



■ AGNES MACPHAIL AWARDS



Cherry (Changhong) Lui /// The Observer

The VOCA Chorus of Toronto kicks off the 2016 Agnes Macphail Award Ceremony with their performance at the East York Civic Centre on March 24.

Rocca known as 'hands-on advocate'

Agnes Macphail Award recipient sets example for global and local attitudes towards community engagement

By **CHERRY (CHANGHONG) LUI**
The Observer

The credo often associated with Agnes Macphail — “Think Globally, Act Locally” — couldn’t come more naturally to the man who won the award in Macphail’s name last week.

“As a child, I remembered seeing letters on the table at my house from various foster children that my parents sponsored. These kids, mostly from African countries, had nothing. That was one of my first memories of how important it is to help those in need,” said Patrick Rocca, this year’s winner of East York’s highest award for civic activism.

Rocca received the Agnes Macphail Award at a cer-

emony at the East York Civic Centre, held on the icy evening of March 24.

March 24 is the anniversary of Agnes Macphail’s birth in 1890. She went on to become the brightest luminary in East York’s political history — as the first woman ever elected to the House of Commons, and one of the first two elected to the Ontario legislature. Her career was characterized by progressive causes, and in 1994, what was then East York municipal council established an annual award in her name, to be given to a local volunteer doing outstanding community work.

“We’re looking for somebody who’s a leader, who does it as a volunteer, and who’s thinking of not necessarily all the things that Agnes did, but things that

are also on the social justice spectrum,” said Lorna Krawchuk, chair of the Agnes Macphail recognition committee.

“Patrick’s a local friend,” Krawchuk said, and referring to Rocca’s career as a real estate agent, she added, “We keep running into each other. It happens that when we were buying the place we live in now, he was the agent representing the person who was selling it to us.”

Most of Rocca’s volunteerism has been devoted to two causes: the fight against prostate cancer and a neighbourhood clothing charity.

“It’s very humbling,” Rocca said of his



■ **PATRICK ROCCA**

■ See **GIVING**, page 5

Ford’s personal touch still warming some East Yorkers



Melisha Ratnarajah /// The Observer

Helen Papadakis, left, and Grace Guarnieri hold their ‘Rest in Peace’ sign outside their store on Pape Avenue.

By **AMY McNEILL**
and **MELISHA RATNARAJAH**
The Observer

Grace Guarnieri never really knew Rob Ford, but she says he still left a lasting impression on her. In a phone conversation, the owner of Second Elegance on Pape Avenue mentioned to the then-mayor that her father was ill.

Ford phoned back to ask if there was anything he could do.

“That’s epic. Who remembers that?” Guarnieri said. “I mean, just that act was consolation enough,” she said. “It was just him doing what he loved to do.”

The 46-year-old former mayor died on March 22. His funeral took place on Wednesday.

Controversy dogged Ford from his first election as a Toronto city councillor for Ward 2 in 2000. But he was re-elected twice to represent Etobicoke North.

His 2010 mayoral bid gained momentum, finding popularity with a “respect for taxpayers” platform. He was elected with 47 per cent of the popular vote. But in 2013, Ford first denied and then confirmed persistent reports of serious substance abuse, including the use of crack cocaine. That,

along with questionable associations and other erratic behaviour — including a visit to the 2013 Taste of the Danforth food festival at which he appeared inebriated — led to council stripping the mayor of all but his ceremonial role.

In 2014, he was diagnosed with pleomorphic liposarcoma, a rare form of cancer. During that year’s municipal campaign, Ford withdrew from the mayor’s race but was re-elected Ward 2 councillor.

After his death last week, he lay in repose at city hall before his

■ See **FORMER**, page 5

POLICE & FIRE

Elderly woman missing in E.Y.

Toronto police are asking for the public's help in locating a woman who went missing on Monday in the area of Coxwell and Mortimer



avenues in East York. Christina McCarthy, 87, was

last seen at approximately 4:21 p.m. on March 28. She is described as 5'6" and has short hair. She was last seen wearing a red jacket, orange sweater and black pants, shoes and framed glasses.

Man wanted in shooting

A man is wanted by Toronto police in connection with an attempted murder on March 14 at 50 Thorncliffe Park Dr. Haaris Khan, 21, of Toronto is being sought for allegedly shooting a man twice after an altercation. The victim is still recovering from his life-threatening injuries.

Thief targeted area schools

Police are looking for a woman who allegedly stole electronics, cash and personal items from unattended classrooms and office areas at seven different schools, three of them in East York, on Feb. 4. She is described as 5'2" with a slim build and long blonde hair in a bun. The East York schools are Gledhill Junior Public, William J. McCordic and Secord Elementary.

~ Charlotte Pun



Bianca Quijano // The Observer

East York trustees Jennifer Story (left) and Sheila Cary-Meagher (second from right) stand with some of their school board colleagues in support of a proposed byelection for Ward 14.

Trustees say yes to democracy

Byelections cost money, but they keep it democratic

By **BIANCA QUIJANO**
The Observer

At a public school board meeting last week, two of East York's trustees came out strongly for the proposition that even when democracy is expensive, it's worth the cost.

At the board's regular meeting on March 22, Sheila Cary-Meagher, who represents Ward 16/Beaches-East York,

and Jennifer Story, who represents Ward 15/Toronto-Danforth, defended a six-figure byelection proposed for Ward 14/Toronto Centre-Rosedale.

The Ward 14 trustee, Sheila Ward, died in February. An election to replace her is tentatively scheduled for June 20.

Byelections are notorious for low voter turnout. And the board expects costs for the "scaled-down" election will be in the \$350,000-\$400,000 range.

