBE Arts, East End Arts and Mary Fragedakis, the councillor for Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth.

The aim is for the mural to be included in next summer's "Cultural Hotspot" program — when the city will promote East York's arts scene and other unique aspects.

"We're interested in creating a mural that is from the ground up. We're about grassroots," Julie Frost said.

Frost, VIBE Arts executive director and facilitator for the night, was insistent on community involvement in the project.

The team also hopes to gain a grant from the city for the project.

"We want to know and hear from the experts," she said, "and you're right here in this room — as well as the experts that are out in the rest of the community."

The consultation was held in part to gather opinions from residents of East York on



Raquel Russell// The Observer

**Julie Frost (left), VIBE Arts executive director and artistic director, introduces story ideas to East York community members at the consultation meeting at East York Community Centre on Pape Avenue.**

what they thought should be included in the mural.

About 15 individuals gave their feedback in the open forum through responses to written questions such as, "What do you love about your neighbourhood?" and "What is important about the east end neighbourhood?"

"We want to gather those ideas, those visions, those comments, your drawings if you want," Frost said.

"We want to collect them here... so that we can then archive them and write a really good grant for the Cultural Hotspot, get the funding behind this project and then use the material, all those ideas that we're getting tonight, to inspire the mural that's going to be on the wall."

More logistical meetings will take place following the outcome of the grant request.

For now, community members are excited about the possibilities.

Marjorie Harriott was among the individuals in attendance at the meeting. She sees potential in the mural.

"We want to be able to do something that is bringing people together and saying this is our community, this is what we're doing," Harriott said. "Let's go out together."

Following the Sept. 22 consultation, "pop-up" sessions will now be set up for the East York Community Centre, where the public will be invited to contribute further artistic additions.

A professional muralist will help shape the de-

sign before mounting the display at the centre.

Painting and installing the finished project will be a combination of volunteer and paid work for youth in the community. The mural will be put on panels that will then be mounted on the brick wall.

Tanya Oleksuk, of Toronto's East End Arts, said that there are also other ways to hear from those who were not able to attend the initial meeting.

She highlighted the process on the East End Arts website.

"We've also got a form on there," Oleksuk said, "so that if you were unable to attend... you can still share your thoughts on the same questions that went around the room tonight."

## 'We agreed to promise to change the system'

New Liberal MP addresses electoral reform concerns at meeting in Beaches-East York

By **JASMINE HUI**

The Observer

The growing debate around electoral reform took centre-stage in Beaches-East York last week, with a public forum convened by the riding's new Liberal MP, Nathaniel Erskine-Smith.

Three other experts joined Erskine-Smith at St. Brigid Catholic School on Oct. 12. The local MP told those gathered that the last federal election was the final time voters will choose a government in Ottawa in the traditional way.

"Our election platform promise was that 2015 would be the last election under First Past the Post," Erskine-Smith said. "We agreed to promise to change the system."

Days after Erskine-Smith's meeting, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau raised eyebrows by telling a Montreal newspaper that despite the Liberal promise, there may not be a public consensus for electoral reform after all.

Still, Mark Holland, an Ajax MP, told the East York meeting that the government is actively trying to choose the best new voting system for Canada. He said there have been formal consultations with others steeped in the issue.

"It's important to know that among the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) Canada is only one of three left that still uses First Past the Post," Holland said. "Other countries have either evolved to a new system or started their new system."

The government's electoral systems factsheet



Jasmine Hui// The Observer

**MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith talking to attendees at his public meeting about the need to change the electoral system.**

describes the traditional system of First Past the Post this way: "An elector casts a single vote for a candidate to represent the electoral district in which the voter resides. The winning candidate must win the most votes — though not necessarily a majority."

A competing system is Alternative Vote (AV): "The winning candidate is the individual who gets a majority of the votes cast. This system can be designed in different ways. For example, the system could allow voters to rank the candidates running in their electoral district in order of their preference. If no candidate receives a majority of votes on the first count, the lowest candidate is dropped and the second-preference votes for that candidate are assigned to the respective remaining candidates. This process continues until one candidate receives the

necessary majority."

