



■ COMMUNITY

East York crime rates declining

Break and enters have 'dropped about in half' in last 10 years, police say at town hall meeting



Roxana Chiriac /// The Observer

(L-R) Police Chief Bill Blair, Supt. William Wardle and Mary Reilly, civilian co-chair of 54 Division, hosted a town hall meeting last week at Estonian House on Broadview Avenue. They spoke about trends in neighbourhood crime and community policing.

By ROXANA CHIRIAC
The Observer

Toronto police say that crime is down overall in 54 Division — and it's down significantly.

Chief Bill Blair and senior officers from the division held a town hall meeting for about 70 residents on Nov. 10 at Estonian House on Broadview Avenue to discuss trends in neighbourhood crime and listen to the citizens' questions and concerns.

"From 2004 and 2005 until now, our break and enters dropped about in half," 54 Division Supt. William Wardle said. "We had about 500 a year occurring 10 years ago (and) so far this year, we've had approximately 235."

But while the crime rate is down generally, the frequency of some serious crimes is actually slightly up. The number of homicides is up by one so far this year — to a total of four — and that's alongside a slight rise in reported sexual assaults.

Still, Wardle said, "this is a very safe division to live (in.)" Blair said that level of safe-

ty is at least in part because of the people living in the area. The division encompasses the southeastern two-thirds of East York.

"What we have discovered is the police alone cannot make the City of Toronto safe," Blair said. "You cannot simply enforce your way into safe communities.... (They) are the result of people working together."

This was one of the last town halls that Blair will lead because his contract as chief is approaching its end. He said the meetings exist to strengthen communication between the police and Toronto's neighbourhoods, and police work best when they are in partnership with the community. When people pitch in, look out for each other and engage with police, he said, it makes a big difference for the better.

It's why "Toronto is one of the safest large cities anywhere in the world," Blair said. "(It's) the strength of our city and when we come together in meetings like this, I think we all draw strength

■ See POLICE, page 2

Why your kids are selling themselves online

Local think-tank examines media habits of young people through #InstaFame research

By NINA RAYNARS
The Observer

New research revealed last week by some East York academics supports the contention that young people are increasingly "marketing" themselves online — and that can create problems.

The Kids Media Centre is a research think-tank founded in 2011 that focuses on children's media experience, and it's headquartered at the East York campus of Centennial College on Carlaw Avenue. On Nov. 12, it hosted a press conference at which the results of a year-long study were unveiled.

"This study supports the social media phenomenon of youth seeking fame and fortune online with the use of savvy marketing techniques," said Barry Waite, the academic chair of the campus.

Debbie Gordon, the centre's director and the study's lead researcher, said the research revealed youth's media habits.

"We learned very quickly when we typed 'selfie' into Google search that there's a lot of young people out there without filters," she said. "For whatever reason, they don't understand the concept of default and how privacy settings are something to be cared about."

The research, titled '#InstaFame and the Epidemiology of Youth's Selfie-Curated Culture,' has itself been packaged as an engaging multimedia resource for parents and educators.

"We are asking a lot of hard questions. Why (are) so many young people spending so much time curating these digital profiles of themselves?" Gordon said. "When a child puts on their Instagram, 'I'm kind of bored today, hit me up with a phone call,' and shares their phone number to the world, how do we feel about this?"

Gordon says some kids are using social media as a brand-marketing tool, and that they are realizing opportunities around content-creation and even monetization.

"A lot of kids are treating themselves as marketers, creating and curating a brand," she said. "Some kids have 50,000, 100,000 and even close to a million followers."

Gordon's advice to parents is to explain privacy settings to their children and to get them



Nina Raynars /// The Observer

Debbie Gordon, director of the Kids Media Centre at Centennial College, unveiled the findings of a year-long research project on Nov. 12.

to sign a contract that gives parents access to their online output.

Kayla McNally, a Centennial College graduate and researcher on the project, said that otherwise some youth will go to extremes and create issues for themselves and others.

"Some are using social media in sometimes concerning ways," she said. "As youth posting all these intimate images of yourself, something to consider is how that's going to affect you later on in life — because we know things that are posted online never disappear."