The most recent byelection held by the TDSB was this

past January, when Neethan Shan replaced elected Shaun Chen in Ward 21/Scarborough-Rouge. Chen had been elected to Parliament in the fall federal election. That vote cost \$250,000.

"It is a waste of much-needed funds," said Chris Tonks, the trustee for Ward 6/York South-Weston. "We can just take that money and use it on our students' education."

Tonks argued for the board to appoint a new trustee in order to avoid the cost of an election.

Student trustee Hamima

Fattah also spoke against a vote. But they were met with strong opposition.

"It doesn't really matter if only four people turn out. People make a choice," said Cary-Meagher. "We can choose our leaders. If you choose not to vote for one, you get what you deserve."

Story stated that the process of selecting representatives must remain democratic, no matter the cost.

"This is a position that is put in place by the electorate," Story said. "We owe it to the people."

Former mayor looks to undo amalgamation

By **KRYSTAL REYNOLDS**
The Observer

Former East York mayor Alan Redway doesn't mince words when it comes to his feelings about the 1998 amalgamation of six municipalities into the current City of Toronto.

"Amalgamation has caused destruction for Toronto," he told those attending a forum Tuesday evening at the S. Walter Stewart library branch at 170 Memorial Park Ave.

Redway, a retired lawyer and MP, published a book about amalgamation in 2014 called *Governing Toronto: Bringing Back the City That Worked*. In it, he highlights the relevance of a decentralized system of government that offers bureaucrats more input within the community.

"When I moved to Ottawa, I realized that I was a part of a very centralized system where many of the decisions were formed under the recommendation of civil servants," he said.

"Canadians have very little input when the Parliament of Canada is making decisions."

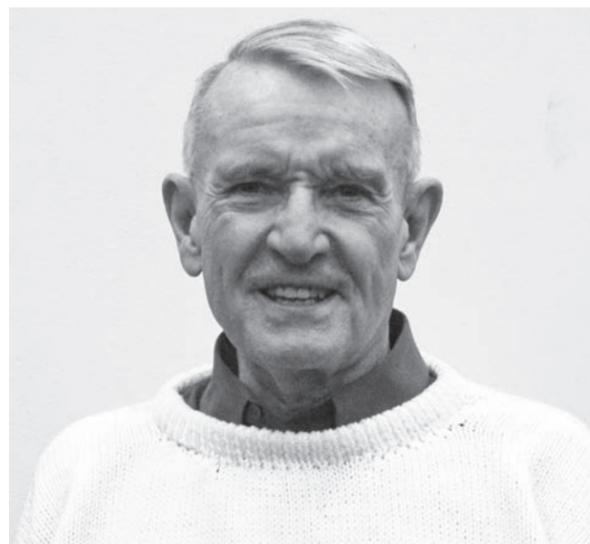
Redway was steadfast about returning to the previous six municipalities of East York, North York, Etobicoke, Scarborough, York and the City of Toronto.

"We had a metro council that dealt with city-wide problems and most of those were accessible to the citizens," he said. "Everyone felt comfortable when they attended East York council meetings, but times have changed."

Redway said there are fewer councillors now who are willing to spare their time and effort to help their constituents.

"If we want change, we're going to have to do it ourselves," he said.

Also speaking at the event were East York Historical Society president Pat Barnett and Grade 6 student Olivia Walsh, co-winner of the Agnes Macphail Public Speaking Contest. After delivering her



Observer file photo

Former East York mayor Alan Redway believes that the 1998 amalgamation of six municipalities into one has created more problems than it has solved.

speech on homelessness and mental health, she received a standing ovation.

Ward 31 councillor Janet Davis and Beaches-East York MPP Arthur Potts were among the 100 people in the audience.

Redway closed his speech with a quote from Mahatma Gandhi.

"First they ignore you," he said. "Then they laugh at you. Then they fight you; then you win."

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Celebrating art

This weekend, Centennial College is celebrating work produced by graduates of its Fine Arts program, which is housed at the East York campus. Their show is at the Toronto Centre for the Arts now through this coming Monday, April 4. The venue is at 5040 Yonge St.

Long-term care

Toronto-Danforth MPP Peter Tabuns will hold a public meeting on long-term care services on April 13. The meeting will feature guest speaker Judith Wahl, executive director of the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly (ACE). It will take place at the WoodGreen Health and Wellness Centre, in the lower level of 721 Broadview Ave. from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Game face on

The Leaside Garden Society will meet at the Leaside branch of the Toronto Public Library, 165 McRae Dr., on April 14 at 7:30 p.m. Lorraine Flanagan will be speaking about the High Line, a unique park built on a former stretch of an elevated railroad on the west side of Manhattan. There will also be a spring mini-flower show.

Spring to spring

The Leaside fitness studio Insideout is sponsoring its 11th annual "Spring Into Action" walk and run, for the benefit of several diabetes charities. It will take place on April 24 at Sunnybrook Park.

~ Melisha Ratnarajah

■ SOCIAL MEDIA

It's all about the brand, study finds

Centennial's #BrandOfMe study shows how children and teenagers are using social media to achieve #Instafame

By **ASHLEY BRUZAS**
The Observer

Social media, like YouTube and Facebook, have only been around for about a decade, but their realms of opportunities have expanded to include more than a few hundred 'likes' and growing lists of friends or 'followers.'

For instance, the online mobile photo-sharing service, Instagram, has grown to accommodate hundreds of millions of users — and some of them are changing the landscape of what it means to be an influencer in the marketing world... especially when it comes to children.

As a followup to its research study, "#Instafame: The Epidemiology of Youth's Selfie-Curated Culture," Centennial College's kidsmediacentre has released a new study, #BrandOfMe.

