



THE EAST TORONTO OBSERVER



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'We still have no clue'

21-year-old missing for 3 months

TRISTAN CARTER
The Observer

Three months after his disappearance, 21-year-old Abu-Ubaida Atieque is still missing.

"The police are working, everybody is working, and we still have no clue," says Atieque's father, Mohammed.

A Facebook group was created to help find the missing student, but has since been taken down.

The youngest of four children, Atieque was studying electrical engineering at the University of Toronto's St. George campus.

However, he was also known to visit the Scarborough campus.

His father says he was last seen leaving their home in the Neilson Road and Sheppard Avenue area on the morning of Nov. 18.

Numerous searches of the neighbourhood have yet to turn up any leads. One search of the valley bordering U of T at Scarborough involved about 300 people and was organized, in part, by the school's student union.

Scarborough Campus Student Union's VP academics Sulaimaan Abdus-Samad remembers Atieque from their elementary school days.

"He was a good student," Abdus-Samad said. "I was shocked when I heard."

Members of one search said authorities triangulated Atieque's last cell phone call to east Scarborough, however this has neither been confirmed or denied by police.

Atieque reportedly suffers from depression.



ATIEQUE

Two sought in student slaying

TEVY PILC
The Observer

A Centennial College student became Toronto's seventh homicide victim of 2009 after he was found dead in his apartment Feb. 10.

Toronto police say Alex Eracleous, 30, was shot in his apartment near Kennedy Rd. and Hwy. 401, around 8:45 p.m. shortly before police responded to a 911 call from the apartment.

Eracleous, a psychology

student lived in the apartment with his mother, who was not there at the time of the shooting, say police.

The person who called 911 was an acquaintance of the victim who was in the unit at the time of shooting. He claims he does not know the suspects, according to police.

The funeral for Eracleous was held Feb. 17 at a Scarborough church.

Memorials have been made from several of his friends, classmates and

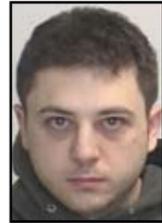
family members on a Facebook group dedicated in his memory. It has served as an hub of information on the murder.

"Alex was a wonderful son, brother and uncle," Angie Sardelis-Eracleous said in a Facebook post. She is Eracleous's sister-in-law.

"Until this is solved I don't think there will be closure for

anyone of us," said Sardelis-Eracleous. "I beg everyone to help the police if they can, any little bit can help, even if you don't think."

Police are still searching for two men, who were videotaped entering the apartment before the shooting. They were caught dashing out the building later from a different door. Footage from the apartment's security cameras



ERACLEOUS

has been released. Police have also released enhanced the images of the suspects.

The suspects were last seen leaving the apartment building in a small, older model four-door car that is either black or dark grey, police detectives said.

Anyone with information is asked to contact police at 416-808-7400, Crime Stoppers at 416-222-TIPS (8477), online at www.222tips.com, or text TOR and your message to CRIMES (274637).



KATRINA ROZAL/The Observer

Winter spirits ablaze

Zanzar, the magical genie, showed off his skills Jan. 31 at the Port Union Winterfest. About 2,000 people attended the winter festivities. See page 8.

Man pistol-whipped in attempted ATM robbery

PHIL SMALLEY
The Observer

An armed robbery took place in Scarborough on Feb. 3. The attack involved suspects brandishing a handgun and forcing the victim to an underground parking lot.

Just after nine p.m., a man leaving his parked car near McCowan Rd. and Ellesmere Rd. was approached from behind by three people. He was told to get back in his car and one of the suspects drove to an ATM machine near Kingston Rd. and Bellamy Rd.

When this was unsuccessful the suspects took him to an underground parking lot and then into a storage room.

They threatened to kill him, pointing handguns and pistol-whipping him. He was treated in hospital for his injuries.

43 Division const. Dave Gray says the best thing you can do in a scenario like this is get the information out as quickly as possible.

"Unfortunately a lot of these situations happen and people wait till they get home to report them. [After this delay] the potential for us catching the bad guys is going to

have to take some extra leg work."

Some victims are embarrassed to tell their stories, but

the faster information is relayed to the police, the better chance there is of recovering stolen property.

"There's usually officers patrolling neighbourhoods on

a regular basis. They could be right around the corner and [could] apprehend these people quickly," says Gray.

"We have resources at our

disposal, like our police dogs that could be tracking right away."

Gray wants to reassure the public that police are out there catching these people. His message is simple: if you rob someone, you're going to be caught, arrested and sent to jail.

"Street robbery is treated as a serious offence," he says.

"A robbery is a robbery. It doesn't matter if someone robs you of five dollars, or five million dollars, it's still a robbery."

Anyone with information is asked to call 42 Division at 416-808-4200 or Crime Stoppers at 416-222-TIPS (8477).

It doesn't matter if someone robs you of five dollars, or five million dollars, it's still a robbery.

- Officer Dave Gray

HOW TO AVOID BEING A VICTIM:

- Keep your head up, walk with a purpose
- Know your environment
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Don't put yourself in vulnerable positions
- Try to walk in groups