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Toronto Argo Chris Rudge at ceremony

The Leaside Sports Hall of Fame will host its second annual induction ceremony tonight, Nov. 21, at Leaside Arena at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25 and the whole community is invited. Some of the inductees are CFL great Joe "King" Krol, Christine Pellerin and Dr. Sidney Soanes. The 2014 Athlete of the Year, Ayanna Badali, will also be celebrated. Special guest Toronto Argo CEO Chris Rudge will be in attendance. For more information, visit leasidesports.com or contact Roanne Argyle at 416-994-3124.

Sound artists at Aga Khan Museum

The Aga Khan Museum on Wynford Drive presents sound artists "DakhaBrakha" in a showcase performance on Thursday, Nov. 27 and Friday, Nov. 28 at 8 p.m. in the Aga Khan Museum Auditorium. Tickets are \$60, \$50, and \$35. Please contact Jesse D. Lacy at 812-339-1195 for more details.

Goodies, anyone? Come to the bazaar

'Tis the season for holiday presents and homemade goodies. If you're looking for your fix, then be sure to swing by the True Davidson Acres Long-Term Care Annual Holiday Bazaar at 200 Dawes Rd. The event takes place on Nov. 29, with doors open at 11 a.m. All proceeds go to support the work of the artists and the True Davidson Acres residents. For more information, call Carly Wolf at 416-397-0400.

Make your own holiday greeting card

From pop-up pages to Christmas collages, learn all about the origins of holiday greeting cards while you create a set of your own. The whole family is invited to the Todmorden Mills Heritage Site on Saturday, Nov. 29 at 1 p.m. to join in on the workshop fun. Advanced ticket purchase is required; please call 416-396-2819 to register.

Get your game on at the library

Bring your X-box, Wii or board game and challenge your friends to the library's "Get UR Game On" lunchtime gaming event on Tuesday, Dec. 2, at the S. Walter Stewart branch, 170 Memorial Park Ave. Call 416-396-3975 for more details. For ages 11-18 only.

If the blue suede shoe fits, drop by

Do you live for the applause? Can you sing like Elvis? If so, join the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 22, 1240 Woodbine Ave., for a night of karaoke every Sunday from 5 until 9 p.m. For more information, call Jim Farrell at 416-425-1714.

Runners ready to race for a cause

Lace up your running shoes because the Toronto Beaches Runners Club is hosting the Centre 55 Tannenbaum 10K community race on Dec. 7. Over 800 runners are set to pound the pavement at 9 a.m. sharp in hopes of raising funds for Centre 55, a youth outreach program in the Main and Danforth area. More information and registration through tannenbaum10k.com

~ Brittany Rogers



Brandon Bernard /// The Observer

Jasun's world

A showing of work by the late photojournalist Jasun Singh opened yesterday in the Corridor Gallery of the Centennial College campus at 951 Carlaw Ave. "The World He Saw" is free and open daily until Dec. 1.

Parents raise the roof

By DEIDRA BARTON
The Observer

After weeks of complaints and protest, the parents of students at an East York elementary school have gotten exactly what they wanted.

The Toronto District School Board installed some portable classrooms at Secord Public School near Danforth Avenue and Main Street about two years ago.

But families with children attending Secord have been complaining about the mould and the smell that have developed in the portables in recent months. The parents even pulled their children out of class on Oct. 24 in protest of the environment that the students are learning in.

Their school trustee, Sheila Cary-Meagher, said she understands why the parents felt the need to protest.

"I think that people have to do what they have to do to get their point across," she said.

"There comes a time when people think they need to pull their kids out of school to make a point. It's their kids. They don't think they're getting what they need and they're not getting listened to so they have to do something." She added that she's annoyed with the province — not the parents — and the funding situation.

Now renovations for the portables have been completed and the students are more comfortable.

"The roof has been replaced

about 10 days ago and I haven't been back to the school since then," Cary-Meagher said. "But I haven't heard anything negative."

Now, she said, she is focusing on the board budget, but she's unsure about how to keep the same situation from re-occurring.

"I'd like the province to step up to the plate and give Toronto the money it needs to fix the schools," she said.

