



Danforth hit with 2 accidents in 2 days

By **EVANGELO SIPSAS**
and **KRISTEN DOOPAN**
The Observer

The intersection of Danforth and Logan avenues was the scene of two serious accidents last week that hurt four people — two seriously and one critically.

At around noon on Sept. 27, a car driven by a man in his 80s struck three people who were sitting on a bench near the intersection. The man was initially backing up but apparently lost control of his vehicle, climbed the curb, hit a garbage bin and then struck the trio.

The three victims were sitting on a bench at Alexander the Great Square. All were injured, and two were rushed to a nearby trauma centre.

“When I heard the car, I turned my head and saw the car coming toward the bench,” said a woman who would only identify herself as Maria. “I yelled and jumped out of the way.... If it wasn’t for the fire hydrant there would’ve been more victims.”

According to Const. Clint Stibbe, the victims are in stable condition and expected to recover. No charges have been laid yet.

This accident came the day after hot tar fell on a 46-year-old worker at the same intersection, sending him to hospital with serious burns.

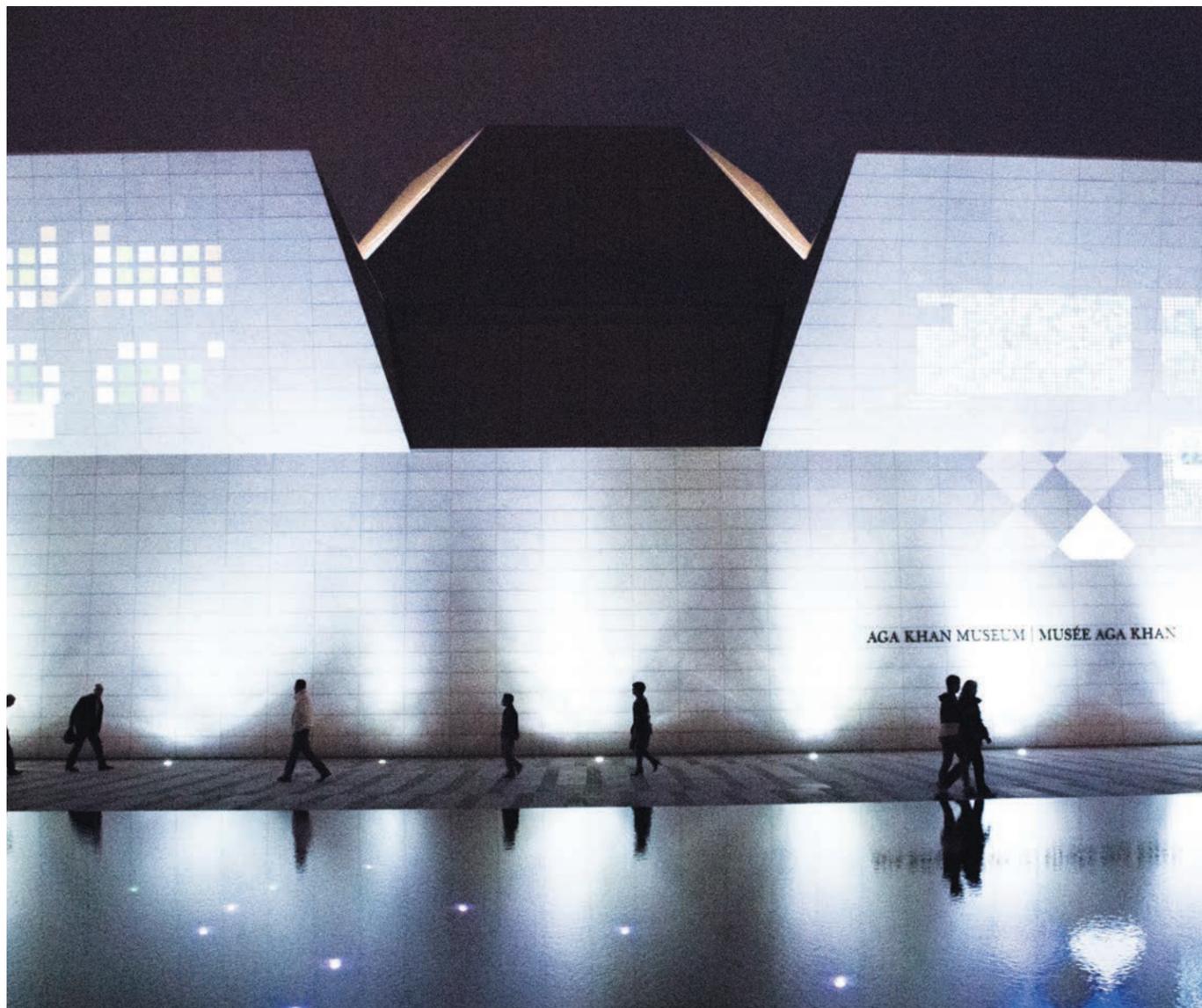
Police and emergency services had to cut the man free after the tar spilled on him and partially encased him in the back of a large truck.

It took rescuers more than an hour to safely extricate the victim. Officials said the man’s face and arms were covered in tar. Witnesses said they could hear him screaming in pain.

Officials said he had been wearing his protective suit and full safety gear. But he still suffered first-degree burns and was rushed to Sunnybrook Hospital. His condition was initially listed as critical, but was later upgraded to serious.



