



■ **MACPHAIL AWARD**

## Remember your roots, says award recipient

By **BRANDON WONG**  
The Observer

As the 25th recipient of the Agnes Macphail Award, Carol Burtin Fripp is fully aware of the ceremony's significance.

"If you don't have ceremonies like this, then people forget," Burtin Fripp told the audience March 24 at the East York Civic Centre.



■ **BURTIN FRIPP**

"It's important to commemorate and recognize what the roots are for where we are now. If you forget your roots, then you don't really know who you are."

Along with Premier Kathleen Wynne, MP Rob Oliphant and Beaches-East York Councillor Janet Davis, the audience included past recipients who have made outstanding contributions to their community. Among them were Lorna Krawchuk, a volunteer reader at VoicePrint; Sheila Lacroix, who focused her efforts on cyber-bullying; and George Hurst, who volunteered at Touchstone Youth Centre to help young people in crisis.

"It's nice to be among the people who have already won it and continue to do great work for East York," Burtin Fripp said. "I was pleased that so many came to the event."

Agnes Macphail was an activist who fought for the rights of women, seniors and the underprivileged. She was the first woman elected to the House of Commons, in 1921. Macphail's contributions include reforming the prison system and fighting for gender equality and the

■ See **MACPHAIL'S**, page 5



Erik Twight/The Observer

### On the Danforth, then and now

On a walking tour of Toronto's Greek community, a volunteer carries a photo of Danforth Avenue from days gone by. The free stroll began at Pape Library and made its way to Broadview north of Danforth on Sunday, March 25. For a story about the walk, turn to page 2.

■ **POLITICS**

## Kathleen Wynne promises free prescription drugs for seniors



Bobby Hristova/The Observer

**Premier Kathleen Wynne recently dropped by the Leaside Curling Club.**

After throwing a rock or two at the Leaside Curling Club, premier says OHIP+ will cover Ontarians aged 65 and older

By **BOBBY HRISTOVA**  
The Observer

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne chose the Leaside Curling Club to make a special announcement affecting all Ontario seniors.

After curling with Leaside seniors on March 20, she announced that anyone aged 65 and older will receive free prescription medicine starting August 2019 as an extension to OHIP+.

"If we don't make these investments now, we will pay a price down the road," Wynne told reporters. "Our parents, our grandparents — people who built Ontario — have told us they want to live independently for as long as possible.... That's something we need to support."

Wynne said the plan will remove the current deductibles and co-payments under the Ontario Drug Benefit program while maintaining access to all 4,400-plus drugs.

The expansion will save people an average of \$240 per year. The province will invest \$575 million in the program by 2020-21.

To pay for this, Wynne plans to operate on a "modest deficit, less than one per cent of GDP."

Dipika Damerla, the Minister of Seniors Affairs, said although people consider healthcare when thinking of seniors, they dismiss afford-

ability.

"Affordability when you're on a fixed income can be an issue," Dipika said in an interview. "We don't want seniors to ever have to worry that they may have to choose or ration their medications."

Cathy Windross, 65, called Wynne's promise a good thing.

"There's a need," she said. "I went through it with my mother, and we could've had more help."

But Andrew D. Gall, CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association, wonders why seniors are being forced to wait.

"Why do we have to wait 18 months? Why can't we make this sooner? It's teasing people," Gall said.

■ See **WYNNE**, page 4

**POLICE & FIRE**

**Man, 22, faces charges after male stabbed in East York**

A 22-year-old man has been charged in a Danforth Avenue and Greenwood Avenue stabbing. Toronto Police say on March 14 the accused stabbed a male victim several times before fleeing. Police arrested a man on March 17. The victim was rushed to the trauma centre in critical condition. "The crime rate these days is growing because of these youth," said a local resident who saw police at the scene. Adam Bryan James MacDougall of Toronto has been charged with attempted murder.

**Thornciffe Park residents launch protest after water shutdown**

Residents of 49 Thornciffe Park Dr. protested a water shut-off after a corroded pipe burst. Toronto Police responded to a call about the protest on March 22, but no charges were laid. Water was restored to the building on March 23.

**Police present guide for sexual assault survivors**

Toronto Police have created Project Guide to provide sexual assault survivors support and resources. The project offers an interactive website, an information guide in 12 languages, and a campaign to encourage survivors to make the best choice in reporting the assault.

~ Jennifer Teixeira



Claire Floody/The Observer

**(Right to left) Panelists Margaret Arnason, Devi Ekanand and Kadon Douglas speak with host Carlene Daley at the event, 'Whose Body is it, Really?'**

**Panel asks, 'Whose body is it?'**

By **CLAIRE FLOODY**  
The Observer

Amid all of the sexual-assault allegations and "Me Too" stories surfacing in today's media, is there space for men in this conversation, too?

Margaret Arnason, research and outreach co-ordinator for Toronto's Assaulted Women's Helpline, believes there has to be.

"We can't progress as a population unless we have the support and help of the other half," she said. "This is no longer just a woman's issue."

She encouraged the young men in the audience to hold one another to a higher standard and call out unacceptable behaviour.

Arnason and two other panelists spoke at "Whose Body is it, Really?," an event held to discuss the female perspective and experience of the entertainment industry. It took place at Centennial College's East York campus on March 23 in front of an audience of both male and female students.

Although much of the discussion was focused on women supporting women, one of the most poignant questions of the day was: Where do men fit in?

Mahmoud Amin Adileh, a 3D-animation student, attended the event because he thinks men and women need to work together to combat sexual harassment.