She explained that Secord isn't the only school going through problems with the conditions of their buildings. She claims that there are dozens of schools with similar problems potentially requiring millions of dollars.

"Our deficiency in facilities is \$3 billion," she said.

Kellway 'will speak for East York'

By SAMIRA MOHYEDDIN
The Observer

New Democrats in Beaches-East York acclaimed their incumbent MP, Matthew Kellway, on Sunday night as their candidate in the next federal election.

First elected in 2011, and now the NDP's military procurement critic in the House of Commons, Kellway and the



■ KELLWAY

party issued a statement saying that he's looking forward to continuing to represent the people and interests of Beaches-East York.

He promised to keep bringing the concerns of Beaches-East York residents to the attention

of the federal government.

"I ensure that when I rise to speak in the House of Commons on their behalf, the government hears clearly the kind of Canada that the people of Beaches-East York want to live in," he said. "My goal was always, and remains, to work hard for the people that I am privileged to represent."

The next federal election is scheduled for October 2015.

Police need to 'reach out': Davis

Cont'd. from page 1

and time given to build the relationships with people." Since then, he said, there have been improvements in police administration to establish that partnership between the police and citizens.

Blair said that things were very different when he started working as a police officer 38 years ago.

Police answered emergency calls, he remembered, but "there was very little effort

York, attended the meeting, and said that it's important for police to reach out to the community on a regular basis.

"It's often difficult to take the step of calling the police," she said.

"I think a lot of people still aren't comfortable reaching out to the police, and every effort that is made to build relationships is important."

of the federal government.

"I think a lot of people still aren't comfortable reaching out to the police, and every effort that is made to build relationships is important."

POLICE & FIRE

Man arrested after women assaulted on bus at station

A man has been arrested after two women were allegedly sexually assaulted on Oct. 21 while on board the Flemingdon Park TTC 100C bus at Broadview station. Ahmad Ayoubi, 35, has been charged with two counts of sexual assault. Toronto police believe that based on the women's stories, more victims may be involved. They are urging anyone with similar experiences to come forward. Anyone with information is asked to call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-TIPS.

Four people stabbed near Broadview

Toronto Police have made an arrest after four people were stabbed on Sunday in the Danforth and Broadview area. Kiril Gousheff, 36, faces an array of charges in relation to the incident. They include attempted murder, three counts of aggravated assault, possession of dangerous weapons and carrying a concealed weapon.

Missing teen has been found

Toronto police would like to thank the public for their help in finding a missing teen. The girl went missing in the Pape and Cosburn area on Saturday, but was later found safe and sound.

~ Brittany Rogers

Almost \$1 million raised for kids in Uganda

Trip to East African country on March break changes direction of former schoolteacher's life

By **SANA FATANI**
The Observer

She quit her job and then made almost a million dollars. But not for herself. For Ugandan children and their educations.

Lorna Pitcher, 66, is a mother of three and a former lawyer, who has 18 years of teaching experience.

Last weekend, she could be found at Eastminster United Church on Danforth Avenue selling traditional Ugandan crafts at the church's fifth-annual art sale.

Pitcher described why she does this work. She had taught at a private boys school with tuition as high as \$25,000. But when she went to Uganda on her March break, she was astounded to see children who weren't getting an education because they couldn't afford the \$118 cost.

"That was a real waste of brain power," she said, "so I thought I'm going to retire and I'm going to do something about it."

That's when she founded Children of Hope Uganda, and since then, she's helped at least 600 children get an education.

Pitcher isn't alone in this. She works with Rotary International, a group of international community leaders with collaborators like UNICEF and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. In particular, she works closely with her

friend Ester Atu, a Ugandan woman who handles all of the logistics and administrative work in Uganda.

Pitcher is in charge of fundraising and has no formal employees, which is why 100 per cent of the merchandise proceeds goes to children and families in Uganda.

"I have 31 employees in Uganda so I'm proud of that because people can take care of themselves," she said.

Pitcher operates on a self-dependency principle. Ugandan women — and sometimes older children who help during their breaks from school — put in their own labour into creating jewelry using recycled materials, like old thrown-out calendar pages, allowing them to provide for themselves and pay for their children's school tuition.

