

Violent 2 weeks for local street

One killed, one wounded on Wakunda Place

By YEYE ZHU
The Observer

Violence on a short street along the eastern edge of East York continues to dominate the police blotter.

After an attempted murder on Jan. 24, police returned this past Sunday, Feb. 7, to Wakunda Place, just off O'Connor Drive between St. Clair Avenue East and Eglinton Avenue East.

They found a man with obvious trauma at Toronto Community Housing's Centennial Apartments, located at 5 Wakunda Place. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

The victim has been identified as 51-year-old Arthur Kent Taylor of Toronto.

Robert Bailey, also 51, of Toronto, was arrested at the scene, and he's now facing a charge of second-degree murder.

He made his first court appearance the following day at the College Park courthouse.

That early-morning violence followed other serious early-morning violence less than two weeks prior.

On Jan. 24, two men shot at a man walking along Wakunda. The 25-year-old victim had just parked his car and was walking along the side of the street when a man approached him, pointed a gun and began to shoot at him.

The victim ran away, but the shooter chased him and continued firing — and another man accompanying the shooter also opened fire.

The victim was rushed to hospital with serious wounds.

Police have a description of just one of the shooters, who is said to have been black and wearing a grey track suit. They have released a grainy image from a surveillance camera that shows a silhouette near a row of vehicles.

Toronto Police is asking anyone with information to contact investigators at 416-222-TIPS (8477).

SCIENCE CENTRE EXHIBIT



Sarah Samwel /// The Observer

A mammoth undertaking

Visitors are mesmerized by the sheer magnitude of a life-sized replica of a mammoth at the Ontario Science Centre. The centre's new exhibit, *Mammoths and Mastodons: Titans of the Ice Age*, opened on Wednesday and runs until April 24. See page 8 for a story on the exhibit.

Mayor serves up free-breakfast initiative

Tory's \$500,000 offer doesn't go far enough, says program director

By EVANGELO SIPSAS
The Observer

The program director at the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office applauds Mayor John Tory's initiative to provide free breakfasts to Toronto-area grade school students, but believes the program doesn't go far enough.

In 2014 the Government of Ontario released a poverty reduction strategy; it included \$10 million made available between 2014 and 2019 to reduce poverty in Ontario communities. On Monday, Mayor Tory was

in the East York area to announce the allotment of \$500,000 (of that \$10 million) to offer breakfasts to communities in need. Mohan Doss, the program director of Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office, appreciates the initiative, but added some criticism.

"What about youth between 19 and 28, who are not in high school, who will not have access to free-breakfast programs?" Doss said.

The breakfast plan delivers free food and milk to children (kindergarten to Grade 6) each morning in schools where the community is in need.



TORY

Councillor Jon Burnside of Ward 26/Don Valley West was alongside the mayor for his announcement, and Burnside said he hopes the free-breakfast program is just the beginning of upper-level government support.

"(The) \$500,000 a year — it's quite a substantial amount of money," Burnside said. "(But) we are hoping to get federal help as well for these particular programs."

The mayor used Monday's announcement to remind those present that in addition to the free-breakfast programs for public schools, the city continues to offer free rides on public transit for youths 12 and under.

"I am proud of the initiatives we are putting forward by way of anti-poverty measures," Tory said.

According to Burnside, council-

lors representing areas of Toronto that are facing poverty issues will reach out to other community members and business to further support the free-breakfast program.

"I have already been talking to business owners and community leaders to hold a fundraiser in the spring to invest in the program," Burnside said, "because (with) private donations... the more money we can raise, the better we can make it for everyone."

Mayor Tory also said that the Ontario government will provide up to \$6 million in new money on top of other anti-poverty measures in the city's \$10-billion budget.

Following the announcement, Tory personally served eggs and toast to students at Thorncliffe Public School.

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Let's talk about 'Granny Power'

A screening and discussion of the documentary "Granny Power" is happening tonight, Feb. 12. The film follows passionate activist grandmothers as they fight for peace, social justice and the environment. The event begins at 7:30 p.m. and takes place at St. David's Anglican Church, 49 Donlands Ave., in East York.

Don't miss the skating party

The annual Beaches-East York skating party is this Sunday, Feb. 14. It will take place at Ted Reeve Arena at 175 Main St. from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Volunteers are still needed. Contact 416-690-1032 or apotts.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org for more information.

Show off your speaking talent

Listen up — for the best middle school speakers in the community. This coming Wednesday, Feb. 17, the finals in the Agnes Macphail Public Speaking Contest will take place at the East York Civic Centre, 80 Coxwell Ave., at 7 p.m. It will feature students from grades 6, 7 and 8 who have won speaking contests at the semi-final level across East York-area schools. For more information, contact Lorna Krawchuk at 416-425-4431 or lkrawchuk8@aol.com

~ Raquel A. Russell



Yeye Zhu // The Observer

Joanne Cantrill (at left) introduces St. Cuthbert's refugee helping program to (l-r) Livie Silva, an unidentified resident of the community, and Silva's husband, Doug Murray. "I feel the responsibility," Silva said.

Church extends a hand to Syrian refugees

By YEYE ZHU
The Observer

St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church in Leaside held a refugee sponsorship information fair on Saturday, providing all kinds of information for people who want to help Syrian refugees start a new life in Canada.

The Bayview Avenue church is working with the Anglican United Refugee Alliance (AURA), a Canadian charitable organization that is helping with the sponsorship and resettlement of refugees. Nine people established an official committee for the church, but they need help to assist a refugee family going through the transition to Canadian life.