"It won't help anyone to be segregated or divided," Adileh said.

Nicholas Kwok, a performing arts fundamentals student, asked the panelists about resources and help for "reformed" men — those who have admitted to past offences of sexual harassment or abuse but are committed to changing for the better.

Kadon Douglas, one of the panelists and a communications and engagement manager at Women in Film & Television - Toronto, says she is open to having these types of conversations with men, and actually welcomes it.

She believes there should be more spaces to facilitate this.

Another important matter raised was how sexual abuse affects each woman uniquely. Women from different cultures, women with physical disabilities and LGBT women face unique prejudice and biases that other women do not.

Lindi Sibongo is a performing arts fundamentals student and was mostly interested in the event to see how intersectional it would be.

"I wanted to see how much of the conversation here today would be about queer women, racialized women or women with disabilities," Sibongo said. "I feel like they are often forgotten about in this conversation."

She did feel that the challenges associated with race were discussed in depth.

For example, panelist Douglas, originally from Grenada, spoke of her experiences celebrating Caribana dressed in the traditional Mas wear and having people from other cultures oversexualize and even harass her.

However, Sibongo thought the challenges that face LGBT women or women with disabilities were merely mentioned or skimmed over.

Devi Ekanand, the final panelist and a member of the Coalition Music family for 20 years, explained her company's "50/50 initiative." The goal is to work towards an equal ratio of men and women in leadership positions.

Sibongo also challenged this. "Even that 50/50 goal implies that half of our population identifies as male and the other half female," she said.

"What about people who identify as non-binary or transgender? Where do they fit in?"

The panelists also recommended safe resources and organizations in Toronto for women experiencing abuse, such as the Assaulted Women's Helpline and Dr. Roz's Healing Place, a centre and safe space for women and children of violence.

"The more we continue to have this conversation and the more we start seeing women in decision-making positions challenge the patriarchy, the sooner we will start to see the shift," Douglas said.

**Greektown tour illuminates Danforth's history**

By **ERIK TWIGHT**  
The Observer

March 25, according to the Julian Calendar followed by the Greek Orthodox Church, marks the Feast of the Annunciation. On that day in 1821, the Greeks began a long revolt against the ruling Ottoman Empire. The Greek Independence Day parade on the Danforth inspired Myseum of Toronto to organize a free historic walk through Greektown last weekend.

Myseum is an organization dedicated to engaging people with local history projects around the city. The Greektown historic walking tours were hosted by Chris Grafos, professor of history at York University and co-founder of The Greek Canadian History Project. The tours ran twice each

day last weekend and were well-attended, attracting curious passersby as the tour progressed along the Danforth from the Pape Library toward Broadview Avenue.

The first stop at St. Irene Orthodox Church further north on Pape was followed by a stroll to the heart of the community, Alexander the Great Parkette. The prominent bust of Alexander the Great was donated by the Pan-Macedonian Community of Toronto in 1990.

There have been tensions between local Greeks and Macedonians, which have occasionally erupted into non-lethal physical violence, Grafos said.

Throughout the tour, Grafos's assistants held up large historic pictures of the Toronto Greek community, which came from the Clara Thomas Archives at York Universi-

ty. The images depicted everyday life and holidays.

Grafos discussed other aspects of local Greek history, such as former Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou's time as an exile here, teaching at York University.

He also suggested that one reason Greeks gravitated toward the restaurant trade was not so much a love of preparing food as making the most of limited opportunities.

Many Greeks who came here in the decades following the war were unskilled rural people who didn't speak English, he said, so starting out as a dishwasher could enable one to scrape together enough money to start their own restaurant.

The tour concluded on Broadview, with Grafos taking attendees' questions.

**WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.**

**Bulgarian Art Festival on at Todmorden Mills**

The Papermill Gallery at Todmorden Mills will be the setting for the eighth annual Bulgarian Art Festival on April 1 from 12 noon to 4:30 p.m. The works of Igor Bounikov will be featured. The gallery is located at 67 Pottery Rd.

**Celebrating our caregivers**

The Heart of Home Care Awards will be presented April 3 from 2-3:30 p.m. at The Forth, 629 Danforth Ave. Family caregivers will be celebrated with stories and live music. To RSVP, go to <http://bit.ly/hohcinvite2018>

**Pay a visit to Robot Land at the library**

Terri Favro, the author of Generation Robot: A Century of Science Fiction, Fact and Speculation, will talk about the process of researching and writing the book. The event will take place April 5 at the S. Walter Stewart Library, 170 Memorial Park Ave., from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Admission is free.

**Poetry helps us listen to places**

The Pape-Danforth Public Library will hold two Wednesday-evening workshops on exploring poetry as a way of listening to places, starting April 11. The workshops will run from 6:30-8 p.m. at the library, 701 Pape Ave. Register for the free event by calling 416-393-7727.

~ Observer staff



Osobe Waberi/The Observer

Above left, Sophia and friends learn the djembe drums at the Africentric Arts Camp, held at Centennial College's Progress Campus. Above right, Acacia, Frances Cowan's nine-year-old daughter, inspired her to create a camp focusing on African culture.

## Student becomes her daughter's teacher

By OSOBE WABERI  
The Observer

For Centennial College student Frances Cowan, 29, one thing more important than preserving her African culture is making sure her nine-year-old daughter, Acacia, does the same.