"It's happening at incredibly young ages," said Debbie Gordon, lead researcher and director of kidsmediacentre, which is headquartered at Centennial's East York campus on Carlaw Avenue. "Jonathan Davids, CEO of Influencer Marketing Agency Influicity, is working with 15 and 16 year olds — and handing over \$10,000 cheques."

This three-year study about young people becoming social media celebrities (and even "brands" of their own) explores the ethics and business models of this online brand-building. The first set of research focuses on primary data, including storytelling and qualitative groups.

A team of more than 20 students and graduates from Centennial College interviewed a list of experts who shared their views on the industry, including Craig Silverman, the editor of BuzzFeed Canada, and Felix LaHaye, founder of influencer marketing agency Instabrand.

Along with young creators, parents of budding stars were also interviewed. Meredith Orlando, the mother of 12-year-old YouTuber Johnny Orlando, details her transition from Toronto to Los Angeles while 'Kelly and Kids' tells the story of a mother with four kids — 5, 7, 9, 11 — all of whom have YouTube channels and a range of social platforms.

The research findings include video, audio and feature stories, as well as online tools that can be accessed to monitor the social media playing field.



Nina Rayners /// The Observer

Debbie Gordon is the director of kidsmediacentre and the study's lead researcher.

"You can go to a tool like Social Blade, where you can see how well different channels are tracked and what the monetization has been over a given year," said Gordon. "About seven of the top 20 YouTube channels feature kids."

Whether they are unboxing products or creating original content, some children are being monetized for marketing.

And as brands continue to pursue young people directly through social media, the roles of the media and marketing agencies are being rerouted. It's a major shift for some advertisers, but other business executives and parents should also be made aware.

"The starting point for parents is to have a sense of their children's social media presence," Gordon explains. "Maybe they're passionate about game play or a cause, while others care deeply

about cosmetic videos." This is sometimes referred to as the 'vertical,' which is analyzed by Multi-Channel Networks (MCN) to target influencers for brand promotion.

The landscape of what it means to be an influencer is constantly changing. With so many people signing up for social media every day and building their brands, the competition is growing in a game of survival of the fittest.

From content creator to influencer, to establishing one's presence through product and brand affiliations, #BrandOfMe highlights some of the trends and implications of the online world for young people.

The full #BrandOfMe study can be found online at www.hashtagbrandofme.com

Prospect of jobs overrules objections to box store

By **ROSE HETHERINGTON**
The Observer

It's been three years since a Costco store was first proposed for Thorncliffe Park, and it seems that over this time, some of the opposition to the proposal has evaporated.

The Costco will be built on land at 42-46 Overlea Blvd., where the former Coca-Cola headquarters has already been demolished.

In 2013, some residents were doubtful that the advantage of some new local jobs would sufficiently offset the disadvantages of competition for established neighbourhood businesses and the increased traffic.

But now, some seem either resigned to the inevitability of Costco — or they're actually looking forward to its benefits.



"It will bring a lot of opportunities for people who are looking for work in this community," said Mustafa Dawood, who works in the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office's Employment Services branch.

"As a side effect, there will be traffic and stuff," Dawood said, but "at the end of the day, there will be a lot of appreciation for the employment opportunities."

Others express the view that pockets of the neighbourhood are high-density and low-income, with many immigrants

looking for work but unable to find it. The Costco development could give some of them entry-level experience in the Canadian job market.

"A lot of times, it's a transition for people," Dawood said. "I would say almost half of the people will be going to a different job after working a few years (at Costco). But a lot of people, they'll stay."

Basic language and communication ability, as well as things like cashier skills, are among the prerequisites needed to work in retail settings like Costco. And the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office has employment and language skills training programs to help develop those very skill sets. The problem is that these employment training programs presently have limited enrolment. Dawood stated that there are sometimes waiting lists of prospective students.



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NEIGHBOURLY NEWS

Highlights from the pages of the East York Observer.
Wednesdays at 10:10 a.m. and Fridays at 4 p.m.
On CJRU/AM 1280.

41 per cent of girls don't play sports. Why?

A focus on academics might be the reason, local teachers speculate

By **JASMINE HUI**
The Observer

There's been considerable progress when it comes to parity between men and women in Canadian public life. But when it comes to female representation in athletics, there's still a lot of ground to make up.

A new research report, released by the Canadian Association for Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, says that 41 per cent of girls between the ages of three and 17 are not in sports. The report was also sponsored by Canada's dairy farmers, and it found that the situation among adult women is even more drastic: 84 per cent are uninvolved.

Stacy Ganogiannis-Reid, a teacher and coach at East York Collegiate Institute (EYCI) said this disparity has been prevalent during her 21 years of teaching at the school. She said the problem among many of the girls she coaches is time-management.

"I know from my experience that the females here at this school are concerned about their academics," Ganogiannis-Reid said. "Participating in high school sports may take away from that."

Ironically, this may connect to greater gender equality in the job market. Now there's a lot of pressure in many families for daughters to get into college or university to position themselves competitively for their careers. And the pressure to get good marks to get into a good school may discourage some young women from spending time on sports.

But it's not all bad news for girls' athletics.

"A lot of kids do come out," Ganogiannis-Reid said. And she added that playing a sport and being on a team shows leadership and versatility, which looks good on resumes for college or university.

But Ganogiannis-Reid also said that some girls aren't even trying out for sports because they put themselves down.



Jasmine Hui // The Observer

(L-R) EYCI coaches Dimitra Tsanos and Stacy Ganogiannis-Reid would like the province to consider making physical education mandatory.

"Some of the girls say, 'I won't come out because I know I won't make it,'" Ganogiannis-Reid said. "Right away, the defeat is attitude."

Ganogiannis-Reid said that she tries to motivate these girls by telling them to try out even if they believe they won't make the team. If they don't, she tells them what skills they need to improve on, so they can try out again next year and possibly make the team then.