- Officer Dave Gray

Child-care funding for local parents at risk

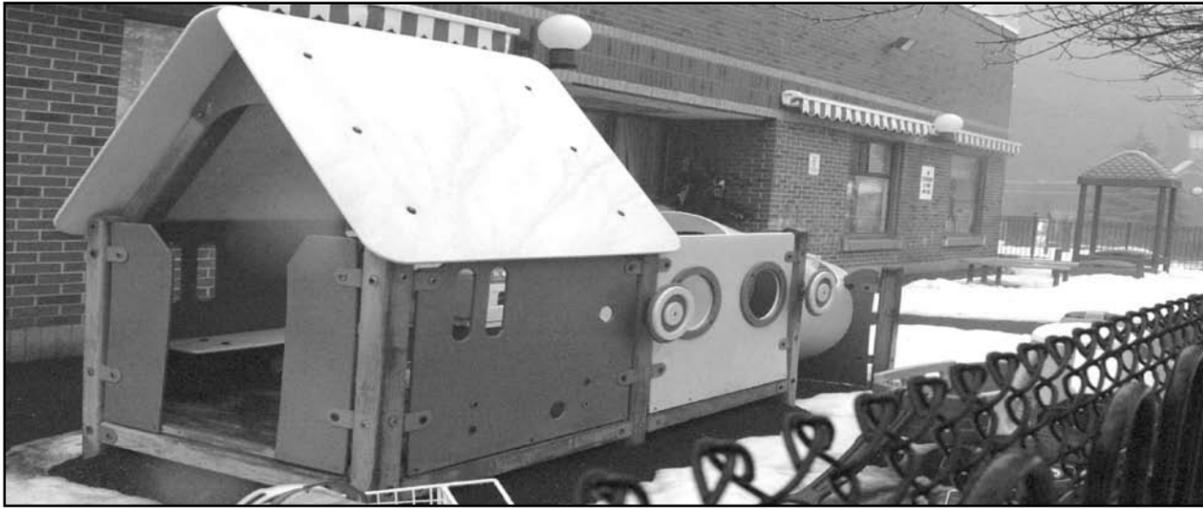
Wards 42–44 targeted by province, advocates say

TEVY PILC
The Observer

East Scarborough parents may be among the first to lose their child care subsidies if Toronto is forced to cut funds received from the province, warn child care advocates.

City statistics show Wards 42, 43, and 44 are all being “overcompensated” now, with more than 40 per cent of Ward 43 children living under the poverty line — one of the highest in the city.

If the funds were to be cut, these overcompensated wards may be the first to lose their subsidies, according to Jane Mercer, executive coordinator of the Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care.



TEVY PILC/The Observer

Cloudy days lie ahead for local parents needing money for day cares like Centenary Seven Oaks in Scarborough.

“It’s a big problem,” said Mercer. “Either the city refuses to guarantee subsidies to all who apply, or cuts off those who already have them. Unless the provincial government doesn’t come up with more money this may happen.”

Toronto has more than 14,000 children on the waiting list for subsidies, of which nearly 1,300 are from Wards

42, 43 and 44. Six thousand spaces are likely to be cut in Toronto over the next several months, according to child care advocates.

“There is no plan for any cutting whatsoever,” Peter Varmuza said, assistant director of Child Services. “The new budget calls for no service cuts anywhere and the children need the money.”

However, he would not

deny that cuts may occur.

The city normally contributes about 20 per cent on the funds, but the province has been completely responsible for funding relatively new spaces.

Jennie Robinson, executive director of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC), said much depends upon how the subsidized child care spaces are

normally distributed.

“Everyone is guaranteed subsidies if they make it through the application process,” Robinson said. “But if this were to happen, the cities would have to look at how they usually divide the money across regions to see who will get how much.”

Subsidies are normally divided amongst communities based on a ward equity

program. Based on complex city service plans, it is determined how many spaces a ward receives through what is referred to as a target level. The number of children living under the poverty line in a ward is vital to determining how many spaces a ward will receive. If more children in a ward are below this line, the ward will get more spaces.

Earlier this month, the head of Toronto’s daycare service said that 22,000 child-care spaces could disappear in the province, including up to 6,000 subsidized spots in Toronto. City officials say if Ontario doesn’t put up \$63.5 million to replace a federal commitment ending in the next fiscal year, municipalities will have to start cutting subsidized spaces this fall.

Mercer said the “overcompensation” of areas like Wards 42, 43 and 44 is grossly blown up.

“Clearly Toronto is being underserved and the current number of 24,000 spaces is not enough,” said Mercer.

News Briefs

Gala to honour club stalwarts

Malvern Cricket Club is to host its President’s Gala Feb 21 to honour members for their work in the club. The gala will take place at St. Thomas The Apostle Church Hall, 14 Highgate Dr., in Markham. Tickets are \$50. For more information call 416-297-5456 or 416-289-0866.

Dance night on in Birkdale

Birkdale Community Centre is having a dance night from 7 to 11 p.m. on Feb 21. It is to be held at 1299 Ellesmere Rd. Admission is \$6. Open to all ages.

Free tutoring for needy families

A registered charity is providing free tutoring services to students from low-income families. Learning Centre tutors grades 1 through 12 in math, science, English and French at William G. Davis Junior Public School two nights a week. Visit www.geocities.com/success_learning or call 416-282-1749.

Campus eatery closes amid student protests

MONICA VALENCIA
The Observer

The closure of Bluff’s restaurant at the University of Toronto Scarborough has employees and students thinking the student union is bluffing about its finances.

On Feb. 6, the day before Bluff’s closed, about 30 students attended a sit-in to confront Scarborough Campus Student Union (SCSU) president Zuhair Syed.

“I think that [the SCSU is] hiding something and that the reasons for closing down Bluff’s are complete nonsense,” former employee Stephanie Hawkland said.

The SCSU blamed the accountant and restaurant managers for mismanaging Bluff’s, said sit-in organizer Jon Mandrozos.

“It was mismanaged for nine months and they didn’t do anything about it. That doesn’t make sense to me because they say that they are not held accountable for the restaurant even if they own it,” Mandrozos said.

Mandrozos also said he does not understand how the \$30,000 emergency bailout that Bluff’s got from the SCSU earlier this year was spent within two weeks. Previously, the restaurant’s \$140,000 yearly budget had been sufficient.