"They recycle everything that they use," Pitcher said. "The Ascoli people have been making paper bead jewelry for as long as anyone can remember. It's from mother to daughter."

Creating something out of nothing seems to be their forte, which is why Pitcher says she learned something from them.

"I learned not to complain," she said. "They don't have toilets, they don't have electricity, they don't have anything, and they don't complain, so I want to support those people,"

Currently only 18 of the 165 children Pitcher has been working with most recently still need funds for tuition. This is a result of the \$60,000 that was raised this year by selling the hand-crafted jewelry.



Sana Fatani // The Observer

Lorna Pitcher, founder of Children of Hope Uganda, sells hand-crafted paper bead jewelry at Eastminster United Church on Danforth Avenue.

Pitcher gets shipments of the merchandise mailed to her, but tries to have acquaintances traveling to Uganda and back to Canada to carry shipments with them to reduce costs.

You'll find Pitcher frequently at the University of Toronto, York, Ryerson, Upper Canada

College, and at various churches and bazaars. She says it's simple for her; she's just following her heart.

"You just help people so much. I love it," she said. "I got two baby Lornas named after me, so that's nice... I'm just lucky to be able to help."

■ **COMMUNITY**

Speaking out against harassment East York trustee says more women now coming forward

By **RAMON LAFEE**
The Observer

The charges of forcible confinement and harassment brought against a Toronto school trustee last week could lead more women to speak out against mistreatment, says a veteran East York board member.

Sheila Cary-Meagher, who was recently re-elected trustee for Ward 16/Beaches-East York, says she witnessed the alleged confinement.

"I don't think there's anybody who doesn't believe it... that men have been the dominant part of our culture and that woman have had to suffer from that," she said. "I have my own experiences; many people had theirs."

But, she acknowledges, the situation is at last "changing slowly."

Cary-Meagher's fellow trustee, Howard Goodman, is facing charges of forcible confinement and criminal harassment for an alleged incident involving Donna Quan, director of education for the Toronto District School Board.

man, trustee for Ward 8/Eglinton-Lawrence, did not run in this fall's municipal election and his term will end on Dec. 1.

Recalling the January 2014 chain of events that led to the charges, Cary-Meagher said she had an appointment with Quan on the day in question, but Goodman was standing at the director's office door.

"I tried to break his concentration and told the director to come out because we had an appointment," Cary-Meagher recounted.

"He was fixed on what he wanted," she said. "It took me two at-

tempts to let her out (and) on the

second attempt, he broke his concentration and let her out."

William Trudell, Goodman's lawyer, released a statement saying that his client was being misused for political purposes.

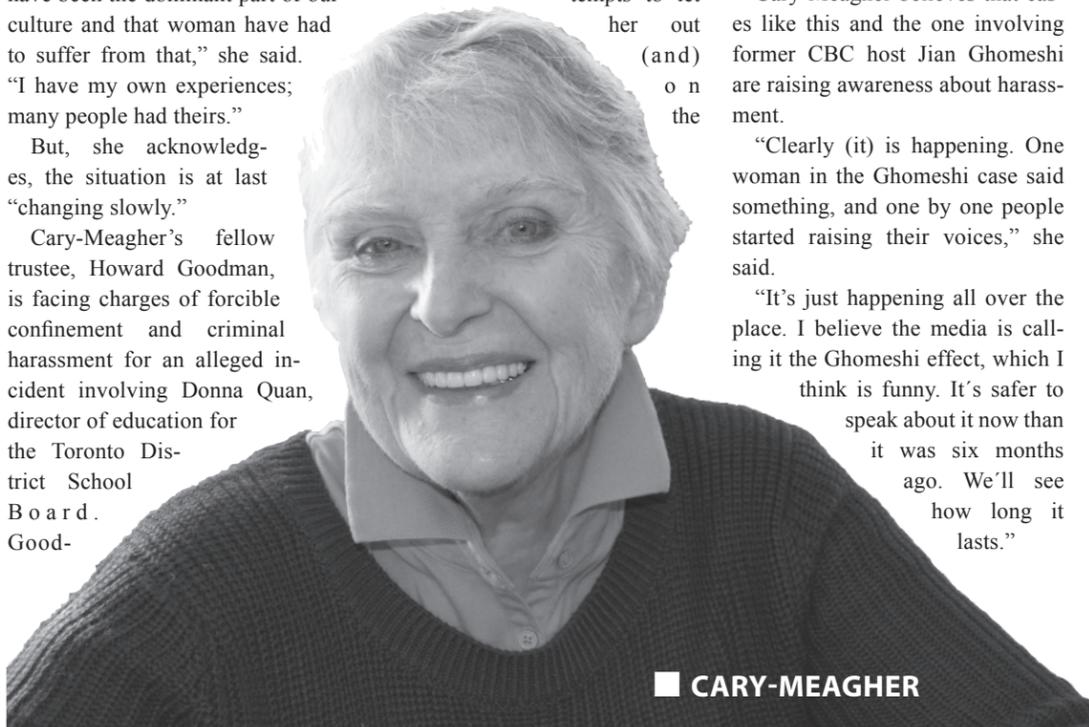
Cary-Meagher said she has "no idea" what that means.