When she asked her daughter whether she would like to visit home one day, she was met with a confused and terrified expression. Cowan came from Sierra Leone, but what is known to her as a beautiful country is known to her daughter as a place of poverty and hardship — or, in the words of a child, “boring” and “sad-looking.”

That is when Cowan, who studies at the college's Story Arts Centre in East York, decided her daughter needed a crash course on her native land. Her search for after-school programs, however, did not end well.

The problem? The programs being offered felt one-sided and too concentrated on African history, something Cowan says her daughter wouldn't

enjoy. To her, a child who knows little about the continent of Africa should not be expected to tackle it all at once.

With that, Cowan did what any mother would. She became her daughter's teacher.

“I had to start with my daughter,” Cowan said. “She is my inspiration, but she is immersed in her [Western] culture, and I want her to learn the other parts of her and even the culture of others.”

Shortly after, the Africentric Arts program was born.

Cowan's most recent event was held at Centennial College's Progress Campus on March 16 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Twenty-three children attended, ranging from age five to 13.

The program is open to children and teens from all parts of Africa, and other kids too.

“This is not just for African kids. This is for everybody,” Cowan said. “Everyone should learn and understand why everybody is different, and learn another perspective other than their own.”

Also in attendance was Centennial College pro-

fessor Jessica Langer and her daughter, Miranda.

“It's incredibly important to me that Miranda learns about different cultures, not just in the abstract but also in her everyday life,” Langer said. “It's not just about learning though. It's important to me that my kids spend time in diverse spaces and that diversity is the default, not just an option, for them.”

Langer teaches at the college's East York campus. She is also Cowan's professor in the Public Relations Management Program. She was amazed, but not surprised, at news of the project and attended the event in support of her student.

“It's my goal to help her build Africentric Arts into a self-sustaining non-profit organization so that she can bring her programming to lots more kids,” Langer said. “But she would be successful with or without me, honestly. I'm just a support. She deserves every bit of credit.”

To Cowan, the camp is more than just face-painting, storytelling and arts and crafts. It takes African education to a new level by incor-

porating a more intense, but fun, way for children to learn about themselves and those around them.

The children learn to play the djembe drums, choreograph traditional African dance infused with modern hip-hop, play tug of war (girls vs. boys) and have lessons on the natural resources every African country produces.

“The camp is about preserving our culture,” Cowan said. “I want my daughter to see the Africa that I see.”

Today, if you asked Cowan's daughter whether she would want to visit her mother's homeland, you would get a different answer. In fact, she is more eager than ever to uncover her roots.

“It's very satisfying to see her like this. We're connecting now,” Cowan said. “Before, our different perspectives separated us. But now she's interested in it and wants to know more. I'm very proud of her.”

There is a trip to Sierra Leone scheduled at the end of the year, Cowan added, and the pair is looking forward to it.

## Award-winning Indigenous filmmaker wows audience

Alanis Obomsawin's 50th doc screened at Indigenous centre

By JELA TEJADA  
The Observer

With over five decades of experience in the industry, Alanis Obomsawin has become one of Canada's most prestigious documentary filmmakers of all time.

Her storytelling revolves around Canada's Indigenous peoples, whose stories are often unheard, or worse—misunderstood by the public.

East Yorkers filled up the Urban Indigenous Education Centre's auditorium on March 23 for a screening of Obomsawin's 50th documentary, *Our People Will Be Healed*.

The 85-year-old filmmaker's latest project shines a spotlight on the Norway House Cree Nation, one of the largest First Nations communities in Manitoba.

In the film, Obomsawin follows the story of a well-funded N-12 school called the Helen Betty Osborne Ininiw Education Resource Centre, named after an Indigenous girl who was abducted and murdered in 1971.

The film focuses on the efforts of the Cree community to restore its culture by educating the younger generation.

It gives the audience a glimpse into what it looks like to embrace one's culture and heal as a community.

Obomsawin said she is pleased to see that Canada is continually improving in terms of properly including Indigenous peoples in its narrative.

“More and more Canadians are now learning about the true history,” she said during a discussion held after the screen-

ing.

“We should also recognize that the history books were horrifying for many, many years.”

Obomsawin has won numerous awards for her body of work, which includes *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*; *Trick or Treaty?*; and *The People of the Kattawapiskak River*.

After many years of storytelling, Obomsawin shared the secret behind her success.

“The main root of things is to be able to listen,” she said.

Theresa Cutknife, a second-year student at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre, attended the screening.

“(Obomsawin) has been one of the forefront people who've been making sure that we're heard and seen,” Cutknife said.

“That just inspires me, in whatever I do, to bring that forward.”



Jela Tejada/The Observer

Alanis Obomsawin leads a discussion after the screening of her 50th documentary.



Bobby Hristova/The Observer

Above, Kathleen Wynne shakes hands with a member of the Leaside Curling Club. At right, the premier throws a rock at the club.

## Wynne rocks Leaside

Cont'd. from page 1

### THE COMPETITION



**DOUG FORD**, the leader of Ontario's PC party, wants to improve hospital wait times.



**ANDREA HORWATH**, leading the Ontario's NDP, proposed province-wide dental benefits and a separate ministry for mental health and addiction services.



**MIKE SCHREINER**, heading the Green party, wants to make nurse-led clinics the primary mode of health care in rural areas of Ontario.

He argues that the turnaround for the original OHIP+ plan was much shorter.

Ontario announced OHIP+ on April 27 and implemented it on Jan. 1, providing the same benefits for anyone 25 and younger.

If re-elected June 7, Wynne hopes to create a national pharmacare program to cover people 25-65.

