



NEW SHOW
Artist Liz Magor works with junk and dead animals - See page 8

WEST HILL vs. LAURIER
Local girls' basketball teams square off - See page 7



THE EAST TORONTO OBSERVER

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KATRINA ROZAL/The Observer

SERCO Des Inc. DriveTest employees walked off the job seven weeks ago due to employment security issues.

The forgotten strike

Driving examiners are off the job, but most people don't know until it's time to take the test

KAREEN AWADALLA
The Observer

Robin Kiatipis was a week away from taking her G-level road test last month when she learned about the Ontario DriveTest strike.

Kiatipis is one of many drivers (or would-be drivers) who have felt the impact of what has been dubbed the "forgotten strike."

"I had every intention of going to take my test and then, a week before, I

realized I can't. It's an inconvenience to me and everyone else whose licence is expiring," Kiatipis said.

Into the seventh week of the province's DriveTest,

See STRIKE, Page 5

Trashing the garbage fee hike

City councillors raising a stink after city staff proposes a fee increase to bins

PHILLIP SMALLEY
The Observer

After a summer of disruption to the city's garbage collection service, any news about a garbage fee increase is bound to meet with disapproval from residents.

However, that is exactly what has happened, as city staff recently proposed an

increase in the annual fee for garbage bins.

Ward 43 and 44 councillors are opposing the hike, in line with what they say their constituents want.

Councillor Ron Moeser says his constituents have already put up with enough this year. Even though the figures for the proposed increase are yet to be approved, he has

already received two phone calls from constituents that were not happy.

This proposed hike is expected to be about 13 per cent over last year's rates.

Councillor Paul Ainslie, Ward 43, is not supporting the garbage fee hike.

"Strike aside, I have seen a number of issues within the solid waste department

which need to be dealt with."

He said the system can be inefficient and sometimes the drivers are too stringent in their standards, while other times the rules aren't followed at all.

Moeser said the original point of the program was to discourage garbage output.

See COUNCILLORS, Page 3

Complaints aired about affordable housing

MONICA VALENCIA
The Observer

Scarborough residents in affordable housing are complaining about rents and poor living conditions.

"I spent four winters with no heating," Princess Water told a meeting of about 80 people at the Scarborough Village Recreation Centre on Sept. 30.

Representatives from local groups met to discuss affordable housing issues with MPP Margaret Best and housing minister Mario Sergio.

"We hope that you too can be a part of finding the solutions that are going to work and make things better in terms of housing," Best said.

But residents said there needs to be a lot of changes.

"They told me they wouldn't be raising my rent because it was already at the cap," said Kimyata McIntosh, a resident at Morning-side Avenue and Ellesmere Road. "But a couple months ago they told me that they will raise it because the net amount of rent has gone up."

McIntosh, a single mother of three, also wonders why

it takes so long to qualify for subsidized residences.

"Waiting lists for affordable housing have been a problem forever and I don't know why they haven't done anything about it," McIntosh said.

Water, who lives on Kingston and Galloway Roads, said residents need easier access to housing offices and workers.

I spent four winters with no heating
- Princess Water

Other tenants said affordable housing locations should also promote integration.

"The government has to be careful when designating areas for co-op communi-

ties," said Allison Scott, who lives on Kingston Rd. "Sometimes they lead to segregation because they're all concentrated in one bad area."

McIntosh said crime rates are usually higher in these neighbourhoods and said she wants more recreational centres and green spaces built, so "youth can keep busy with sports and other programs, instead of just hanging out."

At the end of the meeting, Sergio assured residents their comments were heard and said he will help deliver better, affordable housing.



MONICA VALENCIA/The Observer

From left, Rosemary Bell of the community development department, speaks to Francisca Epale and Allison Scott.

NEWS

Hydro gets smarter by the minute

Household meters to measure by time of day

MAXX SMITH
The Observer

Scarborough residents will soon be completely switched over from their hydro meter to the new smart meter system.

"It's provincially mandated that by the end of 2010, all of Ontario will have switched over to the smart meter system," said Heather Sande, who was at Ward 43's Environment Day on behalf of Toronto Hydro to discuss the change-over with residents.