"It tends to produce more collegial campaigns because not only are candidates interested in trying to earn your first vote, but ultimately earn your second-choice vote," Jane Hilderman said at the Oct. 12 meeting. She's the executive director of Samara, a non-partisan charity promoting civic engagement.

Also discussed was List Proportional Representation. It's one variation of the proportional representation that the electoral systems factsheet describes this way: "Proportional representation (PR) systems seek to closely match a political party's vote share with its seat allocation in the legislature. PR systems tend to vary and the method for calculating seat distribution can range from simple to complex. Proportional representation systems are not

based on single-member constituencies. Citizens generally vote for more than one candidate or for a political party."

"List proportional is probably not something we're going to see happen in Canada," Hilderman said. "But what it does is it helps introduce the concept of proportionality and this sort of variation of open and close are important when we go to the next system."

The fourth system covered at the meeting is Mixed-Member Proportional Representation (MMP): "Mixed electoral systems combine elements of a plurality or majority system with elements of proportional representation. Citizens in a riding cast two votes: one to directly elect an individual member to serve as their representative, and a second for a political party or parties to fill seats in the legislature allocated according to the proportion of the vote share they receive."

"That second vote can be for a party, under a closed list," Hilderman said. "You can sometimes have an open list where you can actually vote for a candidate within a party list. The point is, those votes are going towards a different type of MP."

Hilderman calls those different MPs "List MPs." List MPs make sure Parliament as a whole looks proportional to the total vote count.

The last voting system explained is Single Transferable Vote. Under it, Canada would be re-divided into multi-member electoral districts. So in a three-member district, voters would rank multiple candidates based on their preference.

Erskine-Smith told those at the meeting to weigh the choices, because the government is listening to public opinion on the issue.



Jacqueline Thetsombandith /// The Observer

A student waves his hand around a glass cylinder that fogs up when interacted with to represent turbulent cloud formations.



Jacqueline Thetsombandith /// The Observer

A student peeks through a frosted window from inside an igloo at the Wild Weather exhibit at the Ontario Science Centre.

## 'Wild Weather' storms into science centre

By **JACQUELINE THETSOMBANDITH**  
The Observer

A wild storm has descended on Toronto, except citizens are able to stay dry and warm.

The Ontario Science Centre has opened its "Wild Weather" exhibit, which uses the latest technology to showcase all kinds of weather phenomena, including tornadoes, hurricanes, thunderstorms and heat waves.

Visitors get to experience all kinds of elements such as snow, wind and lightning — while having fun in the process.

"What causes lightning? We experience it all the time," said David Sugarman, a researcher at

the Ontario Science Centre. "One of my favourite exhibits here is the showing of lightning flash and how you can control the speed of it."

Some weather enthusiasts and stormchasers are already fans of the exhibit. George Kourounis, the host of Angry Planet, chases storms as a career. His interest in travel, exploration and science brought him to the opening of the Wild Weather exhibit.

"The weather really allowed me to combine all of those things into this passion... as someone who documents these extreme forces of nature," said Kourounis. "I would've never dreamt that up as a kid."

The exhibit offers a plentiful amount of infor-

mation about each kind of weather phenomenon.

There are several interactive games that visitors can play while learning facts about natural disasters such as hurricanes.

It reminded Kourounis of his real-life experiences, including one of the most frightening in his life: Hurricane Katrina.

"We knew it was coming. We were in a steel-reinforced concrete parking garage... and we didn't know if that was going to survive," says Kourounis. "The warnings from the National Weather Service came out saying that 'small cars and large appliances were going to become deadly airborne missiles.'"

With the more recent experience of Hurricane

Matthew churning through the Caribbean and up the east coast, Sugarman said Torontonians have just been reminded of our own weather vulnerabilities.