"The reality is that there is still more to do," Wynne said.

"It's going to mean one less thing people have to worry about and it's going to deliver real savings to help manage the rising cost of living."



## Film company sees big picture in film grad's short

By **SERGIO ARANGIO**  
The Observer

As G-Hey Kim sat at a Centennial College computer desk editing her short horror film for her directing class, she didn't think it would make it into the Hamilton Film Festival. She definitely didn't think a production company would see it and option it for a full-length feature film.

Kim got the call from her directing professor, George Mihalka, at the end of January saying that Vortex Words + Pictures saw bigger things for her short film and wanted her to help write and direct a feature-length version. She was ecstatic.

"It's unbelievable. I feel like I'm just in my dream," the film graduate remembered saying. "Don't wake me up. I just want to stay right here."

Kim's film, *Don't Click*, shows a man who receives a mysterious email containing a snuff film — a film that shows a victim of real, obscene violence. As the man watches the film, he sees a woman being tortured and is presented with an option halfway through to watch the full video. All he has to do is click his mouse.

The inspiration for the film, Kim said, was the disconnect people have with things they view on the internet that they otherwise wouldn't see in real life. It all clicked during a visit to the school library where she saw a room of students glued to their phones.

Having come to Canada from South Korea four years ago, Kim noted the similarities between the way the two cultures use the internet. That's why, she said, she didn't want her film to be tethered to a specific culture but to be relatable to anyone who consumes online content.

The idea seemed to hit the mark. The film appeared in festivals such as Oregon Scream Week and the Blood in the Snow Canadian Film Festival, which are both geared towards the horror genre. It also won the award for best horror film at the Asians On Film Festival in Los Angeles.

Mihalka, who directed, among others, the cult horror classic *My*



Photo courtesy G-Hey Kim

**G-Hey Kim went to Los Angeles to collect her award for best horror film at the Asians On Film Festival.**

*Bloody Valentine* (the 1981 version), credited the film's success to all the resources at Centennial College's advanced filmmaking program that Kim took advantage of during her one-year program. She went to every workshop they had to offer, Mihalka said, and even helped fellow students with their short films.

"The result was a good [film] idea, dedication, passion, and a certain amount of perfectionism where she wasn't satisfied with just delivering a movie," Mihalka said. "She wanted to deliver a movie that was up to professional standards."

But Kim didn't stop there. Even after sending the film to festivals, she made sure to go to each one that chose to screen it and,

business cards in hand, talk to everyone. This was especially true for the Hamilton Film Festival in November 2017.

Little did Kim know that Susan Curran, vice-president of corporate development at Vortex Pictures, would be at the screening at Mihalka's invitation. Curran was so impressed with the film that she took it to the production company's head of development, Courtney McAllister, to take the short film to the next level with its low-budget film program.

"It's a very now subject," McAllister said about what drew her to the film. "Given that finally women are being heard in a completely different way with the 'Me Too' movement ... I think that this is such an important time for a film like this."

Despite Mihalka's praise of her hard work, Kim said a lot of her success with the film was due to all of the help she received, particularly in submitting it to festivals.

"I never could have done this without [my team]," Kim said. "It was me who made the film, but it was them who brought the film into the world."

Kim admitted it wasn't easy being a film student in Canada. Despite her permanent residence, she said she felt constant pressure from classmates who told her she would never make it in Canada since she isn't a fluent English-speaker.

"You might be a director in Korea because you can speak Korean fluently, but not here," Kim remembered her classmates saying. "I know it will be hard, it's really difficult, but let me try," she responded. "This is my dream and I believe I can make it."

Kim will work intensively with McAllister and her team on writing and developing her feature film for at least a year, with Mihalka mentoring her throughout the process. McAllister plans for it to be a \$150,000 production.

Meanwhile, Kim will still be in school. She's now studying film at Sheridan College because of the extra courses it offers.

Eventually, she wants to have a career making short and feature films and be known for evolving the way films are made. She believes making *Don't Click* into a feature is the first step.

## Crescent Town pool reopens after long repair job

By SHANELL SIMMISTER  
The Observer

After being closed for more than a year, the Crescent Town Club's swimming facility recently threw a "grand pool reopening" to welcome back residents.

The event took place March 10 at 2A The Market Place near Victoria Park and Danforth avenues.

Many who had been waiting 14 months for the pool to reopen brought along friends and family to celebrate.

"It was initially supposed to be closed for six months for repair," general manager Anil Narayan said.

"The pool was leaking heavily. We attempted to water-proof the pool, but unfortunately it kept failing, so we had to prolong the repair."

Narayan estimated the cost to be \$700,000 to \$750,000.

"Fortunately, the pool is now working well," he said. "The people now have access to every part of the facility."

Swimming started the day of the reopening at 12:30 p.m. and ran for an hour and a half. Parents and guardians stayed to watch their kids splash around in the water. Some adults even joined in.

Afterwards, a gathering was held in the community centre's club room.

Subir Shrestha, a father of two, came to the opening to watch his seven-year-old son swim with the other kids. His son had been part of the swim program before the pool closed.

"We went to a private swimming facility and it was more expensive than Crescent, but now we are back and I'm really enjoying it," he said. "I'm excited to see the children have fun."

Program coordinator Krystal Arseneau was also relieved.

"I was very sad about the pool's closing and was hoping it would be a quick fix so people could swim again," she said. "I'm happy to have people back."

The Crescent Town Club opened in 1971. In addition to the pool, it hosts other recreational activities and offers daycare and athletic facilities.