"The new digital meters directly relay residents' electricity consumption, so instead of having someone check meters every two months and estimate usage, they get billed for exactly what they use," Sande said.

They will also be able to pay different rates depending on the time they use power, a new way of billing that could make Scarborough residents uneasy.

With the addition of by-the-minute billing, homes



MAXX SMITH/The Observer

Heather and Angela Sande show pamphlets about the smart-meter system soon to be common in households.

will also be dealing with peak, mid-peak, and off-peak hours, which "change depending on the season," Sande said.

But this new system isn't as bad as it sounds, she said. Electricity is going to be more expensive during peak hours, about the same during mid-peak hours, and less expensive during off-peak

hours. Weekends, holidays and anytime after 9 p.m. and before 7 a.m. are always off-peak.

"The good news is there is more off-peak than peak hours," Sande said. "For people who are concerned about their bills going up, it will balance out to be approximately the same as they're paying now, or less."

The new system can help to empower Scarborough residents to take charge of their energy consumption, she said.

"You can login online and monitor your use and that can help you adjust your habits and save you money."

For more information, visit torontohydro.com

For people who are concerned, [the cost] should be approximately the same... - Heather Sande

New wind turbine rules fail to impress

TEVY PILC
The Observer

The latest regulations regarding the location of wind turbines in Ontario have generated much criticism, especially from the Guildwood neighbourhood.

New rules announced on Sept. 24 state projects of five industrial wind turbines or less have to be at least 550 metres away from the nearest home. Wind farms with more than five turbines must be located even further away.

"We're certainly unimpressed with government's idea of responsible planning," said John Laforet, president of Wind Concerns Ontario, a citizen's group comprising of 37 grassroots organizations around the province, including the Guildwood-based group, Save the Toronto Bluffs, which he also heads.

The rules are covered under the province's Green Energy Act, unveiled in February. Since the act has already been made law, the new rules go into effect immediately.

Wind Concerns Ontario had lobbied for tougher rules, complaining the noise and vibrations cause health problems. But the wind energy industry has repeatedly stated there is no evidence in peer-reviewed science journals, suggesting such noise causes adverse health effects or bothers people as much as other noise.

Local concern

But Laforet said the issue goes beyond the so-called Not-In-My-Back-Yard (NIMBY)-ism, a label he said has been wrongly placed on Wind Concerns members, as well as those living in local communities.

"What's happened in Scarborough has been an absolute assault on citizens' rights and participation," Laforet said. "This is about environmental protection and maintaining citizens' role in democracy in between elections."

He says the rules are placed without discourse and that turbine companies begin planning and construction without approval.

"No politician has truly been willing to go to bat for this community, it's led to a strong movement forming to fill that void," Laforet added.

Reports say Environment Minister John Gerretsen believes the new rules should be coming in the spring.

Early warning sirens raise alarm in West Hill

Toronto East Community Awareness and Emergency Response run preparedness test

MATTHEW ALLEYNE
The Observer

For a period of two minutes on Oct. 1, in an industrial area of West Hill emergency sirens blared.

But there was no danger to the public.

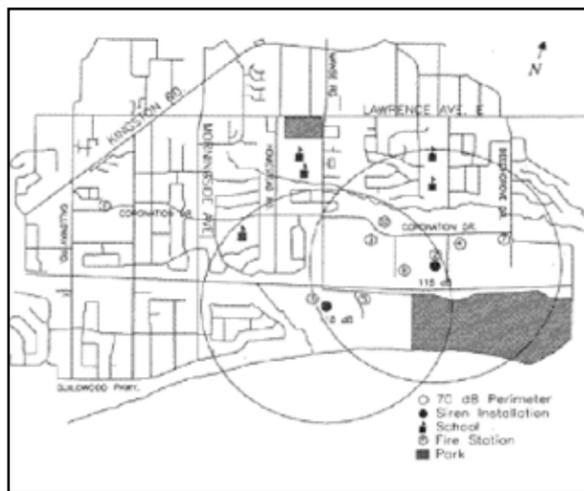
It was just a test by Toronto East Community Awareness and Emergency Response.