"Often when we get these Atlantic hurricanes... we get heavier rain," he said. "Just the amount of moisture that's in the atmosphere that (has) generated that hurricane will cause some extra rain here."

But you can avoid getting wet from the rain outdoors or cold from the snow — at least for a short while — now through Jan. 7 at the Ontario Science Centre on Don Mills Road.

It might even be said that the Wild Weather exhibit will blow you away.

## History of tulips runs deep in the East York community

Expert treats members of garden society to tales of tulips throughout history

By **ASHLEY BRUZAS**  
The Observer

It may only be mid-October, but local gardeners are already thinking ahead to spring.

Members of the Leaside Garden Society who attended the final speaker engagement of the year on Oct. 13 were invited to learn about tulips and some of the techniques involved in prepping the garden for spring.

Guest speaker Michael Erdman spoke about the history and significance of tulips and how species found in countries across Europe and Northern Africa have resulted in a wide variety of qualities and appearances.

In cultivation, representations of tulips have been found in artwork in Egypt and carpets in Turkey, but it wasn't until the Ottoman wars that many European colonies began expeditions in search of new items to bring back to their wealthy masters.

"A lot of our species were discovered in the remote areas of Turkestan in the late 1800s," Erdman said at the meeting, which was held at the Leaside library. "But of course it was the Brits who became fascinated with everything floral, leading to the notion of flower shows."

From 'single early' to 'late season' and



Courtesy of Nora Campbell

On Saturday, volunteers from the Leaside Garden Society planted 150 red and white tulip bulbs at the entrance to the Leaside Library — in anticipation of Canada's 150th anniversary next spring. Pictured from left to right: Rick Hutchings, Joanna Blanchard and Barry Schneider.

the 'Darwin hybrids' that were grown as a result of crossbreeding, "they had to classify them instead of just referring to them as big ones and little ones, or yellow ones and pink ones," he explained.

"So they created 15 divisions which we

now use to display tulips today."

Erdman became interested in gardening after following in the footsteps of his late grandfathers. A researcher by trade, he learned about perennials, roses and shrubs and quickly found that he had no grass left

in his Riverdale yard. Shortly after, he won a number of garden contests and decided to move to the Beaches, where he co-authored books, began educating the public and eventually became president of the Beach Garden Society.

Throughout his discussion, Erdman raised a number of topics, but the question on everyone's mind was how to protect bulbs from squirrels and bugs.

"The easiest thing to do is what I call Shake 'n Bake with cayenne pepper," he said. "You take the tulip bulb and put it in a bag with cayenne pepper. Spray a little bit of water on the bulb and shake it up before putting it in the ground."

Squirrels are not interested and won't even come near, as the smell is what turns them off, he said. Bugs can be deterred using a similar method that involves spraying a Jamaican hot pepper concoction onto the base and leaves of the flower.

Tulips are planted in the fall because they have developed a system called a bulb. As a result of heavy rainfall in the winter and relatively dry summers, the moisture that accumulates allows them to maintain throughout the year.

As for Erdman's experience with the bulbs, he said not to worry about the snow or planting bulbs late in the year, as many species grow in the mountains and are used to harsh weather.

"I've planted them on Christmas Day and they still grow," he said. As long as they are deep enough in the ground, they will be fine.

**BUSINESS**



Photos courtesy of DECA and WoodGreen Community Services

Before and after shots of Merrily, merrily, one of DECA's most successful pop-up shops on Danforth Avenue. The store sells new and consignment clothing and, along with other pop-up shops like it, has contributed to the east Danforth's dramatically lower vacancy rate.

## Pop-up shops bring down vacancy rate

Statistic drops from 17 to six per cent thanks to combined efforts of DECA, local leaders

By **ANDREW HOLLAND**  
The Observer

In the spring of 2012, the east Danforth commercial vacancy rate was 17 per cent and nearly one in five stores lay empty. It was a quiet section of an otherwise bustling city neighbourhood.