Lorna Krawchuk, a St. Cuthbert's stalwart since 1976, is the chair of the committee. She said there's a fundrais-

ing target of \$40,000 to financially support the family for one year — including rent for a home. They have already received more than \$35,000, and there's more on the way.

"The government guideline says something like \$27,000, but not enough for the rent in Toronto," Krawchuk said, "and they need to be reasonably close to services."

Besides money, St. Cuthbert's needs assistance for the family in other ways as well. Everyone on the committee is in charge of something specific. For instance, Ted Krawchuk, Lorna's husband, is responsible for finding people who have the time and skills to help the family in certain specific ways — for example, accommodations, transportation and supporting the family's transition to Canada through schools, medical

appointments, English classes and employment.

The Krawchuks and their fellow committee members are open to other possible assistance too, and they invite inquiries from anyone interested in helping. A police check would be required for volunteers who would have personal contact with the family, but that can be accomplished simply and quickly.

However, they won't start to collect furniture and housewares until the family is chosen and actually arrives — and then the committee can decide what's needed.

And it's the same with clothing; Lorna Krawchuk said they won't collect clothes, but people can donate the clothes to the aid agency New Circles, so that the family can go there and choose the ones they want.

Since the family hasn't arrived yet, people still have time to think about what they can do to help. Doug Murray and his wife Livie Silva were among those at Saturday's meeting. They heard their friends are considering supporting refugees in some way, so they came to find out how they could help the new arrivals themselves.

"I feel the responsibility," Silva said. "I think it's the right thing to do."

Tiia Pfiszner is the committee member in charge of housewares, and she also works as the public relations co-ordinator for the committee. She and her co-worker went to Arz Fine Foods, a Middle Eastern bakery, and bought Syrian cookies for the information fair. She said it was a way to help build a connection between the people who came out and those whom they want to help.

Local minister denies allegations of indecent assault

By TREVOR GOLDING
The Observer

A prominent East York-area minister has been charged with sex crimes related to alleged incidents in Nova Scotia in the 1970s.

Rev. Brent Hawkes has been charged by the RCMP with indecent assault and gross indecency that allegedly took place in Kings County, N.S.

Well-known for his social activism work in the LGBT community, Hawkes

has been senior pastor at the Metropolitan Community Church for close to 40 years. Metropolitan is on Simpson Avenue near Broadview, a few blocks outside East York's southwest corner.

Hawkes, 65, strongly denies the allegations. He posted a statement to the church's website:

"I want to be crystal clear — I am innocent of these allegations. The purported events simply did not take place. While it is impossible for me to understand where these almost 40-year-old



■ HAWKES

accusations come from, I have a faith that will sustain me as well as faith in Canada's justice system."

He is being represented by lawyer Clayton Ruby, who said in a statement that he believes his client will be "vindicated."

The board of the church also released a statement saying Hawkes has

their full support.

Hawkes was awarded the Order of Canada in 2007 for his work in the LGBT community and has been recognized by the City of Toronto and the United Nations Toronto Association.

He preached on Sunday, saying again that he will "fight these allegations." Among those attending his service were Toronto-Danforth MPP Peter Tabuns, former Toronto police chief and now MP Bill Blair, and former MP and mayoral candidate Olivia Chow.

Worried about snitching? There's an app for that

By ANDREW WRIGHT
The Observer

"Don't snitch."

It's a code among students stronger than any anti-bullying rhetoric, and it's become a problem in high schools.

In response, a Safe Schools panel has recommended that the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) roll out an anonymous reporting app in their high schools.

The panel has called the "don't snitch" ethos a "barrier to school safety." The recommendation for the app was one of 33 made by the panel at a

recent TCDSB board meeting.

Safe Schools superintendent Vincent Burzotta explained the advantage of such an app.

"It deals with a vehicle students readily have, which is a cellphone," he said. "They're on them all the time so if they see something, they can report it inconspicuously."

TCDSB chair and trustee for East York Angela Kennedy says the majority of students feel comfortable reporting incidents within her ward. She says approval would rest on a report from Safe Schools demonstrating the need for such an app.

"Whatever we can do to keep our students safe is worth implementing," she explained.

The TCDSB wouldn't be the first to take on an app like this. One anonymous reporting app called Tip Off has had success in the Hamilton District School Board. After a successful pilot project, the app is now in use at several schools across the district. With Tip Off, students are able to report incidents by phone, text message, web chat or through the smart phone app. When students report an incident through the app, Tip Off labels the report and sends it to the appropriate source.

According to the Safe Schools panel, other anonymous reporting tools like 222-tips have had minimal success due to a lack of trust. Similarly, the success of any anonymous reporting app in Toronto schools will hinge on trust between the students and faculty.

One student at East York's Eastern Commerce Collegiate suggests that students collaborate with faculty on production of these apps.

While approval has not yet been granted, the Safe Schools panel is searching for potential developers. Burzotta says they would like to see the app implemented as early as September 2016.

Lippert leaves a legacy of beautiful music

By KAITLYN SMITH
The Observer

The Lippert Music Centre's schoolhouse at 970 Pape Ave. is a familiar sight to passersby. Its heritage goes back decades; in fact, next year will be the centre's 60th anniversary as a school for budding East York musicians.

Its founder was Joseph Lippert Jr., who died on Jan. 28 at the age of 90.

In 1957, Mr. Lippert opened the Lippert Music Centre, splitting his time between the small "schoolhouse" on Pape Avenue and house calls to teach his students.

Of German descent, Mr. Lippert learned to play the accordion as a young boy. In 1956, he attended what was then the Ontario Teachers' College on Carlaw Avenue (now the East York campus of Centennial College) to study music education — and he taught at several schools before striking out on his own.