"I had an appointment and he took her (Quan) away from that appointment without having any appointment in advance (and) he just rushed in," she said.

"So I don't think what political motivations could be there. I don't get it."

Cary-Meagher believes that cases like this and the one involving former CBC host Jian Ghomeshi are raising awareness about harassment.

"Clearly (it) is happening. One woman in the Ghomeshi case said something, and one by one people started raising their voices," she said. "It's just happening all over the place. I believe the media is calling it the Ghomeshi effect, which I think is funny. It's safer to speak about it now than it was six months ago. We'll see how long it lasts."



■ **CARY-MEAGHER**

Burnside ready to 'move city forward'

By **RAMON LAFEE**
The Observer

Former police officer Jon Burnside officially takes over as councillor for Ward 26/Don Valley West on Dec. 1. And while he still has a few days off before moving into city hall, he says he's already working for the community.

"That's building relationships," he said. "I already have an extensive relationship in the community, but I want to build better relationships with councillors and developers in order to move the city forward. You need to have a positive relationship with others."

Ward 26 has its share of problems, including a wide disparity in levels of affluence, heavy traffic, pedestrian safety and a lack of recreational facilities. But Burnside believes he's up to the challenge.

"I have a lot of projects I want to do, like revitalize Leaside Park in Thorncliffe," he said. "I also want to work with building the Redway Road to help with the traffic situation in Leaside. But for me, on Dec. 1, it's also building those relationships with city staff, because they are so important in the process."

Facing such an array of issues could be intimidating to most newcomers to council, but Burnside says he won't be asking where he should begin.

"I believe you have to be able



■ **BURNSIDE**

to walk and chew gum at the same time, so it won't be a matter of tackling a single community problem first. It's about working on a multitude of issues," he said. The staff members he's hired have an "institutional knowledge of city hall," he said, which will be an asset.

People expect results after every election and this one isn't an exception.

"I think the community is seeing results just in the change of attitude. One of my promises was a 24-hour call-back, so when you call in you'll get an answer from us in the next 24 hours," Burnside said. "Maybe you won't get a result right away, but you will know that we are looking into it. We also are meeting the community, so those are results you will see right away."

Remembrance Day



(Top left) Brothers Bill and Bob Walker attended the Remembrance Day ceremony at Centennial College's East York campus. Their father, the late Howard Walker, had attended every one of the campus's services since their inception.

(Top right) Reservist Oscar Trachmann shares stories about his experiences in Afghanistan.

(Middle left) Tracy Trachmann listens to her husband as he speaks to the crowd.

(Middle right) Host Prof. Ted Barris listens as student Ryan Weatherby reads a poem dedicated to veterans written by his sister.

(Bottom left) Bill Walker sits with Centennial College students.

(Bottom right) Members of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 617 are in the front row.



Photos by Nina Rayners



...across East York



Photos by Evan Pang

At 10:45 a.m. on Nov. 11, the sound of bagpipes, the beating of drums and the marching of footsteps filled the air. The parade of veterans, military personnel, cadets and civil servants marched down Coxwell Avenue and into the courtyard at the East York Civic Centre. Hundreds of people attended to pay their respects to those who served overseas and continue to serve in Canada's military. The opening ceremonies began with the national anthem, followed by two minutes of silence while planes flew overhead. The ceremony came to a close with the colour guard leading the march out of the south end of the courtyard.