Thanks in part to a few local leaders, the Danforth East Community Association (DECA) and their "pop-up shop project," this stretch of Danforth Avenue is now a vibrant commercial business area with a vacancy rate

of just six per cent.

Gay Stephenson, community economic development co-ordinator for DECA and WoodGreen Community Services, said before the project, the area didn't provide a welcoming environment.

"It felt deserted and dirty," she said. "Even though there were some great local businesses, there were a lot of dead zones and people didn't feel safe on the street all the time."

The project aimed to create more foot traffic on Danforth East and revitalize the area by filling the vacant storefronts with vibrant new small businesses.

DECA would put business owners in touch with landlords to negotiate a deal for their space. Leases were short term and would vary in length depending on the business owner's needs.

"Businesses would stay for as short as a weekend to as long as six months," Stephenson said.

After the six months were up, the business could renegotiate its lease with the landlords or take the opportunity to move to one of the other pop-up shop spaces available.

As the project grew, Stephenson said, more and more spaces were being filled with attractive new stores, which drew a different group of people to the area. However, gentrification of the Danforth East strip was never the project's intention.

"We were seeking to revitalize without gentrifying," she said. "We didn't allow any corporate people to use our pop-up shop spaces. A lot of our work was a 'shop local' campaign to get people to shop at all the local businesses, not just the pop-up shops."

Stephenson admits that despite their efforts to mitigate gentrification, signs of it did pop up in the area during the life of the project.

"Housing prices are soaring, just as they are everywhere in the city, and we are seeing income levels rise a little bit in our neighbourhoods," she said. "There was a Starbucks that moved into the area, so I suppose that's a sign."

Over the four years the project ran, 32 pop-up shops were in business. Now, with the vacancy rate of the Danforth's commercial strip at six per cent, there are no landlords with space available to keep the project going.

However, it will live on. The cities of Ottawa and Hamilton have shown interest and the Metcalf Foundation wants to expand the project to other parts of the city that need economic revitalization.

## Tide turns for watercolour painter at annual Riverdale art show



Rose Hetherington /// The Observer

William Brisland showcases his paintings at the Oct. 15 Riverdale Art Show and Sale.

By **ROSE HETHERINGTON**  
The Observer

It took a couple of years, but a local artist's ship has finally come in.

William Brisland, who creates coastal-inspired artwork, has taken part in the Riverdale Art Show and Sale for the past three years. In all that time, he didn't sell one of his watercolour paintings.

This year, however, he sold four paintings within a couple of hours at the annual show and sale, held Oct. 14 and 15 at Saint Barnabas Church on Danforth Avenue.

"I guess it's just the type of crowd," said the Scottish-Canadian artist. "It's all a matter of taste, you know, if you like this kind of subject matter."

Brisland likes to relax and "recharge the batteries" by painting. He's inspired by the eastern coast of Canada, especially Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador, and Cape Cod in the U.S. He visits these areas and paints mostly coastlines, harbours and related landscape themes.

"Two years ago, I spent 10 days in Fogo Island (off the northeast corner of Newfoundland) and that was really quite inspirational."

"I came back with a lot of stuff from there," Brisland said. "It's to find something that is unusual. Who would think of painting a rusty old van? It comes up with a sparkle at the end of it all."

Brisland prefers using watercolours, and the paintings he had on

display at Saint Barnabas Church were evidence of that.

This year marked the 28th anniversary of the Riverdale Art Show and Sale, which was started by artist Jenny Reid, who is also a member of Saint Barnabas Church.

Over 20 artists participated in this year's show.

"It's a lot of fun. We love getting together," Reid said. "Some of these people we only see once a year, so (we get) to see how their work has progressed."

The event is also a fund-raiser for the church. There's a table fee and a commission of 20 per cent per sale.

"It's nice to have new people coming in each year and not many people leave," Reid said. "It brings the community into the church."