Membership is free for Crescent Town residents.



Agnes Macphail Award winner Carol Burtin Fripp was joined at the March 24 ceremony celebrating her win — and the 25th anniversary of the award — by some of the past recipients. They included (top row, left to right) Shamsh Kara, George Hurst, Alan Redway, Elisabeth Lister, J. Edna Beange, Carol Burtin Fripp, Ruth Goldhar, Lorna Krawchuk, Sheila Lacroix and Muhammad Masood Alam and (bottom row, left to right) Rev. Jim Parker, Robert Lister and Geoff Kettel.

## Macphail's legacy continues to inspire

Cont'd. from page 1

rights of the working class.

"She changed the rules of societal norms," MP Rob Oliphant told the audience at the Civic Centre. "I can only imagine the type of causes she would take on today."

Macphail maintained her involvement with the community until her death in 1954. To commemorate her legacy, East York council created the Agnes Macphail Award in 1994. It celebrates an individual's contributions to the East York community.

The contributions of 2018 winner Burtin Fripp include developmental proposals and traffic studies, while acting as the co-president of the Leaside Property Owner's Association (LPOA). Her involvement began when she was elected to the LPOA in 1976 and worked to limit heavy traffic to ensure the safety of East York residents. She remains active in the issue.

"Activism never really ends," Burtin Fripp said in her speech. "The work of Agnes Macphail is something we all try to emulate."

There is a small section at the East

York Civic Centre where past recipients' pictures hang, which Burtin Fripp will now join.

"Fame at last!" she joked. "It's nice to be recognized after all that work, and it continues to be work, but it's worth doing."

Oliphant called the award "something that people want to live up to."

"I think the award doesn't just honour people for what they have done but encourages them to keep doing what they've been doing in the future," he said.

Davis considers the award ceremony an opportunity to recognize people for

their work in advancing the same goals Macphail had as an elective representative.

"It's a chance for the community to come together and recognize the leaders who really have made a difference in the lives of residents and our community," she said.

The award comes with a donation, made to a charity of the winner's choice. Burtin Fripp presented a \$2,500 cheque to the East York Learning Experience, which helps adults in East York, East Toronto, and West Scarborough who struggle with their literacy skills.

## 'Shy' Grade 8 student's speech on Me Too wins contest

'I would hope Agnes Macphail feels that the future is in good hands,' says winner of public speaking competition

By BRANDON WONG  
The Observer

Maeve Pestonji, a Grade 8 student at St. Anselm Catholic School in East York, didn't expect to win the Agnes Macphail Public Speaking contest.

"I was surprised, but I'm thankful to have won the award," she said. "It feels like an honour."

The 13-year-old finished first in the 21st annual contest for her speech 'Me Too: The Words that Changed Everything,' which she delivered March 24 at the East York Civic Centre.

"While we have taken a few baby steps forward, there is still a long way to go," she said during her speech. "Instead of speaking over or ignoring the women, we need to listen and listen well. We need a justice system that does not put the victim on trial."

Among the audience for the event were this year's Agnes Macphail Award recipient, Carol Burtin Fripp; MP Rob Oliphant; Councillor Janet Davis; and Maeve's parents, Mehernosh Pestonji



Maeve Pestonji (centre) celebrated her Agnes Macphail Public Speaking Award with her parents, Mehernosh Pestonji and Maureen Gallagher, and friend Gillian Clark.

and Maureen Gallagher.

"We're very proud of her," said Maeve's father. "She's quite shy, so it's a big step for her."

Maeve, however, didn't seem nervous as she delivered her speech.

"I think she was just relaxed because it was a celebration, so she seemed more confident today," her dad said.

Noting that "it was going to be difficult to follow Maeve," MP Oliphant thanked her "for standing so strongly and proudly among us as a woman."

"My sense is that Agnes Macphail

would be pleased with what you said and the way you said it — with strength and dignity."

Maeve became aware of Macphail's legacy because of the speaking event and considers her an inspiration.

"[Agnes] wasn't afraid to stand up for what she believed in, even though she was in the minority," she said. "I would hope Agnes Macphail feels that the future is in good hands with the younger generation."

During her free time, Maeve enjoys sports such as running, swimming and

soccer. She is an avid reader. Her favourite is the Harry Potter series, which she has re-read five times.

Maeve is also interested in politics and regularly listens to CBC Radio.

"We talk about politics a lot in our family, and we have CBC Radio on all the time, so I guess I got interested that way," she said. "I'm always listening to the news about politics and current events."

Maeve would like to be involved in political news. She hopes one day to be part of *The Insiders* at the CBC.

EDITORIALS

# Permit will drive up parking costs

The cost of living is about to rise for many Toronto drivers. Community council is looking to expand the parking-permit system through all of downtown Toronto and East York. This means non-permit holders who park on the street overnight or receive a complaint for exceeding the three-hour limit will be ticketed. According to the Toronto Star, 40 per cent of residential streets in the area do not use the parking-permit system. These streets are being surveyed. The recommended bylaw changes will be submitted early next year. Residents dissatisfied with the number of parked cars on their street deserve a voice, but so do single parents or retirees who may already struggle to afford the bills and maintenance associated with owning a vehicle. The fee for a resident 12-month parking pass ranges from \$209.40 to \$733.90. For a temporary permit, it's about \$11 per day and \$24 per week. Toronto is among the most expensive cities in Ontario for car insurance, with an average annual premium of \$1,743. Based on Kanetix.ca data, that is 32-per-cent more than the provincial average. Households that are barely able to make ends meet could now have to decide if a convenient method of transportation is worth the financial strain. This new expense for drivers will be an asset to the city. As stated in the Toronto Star's report, the parking-permit system generates \$11 million in annual revenue. These changes will add at least another \$2 million. Parking should not be a luxury. While the current inconsistency in parking bylaws is unfair, imposing the permit system on remaining streets with free parking will not add to the fairness.