"The reality is that not everyone's going to make the team," she acknowledged.

Dimitra Tsanos, who is also a teacher and

coach at EYCI, said that there's another issue in recruiting young women into high school sports: teachers who are passionate about their subject areas may sometimes give other areas — including athletics — short shrift.

"Unless you coach, you don't know the benefits," Tsanos said. "Especially if you don't have kids in sports, it's hard to convince some teachers that they're not the centre of the students' universe."

But Tsanos also agreed with Ganogiannis-Reid that standards for post-secondary admission are high, and so some girls focus

only on academics.

"There are some kids who are totally school-based," she said. "They don't want to 'waste time' doing sports. They need to get into universities."

Tsanos said that she thinks some families are more likely to push their young boys into sports rather than their girls, and that too has an effect in later life.

"It's a very misogynistic type of society we live in," Tsanos said. "Maybe girls are pushed into less active sports and then they're encouraged to stay home. There are less female athletes from other countries for a reason, right? Certain religions don't approve of athletes and athleticism in females, so that could also be an influence."

Tsanos said an obstacle for adult women is that there aren't enough clubs or leagues for women. And some of the leagues and clubs that do exist demand a higher level of commitment than some women can realistically make. Again, it's a time-management thing.

"It would be nice to have more organized leagues, especially in Toronto. There's lots in the suburbs, but in the inner city, there should be more leagues," Tsanos said, "and more house leagues, because maybe some of the rep teams are intimidating for older women, so having more of a pickup type of house league would encourage older women."

And for some people, Tsanos said, the affordability of athletics — registration, equipment and other expenses — is also a problem. Both Ganogiannis-Reid and Tsanos said one solution is more low-cost programs through municipal parks and recreation departments.

Ultimately, the two coaches would like to see the provincial government make physical education mandatory throughout high school... a core subject. That, in turn, could be good public policy if phys-ed leads to more active adults who keep their health for longer.

Besides, "you don't know until you try and you're missing out on a great opportunity to meet new people, to get physically fit and try something new," Ganogiannis-Reid said.

Tsanos added: "Finding time is important, otherwise, you won't be alive to see your grandchildren be active."

FINANCE

Living off the grid, courtesy of Bitcoins

By **RYAN BAKUSKA**
The Observer

Living alone in his single bedroom apartment in East York, Marcus Brandt lives a life that some might say is a bit reclusive.

Working at home as a computer programmer, and only leaving his home to purchase groceries and other necessities, Brandt embraces solitude. He was diagnosed with the anxiety disorder known as agoraphobia at a young age, and he generally shies away from social situations.

"I am very uncomfortable with going outside," Brandt said. "The large amount of people is off-putting and almost scary to me."

Brandt has actually found creative ways to live this life — and recently, that's included his embrace of something called Bitcoin.

"For years I've been slowly eliminating the need for the outside world," he said, "and I think Bitcoin might just be the ticket to my freedom from the world."

Bitcoin is a virtual currency that is collected digitally and traded online without central regulation by governments or banks. The currency has seen a large increase in

interest and worth over the last few years. Brandt has been collecting Bitcoins for years and believes he is now able to sustain himself off of his Bitcoin savings.

"I was collecting these coins painstakingly over seven years and saw them go up and down in worth," he said, "and I feel that now is the time to cash that patience in."

Brandt first started collecting Bitcoins at the recommendation of Steven Yao, a North York financial advisor — and Brandt's friend.

"I knew Marcus is super into computers and this new currency was just starting to garner some attention," Yao said. "We didn't think too much would come of it, but man, did it just explode in value."

Over the years Brandt has learned how to generate Bitcoins by spending untold hours on forums and tech sites reading and discussing the best and fastest way to generate the currency.

To generate Bitcoins, a user connects their computer to a network and solves complex algorithms; this is what controls the flow of the currency. And the act of solving the algorithms is called mining. There is a finite amount of Bitcoins and a ledger, which keeps

track of all the Bitcoins mined, is open to the public. Bitcoins are saved locally to computers and other digital devices and this lack of physical presence offers some guarantee of protection from theft for prospective miners.

Yao said the Bitcoin should not be treated as regular currency — but rather as something similar to stocks, considering that Bitcoin can drastically fluctuate in worth.

"Right now, the Bitcoin is worth around \$500. Last year it was almost double that," said Yao. "There is always going to be a risk with Bitcoin, and we have seen some violent changes in its worth."

But Brandt still thinks that he has saved enough Bitcoins to live comfortably for the next few years. That's a feat that he attributes to both the value of the currency and the minimalist life-

style he lives.

"I am very conservative with my money. I've paid off my mortgage and live alone," said Brandt. "I'm hoping that with my current savings and this new cash influx from the Bitcoins that I will be able to take a nice, long extended vacation from work — and the world."



Photo by Fotolia

■ FINANCE

Budget takes new approach to child benefits

By **AUSTIN OWENS**
The Observer

When East York resident Michele Lupa first heard about the new Canada Child Benefit, she was surprised.

“Oh my God! How could I miss that?” she said. “They made a change to the child tax benefit.”

A mother of two, Lupa can apply for the benefit, which will pay families a monthly subsidy based on net income. The new benefit is tax-free and does not exclude families with only one parent.

“Anything that supports parents and families with children is a wise investment in the future,” she said. “I think the benefit being tax-free is a huge shift.”

Finance Minister Bill Morneau announced the Canada Child Benefit in the federal budget on March 22. He called it the biggest help to parents since universal health care was introduced.

With the Trudeau government Child Benefit, families will receive a maximum payment of \$6,400 per year for a child under six and \$5,400 for children between the ages of six and 17.