In print for 44 years. Online for a quarter-century. And now the Observer is on the air.

## NEIGHBOURLY NEWS

Highlights from the pages of the East York Observer.  
Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. and Fridays at 4 p.m.  
On CJRU/AM 1280.

■ EDITORIALS

# Rooming houses need regulations

Next month, the executive committee of Toronto's city council will discuss a report evaluating its current system for dealing with rooming houses. Among the issues: the city will consider expanding the areas where rooming houses are able to operate legally.

One of these areas under consideration for expansion is East York.

Toronto's housing prices are very high, and it can be difficult to find accommodations that fit a small budget. A Bank of Montreal report in April showed that rent prices have set yet another record. It is unrealistic for someone working minimum wage to be able to afford over \$1,000 in rent alone — while also paying for life's other necessities for the rest of the month.

The high cost of living in Toronto is difficult to cope with, especially with a small, fixed income. Rooming houses allow low-income Toronto residents to rent a room in a dwelling at a reasonable price.

So it's appropriate that the city consider expanding the current legal zoning areas for rooming houses, including here in East York.

While the popular perception of rooming houses is that they accommodate "undesirables," let's not forget that they offer accommodation for many new Canadians — and also for students living away from home.

But under the current system, rooming houses in East York can only operate illegally. Rooming houses operating illegally are not held accountable by an external body. So landlords can infringe on a tenant's human rights without consequence.

Tenants desperate to maintain their accommodation have no leverage in these situations because of the fear of being homeless. (The ignorance of young students and new Canadians make them especially vulnerable.)

For this reason, regulation is a must. And for this reason too: unregulated rooming houses often fail to maintain reasonable housing standards or stay current with the fire code.

In 2015, Konstantin Lysenko was fined and put on probation after a tenant died in an illegal rooming house that Lysenko owned. Alisha Lamers, the tenant, was trapped in a fire in her basement apartment.

Without proper regulations on rooming houses, tenants' lives will continue to be in danger. The city must act swiftly — before further fatalities.

~ Renee Allen

# PRESTO pass a fail

PRESTO installation across the TTC is already over-budget even though it's not yet complete. According to a published report, Metrolinx had spent \$276 million by the end of this past March, which is \$22 million over.

It's commendable that the transit system for East York and the rest of the city is trying to put something into place that will provide riders with a more convenient and ultimately cheaper way to pay. But the bumpy installation of Presto so far is not very encouraging. Already, the electronic fare payment system is facing criticism from riders. There are still many subway stations, Wheel-Trans vehicles and buses that are yet to receive PRESTO installation. The GTA's Metrolinx transit authority has not been specific about how much it will cost to complete the installation. And with the project already over-budget, taxpayers and riders can be excused for some skepticism about the spending.

The Main Street subway station, in East York, was the first to have fare gates installed. But since that installation, some machines have had reader problems — and the website was unavailable for a weekend due to updates. Some PRESTO users are also complaining that it takes 24 hours for funds to be added to the card if the payment is made online.

It's worth mentioning that the TTC is covering the cost of fare gate installations at subway stations. Brad Ross, media relations officer for TTC, said that it is on-budget for its side of the PRESTO rollout. When PRESTO is fully installed at all subway stations, East Yorkers can expect to see booth collectors serve as customer service agents (CSAs). The CSAs will help riders traverse TTC routes.

The goal of Metrolinx, along with the TTC's, should be to provide the best service to transit users. Subway stations with fare gates should all have PRESTO cards for sale and working machines.

It is true that people don't always welcome change, but they'd be more likely to embrace this one if there weren't such obvious cost overruns and technical issues associated with it. The spending needs to be carefully monitored and the technology needs to be robust for TTC riders to believe in it.

Show East Yorkers and other commuters in the city that this is indeed a change for the better.

~ Cavel Brown

■ COLUMNS

# Tax those sugary sodas to fight against obesity

Between a bottle of water and a bottle of Coca Cola, which beverage would you choose to quench your thirst?