It was more of a "you must learn" mentality," said Mr. Lippert's only child, Charleen Beard. "The interest piques when you hear something you enjoy."

Music "was his life," said Mr. Lippert's wife, Gloria — who was married to her husband for almost 52 years.

When her father retired in 1996, Beard stepped up to run the centre.

Mr. Lippert taught her to play piano and, by the age of 12, she had passed her crucial Grade 8 conservatory exam. At 10 years old, Charleen was marking the theory papers of her



Kaitlyn Smith // The Observer

Lippert's daughter, Charleen Beard, remembers her father's gifts for both music and teaching.

father's students.

"As a kid, you sort of resent it in a way," she remembered, commenting on the pressure she felt to learn music. "But when you grow up, you understand why."

Anna Bannach was eight years old when she had her first lesson with Mr. Lippert.

"My sister inspired me to play the piano," said Banach, who originally started out learning ballet as a child.

Banach would dance while her sister played, but complained about the quality of music. So she decided to learn the piano, and eventually quit dancing to follow music. She has been teach-

ing at the Lippert Music Centre for 16 years now.

"I got to know the Lippert family and watch them go through (a lot)," said Banach on the death of Mr. Lippert and the toll it's taken on the family.

Mr. Lippert had a difficult time continuing to play music as he got older, but pulled through to play at the centre's 50th anniversary in 2007.

"In later years, he became hard of hearing," his widow said. Still, Mr. Lippert and his wife would attend concerts, and she said he'd complain because he could hear people's mistakes when they played.

Mr. Lippert taught for generations — almost 40 years — and his legacy is that his music centre continues to teach people to play and love music.

Nancy Gomes took group guitar lessons with Mr. Lippert as a young girl in the mid-'70s.

"I remember him being a fair teacher," she said. Her son now takes piano lessons at the Lippert Music Centre.

"I do remember one song I really liked," said Gomes. "The Boogie Woogie. It was my favourite. I can still play the beginning."

The Lippert family held a funeral ceremony at the Heritage Funeral Centre on Jan. 31. Naturally, the service featured music — from the harp, cello, voice... and of course, the accordion.

Family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, students and local dignitaries attended, including city councillor Mary Fragedakis and MPP Peter Tabuns.

■ EAST YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Celebrating Black History Month with songs and stories

President of group says it's vital that we recognize the month's importance'

By ZILUN ZHAO
The Observer

It was an East York Historical Society meeting with a decidedly artistic twist.

With an eye toward Black History Month, the historical society set aside the usual seminar format at its Jan. 26 meeting and adopted a celebratory tone instead.

Brooke Donna-Lee Pastuch, the 13-year-old solo singer for the occasion, explained her reasons for participating.

"I think Black History Month is a very important event," she said. "I think we should definitely celebrate diversity now, definitely stop discrimination against people."

Pastuch said she hopes the people who attended will carry the same feeling of enlightenment forward.

"It's definitely something we should continue to do," she said. "It's important that we celebrate this and remember the people that suffered, and continue to celebrate this."

Black History Month, held every February, celebrates the contributions of black people in Canada and in the United States.

It's also held every October in the United Kingdom.

And, as the historical society's meeting proved, everyone, regardless of skin colour, can join in the

celebration.

Ron Manfield, a pianist and musician, played "What A Wonderful World" and "All For Julie" during the event. Manfield said that music plays an important role in his life, and it can play an important role in helping to harmonize the world.

"Music is international, and to come out to share that talent is an honour I feel," he said. "To enjoy music is a gift, and to share music is a gift."

The East York Historical Society has been organizing Black History Month events for more than a decade.

"It is important that we do remember," said the president of the EYHS, Pancheta Barnett, adding that "we do recognize the importance of Black History Month, because of the history behind it."



Zilun Zhao // The Observer

The EYHS president, Pat Barnett, co-ordinated the event.



Zilun Zhao // The Observer

Soloist Brooke Donna-Lee Pastuch praised diversity.



Zilun Zhao // The Observer

Pianist Ron Manfield sang the Louis Armstrong classic, What a Wonderful World.

Partnership 'a win' for E.Y. hospital

By NIKOLA CVETKOVIC
The Observer

Children visiting the emergency room at Michael Garron Hospital, formerly known as Toronto East General, will continue to receive expert care thanks to a recently renewed partnership between the hospital and The Hospital for Sick Children (Sick-Kids).

Children account for a fifth of the patients cared for in the Garron Hospital's emergency department, so what better place to access the expert knowledge about pediatric care than one of the world's leading providers in it: SickKids.

Kirsten Martin, the hospital's director of clinical operations and transitions, said staff take great pride in the renewed partnership.

"This partnership is a win, not only for our patients, but also for the staff who work in both...emergency departments," she said.

East York resident Mark Howard recalled bringing his son to what was then known as TEGH for the first time.

"It was reassuring to see the hospital's partnership with the leader in children's health care and to receive such superb care," he said. "It's a lot more convenient for us in the east end to be able to have the same kind of care without having to go to downtown."

The continued commitment means an emergency room doctor from SickKids will spend a day a week working at Michael Garron Hospital, and the hospital's emergency staff receives enhanced pediatric training.

"SickKids is truly a great place for sick children to receive some of the best care possible," said Anna Cotic, pre-med student, volunteer, and research assistant at SickKids.



Jacqueline Thetsombandith /// The Observer

A bird in the bush

A harbinger of spring, perhaps? We can only hope. This plucky fellow enjoys the winter quiet in an East York yard.