...the sacrifices

EDITORIALS

TDSB's fresh start

Voters must pay attention to who they elect

Despite running on a huge \$3 billion budget and overseeing approximately 232,000 students, the Toronto District School Board just can't seem to get its act together.

This week, the controversy has revolved around the estrangement between Director of Education Donna Quan and the board's elected trustees. The relationship has become so toxic that the province may have to intervene.

This follows last week's news that outgoing trustee Howard Goodman has been charged with forcible confinement and criminal harassment after an office incident with Quan. Beaches-East York's own Sheila Cary-Meagher was a witness, and was prominent in the ensuing media accounts of the alleged altercation.

And the board's problems aren't restricted to behavioural issues. There have been serious questions raised about its spending and influence on curriculum. Overall, it seems like a clear case of poor management at Canada's largest school board.

But there is some reason for hope. The board's issues can be fixed. Following last month's election, half of the 22 trustees on the board are new. And many of these newcomers, along with some of the veteran returners, have pledged to improve both the style and substance of the work that the board does.

But to ensure that they do, East York and the rest of Toronto must pay attention to the trustees we've just elected. It's not very encouraging to be reminded by the president of the Ontario Public Boards Association, Michael Barrett, that most voters actually skip the school board race when marking a municipal election ballot. But the Oct. 27 vote is over with, and whatever apathy there was then, it's clear now that we have to be vigilant as the new board starts to go about its business.

Considering the turnover in trustees, it may even be premature to call in Queen's Park to arbitrate or take over. Perhaps this new board — with its new chemistry — should be given a chance first.

Incumbents like Cary-Meagher and Don Valley West's Gerri Gershon, along with novices like Toronto-Danforth's Jennifer Story, have said that their top priorities include rebuilding the public's trust and gaining back the TDSB's credibility. With close media and public scrutiny, perhaps they can genuinely transform the TDSB into something that will be functional again.

~ Natalia Makarski

TTC can't stop suicide

Toronto Public Health has released a report titled Suicide Prevention in Toronto, suggesting various ways to prevent instances of self-harm in this city.

The report makes many suggestions, and one of them is installing platform edge door (PED) barriers along subway lines — something that Toronto Public Health voted to endorse just this past Monday.

According to the report, there were 21 suicide attempts on the TTC between Jan. 1 and Aug. 14, 2014, and that's more than in all of 2013. The report noted that while the PED barriers were originally approved in 2010, they have never been funded.

With a potential cost of millions of dollars per station, and John Tory's expensive SmartTrack transit program now in the works, how is the city to fund this endeavour?

Though the report states that 35 cities worldwide have barriers in their transit systems, many require the train to stop with pinpoint precision, something TTC trains currently can't guarantee. Also, the logistics of the installation itself must be considered.

Earlier in the year, Pape Station was closed for 12 days for renovations. The TTC frequently closes off parts of the subway lines for track installations and other updates. Similar closures may occur at each station if barriers are to be installed.

And Toronto Public Health's suicide prevention statement acknowledges that there are means of suicide besides "jumping or lying before a moving object" that cannot be prevented with the use of barriers.

So instead of just scratching the surface and preventing deaths within one realm of urban life, Toronto Public Health and the City of Toronto should broaden its outlook, and think more about having resources in place to help those who feel suicidal... and eliminating the stigma around getting help.

The TTC should also expand programs it already has in place, like Crisis Link.

It's been reported that the suicide barrier along East York's Bloor Viaduct has merely driven suicidal people to other venues to end their lives. Perhaps there's a lesson in that.

Subway barriers won't help people who are considering self-harm with their problems. The focus should be on funding more programs for people to get help, and services to make these programs well-known and widely available.

People should be helped before it gets to the point that subway barriers become necessary.

~ Katherine Forte

COLUMNS

Time to focus on hunger

Last week, as Canadians honoured and mourned their soldiers, both past and present, Food Banks Canada released its annual Hunger Count Report — and the numbers were both arresting and alarming.