The sirens could be heard for a distance of one kilometre.

"I was walking my dog and heard what sounded like one of the sirens when a bomb is going to be dropped," said one Scarborough resident. "It didn't last long, so I did not really think anything of it."

The purpose of the sirens is to provide advance warning, should there be an incident at any local chemical manufacturers, requiring residents to either seek shelter or evacuate the area.

During a recent CP24 phone-in talk show, Mayor David Miller was asked by a caller why are there no early



MATTHEW ALLEYNE/The Observer

City maps show the locations of new emergency sirens pictured at right.

warning systems in Toronto to warn citizens of natural or man-made disasters. The caller spoke of the tornado in Vaughan this summer.

Miller said there is some work being done in the east end of Toronto, but that there are better ways to inform the public than the traditional air-raid sirens of the past.

Rob Tavener of the City of Toronto Office of Emergency Management agrees with Miller and said his office is

looking into other forms of technology to better serve Torontonians.

Tavener said people are familiar with the use of sirens as a form of early warning due to their history with air raids, potential bombings, and dangerous weather.

In some areas, like the U.S. mid-west, a siren is recognized as a tornado warning, but how can it be understood in a city like Toronto?

Miller credits the use of

local radio and television in getting the word out whenever there is a potentially dangerous situation, like the use of storm watches to inform large amounts of people.

The OEM is also looking into other forms of technology to keep Torontonians in the loop.

"We have to think about this in a really modern way," Miller said.

"We have to have a modern way of communicating,

for an example, a tornado warning from Environment Canada to be sent to cell phones which reaches 90% of us who do have phones and can be passed on to the remaining 10%."

The city is also looking into the use of web applications like Listserve that would send out a mass email to a list of subscribers, Tavener said.

Torontonians regularly face severe thunder and electrical storms that can spawn tornadoes.

There is also the threat of severe flooding, as well as snow and ice storms.

Man-made threats also exist with the possibility of large industrial fires such as the Sunrise explosion last summer, chemical spills, and problem arising from Toronto's proximity to Pickering's nuclear power plant.

"There is no one best way to warn Torontonians," Tavener said.

For emergency tips, visit torontoobserver.ca

Briefs

Shots fired at party

Police are looking for a 17- to 18-year-old man who shot a guest at a birthday party early last week. Police say both men were at the birthday party and got into a fight, which continued outside the party room. The victim was shot twice in his lower body and taken to hospital with serious, but non-life-threatening injuries. The suspect is described as light-skinned, around 5-foot-6 and clean-shaven. He was wearing a baseball cap and red and black clothes. If you have any information, contact Crime Stoppers at 222tips.com.

Girls night in for a cure

The Canadian Cancer Society is encouraging women to get together for Girls Night In events to help raise money to find a cure. Women are being asked to invite their girlfriends for an evening full of fun and to donate what they would usually spend on a night out on the town. The money raised will go toward research to cure various cancers, such as breast cancer, ovarian cancer and cervical cancer. For more information on how to participate, visit GirlsNightInForCancer.ca.

De Rosario nominated

Scarborough's Dwayne De Rosario is up for a national Jefferson Award to honour his public service. The Toronto FC soccer player is being recognized for the help and support he has provided others, such as hosting fundraisers for Nothing But Nets, an organization that hands out bed nets to Africans to reduce the malaria carried by mosquitoes. The winner will be announced in June 2010.

Two charged in armed robbery

A young man and woman have been charged following an armed robbery at a jewelry store in Scarborough. Two employees at Jewels by Kobi were held at gunpoint Oct. 1. A quantity of jewellery was removed from a counter. Dareon Thomas, 22, and Rashida Beckett, 20, are charged.

New bridge to ease traffic flow

TRISTAN CARTER
The Observer

Two new bridges were unveiled by Mayor David Miller last week at Morningside and Finch Avenues to help improve access to the Morningside Heights community.

The bridges replace the previous structure, which

was seen as impractical and unsafe.