If you're leaning toward the bottle of Coke, maybe you should rethink your decision.

Why? Well the answer is simple. Obesity, diabetes and tooth decay.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is urging governments to place a tax on sugary drinks. The agency says that there needs to be at least a 20 per cent increase in the retail price of sugary drinks in order for there to be a decrease in consumption.

As someone who relates to the people who would rather choose the bottle of Coca Cola over the bottle of water, I am still actually on the side of WHO.

I'm sure there are people out there who've been telling themselves that they should lay off the sweets and start eating healthy. A tax on sugary drinks might be just

the push we need.

Obesity is on the rise. In 2014, 39 per cent of adults over the age of 18 were overweight.

Adults shouldn't just worry about themselves either. Child obesity is on the rise and the numbers are apparent in the 2015 statistics — with 42 million children under the age of five being obese.

With a nephew who is already larger than other children, I fear that he will join those 42 million.

But more than that, we should fear the ultimate implications of this rise in obesity. Children will turn into adults someday.

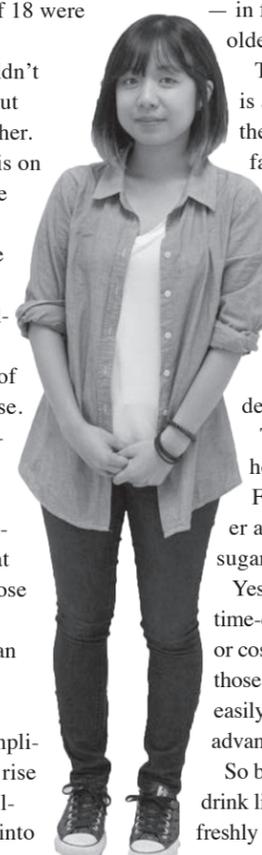
If they're obese now, what are they — and we, who pay for the health-care system — in for as they grow older?

Taxing sugary drinks is a way to reduce the consumption of fattening beverages and slow down obesity. Not only that, but a decline in sugary drink downing will lower the incidence of diabetes and tooth decay.

There are also many healthy alternatives. Fruit juice is healthier and contains natural sugar.

Yes, fruit juice might be time-consuming to make or costly to purchase, but those disadvantages are easily offset by the health advantages.

So between a sugared drink like Coca Cola and a freshly blended fruit juice, I'd rather drink the fruit juice.



Jasmine Hui

# Rogers Centre not a bar

"Ice-cold (overpriced beer!" the vendor shouted at the Blue Jays game. Overpriced or not, fans nevertheless raised their hands to get served.

It was obviously more important to get your beer than focus on the most important game of the year (at least to that moment) right?

Tie game, bottom of the seventh, in the American League Wild Card game.

The Rogers Centre crowd was getting loud for Melvin Upton Jr.

Upton hit a deep fly ball to left field, playable for Orioles outfielder Hyun Soo Kim.

But as Kim made the routine catch, a beer can soared from the stands and narrowly missed him.

So one misguided

soul in the stands made the Blue Jays organization change its beer rules.

The Rogers Centre will henceforth pour beer into cups, rather than serve cans. It's another upset for fans disheartened by Wednesday's season-ending playoff loss.

But it's also the right decision. Whether it's baseball, hockey, basketball, whatever, if you're going to a sporting event to get drunk, please sell your ticket and go to the local bar instead.

It may sound weird, but some people go to the

game to watch it.

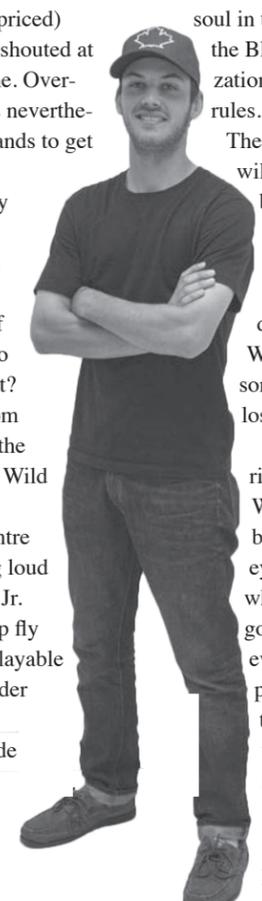
There's absolutely no problem in enjoying a beer at the game, but the moment it gets out of hand is the moment that you ruin it for people around you.