The report says that an average of 841,191 people have been using food banks each month in this country. And 35 per cent of the people getting food this way are under the age of 18. Further, the report says, about four million people live in a constant state of food insecurity.

That's 10 per cent of Canada's total population. Lest we forget.

The connection between hunger and low scholastic performance is something that is well-known by both educators and advocates.

Breakfast for Learning, a recent cross-Canada initiative, has this year alone provided over 44 million meals to children across this country — and this is not a government-funded program.

Speaking of government... On Nov. 24, 1989, the House

of Commons passed a unanimous all-party resolution, known as Campaign 2000, which promised to end childhood poverty in this country by the year 2000.

But 25 years later, in Toronto alone, more than 48 per cent of children go to school hungry, and one in three children live in poverty.

In some parts of Toronto, including the Thorncliffe-Flemingdon Park neighbourhood of East York, that number becomes a staggering one in two children.

Lest we forget. The full Food Banks Canada report is available at www.foodbankscanada.ca/

HungerCount.

But despite these overwhelming statistics, indicating an overwhelming need, Canada remains the only G8 country that does not have a national food program for its schools.

In fact, one of the wealthiest countries in the world lags behind so-called developing countries, such as Brazil and China, when it comes to funding early childhood development programs.

If the federal government can spend more than a \$100 million advertising itself to the nation, why can't it find the money to feed its children?

Before Canada begins to wage new wars overseas in the name of freedom and democracy, it would do well to remember its most vulnerable right here at home.



Samira Mohyeddin

The Ghomeshi aftermath

Once considered among the CBC's biggest stars, Jian Ghomeshi went from being the host of the radio network's popular "Q" to persona non grata.

And the scandal around his alleged abuse of women has left many wondering what a future for Q might look like.

Jeffrey Dvorkin, former managing editor and chief journalist for CBC Radio, has a mixed view.

"Q as a program concept is still valid," he says. "Unfortunately, the public's associations with the name Q are so tainted that the name of the program should, in my opinion, be changed."

As a program concept, Dvorkin says, "the idea of pop culture and celebrity still is a good one and the CBC could build on that. But it should not necessarily be limited by those themes. It's a chance to make and invent something newer and even fresher. The question is how."

It is a question that surely resonates within the CBC as well as among its listeners.

But there are larger questions arising out of the Ghomeshi scandal. One area of inquiry should include the CBC's enforcement of appropriate behaviour by employees. It appears that there may

have been a serious failure around this, considering the number of women who have come forward, all accusing Ghomeshi of assaulting them either on dates or in the workplace. The CBC will have to focus its attention on internal protocols and pay laser-like attention to the complaints filed now and in the future.

But even this is just part of the challenge that the CBC faces. It must be acknowledged that all of this comes at a particularly bad time... as the CBC faces budget cuts and losses of signature programming (like hockey).

And speaking of that, what about Q, now that its star is gone?

The show will need to find a new host to rebrand the program (and, by association, the network). And a new name for the show might be in the works. But ultimately, what happens to Q is window-dressing compared to the larger issue of how CBC Radio and CBC Television will regain its vaunted position in Canadian culture.



Jenna Reid



Photos courtesy of City of Toronto Archives

Behold, the East York of old

We resume our photographic retrospective on East York with these two pictures drawn from the City of Toronto Archives. The photo of the bus was taken on Feb. 8, 1936, and shows one of the vehicles operated by a local, private transit company, Hollinger Bus Lines. The men working the field in the other picture are identified in the archives database simply as “Albert Tapscott, representing Millikan.” It was taken at an East York plowing match on Nov. 6, 1929.

Nuclear engineer ignites her passion for food



Vera El-Timany /// The Observer

Gauravi Shah, former nuclear engineer and current chef/owner of Tilde Taco, holds her favourite item — a meat and potato taco.

Owner of Danforth eatery trades power utility career for meat and potato tacos

By **VERA EL-TIMANY**
The Observer

It’s quite a leap from nuclear engineer to restaurant-owner and chef, but Gauravi Shah says her career change has taught her a thing or two about taking risks.

“I was happy in the beginning” of her power utility career, Shah said.