Families earning less than \$30,000 will get the maximum payment.

Under the previous Conservative child tax benefit plan, the maximum amount a single parent with a child under six could receive is just over \$5,200. The Liberal plan adds over \$1,000 more for families with young children. Lupa recalled her past experiences with the child tax benefit.

“The Conservative tax benefit was about \$100 per month,” she said. “I remember at that time infant child care was about \$1,500 a month and I was getting \$100 a month.”

In the current budget, families will see an average increase of nearly \$2,300 over the next year.

Lupa added that she felt it was important that the Liberals deliver on campaign promises. She would also like to see a child-care strategy put in place over the next few years.

“I still think we can do better,” she said. “I think they are committed to doing something more substantive in the next budget.”

Martha Friendly, the executive director of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, a Toronto-based policy research institute, said talks about a strategy for childcare have to happen in the next budget.

“We’re back to the drawing board on how to develop a national child-care strategy,” she said. “They put no money into this budget, but they banked \$500 million for next year. That’s enough money for the first year, but there has to be a serious discussion about a national childcare program.”



Cherry (Changhong) Lui // The Observer

Patrick Rocca (third from left) enjoys the limelight with members the Agnes Macphail Recognition Committee and previous award recipients. They’re gathered around a portrait of Macphail, East York’s ‘favourite daughter.’

Giving back is all in the family

Award-winner’s children also interested in helping out the East York community

Cont’d. from page 1

award.

“I’m very honoured. I do what I do for the community not for the recognition, and I wasn’t expecting this at all.”

The March 24 ceremony began with songs by the VOCA Chorus of Toronto, followed by a speech on homelessness by one of the winners of the separate Agnes Macphail Public Speaking Contest, Olivia Walsh — a Grade 6 student at St. Anselm Catholic School on Bessborough Drive.

Rocca echoed the sentiments of the young speaker’s remarks, reiterating the importance of helping those in need and giving back to the community.

In turn, Rocca’s children are already following in his footsteps. His daughter became involved with New Circle’s prom boutique drive four years ago, and he’s been helping her along the way. New Circles Community Services is a non-profit clothing collector and distributor operating from headquarters in the Victoria Park Avenue-Eglinton Avenue East area.

“I remember my son telling me a story a few years ago. He helped a boy pick out a suit and shoes. Once the boy was all set, he turned to my son and said, ‘When do I have until to return this suit?’ He didn’t realize that it was his to keep,” Rocca said.

Pancheta Barnett is the president of the East York Historical Society, as well as Rocca’s friend and nominator.

In her speech, she recounted the words of Nita Saini from New Circles.

“Patrick is a hands-on advocate. Every year he can be seen lugging donations from his car to New Circles to make sure clothing arrives in a timely fashion,” she said. “Patrick always treats all the young people with care, dignity, and respect, ensuring that every student he encounters leaves with a positive experience and is well-suited to celebrate with style.”

Going forward, Rocca said he hopes to contribute more to the Prostate Cancer Canada agency and its “Wear Plaid for Dad” campaign, which he became involved in last year.

“I do what I do because I like to give back, and I get great satisfaction in seeing the smiles on people’s faces,” he said.

■ REMEMBERING ROB FORD

Former mayor ‘put Toronto on the map’



■ ROB FORD

Few Ford allies among E.Y.’s political establishment, but former borough councillor Papadakis was a stalwart

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funeral at St. James Cathedral downtown on Wednesday. Ford is survived by his wife, Renata, and two children.

Ford had few allies among East York municipal politicians. His most prominent local supporter, Don Valley West councillor John Parker, distanced himself at the height of the Ford scandals. But former East York borough councillor John Papadakis said Ford “was dedicated to our city.”

“I will remember Rob very fondly as a colleague and a friend who was an inspiration to a lot of people,” Papadakis said. “He put Toronto on the map.”

Papadakis said he learned from Ford’s sense of loyalty.

“He showed that regardless of any situation you face, believe in yourself, believe in what you’re doing, and stay the course,” he said.

In October 2014, Ford endorsed Papadakis’s unsuccessful campaign for Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth councillor.

“He stood by me and I stood by him,” Papadakis said.

Helen Papadakis, John Papadakis’s mother, also counts herself as a Ford fan. She said she will always remember his smile. She said that on occasion she even had an opportunity to cook for him.

She said Ford was like a son to her. She recalled Ford working on a hot day.

“He would run and run,” she said, “and he was all wet. I put a paper towel to his head and he called me ‘Mum’ too.”

This week, Grace Guarnieri sent her condolences to the Ford family. She said if she had the chance to say something to them, it would be “on behalf of Ford Nation”:

“Rob, I want to wrap my arms around your soul, the way you wrapped your soul around the city and the people who loved and supported you.... Ford Nation is not going anywhere.”

■ EDITORIALS

E.Y. recalls Ford

This newspaper called not once, but twice, for Rob Ford to resign or be removed from the office of Toronto mayor. And when Mr. Ford fell ill and brother Doug ran in his place for the mayor's chair, the Observer heartily endorsed John Tory instead. We stand by our assessment that the Ford mayoralty was unsuccessful for its policies and ignominious for the private — and sometimes-public — behaviour of the then-mayor.

But like many others, we perceived a change in Mr. Ford toward the end of his life. And it was hard for even those opposed to his mayoralty to not feel sadness at his passing last week. Losing someone to cancer, after all, is something that most of us can relate to. Maybe all of this helps to explain the suddenly soft tone of news media coverage toward Mr. Ford, and the outpouring of sympathy at what sometimes resembled a state funeral this week.

But maybe there's something else too. Mr. Ford was a man of the people, and he touched many lives. We remember him marching in East York's Canada Day parade. We also remember a political life built around saving taxpayers' money — and that matters to a largely working class community like this one.