After the beer-tossing incident in last year's baseball playoffs, many parents were already reluctant to bring their children to the Rogers Centre. As a kid, you're there to enjoy the game and support your team — without alcohol. Why should that change when you're an adult?

Remember, there are places where it is vaguely acceptable to be drunk — but the Rogers Centre, the ACC and other sports venues are not among them.

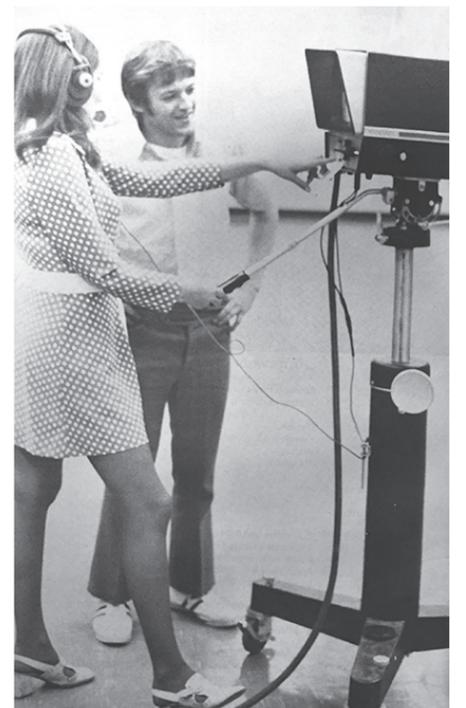
So this winter at the Leafs or Raptors, and next summer at the Jays, remember why you're there. It's a sporting event, not a drinking game with your friends.

Keep cheering loudly, Toronto, but please drink responsibly.



Colin Edwards

# College looks back on 50 years



The Observer continues its look back on local history — this time through photographs from the archives of Centennial College. That's because this past Monday was the 50th birthday of East York's only public post-secondary school. Centennial actually opened its doors as Ontario's first community college on Oct. 17, 1966 at 651 Warden Ave. in Scarborough (at a building now replaced by townhouses). Eventually the college expanded to other east-Toronto campuses... including the former Toronto Teachers College at 951 Carlaw Ave. in East York. It's shown above in its original state, before rebranding and extensive renovations. That campus is now called the Story Arts Centre, and is home to communications and arts programs, like journalism and broadcasting. If you look closely at the top-left photo of the students marching on Queen's Park (in November, 1966), you'll see from the sign they're carrying that they're Centennial's first class of journalism students. (The image of a cat is derived from the school's designation as a "College of Applied Arts and Technology" — CAAT.) The two photos above-right depict early broadcast students in their television studio, and two staff of the student newspaper called "The Arsenal" in 1969. That paper was one of the forerunners of the one that you're reading — the Observer, which has been published by Centennial journalism students since 1972. Beneath this caption is a photo of the birthday cake-cutting that took place on Monday in the lobby of the East York campus. Dean Nate Horowitz served slices of a specially decorated dessert to students. (All photos above courtesy of Centennial College; photo below by Sanjeev Wignarajah)

## Letter: Play more of the classics

Although I actually live in North York, I pass through East York quite a bit and have happened to pick up issues of the Observer in the past — most recently from the Todmorden community centre while doing some shopping and dining out with my husband in Pape Village.

As a classical musician, I'd like to say 'thank you' for the recent article about a classical musician (Sept. 23).