Archeologist's passion sparks award

By RAQUELLE WRIGHT
The Observer

An archeologist with strong East York connections is among the winners of a major international award.

Susan Hughes, a longtime resident of East York and the former curator of the Todmorden Mills Heritage Site on Pottery Road, is part of the team of archeologists and heritage specialists working for the City of Toronto who have won the Archeological Institute of America's Conservation and Heritage Management Award.

"The award the city received recognizes the excellence and best practices of Toronto's Archeological Management Plan, which was

developed to establish planning procedures, policies and protocols for conserving the city's archeological record," said a news release from the city — which shares the award with consulting firm ASI.

"Toronto is proud to be a leader in conserving and managing archeologically significant sites and this plan will establish a model to help other municipalities preserve their history," said the chair of the city's planning and growth committee, city councillor David Shiner.

"This award is to some extent unique," Hughes said in an interview with the Observer, but that distinctiveness, she added, is a reflection of "one of the most comprehensive archeological manage-

ment plans anywhere in the world." With a dozen years of experience behind her, Hughes is now a project manager for the city's archeology department.

"I love museums, I love Toronto's history and heritage and culture," she said. "I think Toronto is the best city in the world."

As for the archeological plan that earned her and her team their award — and a trip to San Francisco to pick it up — "our plan is comprehensive, because it incorporates every square inch of the city of Toronto land and we basically looked at how the city has evolved or developed over time."

The release from the city said that the plan includes "detailed,

geo-coded maps that identify known archaeological sites; a thematic overview of the city's settlement history; and identified areas of archaeological potential."

These tools are supplemented with implementation recommendations and guidelines prepared by city staff and ASI's professional archaeologists in collaboration with representatives of relevant Indigenous communities.

"The plan also includes provisions for interpretation and commemoration. The city requires developers to fund and maintain permanent commemorative and interpretive displays related to heritage and archeology on their properties."

Seven tips to save your garden from disaster after winter

By FATIMA TEXIWALA
The Observer

There's nothing like going to the patio with a glass of wine in your hand and admiring a beautifully manicured garden — maybe mirroring that of Martha Stewart's. But chances are your garden right now is probably covered with patches of snow, dead plants, and no sign of any rescue on the horizon. Still, this is wintertime — and you have a legitimate excuse for why your garden is looking the way it does.

But once spring sneaks up on you, you'll be forced to deal with the tragic truth that all of your hard work from last summer's growing season is moot... and it's time to put those gloves on and get back to work.

Before you start, however, you need to understand the seriousness of dealing with gardening disasters.

"Oh what, somebody steps on your tulips and you have to call an ambulance or something?" joked Tena van Andel — referring to reactions she's gotten over the years. She is an event co-ordinator at the Master Gardeners of Ontario with expert knowledge on garden disasters, and she spoke to the Jan. 14 meeting of the Leaside Garden Society, held at the Leaside library branch.

"Disasters happen all the time and they are devastating," Andel warned. They can also come



File photo from Fotolia

in many shapes and sizes, from pests to improper care of plants. That's why it's best to consider ahead of time what your garden requires for its regular maintenance.

Don't know where to start? No need to fret; Andel has some great tips that can help revive your garden after an abandonment.

Tip #1: "Don't ever surrender!" She is referring to the never-ending struggle that gardeners have with pests such as beetles, squirrels, raccoons, skunks and other animals that seem to destroy any chances of achieving that dream garden. Andel advises squishing beetles as soon as they are spotted. It may not seem like these bugs

do much harm, but they can ruin your plants (like Japanese beetles, which often come in swarms). She also advises not to water your garden so much as these beetles thrive in moisture.

Tip #2: "Avoid any source of food or water on-site." This will no doubt attract those pesky raccoons roaming late night looking for a dinner reservation at Chez Your Garden. Mix up your animal repellants, since "all these animals get used to things. Keep trying something different every time. Nothing is going to work 100 per cent." If all fails, Andel suggests tolerance. "We all live on this planet Earth. You aren't as important as they are."

Tip #3: "Don't use fresh soil." For many, this may come as a surprise. Although you may like seeing that rich, black soil, fresh soil can attract pests. More specifically, those beady-eyed brown fur-balls that are arguably a gardener's worst enemy. Sure, they may seem cute at first, but squirrels work themselves into a frenzy every time you add fresh soil to your garden.

Tip #4: "Rake your soil to eliminate weeds." By doing this, you prevent any further seeds belonging to weeds from germination. That means less throwing your back out from playing tug-of-war with those persistent green invaders.

Tip #5: "De-pot your plants with care." When making space for your plants, dig holes that will help your plant's roots spread evenly. Many people dig too deep. Andel argues that it's better to create "wide holes, not deep ones."

Tip #6: "Be prudent about pruning." Although pruning is a great way to maintain the health and esthetics of your plants such as trees and shrubs, it can be that super power that many of us take to our heads. Simply put, "be minimal about it."

Tip #7: "Water your plants properly." Avoid watering your plants every day. Instead, Andel says, "once a week, make sure you water really well and deeply." This will also help you keep track of how much water you're giving your plants.

Life lessons from life drawings

Observer reporter puts down her pen, picks up a pencil at drawing class

By **KAITLYN SMITH**
The Observer

Every Monday at Centennial College's East York campus on Carlaw Avenue, David McClyment hosts aspiring artists from the community at an open drawing class. For \$5, you sit or stand at an easel, set aside the cares of the day, and draw to your heart's — and hand's — content.

This Observer reporter took the opportunity to attend one recent Monday. I'm by no means an artist, and I don't have any formal training. But I learned that regardless of artistic background, it can still be beneficial to try a life drawing class.