Syed said the bailout money was spent so quickly because it was used on overdue



Courtesy of Alise-Ann Glover

Student union president, Zuhair Syed, takes questions from the sit-in participants at UTSC’s Student Centre.

payments to employees and other restaurant expenses.

“We’re working on a strategic plan for a restaurant which will sustain itself financially without the need to ask students for extra funding,” Syed said. “We want to have a student-run restaurant that has affordable prices and is open to late hours.”

He added the new plan will make it easier to host events at the restaurant and the menu

will improve.

“We’re going to have a student committee with students from the management department, other campus’ business clubs and people from the UTSC community to put in their feedback,” said Amir Bashir, vice-president external of the SCSU.

Another concern is Bluff’s poor marketing, as many students and Scarborough residents did not know about the restaurant, Bashir said.

However, some employees

contradicted claims that Bluff’s closed due to the decline in sales.

“I totally disagree with what the SCSU says because we were making a lot of money in turn of our business. This year the restaurant could make between \$1,500 and \$1,700 on a regular day,” Bluff’s assistant manager Shanique Edwards said.

She said that the financial information from the SCSU and its official report on Bluff’s are not accurate.

“They wrote all over the report trying to account for things that were not originally written on the report just to make themselves look good in terms of Bluff’s financial situation,” Edwards said.

Syed said that even though Bluff’s was at arms-length to the SCSU, as president he takes responsibility for the situation and acknowledges that mistakes were made.

“We do not run a perfect operation and I think we should have been more vigilant. I apologize for not telling students in advance about what was happening with Bluff’s.”

Sit-in participants were not convinced with Syed’s answers, but for Bashir the sit-in was at least a sign of student involvement.

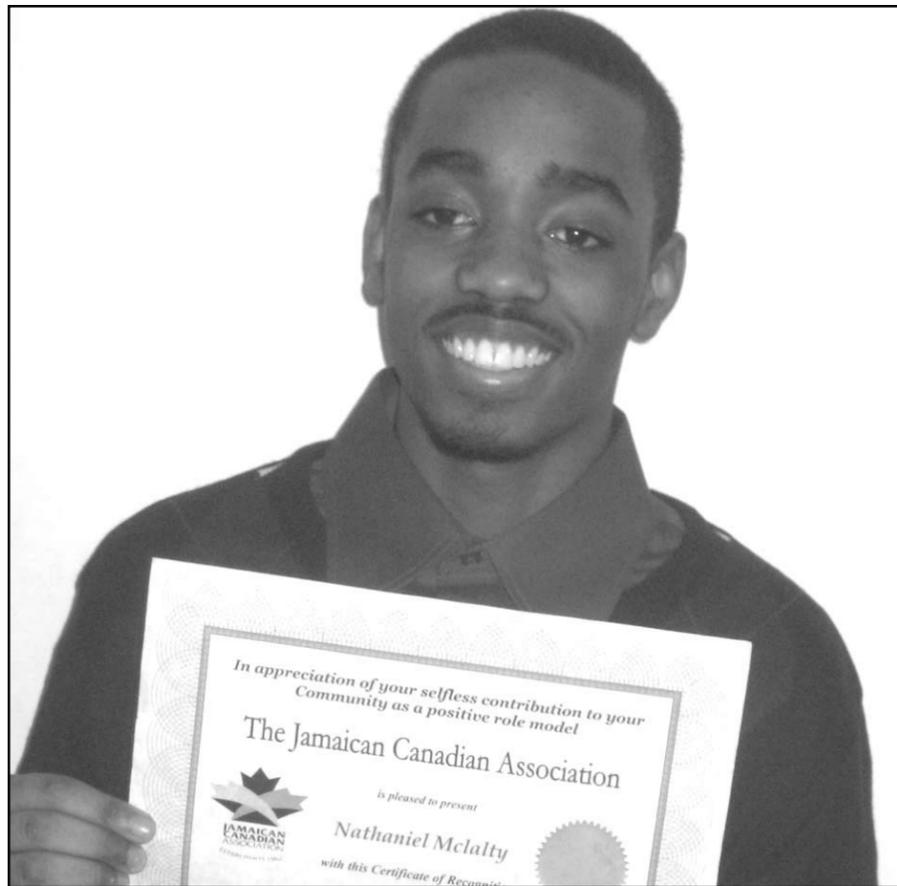
“It’s healthy for students to voice their concerns because our campus has been apathetic for the longest time,” Bashir said.

It was mismanaged for nine months and they didn’t do anything about it

- Jon Mandrozos

Malvern youth honoured

Jamaican Canadian Association recognizes role model Nathaniel McLardy for community work



COURTESY OF Cheryl McLardy

Nathaniel McLardy wins an award from the Jamaican Canadian Association to recognize his work in the community.

TRISTAN CARTER

The Observer

The Jamaican Canadian Association honoured Malvern area men earlier this month.

During their 10th annual fundraising brunch on Feb. 8 awards were given out to recognize positive role models in the community.

Nathaniel McLardy, who studies accounting at Centennial College, received the award after he and a friend

were recommended by their pastor.

"It was quite an honour. We were happy for him, we were pleased," said his mother, Cheryl.

The 18-year-old entrepreneur already has experience running his own small landscaping and haircutting businesses. He has been succeeded both in and out of school despite the distractions and difficulties associated with living in an area with a reputation like Malvern's.

"Right on our block there were quite a few shootings," McLardy said.

He received the award because his accomplishments serve as an example to youth in the area who are hoping to follow a positive path.

"It's good to see that someone is looking out and saying yes it is possible for the kids to do well," Cheryl McLardy said.

"All they have to be is encouraged and pushed and supported to do that."

Navy commends Guildwood hero

Chris Jackson, who grew up in Guildwood, was recently commended by the U.S. Navy.

While working for Fox News in Afghanistan last summer, Jackson pulled a U.S. Marine from a burning Humvee after it hit a roadside bomb.