~ Shayelle Smith

# OHIP+ expands

Ontario's Liberal party wants to make prescription medication free under OHIP+ for people 65 and older. It's about time. On Jan. 1, the province implemented free prescriptions for Ontarians under 25. As someone who frequents pharmacies regularly, this was magnificent news. However, most individuals in this age group don't have medical issues that require prolonged treatment with prescription drugs. Canada has an aging population. Statistics Canada reported that in 2016, there were 5.9 million seniors living in Ontario. It reported 5.8 million children 14 and under in that same period. This was the first time in Ontario's history that seniors outnumbered children. Many of these people live on a fixed income, retirement savings or the Ontario Disability Support Plan. They are also more likely to have chronic medical issues such as arthritis, vision and hearing impairment, and heart problems. The average Ontarian senior spends \$240 a year on prescriptions. For a working individual, \$240 is the cost of a decent seat at a Raptors game. For seniors, it can be a choice between treating their diabetes and buying groceries. The OHIP+ expansion announced last week by Premier Kathleen Wynne would allow seniors to access more than 4,400 drugs without having to worry about deductibles and co-payments. The expansion is estimated to cost the province \$575 million by 2020-21. The expansion will allow seniors to manage their health responsibly and take their medications as required in correct dosage and frequency. This makes for fewer emergency hospital visits and delay the need for acute-care settings and nursing homes. Although the expansion would be a life-changing move for seniors, NDP leader Andrea Horwath says it would still leave two million Ontarians without prescription coverage. However, hopefully this expansion is the first step to universal prescriptions for all Ontarians. In a phone interview, Laura Tamblyn Watts, national director of law, policy and research at CARP (formerly the Canadian Association for Retired Persons) said, "It (OHIP+ expansion) ensures seniors never have to choose between paying rent and buying life-saving medication." Still, the start date is August 2019, 18 months away, and the timing of the announcement may be a tactic to lure votes for the Liberals. If they lose the provincial election in June, free prescription coverage for seniors might never come to pass.

~ Tijuana Turner

COLUMNS

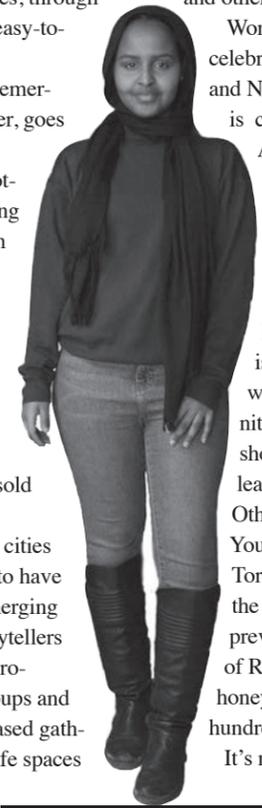
# Welcome back, poetry

"if i write what you may feel but cannot say. it does not make me a poet. it makes me a bridge. and i am humbled and i am grateful to assist your heart in speaking."  
- Nayyirah Waheed

Social media might have 99 problems, but helping resurrect the art of poetry isn't one of them. Although poetry never died, it has been hidden away on dusty book shelves, shared in small cafes and classrooms, written on napkins, and even made appearances on the occasional bathroom stall. But now, people have rekindled their love for poetry in a big way, and we have social media to thank. Poets such as Nayyirah Waheed, Warsan Shire, Rupi Kaur, Lang Leav and r.h. Sin are leading the frenzy. With hundreds of thousands (and, in some cases, millions) of followers on their pages, these poets have changed the

face of modern-day poetry by bringing attention to new ways of telling stories, through relatable and easy-to-read content. Poetry's re-emergence, however, goes beyond its social-media footprint. According to figures from Nielsen Book Research, poetry-book sales have gone up by 13 per cent, with a million poetry books sold in 2016. In addition, cities such as Toronto have seen many emerging poets and storytellers too, because programming groups and community-based gatherings offer safe spaces for people to express themselves

like never before; through workshops, open-mic nights and other means of sharing art. World Poetry Day was celebrated on March 21, and National Poetry Month is coming our way in April. A great way to celebrate is by supporting local poets and reading up on poetic content. Scarborough's RISE Edutainment is just one of the well-known community gatherings that showcase poetry as its lead form of expression. Others include Reclaim Your Voice and BAM! Toronto Youth Slam. And the Bad Girls Collective previously had a reading of Rupi Kaur's milk and honey last November with hundreds in attendance. It's nice to have you back, poetry. You were missed.