He exposed some city councillors by releasing a video naming off all of the benefits they received. Free golf games, free Metropasses and free trips to the zoo were all paid for by taxpayers. Mr. Ford also promoted a less expensive solution to subway expansion to help Torontonians get around their city better.

Although the school board ultimately concluded Mr. Ford's coaching of the Don Bosco Catholic School football team amid controversy about his leadership, it was telling to see some players show up for the Ford funeral observances. And then there were all of the little things — like Mr. Ford's apparently bottomless pool of patience for being stopped by Torontonians for a quick conversation and a selfie.

Ultimately, although he put Toronto under the global media spotlight for all of the wrong reasons, at least Mr. Ford eventually acknowledged that his behaviour was wrong. That kind of admission is tough for anyone, and it's especially tough for someone in the public eye. When he admitted to substance abuse and pledged to clean up his act, it showed a measure of honesty and courage.

Mr. Ford is arguably the most famous mayor of Toronto — and of a major city anywhere, anytime. That may make some of us wince. Unfortunately, his antics overshadowed the good he did. But nobody is perfect. And there's nothing wrong with also remembering Mr. Ford as a down-to-earth politician who tried to carve out a niche for himself as a champion of the little guy.

~ John Morta

Promise not kept

The federal budget that the Trudeau government handed down last week missed an important opportunity to help East York.

In particular: East York is a hub of small business in Toronto. A walk along the Danforth is a testament to this. For every Tim Hortons or Starbucks you see, you'll find a nearby hipster coffee shop.

The new liberal government could have reached out a helping hand to these businesses by reducing the small business corporate tax rate significantly — something that the Conservatives promised that they would do. But now the rate will fall just half a percentage point, to a disappointing 10.5 percent on the first \$500,000 of active business income from 11 per cent. And any future reductions have been deferred.

This contradicts the Liberal campaign promise to stick to the small business tax rate plan of its predecessor government. So small business have been blindsided.

With this new tax rate, many small businesses will continue to merely eke out a living for their employees and proprietors — or worse. It leaves them with almost no room for investment in their businesses and the creation of new jobs.

It's a little harder to enjoy a salted caramel latte knowing that the friendly shop-owner behind the counter is suffering.

Finance Minister Bill Morneau defended the tax plan and did not directly answer questions around why the government has decided against future reductions.

"We know that for small businesses the most important thing is to have an economy that's working," Morneau said. He added that the Liberal budget's focus on the middle class will benefit small businesses, because it will provide them with more customers, as it will give more people more money to spend. But maybe there's some connection to what Prime Minister Trudeau suggested back in September — that some small businesses are avoiding taxes.

So for a community with a largely mom-and-pop commercial sector, the message is this: Small business will stay small; so will their pocketbooks and their ambitions.

But if the Liberals won't step up, maybe the rest of us can: Next time you are considering where to shop, remember: You are now in charge of small business success.

~ Sadiya Rahman

■ COLUMNS

How to grapple Apple

On March 21, Apple held one of its iconic events. Apple's Loop Me In presentation was a standard affair. New devices were announced, amid copious pomp and flair. But one thing was noticeably absent: Apple's trademark arrogance.

As the late Steve Jobs said, "a lot of times, people don't know what they want until you show it to them." And for a time, this was true. Apple released a number of products that consumers didn't realize they wanted; the iPhone and the iPad are both examples of this.

However, ignoring your customers can have a downside. Perhaps most infamously, when the iPhone 4 was having signal problems, Apple told customers they were holding the phone wrong.

But the era of Apple arrogance is coming to an end.

The company began its most recent event with politics; they discussed the encryption debate.

"We believe strongly that we have a responsibility to help you protect your data and protect your privacy," CEO Tim Cook said. A few days later, just this past week, the FBI finally broke into a terrorist's phone without Apple's help. But Apple continues to take a strong stance on this issue, and

that's a win for smartphone users worldwide.

Apple also announced its new CareKit healthcare-oriented platform, and its new environmental stance — also with that familiar air of superiority. And it unveiled a 9.7-inch version of its iPad Pro, a 'work-oriented' tablet. Apple has suggested that its smaller Pro variant is targeted at a crowd of 600 million people who are currently using old Windows PCs. There's an irony in all of this: Apple was championing the discarding of old PCs for shiny new iPads, when minutes before they told the world how eco-friendly they were.

Finally, there was a new iPhone. But it's little more than a rehash of the old iPhone.

While it's tempting to just chalk this up to arrogance as well, however, that may not be the case.

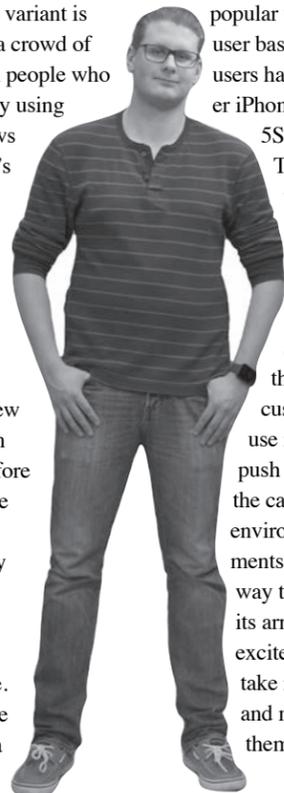
In January, Apple reported flatlining iPhone sales, and a decline in iPad sales. The issue? The iPhone 6. Apple moved to a larger screen and phone design with the iPhone 6, but that decision was not popular with all of Apple's user base. A number of iPhone users have clung to the smaller iPhone 4S and iPhone 5 and

5S, instead of upgrading. The new iPhone SE is targeted at that crowd.