The old bridge allowed for only a single lane of traffic to travel underneath the railway. This meant traffic could only go in one direction at a time. The tight squeeze under the bridge also put pedestrians at risk.

"Basically, the idea behind

the project was to improve traffic flow and increase pedestrian safety," project manager Peter Pilateris said.

The project features two new bridges which allow for two lanes of traffic in each direction, sidewalks, bike paths beside Morningside Avenue and bike lanes on Finch Avenue.

The project cost around \$34 million. At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Miller mentioned his unpopular vehicle licence registration fee helped pay some of the cost. Another \$2.5 million was contributed by the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Residents appear to welcome the new bridges despite

two years of construction.

"There was a big turnout of residents and they all seemed pretty happy about it," said Pilateris, speaking about the project's media session. "A lot of people bought those houses and were waiting for these infrastructure improvements, so it's been a long time coming."



Four workers, putting the final touches on the new bridge at Morningside and Finch Avenues, pose in front of their handiwork. **TRISTAN CARTER/The Observer**

Tropicana centre celebrates 15 years

AMANDA LY
The Observer

Scarborough youths from Tropicana Community Services put on a proud performance of singing, dancing, drumming and poetry on Oct. 3 to celebrate 15 years with the Scarborough Youth Resources Centre.

Omar (Medals) Khan, 20, recited a poem he wrote about his friend's death.

Khan turned to Tropicana to offer support to others in need.

"I turned my friend's death into a positive," he said.

"If any kid is going through

something, if anyone needs someone to talk to, I'm here. All the problems that youth are facing in today's society can be dealt with here."

Khan earned the nickname (Medals) after winning so many awards for his high school's track and field team for shot put.

Showing off one of his gold medals, Khan said he's training to go to the Summer Olympics in 2012.

Mary Hines-Henry, 17, has been coming to the centre for three years.

He did a step dance performance which is one of the

services offered at Tropicana.

The centre has taught her more than just rhythm.

In the Sister to Sister program, she discusses racism, effects of media, self-esteem, and daily life issues.

Jerema Hewitt, 20, has been coming to the centre since she was nine years old.

Once at the receiving end of the centre's services, she

is now a mentor and initiates their programs like ARP (Arts Roots Perception).

For Hewitt, Tropicana has been life changing.

"I was really shy," she said. "I wouldn't be able to speak or even perform. My first entrance into public performance was through Tropicana."

"They helped me build my confidence. It's a big family here."

Tropicana started 29 years ago to address the 40 per cent high school dropout rate among black youths, but have since expanded their services to provide counselling, employment help, daycare and more.

It's open to youths of all different backgrounds.

MPP Brad Duguid presented the centre with a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The centre is located in Scarborough Town Centre.

For more Tropicana locations, visit tropicanacommunity.org.

They helped me build confidence. It's a big family here
- Jerema Hewitt

Councillors hear citizen complaints on garbage

From Page 1

and he owns a small bin, which currently only has a \$10 per year fee.

"But for those families with five or six people, their rates

are higher, so they will have a bigger burden."

Residents are expected to become more outspoken when the whole financial picture is agreed upon and the final numbers are released.

"As a city councillor living in the area I represent, I have heard continual griping about our garbage collection system. A fee increase will only serve to heighten these feelings," Ainslie said.

Before anything is approved, the city must look over the finances and see whether there is any money to spend.

"We need an update as to what we are spending on

programs and if we have a surplus," Moeser said.

Councillor Glenn deBaeremaeker, chair of the public works committee, which is at the centre of this debate, was unavailable for comment.

UofT begins campus expansion

Ground breaks on laboratory centre

SELENA MANN
The Observer

A \$78-million building is being constructed by the University of Toronto at Ellesmere Rd. and Military Trail.

The building, measuring 15,000 square metres, is to be built over what used to be a parking lot for U of T staff and students.

Federal and provincial governments are contributing \$70 million toward building the Instructional and Laboratory Centre for the university's eastern campus.

"With this building we will increase our academic facilities 25 per cent," said Franco Vaccarino, principal of University of Toronto Scarborough, at the groundbreaking ceremony on Sept. 24.