Life drawing has a long history. It started with stick figures in caves and on ancient pottery. As time has drawn on (pun intended), artists have become obsessed with sculpting or



Smith's artwork

drawing a realistic imitation of the human body. Every culture has had an interest in drawing nude figures, whether it's for science or entertainment.

If you want to jump into life drawing, I say you should. Here are a few things to consider:

The paradox of thinking not to think

McClyment is an artist, art teacher and the co-ordinator of the college's fine arts program. When I first met him in his office, he pointed at my head and said I'd need to turn my brain off. I thought, "I can do that!" When I sat down and started to draw the model on Monday, I reminded myself: "Turn your mind off, turn your mind off."

Telling this to yourself doesn't mean you've tuned out the world around you entirely. But it's still much easier said than done. The more you draw, however, the less you think. So don't think about how to stop thinking; just draw and let it come naturally.



Think not, judge not

If you have no training, or don't have natural talent for drawing, think of it as "like riding a bike," said McClyment. You don't have to be Leonardo da Vinci to go to a class; just go and have a good time doing it. This is a time to try something new, so don't judge how well you do, especially if it's your first experience. The people attending won't judge you either, and some have helpful tips to share.

The messier, the better

McClyment gave me a synthetic charcoal pencil to draw with before the session. I used charcoal in high school so I knew it was messy, but figured synthetic charcoal was less so. I was wrong.

McClyment has a strict rule for his art students: "Friends don't let friends leave with charcoal on their face." Thank goodness I became friends with the girl running the session, a college art student. Before I left, she told me I had black smudges all over my hands and face.

Change your point of view

The easels at Centennial give you an option of whether you'd like to stand or sit. I sat for most of the time, but my bum got sore, so I had to stand. Standing gave me a better field

of view and also gave me the chance to lengthen my arm away from the page. When you sit to write or draw, your wrist does most of the flicking, but when I stood, my wrist got a break while I used the movement from my shoulder down to draw. I had more freedom to move, which gave me the physical and mental space to draw better pictures.

Life lessons from life drawing

When you look at the model to draw her/him, don't disregard who they are. Instead, use your utensil to draw a story about the person. The model is a human too and every person has a story. Let your art — the strokes and flow of the picture — show whom the person you're drawing is or could be.

This profound thought opens a world of possibilities and extends beyond the three-hour drawing session. This is a life lesson from life drawing: treat every person like they have a story. (You might find yourself living in a happy, healthier and more balanced world!)

You can find more information about the open drawing sessions by contacting David McClyment at Centennial College at dmcclyment@centennialcollege.ca



Evangelo Sipsas /// The Observer

Both experienced and novice artists enjoy creating at Centennial College's community open-drawing class.

Winter running on the rise in East York

By **JONATHAN YUE**

Every Saturday morning, in temperatures hovering around the minus-10 mark, members of the East York Runners Club gather for their weekly run.

Not many people think about going on a run during the cold Toronto winters, but for these runners of various ages, it's more about the preparation than the weather.

"(Definitely) dress in layers, but not too many," club organizer Jim Clayton advises. "Usually what we do is dress for 10 degrees warmer. It may start off cold, but it gets warmer."

The club has been running through the streets of East York since 2009 -- rain, snow, sleet or shine. Clayton, who took over the



Jonathan Yue /// The Observer

The East York Runners Club hasn't let cold weather slow it down.

organizing duties a few years ago, explains that instead of a drop in attendance during the winter months, the number of runners joining the club rises.

"We actually see an increase in January, a surge of people," he said, "and we have a core group of about 20 runners that come when they can."

What seems to attract people to the running club is the camaraderie among the members. Running in general, especially during the winter, can get lonely sometimes, and being in a group may help keep people going. The East York runners come together every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday, building off of their prior goals together.

For runner Cheryl Vergut, the club is a way for her to stay motivated and active.

"For me it's exercise, like a cardio day, so I come for the exercise value. It's nice to be in a group. It's hard to run alone, so the group is a motivation for sure," she said.

When asked what advice the group would give to other runners looking to brave the winter weather, the consensus was to take the first step and get out there.

■ EDITORIALS

Inclusion vs. lice

Toronto school board needs to change its 'no-nits' policy

The TDSB's "no-nit" policy is under review, and some parents are upset.

The review comes after a policy update from Toronto Public Health. The update was made in accordance with a position statement from the Canadian Pediatric Society that says there's no medical basis for excluding students with head lice from class.

The pediatric society maintains that the spread of lice can be effectively prevented by treatment outside of school and the discouragement of head-to-head contact inside school.

Parents, however, are not convinced. A Facebook group called "Stop the Head Lice Protocol" has created an online petition — and has collected more than 1,500 signatures.

The concern of parents is understandable, especially parents who have had children come home with head lice before. The treatments can be exhausting and expensive, and they often have to be administered more than once. Even then, many parents have a problem with recurrence.

It's a nuisance. But the pediatric society calls this nuisance a societal issue — not a medical issue, and it says that exclusion is no longer an acceptable solution.

A two-hour drive east along the 401, in schools run by the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board, there's already a policy in place that does not exclude students affected by head lice. According to a document outlining that board's policy, exclusionary practices only further stigmatize and damage the self-esteem of affected students. Head lice is already inaccurately associated with poor hygiene, so a certain discrimination is compounded when children are kept home from class and home from their friends.