"He doesn't think of himself

as a hero," said Jackson's mother, Elaine Zdunich. "He just reacted on instinct and did what he had to do."

At a ceremony in Iraq, Jackson received the Distinguished Public Service

award, the second-highest



JACKSON

award given to civilians by the U.S. Navy. Jackson, 35, rescued the unconscious vehicle commander despite being injured by shrapnel himself. Jackson has since recovered and is currently working

for Global News in India.

Residents cool to city's budgeted tax hike

KAREEN AWADALLA

The Observer

In the current state of recession, can Torontonians really afford tax hikes?

Mayor David Miller thinks so.

Local residents appear to disagree.

On Feb. 10 the mayor proposed a four per cent tax increase on residential properties in the city's 2009 budget.

"I don't agree with it," Scarborough resident Edith Rozal said. "He can find

other means to raise funds instead of increasing the homeowner's taxes again," Edith Rozal said, a Scarborough resident.

Low risk?

Budget highlights include investing in the TTC, funding enhanced public programs, and implementing climate change strategies, all of which are appealing but expensive initiatives.

In what sounded like a child sponsorship ad, the

mayor said the tax hike will only cost average families a quarter a day.

"If at all, he should raise taxes in the upper rich bracket of society, those who can afford to spare money to pay for the additional taxes," Rozal said.

In an effort to ease fears, the mayor argued there would be programs to make it easier for low-income seniors and people with disabilities to qualify for a tax break, or complete cancellation.

In East Scarborough

homeowner Revathy Navaretan's case however, this does not help.

Navaretan said she believes those like her in the middle income tax bracket are usually left out of these deals.

"It's just not a good thing for us, maybe if the housing market was going up then I would agree with the mayor," said Navaretan.

"Right now we are paying taxes but the value of houses isn't going up and we're losing more jobs."

Navaretan's neighbour, Marivic Ramirez, is more accepting of the tax hike if it means giving tax breaks to those who need it.

Basic needs not met

Ramirez works for the Ontario March of Dimes and sees many people who are unable to even pay for basic needs.

"I think it's okay if people in the middle income bracket have to pay more because those in the lower income

just don't have the means to pay for the increase," Ramirez said.

More information on applying for deferral or cancellation will be available when residents receive their final property tax bills.

Meanwhile, the proposed budget breakdown is available to the public on the city's website.

The operating budget review process will continue March 31 and April 1, when City Council members meet, to consider the final budget.

Sri Lankan genocide hits relatives abroad

SELENA MANN

The Observer

The genocide in Sri Lanka has attracted a lot of media coverage because of escalating violence in the region and the genocide directed at the civilian population. Many protests have been held in Toronto and Scarborough, where the large Tamil community has organized rallies against the conflict, hoping to be heard by the Canadian government.

A peace rally at University

of Toronto Scarborough campus was held on Feb. 4, where students wore white t-shirts with "Stop the violence" written on them.

Danusika Mahendrian, a student studying environmental science, participated in the peace rally at UTSC. She has family in Sri Lanka, like many Tamil people in Scarborough.

"Medical supplies can't get in, food can't get in, no water, nothing. There have been attacks on hospitals. In fact one hospital had two, three

attacks, and they work with the bare essentials. They don't have any medical supplies," Mahendrian said.

Centennial College students also demonstrated on numerous occasions, holding signs to raise awareness of the deadly conflict and the atrocities.

On Feb. 13, Tamil students were standing outside the

main entrance of Centennial College HP Science and Technology Centre, protesting the genocide.

It's affecting me not as a Tamil member but as a person.
- Danusika Mahendrian

"It's affecting me not as a Tamil member but as a person. Women and children are being killed, like children I saw a video where a boy lost his arm and he was bandaged and he was just like the look

of his face of like no hope," Mahendrian said.

State of civil unrest

There were also protests at the corner of Morningside and Sheppard on Feb. 12.

"What do we want? Stop the genocide...now!" the protesters shouted.

The CBC reported that the Sinhalese government has allegedly started to eradicate the Tamil people. This mass killing is a recent development

of the civil war in Sri Lanka between the Tamil Tiger rebel group and the government. They have been fighting since 1983.

The Sinhalese people are the main ethnic group of Sri Lanka, and there are 15 million in the world.

The Tamil people are the minority group in Sri Lanka with about three million living there.

See one resident's experience on page 4.

FEATURE STORY

Tragic past inspires police ambitions



RIMA RAMOUL/The Observer

Paranivasagam Ranjithkanna stands outside the Toronto Police's 42 Division where he completed his co-op placement. He is now actively denouncing the treatment of Tamils by the Sri Lankan government. Below is a map of Sri Lanka.



Above: The emblem of the Tamil Tigers. The LTTE and the Sri Lankan government have been at odds since 1983.



COURTESY OF Press Secretariat of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

One of two young survivors of the attack that Ranjithkanna narrowly avoided. Five of his friends were killed by Sri Lankan soldiers on the beach that evening.

Local Tamil affected by conflict in Sri Lanka

I first met Kanna at Toronto Police 42 Division. There he was, a young man being shown around the station by a civilian in uniform. The security card hanging from his neck indicated he might be a co-op student on his placement.

I asked him for an interview, thinking I would get his thoughts on his experience working with the Toronto police.

But Kanna had a far more interesting — and disheartening — story to tell.

One of friendship lost in a war-ravaged country, of panic and fear, but also of hope for the future. Recently, a lot of attention has been given to the turmoil taking place in Sri Lanka between the government and the Tamil Tigers. For the Sri Lankan community in Toronto, including Kanna's family, thoughts of home and of loved ones are constantly on their minds.

Today, many Tamils living here are using the term "genocide" to describe the situation in their homeland. To show solidarity, Kanna and many other Tamils are banding together.