SELENA MANN/The Observer

University of Toronto management take up their shovels to kick off the groundbreaking celebrations with the help of politicians from the provincial and federal governments on September 24.

"It will address our space needs," he said.

Also at the groundbreaking were Ward 44 councillor Ron Moeser, Guildwood East

Scarborough MP John McKay, Pickering-Scarborough East MPP Wayne Arthurs, and federal minister of state Gary Goodyear.

The building is a part of a federal and provincial government initiative to create and finance educational institutions.

The expectation is that this will help the economy by creating more jobs, Gary Goodyear said.

The government will also

be putting money into creating more scholarships.

Arthurs said that new centre will make the Scarborough campus more appealing, instead of being considered a satellite campus.

"Today marks a new phase in the history of the University of Toronto Scarborough, a history that has seen UTSC become a preferred destination for both students and teachers throughout Canada and the world," Arthurs said at the ceremony.

Military Trail was closed off for the groundbreaking with a variety of entertainment on the street.

Free food and a live band brought many U of T students to participate in the event.

There was also a huge street drawing of the campus done by two arts students, a hip hop dance routine, solo guitarist, and street performers. The centre is set to be complete within two years.

For more photos go to torontoobserver.ca

New United minister has faith in area

LAURA ROSS
The Observer

At the age when most teenagers rebelled and stopped going to church, Cheryl-Lynn MacPherson was just beginning to attend. She got involved in the choir, because the music and singing really helped connect her to her faith.

Now she's the new supply minister for St. Mark's United Church at 115 Orton Park Rd., replacing the previous minister who took a job in the church's national office. She will be leading the congregation in conducting a needs assessment to determine what they need in a new minister — until the end of June, when she may apply for the job herself.

Career choice

It's a career choice she never expected to face when she was younger. During university, MacPherson moved away from her faith but eventually returned and attended a church with a female minister. Never having had a female minister before, MacPherson had her eyes opened to the possibility that she could do it too.

"From there it was an unfolding process," says MacPherson. "In the church we use the term 'called by God.' It was a nudging

feeling that I could do that — serve other people, hopefully help them and provide inspiration to them."

Her family was surprised at first, but very proud and supportive. MacPherson did her training in the Presbyterian Church and transferred to the United Church which was a better fit with her ideals, because it does a lot of work on social justice issues and is inclusive of people of different backgrounds and sexual orientations.

In 1988 the decision was made by the United Church to ordain people who may be gay, lesbian or bisexual. This big moment for the United Church came with a lot of pain and division.

Since then understanding has grown within the faith and the United Church has taken a national stand on supporting same-sex marriages.

In the last few years St. Mark's itself has gone through an affirming process facilitated by Affirm United, which is an organization of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities who work to provide the full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in the church and society. They take time with congregations to study what, if anything, the bible says about sexual orientation.

MacPherson explains the united faith is part of the



LAURA ROSS/The Observer

Minister Cheryl-Lynn MacPherson will be leading St. Mark's congregation until June.

reform tradition of Christianity and so has its roots in the old Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregationalist traditions. Formed in 1925, the United Church is unique to Canada in that the three denominations on which it is based came together in the hope of forming a church that would be a leader among the protestant population.

"The United Church is a wide umbrella theologically, but it is a mainline liberal tradition that follows the teachings of Jesus," says MacPherson. "We try to walk the talk and that has implications on the way we live our lives." MacPherson attended three years of theological college and then served a one-year internship before receiving her

Masters of Divinity. She was ordained in 2006 and her first pastoral charge was Camilla-Laurel-Monocenter, between Orangeville and Shelburne, Ontario. This was a group of three churches so small that each one alone could not afford a full-time minister, so they pooled together and shared one minister among the three congregations.

Rouge Park to be revived

TRISTAN CARTER
The Observer

Construction is underway to revitalize a section of Rouge Park as part of the Waterfront Trail Western Gateway Project.

The project, which began in July, is scheduled to be completed in December. The plans include adding paths to encourage more walking and biking in the area.