The "no-nit" policy also acts as a barrier in other ways. The Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board policy wisely takes the varied socio-economic circumstances of each child into consideration. Specifically, exclusion is seen as an added stress to those students whose families are financially disadvantaged. Parents with lower incomes may not be in the financial position to miss work and keep their child at home. And they may not be as able to afford the sometimes-expensive treatments that are required. Finally, ESL children and children with learning disabilities who are required to stay out of school may fall behind, considering that they rely heavily on help from their teachers.

The control of a head lice infestation is important. There is no disputing that. A protocol that ensures proper treatment and minimizes the spread of head lice should be included in any policy reform. But in no way should the nuisance of an itchy scalp become a barrier to a child's education and development.

~ Andrew Wright

Diminishing trust

Pollsters working for the CBC recently asked Torontonians if they trust their police.

A bare majority said yes. And one in three respondents said they think that to at least some extent, police officers are above the law. When asked if police conduct is treated specially by the criminal justice system, 79 per cent of the sample said that the justice system treats our police officers with clemency.

Let's hope that the Toronto Police Service — and especially its rank and file — pays particular attention to this reported perception. We know that this poll and its results came in the wake of a Toronto policeman being found guilty in a case that revolved around his shooting of a mentally disturbed young man who was waving a knife. And in the wake of alleged evidence-planting by other officers at the southwest corner of East York. Those blemishes on the public face of our police may have distorted the survey results, considering how high they were on the news agenda at the time of the polling.

But that doesn't mean we should dismiss those results.

"I think it's important for large organizations like the Toronto Police Services to have some idea on what the public's perception is," said Shelley Carroll, a city councillor and member of the Toronto Police Services Board. "The public's perception is getting weaker and weaker about the police, so we hope that when such polls are conducted, they will take it to heart, regroup and respond to that."

Another councillor — and former police officer — isn't quite so sure. Ex-cop Jon Burnside is now Don Valley West's representative at city hall. He thinks the police sometimes get a bum rap.

"Stereotyping is human nature. I made the comment before that people accuse the police of stereotyping; yet actually they do the same to the police," Burnside said.

He has a point. We can probably agree that the vast majority of police officers are making a good faith effort in a difficult job. But that shouldn't blind us to the need to winnow out the police who are power-tripping. And the need for ever-more-sophisticated education and training for even the best-intentioned officers.

~ Evangelo Sipsas

■ COLUMNS

Observe black history

Black History Month is an annual celebration of the achievements and accomplishments of African and African-Canadian culture.

At its best, it transmits the insight of individuals who have helped shaped cultural acceptance as well as helped mould the world into what it has become.

From important practical inventions like the pacemaker to moral imperatives emphasized in street protests, this observance of Black culture brings forth many historic facts that should be deemed a crucial part of each Canadian's mindset.

But as February rolls in and out year after year, it seems that there is less and less attention and responsiveness toward Black History Month — leaving some to wonder why the occasion was created in the first place.

The lack of

exposure and attention lowers the meaning and importance that the month was meant to foster.

Bryan Sterling, now a 23-year-old social work graduate, recalls his own confusion around Black History Month observances

(perhaps "non-observances" would be more appropriate):

"It was shocking to see that the high school put no effort into educating these kids of how important this month really is.

Nowadays it's hard to find a child who can explain who Jackie Robinson was and what he did for black culture."

In order to help mend this, a change must be made to promote this cause. There has to be more attention shone on this important month.

Perhaps one rem-

edy is to distil Black History Month down to Black History Week.

A shorter, more intensive observance would focus public attention more efficiently. Though many might think that a week isn't long enough to cover this important cultural event, a week might draw more involvement than a month of relatively diluted events and information.

But other thoughtful promotion is required too. There should be more of a build-up to Black History Week, to create more anticipation of it. More celebrity endorsements could be just one tool to help. The production of movies, television shows and commercials for the week could be another.

Finally, better implementation of a school curriculum around black history would encourage students to learn about that history and gain a better grasp on the change and importance that it brings to Canada and Canadians.

It's something worth celebrating.



Grazielle Solomon

Let's add a little colour

TV news anchors should reflect our Toronto's diverse community

It's an axiom in the news business that people are most interested in what's happening right around them. Audiences value local news. So the news media — hoping to attract and hold those audiences in a tough environment — value local news too.

You can see this principle in local television; in the familiar faces of the anchors and reporters on Toronto television newscasts.

But there's a strange aspect to that.

Many ethnic faces make up Toronto. But when you watch local television news, it's overwhelmingly white — males and females with a specific, non-ethnic look.

Here in the journalism program at Centennial College's East York campus, I and my fellow students have noticed this tendency. Like my classmate, Raquel Russell:

"In five years, I feel that I'm going to have to cut off my dreads," she told me. "Especially if I want to be on television."

Although we live in a coun-

try and a time that treasures equality, multicultural differences aren't equally represented to us through journalists who report the news.

Many of us studying journalism like to imagine ourselves on television, but it's an unfortunate reality that only a selected few are chosen for it — in part due to their looks, and even a willingness to create an image that may not be their own.

When I think of a woman who embraces her natural roots, CNN's Nima Elbagir comes to mind.

Her determination to maintain the appearance of her natural heritage inspires people of ethnic backgrounds to keep hold of their culture —

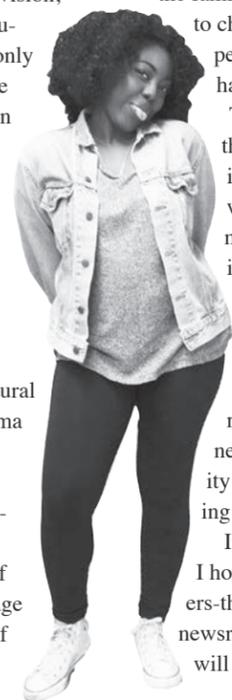
without the need to conform to the norm.