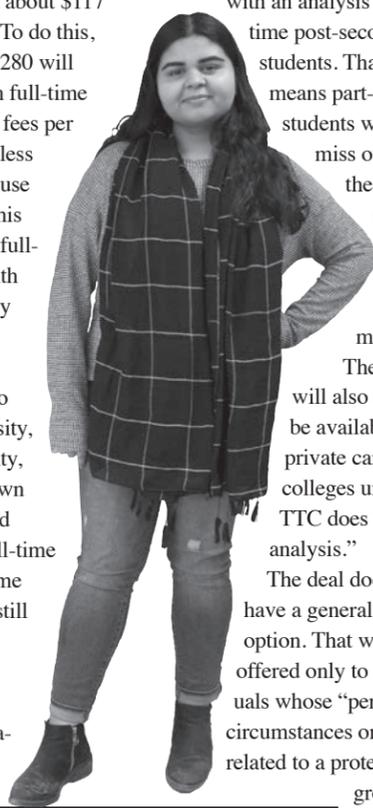
Osobe Waberi

# Inequality of the U-Pass

The TTC is claiming to help students cut costs by reducing the price of the monthly metro pass with its proposed universal pass, or U-Pass. But the price-break is coming at the expense of some. The plan, unanimously approved last week by the TTC board, will reduce the price of the post-secondary-student metro pass from about \$117 to \$70 a month. To do this, a lump sum of \$280 will be added to each full-time student's tuition fees per semester, regardless of whether they use public transit. This will leave some full-time students with an extra cost they don't need. The U-Pass will be offered to Ryerson University, OCAD University, and George Brown College. It would apply only to full-time students. Part-time students would still pay the regular post-secondary metro-pass rate. One of the reasons part-time students engage in these stud-

ies is to lessen the financial burden of being a full-time student. If the U-Pass becomes reality, they will be forced to pay much more than their full-time counterparts, and likely for some time. In its U-Pass Policy Framework, the TTC says it will put forward a new report in 2019 with an analysis of part-time post-secondary students. That means part-time students would miss out on the lower rate for at least a semester. The offer will also not be available to private career colleges until the TTC does "further analysis." The deal doesn't have a general opt-out option. That will be offered only to individuals whose "personal circumstances or needs related to a protected ground under the Ontario

Human Rights Code restrict their ability to utilize transit." The original offer also extended to U of T students, who have since rejected the discounted pass. The Toronto Star reported that 65.6 per cent of voters polled in a referendum opposed the idea. It is not clear when students from the other institutions will vote. This is after student-union reps from each of the institutions conducted an online survey, which found that 95 per cent of approximately 16,000 respondents would vote in favour of the U-Pass. The TTC had estimated that if the entire full-time population of 110,000 students at the four institutions adopted the U-Pass, \$66.4 million would be generated annually. Without the pass, full-time students generate \$61.7 million. The TTC also says the new plan will be "revenue-neutral" and that the extra money will be used to neutralize the cost of the "additional ridership from the U-Pass initiative." While the U-Pass could reduce the financial burden for some students, it's not inclusive to all post-secondary students, and might even increase their financial burden.



Nida Zafar

# Old building stands on new street



City of Toronto Archives



Nida Zafar/The Observer

The intersection of Danforth and Greenwood has transformed completely in the past 93 years. Old hydro poles have been replaced with modern traffic lights and a home with a gas station. The historical photo from 1925 (at left) displays a building that houses small businesses. That building still stands.

■ COLUMN

## The law and the law

Legal marijuana in Canada is barely three months away. Businesses big and small, legal, not-so-legal, and totally illegal are looking for their niches in post-prohibition Canada.

The provincial government's launch for legalization combines sparsely placed dispensaries with vigorous law enforcement.

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne plans to roll out 40 legal marijuana stores by July 1. Many observers, from dispensary staff to RCMP Assistant Commissioner Joanne Cramp-ton, have deemed that number inadequate to meet demand across the province. Former Toronto police chief and aspiring marijuana producer Bill Blair cited "accessibility" as a requirement for legal pot to compete effectively with illicit supplies.

Initially, much of the appeal of legalization was the expected savings on law enforcement and legal costs. Now the government wants to spend an extra \$274 million on cannabis-related law enforcement.

Penalties related to illegal marijuana will be raised; fines up to \$250,000 and jail sentences up to two years less a day have been announced. Ontario Attorney General Yasir Naqvi has promised, "If you operate one of these facilities, consider yourself on notice."

Today, there are doctors who legally prescribe marijuana, there are dispensaries selling marijuana illegally, and there are businesses selling myriad marijuana-related products, except for marijuana itself.

Sierra Bisgould works at Tokyo Smoke, which runs coffee shops with pot-related products, but no pot, for sale. "Tokyo Smoke is about normalizing cannabis," Bisgould says.

It has teamed with marijuana producer Cannabis Company Limited, which also uses the name DOJA. As a legal grower, DOJA plans to sell weed alongside Tokyo Smoke's products.

Bisgould expects dispensaries to disappear following legalization and believes Tokyo Smoke will "profit from that, because a lot of people will buy our marijuana because they can't just go next door."

The array of hangouts in which people can buy and ingest pot seems disjointed. Several in the Danforth area have been busted periodically and don't generate as much attention as Kensington Market outlets or other west-end establishments do.

The Relief Center, a dispensary on King Street West, has a steady stream of customers. The door attendant hears rumours and wonders if his workplace will last beyond July 1.

While staff is friendly at several dispensaries, no one wants to divulge their name or identify the proprietors. In the front room of a

nondescript Kensington Avenue storefront, customers show identification to staff who buzz clients into the back where the action is.

The attendant, who says he's been busted before, compares Ontario to British Columbia. In Vancouver, dispensaries pay licensing fees to the city. A for-profit dispensary licence costs some \$30,000, while non-profit compassion clubs pay less. Why can't that be implemented here? he wonders.

"It's all the cash, and that they don't know who the owners are," which has the province and the feds concerned. He thinks if dispensaries were licensed and prohibited from accepting cash, sales could be tracked and taxed accordingly.