Apple is actually listening to its user base this time.

It's nice to see a version of Apple that is considering its customers, and trying to use its large influence to push a political agenda, in the case of the security and environmental announcements. Apple still has a long way to go before it shakes its arrogant image, but I'm excited that it's starting to take its clientele seriously, and make good phones for them, instead of making

what it wants, and telling the customer that they want it too.



Jon Lamont

It's all about equality

"What? You? But you're a..."

This is the sort of reaction I got around this past March 8 and around this time every year — when I tell people that I'm really not that into International Women's Day (IWD).

They can't comprehend why I — a woman — would be averse to a whole day celebrating me and my gender. And with men, there's this weird hesitation to point out that I am in fact a woman.

Now, I'm not against it entirely. I posted a picture of an inspiring woman on

Instagram just like every other girl on IWD. (It was Margaret Hamilton, a NASA software engineer, who you should all look up, by the way.) And I think any opportunity to teach girls and boys about awesome female role models and the importance of gender equality is a good one.

But part of me is thinking that if you want to celebrate women or a woman's achievement, why not do it today, tomorrow, any day and every day?

My criticism of IWD reminds me a lot of the criticism that Black History Month gets — that it's a way out of our guilt, a month-long Band-Aid over centuries worth of injustice.

Here's a whole group of people who have been oppressed, disre-

spected, exploited and cheated out of something in the past. So let's give them an occasion on the calendar but, hey, come tomorrow, it's back to business as usual.

Another issue I have with IWD is that on March 8, all women are lumped together simply because we are women. This suggests that because we have two X chromosomes, we all face some homogenized struggle.

And that's just not true. What a lot of feminist causes often fail to consider is the intersectionality of race, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.

Here's a quote from Daily Mail columnist Sarah Vine, "The main reason I hate IWD is because I am not stupid enough to think that such a shallow outpouring of faux solidarity will, for one single second, improve the lives of women genuinely suffering around the world."



Scout McCraw

You've come a long way, TEGH



Courtesy of City of Toronto Archives

The Observer continues its look back on East York history through photographs from the City of Toronto Archives. A story on this page notes a recent award for what is now known as Michael Garron Hospital, the former Toronto East General. The photos above show the hospital when it was brand new. In fact, these are architect's photographs, taken in the year TEGH opened: 1929. The picture on the left is dated June 10 of that year, and shows the exterior. The one on the right was taken on Jan. 17, and is labelled "major operating room/fourth floor."

■ COLUMN

Digging Donald

Many Americans hate Donald Trump. The media bashes him constantly. He's seen as brash, rough around the edges and offensive to some.

But that's exactly what the problem is. Society is too sensitive and Trump's supporters are fed up with it.

If I were American, you can bet that I'd be voting for Trump over socialist Sanders or... Clinton. Trump speaks his mind, isn't under the thumb of donors or Wall Street and, let's face it, he has no regard for political correctness. In a world where universities in the United States are pushing for "safe spaces" because a few people are hurt by words, and free speech is being suppressed, the American public will inevitably swing from the left to the right — and it's about damn time.

No, Trump isn't your classic orator. Each candidate that has tried to stump him has been met with a slew of insults and over-the-top rhetoric. In each debate, candidates have been sword-fighting with Trump in the traditional way — forgetting that the days of Errol Flynn are long gone.

So Trump has won consistently, despite the pundits predicting his demise pretty much since the moment he announced his candidacy last summer. The GOP establishment is mortified with Trump because he isn't a career politician



Bradley Dobson

that they're able to control.

Donald Trump is Dr. Frankenstein's monster. When you look at the polls and see the surging popularity of candidates like Sanders and Trump, who represent the extremes on both ends of the political spectrum, then it's clear that Americans are done with the establishment.

It will be interesting to see how the rest of this U.S. election season plays out. Once Hillary Clinton wins the Democratic nomination, which I assume she will, we are set up to see one of the most colourful smack-downs in the history of United States politics. I can picture it now: Clinton vs. Trump. Trump will no doubt air every scrap of dirty laundry he can find on Clinton and use it in the most politically incorrect way possible. And I'll love every minute of it.

But while the GOP establishment is firmly against Trump and his wild card ways, this election is seeing record high numbers of Republican supporters coming out for rallies and voting in spite of the crap that they've been fed by establishment politicians for the last two decades.

I can only expect Trump's numbers to continue to rise every time he states that he can 'shoot someone in the middle of Fifth Avenue and not lose any voters.'

This is a man who's creating a movement inside the Republican Party — proving that people are just tired of politicians and the overly sensitive left.

Listening to seniors the secret

East York hospital the first recipient of new award for patient care

By CAVEL BROWN
The Observer

Until December, East Yorkers knew it as Toronto East General Hospital. Now they know it as Michael Garron Hospital. But while the name change, the \$50-million donation that accompanied it and the ongoing redevelopment of the hospital campus point to the future, other things point to continuity at the corner of Coxwell and Mortimer avenues.

One of those things is another award for the hospital from the Regional Geriatric Program of Toronto. The program has recognized the hospital before, but this time was special. The "Patient Voice Award of Excellence" is new, and MGH was the first winner.

"We felt extremely proud to be the first recipient of the award," said Sandra Dickau. "We're just very proud of the work we're doing."

Dickau is the director of the Complex Continuing Care and Rehabilitation department of the hospital's Family and Community Medicine division.

There were 27 organizations within the GTA considered for the Patient Voice Award. MGH won based on a patient-centred framework that was developed by its ethicist, Lorrie Hamilton. The framework involves information-sharing between senior patients and staff and collaborative participation in the care of those older patients.