Kristen Doopan /// The Observer
Danforth and Logan avenues after a worker was scalded by hot tar.



Yeye Zhu /// The Observer

Lighting up the night

Nuit Blanche descended on the East York area in a big way last weekend, as the Aga Khan Museum on Wynford Drive joined the city’s all-night art festival for the first time. See page 4 for another photo.

Female suspensions on the rise at TCDSB

‘It’s not a local phenomenon,’ says TCDSB superintendent of new survey showing slight uptick in girls being suspended

By **SARAH SAMWEL**
The Observer

Is it fair to call girls “mean girls?”

Some experts in bullying say no, in spite of the surprising results from a report released Sept. 22 at a meeting of the Toronto Catholic District School Board.

The board surveyed 15,193 elementary and secondary students about their perceptions of school safety between November 2015 and April 2016. The results were, for the most part, positive, with bullying in general showing a downward trend. Sixty-five per cent of elementary students surveyed reported that they had never been bullied and 92 per cent of secondary students answered that they felt “safe” or “very safe” at their schools.

However, one of the areas of concern was the increase of female suspensions at the elementary level. In total, out of 981 suspensions at the elementary level in the 2015-2016 school year, 196 of those were female. While that number remains small in relation to the total, there were only 158 female suspensions the previous year. That’s an increase of 38 suspensions. Notices

of suspensions increased by 63 from 199 to 262 for females over the last two academic years.

In the context of nearly 61,000 elementary students, that’s a relatively small number. However, the increase is still an area of concern, trustees say.

The report showed that elementary students who had experienced bullying mainly faced verbal (85 per cent) and social (46 per cent) bullying. Verbal bullying included name-calling, constant unwanted teasing/joking. Social bullying was defined as gossiping and excluding others, but this was not broken down by gender.

During the board meeting, the increase in female suspensions was attributed to the “mean girl phenomenon” and “mean girl cliques.”

Vincent Burzotta, the superintendent of education at the Toronto Catholic District School Board, said it’s not unique to Toronto.

“We are concerned,” he said at the meeting. “It is not a local phenomenon. In fact, it is happening all across North America.”

He added that research has shown that females are now engaging in riskier behaviour, which includes physical fighting, social and verbal bullying.

In an email Thursday, Burzotta stressed that female students are not being suspended more than males. There has, however, been a “small” increase in suspensions of female students, he said.

“Schools will be looking at their data to see

if the same pattern is happening at their local schools,” he added.

Angela Kennedy, chair of the TCDSB and trustee for Ward 11/East York-Toronto, said she’d been unfamiliar with the term “mean girls” prior to the Sept. 22 meeting.

“In all my years as a trustee, I’ve never heard that,” said the 18-year school board veteran.

Some have argued the term may be unfairly targeting girls.

Maureen Fitzgerald, the Vancouver-based author of *Mean Girls Aren’t Mean* and a former lawyer, disagrees with the characterization of girls as “mean girls.”

“I think the most important thing to know is that ‘mean girl’ is an offensive stereotype that silences girls,” she said. “I think it’s a terrible shame that the ‘mean girls’ brush is attributed across all girls.”

Fitzgerald noted there’s a difference between what is often labelled as “mean girls” and bullying.

“Bullying is when it gets extreme,” she said.

Instead, Fitzgerald argues that this behaviour is more of a reaction to societal pressures placed on girls through the media and patriarchal systems. When girls are gossiping, they are trying to find power in a structure that often favours males.

“We construe all of this behaviour as ‘mean girls,’ but we never say ‘mean boys,’” she said.

Rather, using the term “mean girls” may be a

■ See ‘MEAN GIRLS,’ page 4

POLICE & FIRE

Man last seen on Danforth

Toronto police are asking for help in locating a 30-year-old who was reported missing on Monday. He was last seen on Sunday at around 9 a.m. in the vicinity of Danforth and Jones avenues. Christopher Facchini is described as 5 feet, 11 inches tall, weighing 150 pounds with short brown hair, brown eyes, and a goatee-style beard. Anyone with information is urged to contact police at 416-808-5500.

Police seeking public's input

Toronto Police Services Board Chair Andy Pringle and Chief Mark Saunders will host a community consultation session for the East York area on Wednesday, Oct. 26. The session is about modernization of the Toronto Police Service, and it will run 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Danforth Collegiate and Technical Institute. The session will include remarks from Pringle and Saunders and break-out tables designed to get the public's opinion on the future of policing. Members of the public are encouraged to first read the Transformational Task Force Interim Report, especially the report's 24 recommendations. The report can be found on the Toronto Police Service website. For those who can't make it to the high school at 800 Greenwood Ave., the consultation session can also be viewed live on Facebook.

~ Yeye Zhu



Sam Seon // The Observer

Lawn bowling enthusiasts enjoy an evening round at the Cosburn Lawn Bowling Club. People of all ages and backgrounds are attracted to the activity, organizers say.

Club bowls down stereotypes

By SAM SEON
The Observer

Ken Wood realizes lawn bowling is competitive. But for him, it's not about winning.

"I'm not athletic," he said. "This is about as much athleticism as I'll get."

Summer may be gone, but the beautiful fall weather so far keeps beckoning East Yorkers to the Cosburn Lawn Bowling Club. And the bowlers aren't always citizens who are retired. Ron Sellen, owner of the club, said that lately the students at Cosburn Middle School, just across the street, have come often for lessons.