The 24-year-old, whose full name is Paranivasagam Ranjithkanna, is very active within his community. He dreams of becoming a police officer and perhaps going back to Sri Lanka to pursue his career, once peace returns to the area.

Kanna was raised in the north-east of Sri Lanka with his three siblings. His father spent 12 years working in Saudi Arabia and only once a year managed to visit his family in Sri Lanka. In 2002, Kanna's father finally settled in Canada and began the sponsorship process to bring over the rest of his family. It was four years before the family could finally be reunited in Toronto in 2006.

'Senseless killings' on the beach

As we sat down in one of the conference rooms at 42 Division, Kanna began to tell his story. He explained that in 2006 the situation in Sri Lanka was rather peaceful and attacks were uncommon. But the tragic events that took place the evening of Jan. 2, 2006 would deeply affect Kanna.

It was late evening during a school break when seven of Kanna's friends decided to gather at their favourite spot, the beach. Kanna, who lived farther away, opted to head home instead and said goodbye to them.

"At around twelve o'clock I heard some students were killed," Kanna said. "Somebody passed on the message; friends who were living in town called our house and said our friends were killed."

They were shot by the soldiers whose camp was located near the beach. The next day Kanna made the trip to the hospital and ran into one friend's distraught father.

He was so angry he could not speak and Kanna tried desperately to calm him down. When he had composed himself, the man told Kanna he was home that night and heard the blast and subsequent commotion. He ran outside to see what happened, but soldiers had blocked the way to the beach. That's when — from a short distance away — he caught a glimpse of his son lying lifeless on the sand, among the bodies of his friends.

That day at the hospital, Kanna was able to see two of the friends who were shot that night, but who miraculously survived to tell their story. They played dead after they were shot and the soldiers left, believing that all seven



Rima Ramoul

had been killed. According to the two who survived, they had been at the beach when they heard a sudden blast close to them.

"Something happened there," Kanna explained. "Someone came and threw something, so the soldiers were waiting."

People panicked, not knowing where the blast came from, and in the commotion the soldiers came running and shot all seven young men. Kanna still vividly remembers the fear he felt when he learned the terrible news, and calls them "senseless killings."

"They were just talking and having fun, and the soldiers came and shot them for no reason," Kanna said. "The soldiers said it was because they were part of LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], but that's not true."

Sri Lanka's civilians have been caught up in the middle of the on-going conflict between the Tamil Tigers and the government since 1983, and many people have lost their lives since the civil war began. The Tamil Tigers are demanding a separate state called Tamil Eelam in the North and East of the country and insist that their identity be recognized. Despite the unrest, Kanna is proud of his Tamil roots. Recently, there have been many rallies to denounce the treatment of the Tamil people by the Sri Lankan government, the most recent at Union Station on Jan. 30.

"Our community people gather together and ask help from Canada to help and save our people from genocide," Kanna explained.

"College students, high school students, and Tamil media; all people participate in these events."

A glimpse into the future...

Kanna next plans to apply to Centennial College and is confident he will be accepted to a police academy in the future. He hopes peace will return to his country so he can see his friends and family.

"I would go back to Sri Lanka," Kanna says. "I'm waiting for the peace day."

After his arrival in 2006, Kanna attended the Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies

and enrolled in their co-op program and that's how Kanna ended up at 42 Division where I met him. He started his co-op placement in September 2008 and finished it last month.

During his time with the Toronto Police he worked mostly in administration, but got the chance to learn and grow, as well as network with the superintendent and detectives at the station. However, it is with mixed feelings that Kanna's family members watch him draw closer to his dream of becoming a police officer. Though they are proud, they are also understandably scared.

"I tell them, this is what I like to do — to help people."

The soldiers came and shot them for no reason.

- Kanna

I would go back to Sri Lanka. I'm waiting for the peace day.

- Kanna



MATTHEW ALLEYNE/The Observer

Scarborough Stars Under 15 team practice at the Scarborough soccer centre last week.

Girls' lacrosse blooming

MATTHEW ALLEYNE
The Observer

Scarborough's many young hockey players are looking for something to keep them active and their skill levels high off-season. For many the answer is lacrosse, made possible by The Scarborough Stars Lacrosse Association.

The Scarborough Stars Lacrosse Association is a not-for-profit group that promotes lacrosse throughout the Scarborough community.

"It started out small in 2001 as a group effort to have a better program for our kids, and today the program serves close to 600 players in both boys and girls divisions of various ages," says Ron Parkinson, the league's president.

The association also

exposes lacrosse to different cultural communities, such as Asian and South-Asian communities that might know about hockey or soccer but haven't been exposed to lacrosse.

Lacrosse was first played by Canada's First Nations people and is a sport that has similar principles to modern-day hockey.

There are two types of lacrosse: field and box. Box lacrosse is played indoors on an artificial surface.

"This sport is known for being the fastest sport on two feet," Jim Calder said, vice president of girls lacrosse for the Stars. Lori Boudreau-Evans registered her son Aiden to be a part of the program as

a means of keeping him busy during the hockey off-season. Boudreau-Evans has seen the positive influence it has been in Aiden's life after six years of building self-esteem, and providing Aiden with the opportunity to meet and interact with new people.

[Lacrosse] is known for being the fastest sport on two feet
- Jim Calder

Aiden Evans, 14, explains he is looking to the future because he sees opportunities for him as a lacrosse player.

"I like hockey, but lacrosse is a good compliment," says Evans. "There are a lot of scholarship opportunities both here and in the States."

The Stars girls division has seen a lot of success, with its

midget girls bringing home championships in regional and provincial tournaments over the last two years. Three members of the stars — Hayley Cows, Geneva Calder, and Caitlin Gourley — have qualified to try out for the provincial women's team.