You are among the very few non-specific arts-oriented publications outside of the major Toronto newspapers that have published a very substantial article about a classical musician — in this case, the recent University of Toronto grad who is now a member of the Canadian Opera Company cast.

It is so rare that any publication acknowledges the people who love the finer types of music such as classical and opera, in this sports-mad city. There are so many more fine classical ensembles and musicians, some who have won awards, and who put on great shows consistently (which cost way less than seeing a professional sports team play).

—Meri Dolevski-Lewis

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The subject of that Sept. 23 profile, Charles Sy, is currently one of the featured singers in the Canadian Opera Company's new production of the Bellini opera Norma, onstage at the Four Seasons Centre until Nov. 5.)



# Greektown slams onto local wrestling scene



## Tag team's Fall Brawl event raises money for Michael Garron Hospital

By **SCOTT DELL**  
The Observer

With body slams, choke holds and spraying mist, Greektown Pro Wrestling returned to a packed house of rabid fans at the Royal Canadian Legion on Pape Avenue last Sunday.

The Oct. 16 event, organized by local tag team The Fraternity and supported by Djawadi Law Office and the Detroit Eatery, raised \$500 for the Michael Garron Hospital in East York.

"They work with us; they involve us in a lot of the excellent things they do with the kids," said Channing Decker, who makes up The Fraternity with partner Trent Gibson. "That's important to us. We're happy to give back and have them as part of our events."

Decker, giddy to be speaking in character, expressed his love of Fall Brawl as a community event.

"It's local, it's family," he said. "It's everything that this community is about, embodied by two good-looking boys from the neighbourhood."

Decker and Gibson, both names used for their wrestling characters, are honoured to be giving back to the Greektown community.

"It's important to me to contribute to something greater than myself," Decker said. "If I can contribute to a space of inclusion that includes others within the community to support one another and create opportunities for others, I can be proud of that."

The evening featured a women's match between Canadian favourite Alexia Nicole, aka The Bubble Gum Princess, and Total Nonstop Action Wrestling champion Rosemary.

Despite being in a major promotion, with Impact Wrestling airing every Thursday on POP TV, Rosemary said she loves coming back to Canada to perform at small wrestling shows.

"This is where I grew up," said the 32-year-old wrestler, who was born in Winnipeg. "This is where I got my start and I love the Ontario indie scene."

"We have really awesome fans. Even though you have experienced television success, there is something to be said for an intimate setting."



Andrew Holland /// The Observer

(Top) Space Monkey spears his opponent into the turnbuckle. (Bottom, l-r) Referee "Old School" helps his colleague after he was sprayed in the face by Rosemary's "red mist." Channing Decker, one half of "The Fraternity" tag team, kneels before his main event.

## REVIEW

# New IMAX film invites viewers to explore time

By **KIRK BUDDEN**  
The Observer

Surround sound is normal. Surround screen, that's on another level.

The Ontario Science Centre's OMNIMAX theatre literally surrounds the audience with its dome-shaped screen.

Its latest presentation, *Voyage of Time*, is a thinker for sure. Brad Pitt's raspy voice whispering the deepest thoughts of life as spectacular visuals cover the dome effectively connect the viewer to the film.

Director Terrence Malick massages his audience through his thoughts on life during the 40-minute movie, using his visually stunning style.

Malick tells the story through the appealing imagery and uses his star narrator, Pitt, sparingly, allowing the audience to create their own thoughts.

The movie switches between animated and real-life footage, ranging from prehistoric time with dinosaurs and cavepeople to modern-day. At times there is a feeling of looking down from a drone as the world becomes... the world.

Then, as the screen turns black and Pitt speaks of how small the world is in comparison to the universe, the audience inhales collectively.

*Voyage of Time* plays at the Ontario Science Centre's IMAX theatre weekends starting tomorrow, Oct. 22, and ending Dec. 18.



Courtesy of the Ontario Science Centre

A screenshot from the film *Voyage of Time*, playing at the Ontario Science Centre from tomorrow until Dec. 18.