"It's hard to get young people into the sport," Sellen said. "I didn't like it when I was young because you have to be quiet. People are concentrating; there's no place for talking and joking around with your pals."

The Cosburn Lawn Bowling Club offers free lessons Tuesday and Thursday evenings with seasoned veterans of the sport offering instruction. The club also offers a women-only practice and a men-only practice, as well as a session for players from the LGBTQ community.

"We want everyone to feel comfortable here," Sellen said. "It's all about the love of bowling."

Kyle Knoeck is the founder of the Rain-bowlers, an LGBTQ group that bowls every Wednesday evening. Knoeck played in an LGBTQ curling league, and suggested the switch to lawn bowling when some fellow curlers thought they'd like to give it a try.

Six years later, Knoeck encourages people of the LGBTQ community to lawn bowl and feel as welcome and comfortable as possible.

"There's a big social side to (Wednes-

day night games), and a lot of times it's more comfortable for lesbian and gays to engage in a sport in a queer environment," Knoeck said.

The Rainbowlers also help bring in younger members to the club.

Like Sellen, Knoeck acknowledges the stereotype about lawn bowlers often being retired people. But some Rainbowlers are in their 20s, some in their 60s.

"East York isn't really thought of as a hot spot of queer culture in Toronto, but we are everywhere, so it's good to have organizations and activities in all parts of the city and not just downtown."

The lawn bowling is very relaxed. There's laughing and the odd cheer after an especially good bowl.

"I'm not good at all, but that's OK around here," Wood said. "It's relaxing on a Wednesday; it's all calm, easy-going people."

You don't need to be Scottish to kick up your heels

By JUSTIN VIEIRA
The Observer

It was Edinburgh over Athens on Saturday, as the Greektown neighbourhood's usual vibe gave way to some Scottish dancing at Eastminster United Church on the Danforth.

The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS) of Toronto organized the event as part of Ontario Culture Days, an annual province-wide celebration of arts and culture that ran last weekend and connects in turn with a national event.

Scottish country dancing is centuries old, with drums and other rhythm-makers as well as fiddles, accordions and other instruments for accompaniment.

It may have once been more associated with high society and gala balls... but nowadays, it's decidedly more democratic, and at Eastminster on Saturday, everyone was encouraged to join in and learn the importance of the social



Justin Vieira // The Observer

An instructor leads participants through a Scottish country dance during Culture Days at Eastminster United Church.

nature of the dance, while following the correct technique. One organizer was Paul Barber, who began dancing back in 1976 (when his wife compelled him). He says that you don't have to be Scottish to take part in the dance; all that's needed are dance shoes — or just a

good pair of shoes, period.

The Eastminster dance, which has been held at the church for the past seven years now, is quite sociable. Both experienced dancers and newcomers show up, and no partner is needed.

"Unlike some other forms

of dance, you do not need a partner to join in," Barber said.

"There is a strong tradition in Scottish country dancing that dictates that one should change partners for the next dance."

So singles are welcome and easily included in the dancing. It's a social activity that normally involves six or eight dancers dancing together per group — and is certainly an excellent form of physical exercise too.

The majority of participants on Saturday were seniors looking for some fun. But they also got some exercise... and by learning the dance routines, they got some "good-for-the-brain activity," according to one participant who has attended for the past five years.

Barber says that people enjoy learning the dance and have a good time while they're at it.

"Dances typically conclude with dancers breaking out into broad smiles and applause," he said.

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Get ready for spring tulips at October meeting

Love gardening? Join the Leaside Garden Society at their next meeting this coming Thursday night, Oct. 13. The featured speaker will be Michael Erdman, who will be lecturing on tulips. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Leaside Library, 165 McRae Dr. Refreshments will be available prior to the meeting.

Love art? Get an eye-ful at annual show and sale

Looking to score some great pieces of art? The 28th annual Riverdale Art Show and Sale is the right place to go. Stop by to see 22 local talented artists showcase their work. The show will be running back-to-back days: Friday, Oct. 14, from 6 to 8:30 p.m., and Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at St. Barnabas Anglican Church, 361 Danforth Ave., right across from Chester subway station. All are welcome.

Families invited to share songs, stories, rhymes

Looking to spend some quality time with your family? Come down to 370 Broadview Ave. on Saturday, Oct. 8, from 10 to 11 a.m. to take part in stories, songs and rhymes for children and their caregivers. No registration required. For more information about the event, call 416-393-7720.

~ Justin Vieira

East York school's future up in the air

French-language high school or indigenous public school? Eastern Commerce's fate may depend on cost of renovations

By AMIL DELIC
The Observer

When the historic Eastern Commerce Collegiate Institute closed its doors with just 62 students in June 2015, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) recommended that the building at 16 Phin Ave. become the new home of Ontario's first indigenous kindergarten-Grade 12 public school. It was expected to open with 45 vanguard Grade 9s this fall, and eventually add grades and students until it approached the building's capacity of 903.

But instead, the school near Jones and Danforth avenues continues to rent space to the Creative Pre-School, and it's home to the Subway Academy One, an alternative high school. It also houses the TDSB museum and archives. And instead of an indigenous K-12 school, it seems likely to become a French language high school, if some politicians and parents get their way.

"The parents in east-end Toronto have been strong and effective advocates for a French-language high school in the east end for a long time, but their voices have become louder because there is now a site that looks to meet their purposes," said Jennifer Story, the TDSB trustee for Ward 15 /Toronto-Danforth.