Nancy Simmons is part of that process. She's a retired nurse who



Cavel Brown /// The Observer

Nancy Simmons is a member of the Seniors Friendly Hospital Team at Michael Garron Hospital. The special committee was created to listen to the voices of senior patients.

started volunteering at the hospital almost 15 years ago, and is part of the Seniors Friendly Hospital Steering Team. Simmons interacts with geriatric patients and brings their suggestions or issues to the committee.

"I bring a senior's perspective to the staff," she said. "The formation of the Seniors Friendly Steering Committee indicates that the hospital is interested in fulfilling the needs of the seniors."

Through the use of this strategy, positive results have been seen, like the "seniors' fair" that began in the fall of 2014. The fair promoted vitality for active seniors, and their engagement in the community. Beyond things like that, the staff provides community outreach on an ongoing basis to inform seniors in the com-

munity about issues related to their health so that they can lead fulfilling lives. The umbrella approach is to include the senior's voice in geriatric care, and to treat it as a joint effort between patient and healthcare provider.

"It's creating a partnership in the hospital where the patient and care providers are partners in the care," Dickau said.

"It's no longer what we can do for you. It's together we go on this journey of your care."

Simmons agreed, saying that MGH is bringing its older patients' perspective to the staff — which then works on that information to provide better care.

"The hospital is to be commended for this initiative and for listening," she said.

■ GARDENING



Natalia Albuquerque // Observer

(Left) Members of the Leaside Garden Society listen intently to Steven Biggs. (Right) Biggs, co-author of *No Guff Vegetable Gardening*, spoke to the group at the Leaside Library on McRae Drive.

No guff... gardening can be fun

Author rallies the troops around the vegetable patch at meeting of Leaside club

By **NATALIA ALBUQUERQUE**
The Observer

That early-spring blast of winter last week may have left some East Yorkers discouraged about the prospects of getting out into their gardens.

But the Leaside Garden Society is undaunted. Even while winter was still officially in effect, they invited gardener and journalist Steven Biggs to rally the troops around the vegetable patch.

“Gardening should be fun,” Biggs told about 30 members of the society at their regular meeting on March 10 at the Leaside library branch on McRae Drive.

Biggs is co-author of the Canadian bestseller *No Guff Vegetable Gardening*.

He spoke about his own experience with growing a garden in front of his house in Willowdale — and what he said are ways to get your

green thumb to work.

Foremost among them: “Don’t get too technical.”

Biggs expanded in a practical manner on which plants to grow — and how — for looks, simplicity, tight spaces, front yards... and with the help of kids. On that last point, Biggs should know. He’s a dad himself.

The members also learned how to grow different plants together, like veggies and flowers side-by-side for a colourful mix and how to cook that bitter vegetable that otherwise wouldn’t make a meal.

TTC celebrates 13-per-cent drop in delays, but riders tell a different story

By **SCOTT DELL**
The Observer

New numbers out indicate that last year, the total number of minutes that TTC vehicles were delayed shrank by 13 per cent.

But some East Yorkers beg to differ. “There was a delay this morning,” said Joe Park, a student who commutes through East York. He added that his own observations don’t indicate any change in the on-time rate.

The city added an extra \$95 million to the TTC budget last year, and the transit commission also increased cash fares by 25 cents — all to bolster service now and for the future.

But Park said he favours that cash infusion.

“Everything’s justified,” he said.

East York resident Kasia Qyz said that she doesn’t feel the TTC subway service stacks up with other subways around the world.

She said she had recently used the subway in New York.

“It’s not glamorous,” she observed, “but the timing of it was a lot faster.”

Qyz said that she purchases a Metropass every month, but that she’s looking into getting a car, because the \$149 price tag “almost equals what I would pay in (car) insurance.”

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

■ IMMIGRATION

Playing the waiting game a ‘frustrating’ process

‘They screwed it up,’ woman says after immigration office loses husband’s documents

By **RYAN BAKUSKA**
The Observer

Vivien Polito started the application to bring her husband from the Philippines to East York in 2013. At that point, the wait time was two years. In 2014, the wait time was increased to three years and, while annoying, she understood that such things happen.

“I know that anything to do with the government might have delays and setbacks, but it is very sad to hear that your wait time has increased by a year,” she said.

As the three-year deadline came and went, the East York woman started to worry. She had not received the approval documents. She called the immigration office to inquire about the status of her application and was shocked to learn that all her documents had been lost and would need to be resubmitted within 90 days.



Photo by Fotolia

“It was very annoying and frustrating for me. I waited almost three years for my husband to come over and they screwed it up,” said Polito, who works as a telemarketer, receptionist and babysitter.

“The Philippines are not known for their fast bureaucracy and I had to pay out of my own pocket to get all those documents again.”

The Liberal government is planning to welcome more than 300,000 new permanent residents to Canada this year. Between 280,000 and 305,000 are expected to be admitted as permanent residents, an unprecedented level that has not been seen in decades. For many families, this means they will be able to welcome their loved ones to Canada sooner than expected. For others, like

Polito, it is a bittersweet reminder of how emotionally exhausting the process can be. Even though she was able to resubmit the documents on time and her husband is now in Canada, having finally been approved as a permanent resident, she said the process was frustrating.

For immigration lawyer Pankaj Singh, Politos’ case is a good example of what he tells his clients to expect.

“It can, at times, be very disheartening for families to realize how much work and time it takes to bring loved ones to Canada,” he said. “I always let them know right off that they may have their wait time increased and errors can be made.”

The expected increase in permanent residents to be admitted this year is a positive sign of the country moving forward, Singh said. However, it is not a guarantee that the higher numbers will equate to a faster process time.

“Families see the news that we are expecting record numbers and they get excited,” he said. “Excitement is understandable, but you’ve got to understand that as with any legal process, speed is never guaranteed.”