"If your child is already playing hockey, most of the equipment is interchangeable between the two sports," says Calder. "Depending on situation, it could cost you as little as \$50 to \$70 to get started with a helmet and stick."

The Stars regular season runs April through June, with championships in July. Their games are open to the public.

For more information about the Stars and the dates for registration, open clinics, and games, visit their website www.starslacrosse.com

Local man on hunt for justice

Slain deer found in Rouge Park

GESILAYEFA AZORBO
The Observer

Last month a naturalist and a photographer discovered a dead deer with a hunting arrow stuck in it in Scarborough.

There is a problem of illegal hunting and poaching in Rouge Park. However, that appears to be something the public has to deal.

At the last meeting of the Rouge Park Alliance (RPA), poaching in the park was not on the agenda, but was brought up by a resident of the area.

"We've had a member of the public come to one of our Alliance meetings (Feb. 6). He raised his concerns to our board of directors," said Michelle Holmes, manager of interpretation and culture for the RPA.

Community concern

That concerned citizen was Andy McKinnon the naturalist who discovered the dead deer.

Holmes said the board responded by directing him to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) tips line.

She said that the partners of the park, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the City of Toronto have also been notified of the poaching situation.

"I think we're just on a higher alert," Holmes said.

The park does not have its own policing authority, as

there is no park ranger program in place yet.

Rather, according to Holmes, this role is taken on by both the Toronto Police and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA).

"Because we are a partnership park, our lands are managed under a memorandum of understanding," Holmes said.

McKinnon told The Mirror that he had complained to authorities about poaching before.

Park responsibilities

However, Tracy Smith, Aurora district manager for the Ministry of Natural Resources, said this is the first they are hearing about it.

"We have not had any calls about poaching in the Rouge Park until we received that one...three weeks ago," Smith said.

He said that the MNR conservation officers are responsible for enforcing the official wildlife conservation act of Ontario, including the latest violation which is under investigation.

"There is not much information to go on here other than the fact there was a dead deer. So what we encourage the public to do is to take as much information as they possibly can, so things like license numbers of cars or whatever."

"The public are really the eyes and ears for these kinds of activities," Smith said.

Pan Am games bid: Win-win for Scarborough

MONICA VALENCIA
The Observer

Whether Toronto wins or loses its bid to host the Pan American Games in 2015, the University of Toronto at Scarborough will gain a state-of-the-art sports facility.

"This is a win-win situation because we need the facilities so badly," Ron Moeser said, Ward 44 Councillor.

"The community is looking forward to the partnership and to using the facilities as well as the students at the university."

The partnership includes various levels of government and the University of Toronto.

The athletic complex will have a gym, training centre,

indoor track, two Olympic-size pools and a 10-metre diving tower.

The building will cost \$170 million, with the City of Toronto and U of T each contributing \$37.5 million. The rest coming from the provincial and federal governments.

Needed improvements

"We badly, badly need these facilities. The ones we have are falling and the competitive athletes don't have the resources and facilities to train," Moeser said.

He added that the Highland Creek area still needs a community centre with athletic facilities and that the Pan Am bid will speed up the

construction of the centre.

Elise Tracey, president of the Scarborough Diving Club, said facilities in Scarborough are old and rundown.

The community could use the pools for lane swimming, swimming lessons and water sports.

Moeser said that Scarborough has been promised an aquatic centre since the 1986 Pan American Games bid. However, Toronto did not host the 1990 games and the pools were never built.

A new complex will also speed up construction on the light-rail transit line planned for Scarborough. Moeser says if Toronto gets the Pan Am Games there will be extra funding.

"This project would also

create a lot of jobs. So, it will not only benefit the athletes but it will help the community with the job situation, too," Moeser said.

Community rewards

Moeser works closely with U of T and said the Scarborough campus wants to expand and build an aquatic facility and other infrastructure on Ellesmere Rd. and Military Trail.

"For two years the Scarborough campus has been planning to expand its athletic facilities," Heidi Calder said, assistant director of U of T at Scarborough athletics.

The final bid for the games will be submitted by the end of April.



MONICA VALENCIA/The Observer

Current athletics centre at U of T Scarborough. The new aquatic complex is to be located at this campus if the Pan Am bid is approved.

Two sides to every story

There has been a lot of coverage recently of the Tamil genocide in Sri Lanka and tension between the two sides is rising, even here in Canada. It is obvious this conflict must be stopped, but amid all this media attention, the public is forgetting one very important fact.

A war is fought between two sides and, correspondingly, understanding must be given to both sides as well.

Let's not forget that this cause du jour dates back as far as to 1975 when the Tamil Tigers were formed and demanded the creation of a separate ethnic state of Tamils. Even further back. As with many world conflicts, the original cause is lost in years of entrenched ethnic conflict and animosity that eventually erupted in war.

We need to remember the Sri Lankan government didn't just decide to kill Tamils. Tamil Tiger suicide bombers have assassinated political figures and Sri Lankan supporters, as in 1993 with the assassination of Sri Lanka's president Ranasinghe Premadasa. In 2006, the Tigers closed the gates of a reservoir, cutting water to over 60,000 people. This prompted the Sri Lankan government to launch its first major attack on Tiger territory since a 2002 ceasefire. And yet, who are we to judge the Tigers' motives? We can only pass judgment on the means.

We also need to remember that not every Tamil person is a Tiger. On the contrary, most are civilians. An estimated 250,000 people are trapped in a battle zone and people are said to be dying each day.

Wrongs have been made on both sides, and the GTA's large Tamil population is right to raise concern. We fully support the protests, the activism, and the cries for justice. This editorial is not meant to pick a side. We don't have enough expertise to decide who is right or wrong.

Can anyone really have that say?