In July, the TDSB submitted a business plan to the provincial government for the proposed Urban Indigenous Education Centre of Excellence. A number of locations were suggested, including an alternate site in the West Don Lands at Cherry and Mill streets. The area has recently seen an influx of low-rise condominiums, and has more space to spare.

Proposed alternate locations for the indigenous school might also have something to do with the current physical state of Eastern Commerce. The school is 91 years old and is in major need of renovations — estimated at \$40 million. Metal mesh caging covers the ground-floor windows, exposed wiring drapes the brick walls, and paint is peeling around many of the window frames.

"It resembles a residential school setting. People don't want that. They don't want any reminder of that," said Tasunke Sugar, who has the ti-



Amil Delic // The Observer

The 91-year-old building needs renovation before it can be put into more regular use.

tle of family nurturing instructor at the Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre in Cabbagetown.

Sugar, 21, attended the existing First Nations School on Dundas Street East up until Grade 8, but when it came time to transition into the public high school system, he found it "scary and very intimidating" to be around so many people in a bustling environment. He believes there is a vital need for a public high school where indigenous students can learn in a culturally appropriate environment.

If Eastern Commerce "was to be an indigenous

'Centre of Excellence,' the commitment (by TDSB) would be to retrofit the space to indigenize the space to make it appropriate for indigenous teaching, learning and support for an urban indigenous community," said Story. The school would include a drum area and enough outdoor space for nature study.

The need is certainly there, even if Eastern Commerce isn't the eventual destination, according to Sugar's colleague, Joan McDougall, who is manager of the education department at Toronto Council Fire. McDougall meets many aboriginal people in her literacy program who are still

interested in getting their secondary credits.

"I think it would be a natural fit for them if they knew there was a First Nations secondary school where they could be enrolled," she said. "I think if there was a high school there (downtown), people would quickly know about it."

By law, if the TDSB declared Eastern Commerce surplus, "the board would be required to offer the building to other school boards, with a priority to the French school board," said Story. She acknowledged that the East York francophone community "has been lobbying for 10 years for a site in the east end" in the hope of establishing a French secondary school.

With three French elementary schools in the East York area and only one secondary school downtown east of Yonge Street, the next nearest francophone high school is in Pickering: Ecole Ronald-Marion, opened in 2013.

"There is a huge geographical gap and many of the students have to travel long distances or they leave our system to go to the English board, which is unfortunate," said Jean-François L'Heureux, the chair of the Conseil Viamonde, which manages French-language public schools across a large swath of southern Ontario.

In a July 22 open letter signed by New Democrat MPP for Toronto-Danforth Peter Tabuns, as well as Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth city councillor Mary Fragedakis and Ward 30 councillor Paula Fletcher, the political trio stated that "we strongly urge the TDSB to consider transferring the building to the Conseil Scolaire Viamonde to be used as a francophone secondary school."

Conseil Scolaire Viamonde has been opening new schools every year inside former Toronto public schools. It purchased the former West Toronto Collegiate and now operates École Secondaire Toronto Ouest.

"The cost of the renovation was just as much as buying the 40-year-old building," said L'Heureux.

Tabuns has been supporting francophone initiatives for the last three years, but he says he knows that "the TDSB will respect the wishes of the indigenous community." In his view, the move to the West Don Lands is a decision the indigenous community has to make — and no one else.

The TDSB's position is similar to Tabuns'. With the help of the indigenous community, the TDSB is working patiently to make sure every part of the process is done correctly and "all the voices around this challenging and big decision are heard," Story said.

Project allows everyone to make beautiful music together

By ANDREW WRIGHT
The Observer

When class lets out on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at Secord Elementary School on Barrington Avenue, the East End Music Project begins its work — or rather play.

In one classroom, percussion drums and keyboard pianos replace the desks and worktables; in another, ukuleles and guitars take over. There's something for everyone, and at this music school in the Main-Danforth area, expense isn't an issue.

The lessons at the East End Music Project (EEMP) are subsidized based on income, and so they range from \$2 to \$15 a pop.

The project's founder and director, Miranda Snyder, determined the need for the program with the help of World Vision.

The proof of its need though, is in who has taken advantage. Families who qualify for the lowest fees — because they make less than \$20,000 a year — account for more than 50

per cent of the families enrolled this year.

"They have multiple kids, they're making less than \$20,000 a year, many of them are new to the city and new to Canada," Snyder said. "If I'm not running this program here, it's not like they're going somewhere else for music lessons. This is it."

In addition to subsidized lessons, renting an instrument is also affordable.

Through Snyder's partnership with Long and McQuade music store, instruments can be purchased at cost or rented for \$20 a year.

With the program in its third year, Snyder's work hasn't been in vain. Ingrid Palmer, who has had her two children in the program since its launch, has seen steady improvements in her children.

"In the beginning, it's pretty much noise," Palmer said. "But over time, they're learning how to play actual songs, they're learning the notes and chords."

The driving force behind those improvements is the instruction. Being a musician her-

self, Snyder hired fellow "gigging" musicians who would appreciate the steady income — a move that she says ensures a high quality of service.

For Domonique Morris, a piano instructor at EEMP, it's more than a job. Having grown up in Toronto housing, she understands the struggles that her mother went through to pay for lessons.