As a journalism student, I have high hopes that I'll be accepted in television news without having to change my look to fit someone's notion of the familiar. Without having to change my nature and personal preferences on hair, attire and attitude.

Toronto may well be the most diverse city in Canada. Which is why there needs to be more acceptance when it comes to diverse appearances on television.

The news media that supposedly reflect our community need to embrace ethnicity and stop discriminating against it.

In the near future, I hope that the powers-that-be in television newsrooms across our city will change and allow diversity to filter out to Toronto homes.



Raquelle Wright

The Brick Works legacy lives on



Courtesy of City of Toronto Archives

The Observer continues its look back on East York history through photographs from the City of Toronto Archives. These two pictures resonate especially for this issue — considering the date on the calendar and the story on this page about Evergreen Brick Works. At left is a photo that is almost exactly 80 years old. It was taken on Feb. 10, 1936, along Daves Road, and it depicts a bus from the private “Del-Ray” coach company. The picture on the right is identified in the archives as circa 1911, and is described simply as showing the “Don River Valley... and brick works.”

Even skating rink is eco-friendly

By **JON LAMONT**
The Observer

The familiar sound of skates on ice echoed across the rink as two brothers whizzed by on the ice, laughing. It was their first time at the Evergreen Brick Works skating rink, and they were having a blast.

Their mother, Chong Suan, watched nearby, laughing as well. “It’s unique,” she said, smiling.

The Evergreen Brick Works rink, a small ice rink in one of the Don Valley Brick Works buildings, is a hidden gem in Toronto.

The rink resides inside one of the old brick work buildings. The roof is gone, leaving just the rafters, which al-

lows the sun to shine through during the day.

Little green hills sprout out of the ice, turning it into an oval track. Trees and shrubs grow on the mounds, giving the rink its own look and feel.

The ice rink’s distinct personality also comes from the site’s heritage.

The Evergreen Brick Works started off as the Don Valley Pressed Brick Works in 1889. After the Great Fire in 1904, the brick works provided much of the brick required to rebuild the city, including landmarks such as Massey Hall and Casa Loma.

The factory closed down almost 100 years after it opened. Shortly after, the land was expropriated by the City

of Toronto and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). In the 1990s, Evergreen started tree-planting initiatives in the Lower Don Watershed, and the TRCA began the first phase of park development.

In the 2000s, Evergreen began exploring new environmental ideas, while opening sections of the Brick Works for markets, local food displays, eco-art displays and summer programs such as gardening. In 2010, the Brick Works opened year-round, with a focus on demonstrating greener models for urban living.

The skating rink is a prime example of Evergreen’s goal. Through the recycling

of space and the use of the Eco Chill system, the Brick Works rink demonstrates an eco-friendly model. Unlike standard ice rink refrigeration systems, which extract heat from the ice and expel it into the atmosphere, the Eco Chill system recycles the extracted heat. In the case of Evergreen, they use the recycled heat to warm their marketplace, which reduces energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

But all of this goes on behind the scenes. Most of the skaters are content with just enjoying a favourite winter pastime. As her boys zipped around the rink, Suan smiled.

“It may be our first time here, but it isn’t our last.”

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BRICK WORKS

- 1889: William Taylor and his two brothers opened the Don Valley Brick Works.
- 1904: Toronto’s “Great Fire” destroyed much of the downtown core of the city, resulting in new bylaws requiring masonry construction. The brick business boomed.
- 1984: Bust. The factory closed.
- 1986: The land was expropriated by the City of Toronto and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, with key support from various levels of government.
- 1992: The first phase of park development was undertaken with the support of the city, TRCA, and a private donation by the Weston Foundation.
- 2008: Ground-breaking was celebrated and construction began.
- 2010: Evergreen Brick Works opened year-round.

—Source: evergreen.ca

East York bar transformed by weekly poetry sessions

By **DENICE RAAGAS**
The Observer

Marsha Barber is a poet who, in a bright red outfit, stood in the spotlight with a microphone in an otherwise dimly lit room. It was so dark outside her pool of light that she couldn’t even see the faces of the people she was addressing.

She read poems about life, death and love. As she delivered her prose with a range of emotion, she captivated her audience. The room went silent, then burst into applause.

“It’s very important for me to communicate,” Barber said. “Poetry is a wonderful way to search for the truth, the emotional core, the heart of whatever subject I’m writing about.”

Barber, 60, is an author, poet and professor who attended The Art Bar Poetry Series one night around Christmas-time. The series is held at The Black Swan Pub on the Danforth. The Art Bar Poetry Series is recognized as Canada’s longest running poetry-only weekly reading series. Creative people from different walks of life are given the spotlight.

Some poems were lyrical, musical, angry and philosophical. Other poems were free verse, bristling with ideas.

Another poet who read alongside Barber was Norman Allan. Allan, 56, is not only a poet, but also an artist. He was the very first featured to read when The Art Bar first started 25 years ago. Right by the stage, he carried a sketchpad and a box of chalk filled with red, blue and yellow pastels. As Barber recited poems, Allan started to sketch Barber’s face on a blank piece of paper.

“It’s one of the ways I get inspired,” Allan said.

Allen Briesmaster, editor and publisher of Quattro Books, took over from the founder of The Art Bar Series just two years after it was started. According to Briesmaster, it’s a place where a sense of communities overlap. The gathering is significant because individuals in the community are exposed to learning about poetry.