Our editorial purpose is to press the public to be careful and keep a balanced perspective. Just as large Tamil populations — innocent civilians — are being persecuted, I urge those in this community to remember the Sri Lankan people living beside you are innocent civilians as well. Sri Lankans and Tamils in this country shouldn't be persecuted because of their ethnicity and cultural history.

German-Canadians and Japanese-Canadians didn't deserve the backlash they received during World War Two. The Arab people did not deserve the backlash they received after 9/11. And Sri Lankans and Tamils should not receive a backlash either. Let's send support for justice across the ocean, and not carry old hatred back with us. Let's not let history repeat itself.

- Maxx Smith

Great attempt may miss the mark

Finally, a government payout that will actually help the people.

After billions of dollars being doled out to automakers and giant corporations, with people still losing their jobs and perpetuating our downward economy, it's nice to see initiatives aimed at directly helping the public. Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Premier Dalton McGuinty announced their governments would be spending \$500 million in infrastructure funds on Ontario's GO Transit system.

Twelve stations will be getting a boost from Mississauga to Markham. The main focus will be to ease congestion; the bane of every commuter's existence.

It's good to finally see a proactive approach to kick starting our ailing economy, rather than the reactive measures we've gotten used to.

But alas, there is a catch.

The *National Post* reported the new GO trains will be bought from a factory in Idaho, which is great for our southern neighbors, but not so much for Canadians recently out of manufacturing jobs.

And let's not forget the fact that GO Transit commutes roughly 200,000 people on an average business day, while the average for the TTC is 1.5 million.

Perhaps it would have been a little more beneficial for the people stacked like sardines in a subway car to get a piece of that \$500 million.

- Maxx Smith



MONICA VALENCIA/The Observer

Post-secondary thought

As readers are likely aware, the students of York University have finally returned to class, as what was truly a long, bitter winter has ended. Having personally known a few people affected, I have been led to reflect on our post-secondary education system here in Scarborough. Throughout the entire ordeal, I kept hearing about how desperately the students wanted to return to class.

This got me thinking, what is it that makes it so important that they return to university? The answer seems simple enough: the refrain that's been drilled into students since elementary school is get an education, and then a career.

The golden ticket

But when you stop and analyze that, what is it they're really after? They're chasing after a piece of paper they can put on their wall, one that says they're better than average, supposedly a ticket to the front of the line.

The theory behind that piece of paper is that it indicates you've been given certain skills.

But nowadays, it sometimes seems the skills are not as important as the paper itself.

For those who are not aware, this newspaper is primarily produced by students in the joint journalism program between the University of Toronto and



Anthony Geremia

Centennial College. We arrived here after two years at the University of Toronto and gone are the majority of the lectures, readings, and tutorials. Instead of just listening, we are now doing.

If anything, the whole experience has made me question what exactly it was we were doing for the last two years.

Working on an actual newspaper has underscored the fact that my previous education did little to actually prepare me for the goal of going into the workforce.

I suppose this goes back to the traditional role of universities. They were not initially career-makers, despite the common misconception. They were places of higher learning.

Students pursued philosophy, art, and advanced theories in science and mathematics. While those things certainly have a place in the world, it feels to me that people now expect these institutions to

provide job skills.

This is further compounded by the fact that most students pay for this out of their own pockets, a bill that can total upwards of \$20,000.

I wouldn't say they are being swindled, but rather that we've collectively forgotten the original purpose of these institutions: to teach the abstract rather than the practical.

Looking forward

So where does that leave us? As stated before, it seems as though the content of the education isn't on anyone's mind, so much as the degree at the end promising a better future.

It nonetheless concerns me that students are not truly being prepared for the real world. Instead they are being

taught abstract theory and then set loose into a very non-abstract, competitive world that they are not prepared for.

Were the students of York University really missing something essential?

Except as a means to an end, it doesn't seem likely. And if this ordeal has driven any point home, it's that our post-secondary system truly needs to evaluate its position in the modern world if it wishes to remain relevant.

Were the students of York University really missing something essential?

The East Toronto OBSERVER

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Breaking the ice with kids

43 Division takes over Heron Park for skate day

MATTHEW ALLEYNE
The Observer

Toronto Police 43 Division held its third annual Family Skate Day on Feb. 13 at the Heron Park Arena.

The event offered Scarborough families a chance for ice time with local community officers on the Family Day long weekend.

"It is our hope that this event will allow children and youth to be able to see officers in a different light," said Marilyn Hodge, co-chair of 43 division's Community Police Liaison Committee (CPLC).

"A lot of people are afraid of the police. Hopefully this would be a way of breaking down some barriers."

Even before the doors open, many families are gathered in the lobby area and children of all ages eagerly wait to get on the ice.

For Jennifer Jones it's the first time her young daughter Jolivia will be trying ice-skating.

In the stands, with Tim-Bits and hot chocolate to keep them warm, parents

watched their kids. Many were accompanied by officers as they stepped onto the rink and skated laps around a cruiser placed at centre ice.

The event has in past years averaged about 375 participants, with children ranging in age from toddlers to young adults.

No experience is needed, as various officers from 43 division's community hockey team were there to lend a helping hand.

43 division Superintendent Paul Gottschalk emphasized the ongoing commitment of his officers to "engaging" the youth in the community.

"It is just a little step in getting the youth and the police to interact with each other," Gottschalk said.

"Every year the crowd gets bigger and bigger, now the challenge is getting enough skates donated for those who cannot afford them."

Giving back

Through local media and by donations from sponsors like Canadian Tire and Westhill Golden Hawks Hockey Association, the CPLC was able to collect 150 pairs of skates so underprivileged children could participate.

Both Hodge and Gottschalk said the event would not be possible if it were not for the help of volunteers.



MATTHEW ALLEYNE/The Observer

Police constable Terri Lynn gives two first-time skaters a helping hand at Family Skate Day on Feb. 13.