"She didn't have that subsidy," Morris said. "So for me, I want to give back to my community because I know how much music has shaped me."

Enrolment in the program has increased every year and now sits at 250 students. Keeping up with increased capacity hasn't been easy for Snyder, involving the organization of fundraisers and lobbying for corporate sponsors. Snyder, however, refuses to turn anyone away.

"There should be no barrier," she said. "Not race, not ethnicity, not your ability to access the Internet; there's no reason why any kid should get left behind."



Andrew Wright // The Observer

Yoyada Tareke and Domonique Morris enjoying a one-on-one piano lesson at Secord Elementary School in East York.



Nathan Vaz // The Observer

Gavin MacDougall's mural, entitled "Dare to Achieve," uses the visual medium to show where the college has been, where it is and where it's going.

Mural challenges viewers to 'Dare to Achieve'

By **NATHAN VAZ**
The Observer

When Gavin MacDougall decided to enrol in the fine arts program at Centennial College's East York campus, he was hoping that the school would leave a lasting impression on his life. Little did he know he would have the opportunity to leave a lasting impression on the school.

As part of the college's 50th anniversary celebrations, it commissioned an outdoor mural for its main Progress Campus to demonstrate

Centennial's growth over the years.

Accordingly, a competition among current and former students was created in search of the most fitting mural. MacDougall, now a Centennial alumnus, was chosen as the winner for his design, one of hundreds of entries.

"It's an honour," he said. "It's quite a milestone and as a graduate from Centennial College, it's exciting to be part of it."

MacDougall's mural, entitled "Dare to Achieve," uses the visual medium to show where the college has been, where it is and where it's going.

He noted that in an institution like Centennial College, people have to take risks in order to achieve their goals. In naming his work "Dare to Achieve," MacDougall acknowledges that the first step in completing any goal is to take a risk and dare to do something one wouldn't normally do.

As for the mural and its design, MacDougall explained that the concept of his work is heavily based on universal beliefs.

"The idea is that a community brings together people from all sorts of backgrounds. It's everyone and all of us," he said.

"The central idea is that we can rise above our individual limitations and as a group we can achieve more than what we can as individuals. This is what happens at the college."

Along with a \$10,000 cash prize, MacDougall will also be able to see his mural next spring at Centennial College's Progress Campus in Scarborough. It will be added to the exterior of the new Residence and Culinary Arts Centre.

"It's going to be incredible. It's hard to imagine. It's something that will be there for a long time," MacDougall said.

Volt hockey gives everyone a chance to shoot, score

By **ANDREW WRIGHT**
The Observer

Young East Yorker Emery Gelissen zipped around the court at Variety Village in Scarborough, where recently Canada's only Volt hockey team held its first practice.

"I wish this thing had six cylinders," Emery shouted as he took a corner in the practice.

Volt hockey involves players in wheelchairs powered by twin 12-volt batteries that can reach a maximum speed of 13 kilometres an hour.

Participants control their chairs with the flick of a joystick mounted on either side of the chair.

Fixed to the front of each player's chair is a hockey stick split into three blades – one that juts out directly in front for shooting, and two on either side for ball control.



■ **EMERY GELISSEN**

Emery has Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a progressive genetic disorder that gradually weakens his body's muscles.

Emery's father, Marcus Gelissen, had strug-

gled to find an activity suitable for his son.

"It's hard to find something that's specific to Emery and his needs and this is it," Marcus Gelissen said. "I love it."

The arrival of the sport in Canada was made possible by a partnership between Variety Village and the Danish consulate. Together, the two raised enough funds to purchase 10 chairs valued at \$100,000.

Chris Murdock, teams manager at Variety Village, organized drills to introduce players to the sensitivity of the chair's controls.

Emery Gelissen didn't appear worried about the controls or the speed. With his chair set to speed setting number three out of a possible four, he buzzed around the court, his joystick pushed far forward.

Other para-sports often fall short for youngsters such as Emery.

Sledge hockey, for example, required up-

per-body strength and dexterity that children with progressive disorders lose over time.

While assigning a pusher has been a solution for some, Murdock said that Volt hockey provides something more.

"The chair becomes their movement and with that they become completely independent," Murdock said. "This sport will always allow them the opportunity to play."

Emery wasn't shy about exploring that independence. After growing bored of a pass and play drill, he broke out into a full speed joyride around the outer edge of the arena.

Soon he found himself sidelined with his chair powered off. Murdock called it the penalty box.

"He actually just wants to rip around," Marcus Gelissen said.

"If you let him go, I'm sure he'd just take the track."

'Mean Girls' is a movie, not a phenomenon, says bullying expert

Cont'd. from page 1

way to label pre-existing female bullying patterns with the influence of pop culture.

To Lynn Glazier, a journalist and the filmmaker behind documentaries *It's a Girl's World* and *It's a Teen World*, "Mean Girls is a movie. You can say that girls can be mean without having to slap the label on them of 'mean girls.'"

In her documentary, Glazier discovered that when it comes to bullying, girls have been known to use much more subtle methods than the aggressive behaviour typically used by boys.

Girls often use gossip and

use social media and relational power structures to assert their authority, she said, making it difficult for teachers and parents to recognize what they're doing.

According to Glazier, the increase in suspensions may be due to more awareness.

"I would suggest that this rise that the Toronto Catholic District School Board is seeing is not because there's been a rise in girls' social aggression," she said.