“It’s very accessible to anybody who is not a specialist,” Brisker said. “The Art Bar has always been a cornucopia of all the different possibili-

ties of poetry.”

Jonathan Mungal, 26, is a poet who was reciting a poem in front of an audience for the first time. Mungal didn’t read his poem; he free-styled. As a half French-Canadian and half-Trinidadian, he was afraid that people might not be able to understand him because of his accent. Mungal recited a poem about imperfection and being human.

“I was very honest on-stage,” he said. “It is important because I am able to express myself and how I feel at that moment.”

Mammoth-sized lesson from the ice age

Science centre takes patrons on journey through the ice age

By SARAH SAMWEL
The Observer

About 42,000 years ago, a baby mammoth was born. She would only live a month — but her legacy extends all the way to present day, into a new and exciting era of research.

Nicknamed Lyuba, she was discovered in 2007 by a reindeer herder and his two sons in Russia. She is the best-preserved mammoth specimen ever found.

Dr. Daniel Fisher, a professor of paleontology at the University of Michigan, said the discovery was groundbreaking.

“We learned things about mammoth biology we never knew before. For instance, how long the gestation period, and when during the year they were born,” he said.

“We learned things about how mother mammoths cared for their calves.”

Now that Lyuba has captured the imaginations of scientists, she’s going on to capture the hearts of the public. She is the centerpiece of the exhibit *Mammoths and Mastodons: Titans of the Ice Age*, which opened on Wednesday at the Ontario Science Centre.

Fisher is the curator of the exhibit and one of the scientists who worked with Lyuba. He said the most interesting thing coming out of the discovery was looking at mammoth tusks.

“Tusks are teeth, and they grow throughout the life of a mammoth. They grow by adding layer upon layer of material,” he said. “Out near the tip of the tusk is the earliest record of the animal’s life, and near the base of the tusk is a record at the end of life.... You have almost an entire record of life.”

Mammoths, contrary to popular belief, are not the predecessors of modern elephants. They are related,



Sarah Samwel /// Observer

The best-preserved mammoth specimen, Lyuba, is the inspiration behind the Ontario Science Centre’s new exhibit. The mammoth was only one month old when she died, but her remains have provided countless insights for scientists.

though, sharing an ancestor about six million years ago.

Asian elephants are more closely related to mammoths than African elephants.

Mastodons are a more distant relative of elephants. The most recent common ancestor dates to about 25-30 million years ago. They had different diets, behaviours and anatomy.

Curated by the Field Museum in Chicago, the exhibit now at the sci-

ence centre on Don Mills Road takes visitors through the biology, history and consequences of the ice age for mammoths and mastodons. On display are life-size replicas of a mammoth and an entire skeleton. (One is quickly reminded of the origin of the descriptive word “mammoth.”)

Life-size prehistoric bears and cats are also on display. They were common predators of mammoths and mastodons.

Bones and skulls are spread throughout the exhibit, showing how mammoths developed throughout the ages. As well, there are replicas showing how humans interacted

with these creatures.

“(Humans had) neat storage locations, places where people brought parts of mastodons they had hunted, killed and butchered. They stashed the carcass parts to store the meat so they could come back to it later,” Fisher said.

While it is a commonly held notion that the ice age caused the extinction of mammoths, there is new research to suggest that human interaction may have also been a component. And with this in mind, the exhibit ends with a look at modern elephants and human interactions. Elephants are currently at risk of extinction,

like the mammoth. Visitors are left with a message to ponder about what human interaction truly means to these majestic animals.

The exhibit is meant for all ages. Children will enjoy the interactive elements, life-size replicas and educational videos. Adults and teens will appreciate the walk-through dioramas, photography and educational components. There are interactive elements, like picking up food with a mechanical trunk or wrestling a friend with handheld mammoth head replicas.

The exhibit runs until April 24 and is included with regular admission.



■ FISHER

Local Spin-A-Thon sweats it out for a good cause

By GRAZIELLE SOLOMON
The Observer

The Energia fitness store and studio on Pape Avenue hosted the fourth annual Spin-A-Thon on Jan. 30 to help raise money and awareness for the non-profit Peer Project — a Toronto agency that provides mentors for youth who are at-risk or who are newcomers to Canada.

Participants gathered pledges, and then mounted stationary bikes and spun, spun, spun for between one and 12 hours.

The workout instructors helped keep the wheels turning, along with non-stop music, refreshments and prizes — and the knowledge that it was all for a good cause.

The final tally: \$30,000.

Sally Spencer, the CEO of the Peer Project, said she’s devoted 28 years to the peer mentoring program.

“Mentoring is one of the most powerful



Grazielle Solomon /// Observer

The Energia fitness store and studio on Pape Avenue hosted a fundraising Spin-A-Thon on behalf of Toronto’s Peer Project youth mentoring agency.

things you can give to someone,” she said. “It changes lives when you motivate the youth.”

The Peer Project’s target demographics

involve clients between six and 15 years of age — and volunteer mentors between the ages of 16 and 29. Once mentors are trained and a match is made, the goal is to try to

create a bond between the two that will allow comfort not only for the protégé, but for the supporter as well.

Overall, the program hopes to create an active relationship that will allow the “mentee” a chance to make personal and positive change within his or her life.

There are 600 active matches and a wait list of over 400.

Shante, a peer mentoring mentee, said that the program has made a positive difference within her life.

“I really found that my behaviour changed a lot,” she said.

Shante’s mentor, Karina, added that she could “relate to the program a lot because I had a lot of mentors and people in my life who had inspired me and guided me in my life.”

“I guess I didn’t realize how much I can give to others. I find it very inspiring just to see Shante change and grow.”