But she was not fulfilled.

“Then food started taking over my life and that’s when I realized that’s what I should do,” she said.

“Everyone was totally surprised. Of course they were surprised that I wanted to leave my decently comfortable job.”

But the security and pay that came

with her former job just simply couldn’t compete with her passion for food.

One of the servers at her restaurant knows just how long the hours are and how difficult it is to run one’s own business.

“Nobody does that unless they really love [to cook],” said Jessica Liotskos, server/bartender at Shah’s restaurant, Tilde Taco.

Tilde, located at 699 Danforth Ave., is a new restaurant that held its grand opening last month.

More than 500 people stopped by to enjoy free servings of tacos at the opening.

Luis Valenzuela, a customer who lives in the neighborhood, said Shah and her staff are off to a good start with their variety of unique taco flavours.

“The service was very friendly,” he said. “The food was very good, the flavour was very good and [the tacos] were

different than traditional tacos.”

Prior to her ownership of Tilde Taco, and while working part-time, Shah attended courses at George Brown College for a culinary certificate that helped make her dreams a reality.

“For now, food is my future. I want to see how I can expand,” Shah said.

With more than 50 per cent of restaurants going out of business in their first year in Toronto, Shah knows the odds are not in her favour, but says opening this establishment made sense for her.

“It is kind of scary. People usually don’t take such large risks, but for me it was now or never,” Shah said. “It was perfect timing.”



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

Financial advisors weigh in on crunching your holiday budget

Experts say to set a specific amount and stick to it

By **VERA EL-TIMANY**
The Observer

For those worried about overspending during the holidays, the easiest way to make sure that stocking up on all those gifts, decorations and hors d’oeuvres doesn’t break the bank is to set a budget, according to local financial advisors.

With Christmas and the New Year around the corner, consumer spending begins to spike around this time of

year. To avoid the possibility of overspending, setting a budget is an important first step, according to Richard Killen, president of Richard Killen and Associates, a bankruptcy trustee located at 2600 Danforth Ave.

“The key to proper financial management, especially during the Christmas season, is to know your dollar limits,” advises Killen.

He says it’s critical to “set up a budget on all expenditures... to research all expenditures (shop around) and be very disciplined in sticking to the budget you set.”

Elena Jara, director of education at Credit Canada

Debt Solutions, also located on Danforth Avenue, says a good way for buyers to avoid overspending is to focus on the necessities and acknowledge how much they realistically can spend without hurting their bank account.

Jara says paying cash is better than using credit because credit can lead consumers “to think that they can afford the lifestyle that they’re carrying,” when in reality, “they’re living beyond their means.”

To ensure that consumers avoid digging a deeper hole of debt over the holidays, Laurie Campbell, CEO of Credit Canada Debt Solu-

tions, offers her own tips on steering away from this common problem.

“Start early and ensure you make a list of who you need to buy for and the dollar amount to spend,” Campbell said. “If you are cash-strapped, tell people early that you have a spending limit. Have an agreed dollar amount so you are not left feeling guilty. Look at other ways to give, such as your time — like offering to babysit as a gift or helping an elderly person. “Think about [this] as a forced savings plan and have it taken from your bank account to be invested every payday.”



Vera El-Timany /// The Observer

Out and about in East York



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(Clockwise from above) Isabelle Zaw-tun stands with her art exhibit, "Doodle Galaxy," at Centennial College's East York campus. **Rabbit Planet, drawn by Zaw-tun, was featured in the show. **M.H. Callway, the founder of the "Mesdames of Mayhem" crime writers club, and Marian Misters, co-owner of Sleuth of Baker Street bookstore on Millwood Road, launch Callway's debut mystery novel *Windigo Fire*. **Taking a (pre-snow) stroll through Todmorden Mills. **Three Centennial College music students — Christina Laurin (on guitar), Thomas Lappano (on banjo) and Max Bornstein (on cajon) — perform alongside the 20th birthday party for the college's communications campus on Carlaw Avenue. **Below, the choir of St. Barnabas Anglican Church joins bagpipe player Brendan Culver in a pre-Remembrance Day concert.



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Andrea Preciado /// The Observer



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