"I think that they may be becoming better at recognizing the behaviour. More incidents may be reported now, because there's much more awareness of it."



Yeye Zhe // The Observer

Night at the museum

A visitor takes in one of the displays at the Aga Khan Museum during Nuit Blanche last weekend. This was the first time that the Wynford Drive institution took part in the overnight event, which is designed to make contemporary art accessible to everyone.



On Sept. 25, the Royal Canadian Legion, Todmorden Branch No. 10, held a memorial march and candlelight service in honour of soldiers who have ended their own lives due to PTSD. The march began at 6:30 p.m. at Cosburn Avenue and Todmorden Lane and then headed north to the Legion at 1083 Pape Ave. The candlelight service followed at dusk.

Evangelo Sipsas /// The Observer



East Yorkers support families, veterans coping with PTSD

Honour Our Canadian Soldiers organization is part of raising support, awareness of PTSD

By **EVANGELO SIPSAS**
The Observer

Jason Mullis waited patiently for the funeral to end. People paid their respects at a coffin draped with the Canadian flag and with flowers all around the gravesite.

"I knew something was different," he said,

"so I stood there for... hours waiting for everyone to leave."

That's when he finally spoke to Denise, the mother of the deceased veteran being buried. Mullis simply wanted to offer his assistance to her. He recognized the difficulties she might have faced as the mother of a former soldier who died by suicide.

On Sept. 25, people from across the GTA gathered in East York, at the Royal Canadian Legion, Todmorden Branch 10, to pay their respects to soldiers who have taken their own lives.

Mullis, funding representative of Honour Our Canadian Soldiers (HOCS), said the ceremony

at the Legion on Pape Avenue was also intended to raise awareness about the issue.

"They have to be recognized as fallen soldiers, not suicide soldiers, as some people are saying," Mullis said. "There is a stigma still."

HOCS is a non-profit that focuses on providing support to veterans dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The organization also offers support to veteran family members, such as Denise, who has lost a loved one by an act of suicide because of PTSD.

"We're not here for the military. We're not here for Canada," Mullis said. "We're here for the fallen soldiers' families."

Mullis is also a victim of PTSD, but never

fought in Afghanistan or Iraq. He developed PTSD after being hit by a truck in his hometown of Guelph in 2007. He attempted to take his own life a number of times, but with the help of others he managed to overcome the traumatic stress.

Mullis and his organization travelled from Guelph to attend the ceremony in order to offer assistance to families coping with PTSD. He encouraged veterans to speak about it.

"We want the families to know that they're never alone," he said. "And to the soldiers (who) are at that point, (who) think it's the best way out, know (that) there are people there for you."

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



NEIGHBOURLY NEWS

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

■ EDITORIALS

New lines, old spirit

When it reported on the proposal to realign city wards, the Toronto Star focused on the reaction of East Yorkers' neighbours to the south. It seems some folks in The Beach would prefer not to see wards redrawn in such a way as to suggest a connection with Scarborough.

Well, that's awkward.

But while East Yorkers may be tempted to smile at such considerations, we shouldn't be too complacent about the implications of this reworking of boundaries.

This all stems from the Toronto Ward Boundary Review's attempt to attain a more equitable city council. The way things stand, there's a wide range of population among the city's 44 wards. Some wards have twice the population of others. The purpose of the review is to even those numbers out — to something between 60,000 and 70,000 per ward. (Or, under a more dramatic proposal, to around 110,000 per ward... with 26 wards instead of 44.)

In East York, the effects in the two southern wards would likely be minimal: both Ward 29/Toronto-Danforth and 31/Beaches-East York would simply be extended a few blocks further south — to just beyond Danforth Avenue. But in the northwest third of East York, the effect would be more pronounced. What was one ward, Don Valley West/Ward 26 would suddenly divide and peel off into three wards — one heading far west into Toronto, one heading far north into North York and one heading far east into Scarborough. So instead of one constituency and one representative at city hall, East York's upper third would be politically diluted. Dissected into three, with those three subdivisions then blended with non-East York neighbourhoods.

This would be a significant official change. Perhaps the most significant since the Borough of East York was dissolved 18 years ago in then-premier Mike Harris' forced merger of the autonomous municipalities that had made up what was previously known as Metro Toronto.

But the key word there is "official." Let's remember that many people predicted that the 1998 amalgamation would spell the end of East York's sense of community. But that hasn't happened. (This newspaper, the East York Observer, is evidence of that.)

So with the possibility of a ward re-draw facing us, it's best to remember that any re-division will not erase our neighbourhoods' history.

And as a practical matter, whatever the name or number of your new ward, you'll still be in East York — still just a walk or a short ride away from the features of our community that make it a community.

The stores and restaurants and libraries and recreation centres that you enjoy will still be open for business (along with others that would be joining us under the new wards).

So while Mayor Tory's executive committee is expected to take up this issue later this year, remember that, whatever happens and however our official boundaries may change, East York and our love for it can never be divided.

~ Chelsea Ward

Becoming a hotspot

Artists living in East York shouldn't let the spirit of creativity, which often flows out of Nuit Blanche, dissipate.

Overnight this past Saturday-Sunday, the downtown core was alive (if soggy) with creative displays, out-of-this-world performances, eye-catching art, music and culture. Every year, Nuit Blanche fills the streets with Torontonians, out-of-towners and tourists who explore the city at night and take in sights they may have never seen before.