He also speculates that multinational corporations could end up supplying Ontario's legal pot. The government hasn't promised to deal Canadian product exclusively. Emma Baron, who works with pot edibles at a rheumatology clinic, believes The Cannabis Act is a work in progress. "What's interesting about the proposed legislation is that it's not very long; it's short. I think they're just trying to allow themselves room to grow," she says. "I think they're saving the edibles for a re-election bid."



Erik Twight



Nida Zafar/The Observer

Multiple parking signs spell out the rules at the intersection of Carlaw and Fulton.

## New parking rules could soon hit East York streets

By NIDA ZAFAR  
The Observer

East Yorkers may soon have to embrace a new way of street parking.

City council has put forward a report that will make it mandatory for all residents and visitors who choose to park on the street at night to obtain a parking permit or risk being ticketed.

The current bylaw allows for cars to be parked for a maximum of three hours. However, people leave their cars parked for longer because the bylaw isn't enforced at night, said Ward 31 Beaches-East York Councillor Janet Davis.

Getting a permit "gives [people] the ability to park without being ticketed, and certain areas of [the] street are considered public, so overnight they get preferred parking when

they get a permit."

Davis said the changes will help expand the availability of on-street parking, especially for areas that don't have access to it.

"This is a legacy from old municipalities, and there are larger areas in the city that don't have permit parking," she said. "[It] should apply to all over the city. I think that would make it fair."

But obtaining a permit doesn't necessarily mean that permit-holders won't be ticketed.

When Richelle Lloyd's boyfriend lived in his former East York home, she saw him getting ticketed "two or three times a month," regardless of purchasing a permit.

She also says that it is sometimes challenging to get a permit in the first place.

But Lloyd does say there are

pros to the potential changes.

People who purchase permits will be able to park on the street, as new bylaws may create more enforcement and therefore more room to do so.

This is something Lloyd's boyfriend had trouble with. On weekends, Lloyd said, he would have to pay to park his car at a local Sobeys because people had friends and family over who would park on the street. This, she said, is especially true on small streets. "There are so many houses," she said. "There aren't many spots, and some houses don't even have parking."

It is not clear how much the new parking permits will cost.

Residents shouldn't expect swift changes. Consultations will be held with East York residents in the near future and a final report will be put forward in 2019.



Erik Twight/The Observer



Rushanthi Kesunaturan/The Observer



Erik Twight/The Observer

### Signs of spring in East York

(Left) Vikas Sharma and his daughter Tamryn Sharma, 7, spent some quality time together last weekend decorating Easter eggs at the Todmorden Mills Heritage Museum and Arts Centre. (Top and above right) Greek Independence Day celebrations fell on the actual date of the holiday, March 25, for the first time in seven years. Revellers watched the parade wend its way west on Danforth.

# From Tormorden Mills to Flanders Fields, in song

By ERIK TWIGHT  
The Observer

East York-based singer-songwriter Mike Ford wants your kids to get to know, love and write songs about some of the former borough's more bucolic retreats.

Since going solo in 2004 following his time with college band staple Moxy Fruvous, Mike Ford has recorded a succession of Canadian-themed CDs that sing out our history and geography, following the tradition of Allan Mills, Stompin' Tom Connors and Gord Downie.

Ford has released four discs of songs about Canadian history, including two volumes called *Canada Needs You*. Some of the songs are period-style compositions, such as *Let's Mobilize*, a song about the lead-up to the Second World War. Others, such as *Tea Party*, feature guest vocalists and a modern club sound.

One disc is about travelling on a working vessel across the Great Lakes. There are French songs as well, as Ford, who is

Franco-Ontarian, has performed in French, but mostly records and teaches in English.

Currently, Ford runs a songwriter program at Todmorden Mills through the Toronto and Ontario Arts Councils. Nestled in the Don Valley, Todmorden Mills is one of 10 historic sites owned by the city, and the Upper Beaches/East York-based artist is delighted to be at this particular site.

The smokestack is visible from afar, but the mill is still one of the city's lesser-used facilities, "a real hidden treasure," Ford said.

"It is really underknown, underused, but there's a nice side to that, too... every time I come here I get to walk down that hill and walk into this oasis here, of trees."

The song-writing program is aimed at school-aged children.

"I mentor them in creating songs about right here – about the valley, environmentally (and) historically," Ford said.

Drawing on the immediate area for inspiration, it is easy to forget this place was, for many years, a hub for dirty, heavy industries.

With this in mind, Ford sees music as the

next step for the area – a post-industrial product that could flow out of this now-serene little spot. Through the mentorship program, students can work on and record songs that are kept online for future accessibility. Ford hopes to "mimic the creation that's gone on here for a couple of hundred years – whether it's paper, bricks, beer, honey or lumber, of course. I said, 'What if songs come out of here?'"

Ford will be leaving Todmorden Mills in the spring. Ever the history buff on a mission, he has a scheduled tour of Europe that will include Flanders Fields. The tour will commemorate Canada's involvement in World War One, and will feature dramatizations as well as singing.

Meanwhile, East York's nature will continue to inspire Ford, particularly its surrounding waterways.

"You've got Taylor Creek coming right through, and the ravines... East York is surrounded," he said. "So I think it's an essential character of East York — the creek and the ravines."



Erik Twight/The Observer

The custom art on his guitar shining in the noon sun, local songwriter Mike Ford strums and sings at Todmorden Mills.