"All donated skates were generously sharpened by Bill Frasier of Scarborough Village Arena," Hodge said. "Plus we have the support of other groups such as ProAction Cops & Kids."

ProAction is one of the largest private funders of Toronto police programs for at-risk youth.

It is just one of many initiatives the CPLC runs in the community.

"Volunteer officers have

gone to some of the high schools and are teaching cooking classes and other officers who have black belts are teaching a lot of youth and their parents martial arts," Gottschalk said.

"Officers are volunteering their own time and skills as a way of connecting with the community on common ground."

The next CPLC event will be a community picnic in May.

Warnings from heart disease survivor

STEPHANIE LEUNG
The Observer

Having cheated death, Brian Campkin is grateful to be given a second chance to eventually walk his daughters down the aisle.

Campkin, a survivor of heart disease and volunteer leader for the Heart and Stroke Foundation in Durham Region, advises everyone to be cautious with their health.

"It's much easier to prevent heart disease than to cure it," he said in February, which is Heart Month. "Exercise, eat right and don't smoke."

Campkin experienced shortness of breath during a tennis warm-up with a friend in January 2007.

Diagnosis

Doctors at Centenary Hospital diagnosed him with heart disease and he received triple bypass surgery that same year.

"I felt weird," Campkin said. "I knew my body wasn't being normal because I was just warming-up."

People are still prone to heart disease even if they take care of their bodies. Campkin was not overweight and never smoked, but his father died from a heart attack in 1991.

"Even if you think you're in great shape and never smoke, you could still be diagnosed because of your

family history," he said.

Campkin was in Rouge Valley Centenary's cardiac wing in East Scarborough at the time. The hospital provided him with information on the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

A month after his surgery, he made his first speech and is now a spokesperson for the foundation.

Recovery

In September 2007, Campkin did a 60-km walk and played tennis for the first time since his surgery last year.

"I didn't want [heart disease] to stop me," Campkin said.

Heart and Stroke uses one-on-one canvassing to collect donations and help raise awareness for the Heart and Stroke cause. In Scarborough, the Rouge Valley cardiac centre is also accepting donations to improve their cardiac programs and facilities for patients.

"We want to let residents know that they don't have to travel all the way downtown to be treated," said Amber Heath-Underwood, acting coordinator for the cardiac prevention and rehabilitation service at Rouge Valley. "We want people to know that they have a centre right in their backyards."

For more information visit heartandstroke.com.

Kids learn morals through story and dance

CELESTE DE MUELENAERE
The Observer

Donald Carr was on hand at the Malvern Public Library on Feb. 12, to provide entertainment for the library's Black History Month celebrations.

Rows of school children gathered in the community room to see Carr perform.

A renowned actor, performer and dancer, Carr combines contemporary dance with storytelling to teach young kids important moral lessons.

"We are all beautiful," Carr



CELESTE DE MUELENAERE/The Observer

Donald Carr performs at Malvern Public Library.

told the children.

"Me as a black man watching television, I find it unempowering as every ad is geared towards women," Carr said.

These types of ads give kids a bad self-image and a distorted view of what beauty is, Carr said.

Ali Arabpour, who has worked with Carr for the last nine years, said Carr is "more of a spiritual teacher."

Born and raised in Jamaica, Carr has trained as a

dancer with numerous prestigious companies, such as the National Ballet of Canada.

He has performed all over the world including Paris, London, and Johannesburg.

Not afraid to speak his mind, Carr teaches children to respect themselves and others and also teaches them general manners and behavior.

During the performance he even told one student to pay attention and another student to sit up straight.

REVIEW

Urinetown funny to the last drop

KAREEN AWADALLA
The Observer

If it was a privilege to pee, this hilarious musical shows what it would be like.

People were pleasantly surprised by the Scarborough Music Theatre's production of *Urinetown*, directed by J.P. Gedeon.

Theatre fan Joan Backhurst travelled all the way from Barrie to attend.

"I thought it was hilarious, it was very entertaining, and I wouldn't mind seeing again it in another venue somewhere to see different interpretations of it. I had a great time."

A satirical piece, *Urinetown* juxtaposes ruling class bourgeoisie and the town's "piss-poor" inhabitants to poke fun at capitalism. The evil Urine Good Company makes peeing a commodity for the lower class by paying off police and city officials.

People are forced to pay to use the toilet or be charged with breaking the Public Health Act, which is punishable by death.

Rebellion erupts as fee hikes are announced as a means for company officials to fund a trip to Rio, or rather provide long term solutions for the water shortage, the intent was clear.

"I think it's timely, isn't it? So it couldn't have come at better time," Backhurst said.

The actors brought the characters to life in every scene, song and dance. The cast is full of talented professionals and the music set the mood.

Judi Lytle, usually a member of the orchestra at the

Scarborough Music Theatre, was on this occasion a very impressed member of the audience.

"Best production ever," Lytle said. "The costumes, the music, everything was amazing."

The Urine Good Company CEO is played by Michael Schneider,

who takes on the role of villain superbly. Rich Burdett played lead cop and narrator and had the audience in stitches as he told Little Sally, played by Jackie McCaffrey, that dreams are only meant to come true in happy musicals.

The cast and crew brought the audience to their feet by end, proving small town productions can become big-time hits.

Best production ever. The costumes, the music, everything was amazing.
- Judi Lytle

WINTERFEST MAGIC

No better way to get out and celebrate the snowy season



**Photos by
Katrina Rozal**

For the 13th year, the Port Union community held its annual Winterfest carnival. At the Rec Centre on Jan. 31, families participated in all types of fun-filled activities including ice-sculpting, wood-carving, magic tricks, and show dogs. Local MP Danw McTeague (below) serves up hot chocolate.