This year the Ismaili Centre and Aga Khan Museum and Park on Wynford Drive brought Nuit Blanche to East York, with a lecture indoors and a "sensory garden" and sculptural installation outdoors. It's a rare sight for East York to be a stop on the Nuit Blanche circuit. Thankfully, a week later, the sprinkling of attention on East York doesn't have to be brought to a halt.

Preparations are in the works for the 2017 East York Cultural Hotspot designation. This event will undoubtedly become more familiar over the next few months as the community and city prepare for one of the biggest promotional programs to come our way. The Cultural Hotspot is about shining a light on the arts, culture and heritage of a chosen region of Toronto, traditionally outside of the downtown core. In partnership with Toronto City Services and Toronto Tourism, the hotspot will bring more and new eyes to what makes this East York so special.

This is an opportunity for community members to be actively involved in how our neighbourhoods are portrayed. The Observer recently reported on a Cultural Hotspot Connect meeting held at the East York Civic Centre. This edition reports on a community mural project in the works for the Hotspot. And a lot more information will soon be circulating.

Going by the past successes of Cultural Hotspots in Scarborough and this year's North York, it's fair to state that this is an important event for East York. Businesses have the opportunity to thrive in a bright tourist spotlight, and so do artists who might traditionally perform or share their art in venues closer to the downtown region.

Nuit Blanche is over, but the East York Cultural Hotspot is on its way.

~ Raquel Russell

■ COLUMNS

Listen to those in pain

If you can, try to remember the most insufferable pain you've ever felt — physical or emotional. Actually take the time to think about it. When it happened. What the room smelled like. Who was around. How it surfaced. And ultimately, why it happened. What was going through your mind? Now imagine if that pain persisted. If it never went away. If it stuck and affected your everyday life and functioning. Even just articulating the words to describe that kind of heartache could be near-impossible.

But this is a reality for many people. Now imagine being told that, in addition to this suffering, you only have a very finite amount of time left to live. An hourglass over your shoulder, in effect, and it's draining fast.

Wouldn't you want to consider all options?

Fortunately, the option of assisted death can now, legitimately, be among them. And yet, there is still opposition to this humane alternative. But it is important that patients have the right to choose this form of treatment as long as they meet the law's criteria. It allows patients to be in control of their lives. I'm thinking of a person who used to be an athlete, but after years of battling AIDS, he only weighs 80 pounds.

He is slowly starting to lose his vision and memory. Or another who is suffering from lung cancer and is no longer responding to any treatment. He must choose between constant sedation or excruciating pain. These aren't figments of my imagination; they're in the book *Health Care Ethics: Critical Issues for the 21st Century*.

Physical and mental health are at stake. A cancer patient's physical health can be affected by the side effects of chemotherapy. In terms of mental health, some may feel hopelessness and experience deep depression. Sometimes people come to feel that their condition is their identity. Even just having the option of assisted death could be beneficial for those with a terrible prognosis. It could be gratifying for some to know that they still have control in deciding what is best for them. And if they make that ultimate choice, who among us can stand in judgment?



Jacqueline Thetsombandith

A curse of modern life

COLUMNIST'S "TRIGGER" WARNING: The following may offend people who think it's their duty to enlighten the world with their superior knowledge.

Political correctness is a curse that is being spread around by what some people call "social justice warriors," or SJWs. These SJWs have an agenda to make everyone's life miserable by instructing people with their take on the world and its current events.

For example: Annaliese Nielsen — an outspoken California businesswoman (whose enterprises range from a soft-core porn production company to a social networking site).

From the back seat of a Lyft car (think Uber), Nielsen took offence to the driver's Hawaiian bobble head. In a video that has now gone viral, Nielsen says, "You thought that was adorable; you didn't think about the pillaging of the continent of Hawaii?"

Nielsen begins to mock the Lyft driver about how he purchased the doll from Goodwill, threatening to "expose" him to Gawker.

Another example of an SJW is Zarna Joshi, an activist against the building of a Seattle police station. Joshi was offended by a local media

interview of a person with a differing opinion by the name of Rudy Pantoja. When Pantoja finished talking, Joshi went straight to him and asked for his name. Pantoja refused to give his actual name and said it was "Hugh Mungus" instead. Joshi tried to turn the tables by then loudly claiming that the exchange amounted to sexual assault. (It turned out Pantoja was there to support the police for taking his 26-year-old daughter off the street for treatment.)

Jeannie Suk Gersen, a Harvard professor, wrote a column in *The New Yorker* recently about how it's difficult to teach some forms of law because it might be "triggering" to some students. Because such stark confrontations with certain aspects of reality could be traumatizing. A teacher whom Suk Gersen knew told her that a student

had asked if the faculty could avoid using the word "violate" in class. What was the context? "Does this conduct violate the law?" This begs the question: Are we going to get to the point where a history professor will have to give a trigger warning to their class when we're about to talk about a war?

In my own college career, I've experienced teachers and students walking the fine line of political correctness. I remember one discussion in which the view was expressed that grocery stores should reconsider specially labelled sections for halal foods.

I should be clear that this isn't a political issue. Despite what people may think, there's a difference between openmindedness and political correctness. And in their overzealousness, SJWs don't actually contribute to any meaningful discourse.

All they contribute to is forced smiles... and internal eye-rolls.



Carmen Tortorelli

East York's 'Not-So-Roaring '20s'



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 are a reflection of the Not-So-Roaring Twenties in a community that was still removed enough from Toronto's city centre that a pastoral atmosphere continued to prevail. For instance: The now-busy intersection of Coxwell and Danforth avenues looks almost untouched in the photo on the left, taken on Oct. 6, 1926. The picture on the right, from Feb. 11, 1929, depicts a class at the Danforth Day Nursery, located at 363 Main St.

Eco-friendly school practises the 3 Rs

Reduce, reuse, recycle the mantra at Jackman school

By KAITLYN SMITH
The Observer

The whole thing was just a misunderstanding. Jackman Avenue Junior Public School recently found itself in the journalistic spotlight when a memo from the school told parents not to pack juice boxes in their children's lunches. In one of several stories about the memo, juice boxes were referred to as "Enemy No. 1."

The matter was resolved when principal Rory Sullivan told the Toronto Star that the memo was sent to introduce new parents and remind returning ones about Jackman's eco-friendly policies.

The school has platinum-certified eco-friendly status and has become a community leader in practising the motto "reduce, reuse, recycle".

A reporter from the East York Observer sat down recently with several of the school's front-line, eco-friendly representatives to see what the rap is against non-recyclable wrappers.

Sitting at the table are Sullivan, Paul Cressman, a veteran teacher who has been at Jackman for almost a decade now, and Jennifer Proos, a mother of three students at the school and parent council member.

The Toronto District School Board lists its



Kaitlyn Smith /// The Observer

Mom Jennifer Proos packs lunches in reusable packaging for her children (left to right) Kelly, Katherine and Jakob.

eco-friendly schools as platinum, gold, silver and bronze, with platinum being the most eco-responsible and bronze the lowest.

So, with the juice boxes, Jackman isn't nitpicking. With a platinum designation, the school's students and teachers take pride in their duties as

the earth's benefactors.

What's the difference between platinum and gold eco-schools? "A lot of work," Cressman said.

Students are educated about eco-friendly policies in curriculum and classroom life. They take their knowledge home to parents, and the eco-minded-

ness gets passed around the community.

Cressman is the school's appointed person-of-responsibility overseeing the eco-friendly policies at Jackman.

Last year, Cressman's class wrote a letter to city council to try to stop the TDSB from cutting down trees in the front because of the emerald ash borer. Later, saddened by the loss of the trees, his students wrote the TDSB's overseer of grounds and were met with a positive response. A week later, new trees were planted to replace the old ones.

"Our students have been really good ambassadors for developing eco-mindedness in the community," Sullivan said.

In the lunchroom, classrooms and outdoors, Jackman has taken special care to surround students with the knowledge of how to make the world a greener place.

In social studies classes, children learn about current events on the planet's health and wellness. In science, they learn about endangered animals and the causes of their path to extinction.

And in math, students compare the surface area and the volume of 10 juice boxes to that of a reusable juice container, discovering just how much waste can be saved when using one.

As for implementing eco-friendly mindfulness, Proos says it's not difficult. "It's the philosophy of reducing garbage and waste at the school."

East York poetry lovers gather at Children's Peace Theatre

By JONATHAN YUE
The Observer

For writers Tyler Hosken and Mary White, East York is an example of Toronto's vibrant poetry scene.

Compared to other cities, "there's certainly a great deal more readings," Hosken said in an interview. "In Toronto there's about three a week that we know of."

On Saturday, about 30 people came out to the Children's Peace Theatre on Dawes Road near Victoria Park Avenue to enjoy spoken word performances, poetry and music.

Hosken and White, who met in North Bay,

said that events like these, where poets and writers can share their work, are what makes poetry thrive in this urban setting.

One of those poets at the Children's Peace Theatre was Ruben "Beny" Esquerra. A multi-instrumentalist, lyricist and arts educator, Esquerra focuses on the spoken word — and agrees that this is an environment where poetry thrives.

"There's so many people here from different places around the world," Esquerra said. "There's a potential for more contribution to the genre with different languages."

Besides stirring a cosmopolitan air, the poetic messages themselves can be thought-provok-

ing. And because of that, Esquerra believes that poetry in Toronto will continue to have significance.

"As long as people are continually writing, as long as there's events and support on the creations, (poetry) is evolving for the better," Esquerra said.

And with events like the one on Saturday, the potential for poetry reaching more and more people can only grow.

In turn, that encourages others to join in on writing and performing.

"Obviously, you have to want to go out and seek it, of course," White said. "You can get as involved as you want to with poetry."



Jonathan Yue /// The Observer

Ruben "Beny" Esquerra performs his music and spoken word at the East End Poetry Festival held last Saturday.

Golden anniversary in college green



East York's only public post-secondary school is celebrating its 50th anniversary this fall, and so staff and students from Centennial College on Carlaw Avenue donned their school colour and joined counterparts from Centennial's other East Toronto campuses in a city-wide park cleanup on Sept. 27. Clockwise from top: Staff and students set off to tidy Thomson Park in Scarborough; college admissions manager Darryl Creeden rallies the troops; students Colin Tavares (left) and Jermere Culzac team up to tackle trash troubles together; the CN Tower beams with Centennial green that Tuesday night; Shruti Sule (left), Viranch Shah (centre) and Hira Sadiu had never met before but became friends during the cleanup. (Photos by Chelsea Ward — except CN Tower, courtesy of Centennial College)