While much of the area has been stripped during the construction, the project calls for more foliage to be added in order to provide additional stability to the river banks.

Pickering, Markham, and Toronto are all ambitiously improving their trail systems. About 50 hectares of trail space are added to improve the area every year.

Plans for a bike path from Morningside Avenue and Steeles Avenue to the lake are also being worked out. The hope is to construct a "continuous connect" which would allow cyclists to travel using bike paths.

"We're bringing on board next week a trails coordinator to help us not only design trails but lead hikes," said Alan Wells, chair of the Rouge Alliance.

Job action rolls on at picket lines

No deal in sight in ongoing strike at DriveTest centres

KATRINA ROZAL
The Observer

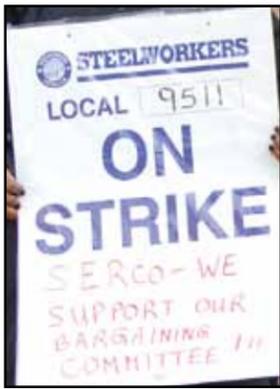
An average of 20 would-be drivers visit the Port Union DriveTest branch every day, despite it being seven weeks since DriveTest employees walked off their jobs.

While the strike has been dubbed “the forgotten protest” or “the strike that nobody cares about,” DriveTest estimates that each day since the strike began about 4,000 people have been unable to obtain their licences.

“Until there’s a public uproar nothing will happen,” said one picket at the Port Union DriveTest location.

Members of Steelworkers Union Local 9511 walked off their jobs after their private employer, Serco Des Inc., refused to negotiate terms regarding job security, management policy and health and safety. Serco has run Ontario’s driver examination services since 2003.

Parent company Serco Group is a U.K.-based company providing service in gov-



KATRINA ROZAL/The Observer

Employees at DriveTest centres like this one on Port Union Dr., have been at the picket lines for more than seven weeks.

ernment, health, transportation and military sectors. The Ernie Eves government awarded the company a 10-year licence after it outbid other businesses in a \$114-million contract to privatize Ontario’s driver licensing system.

“This company won the bid and that’s where it’s been going down, down, down,” one DriveTest staff said. “The morale is terrible.”

While today’s McGuinty government hasn’t directly intervened, it announced it has offered a mediator to be present at talks to help both sides reach a resolution sooner.

On Sept. 30, about 200 DriveTest employees rallied at Queen’s Park asking the province to resume written and vision testing during the strike. That request was denied.

According to Jim Young,

president of United Steelworkers Local 9511, their employer has proposed “language that it can lay off the most senior person prior to laying off junior employees, term employees, students or new hires in probation. This puts the company in a position to “circumvent the employment of full-time employees” in order to save money on benefits given to full-timers.

“We’re on strike mostly for job security because the company didn’t follow the actual seniority list,” said Matt Mazuryk, Port Union team captain. “What they were doing was they were laying people off periodically and we wanted to have a little bit more security than that.”

There are two primary types of staff at DriveTest: the driver examiners and customer

service agents. According to Young, their employers’ work culture doesn’t reflect the delegation agreement established when driving examinations became privatized.

“Our employer believes that the work is anyone’s work,” Young said. “When supervisors are performing our work that results in a reduction of hours for employees who are willing to work.”

Strike raises public safety concerns for drivers

From page 1

strike, instructors and administrators are stressing their concern over public safety. They say without awareness of the dangers involved, both while on strike and under contract, the risks will become a reality for everyone.

“We want safety for the province of Ontario more than anything else,” said Lawrence Smith, past president of Local 9511 DriveTest.

Since being unionized 6 years ago by Serco DES Inc., workers say their contracts grew increasingly uncertain as their seniority status became futile.

Serco got into the habit of hiring part-time staff to do road tests.

“The integrity of the driver exam is at risk,” says Smith.

Matt Mazuryk, team picket captain at the Port Union DriveTest location, said for every full-timer laid off, two part-timers were hired.

“[Road tests] require a lot of time and skill to do properly, so we are concerned about public safety as far as that is concerned,” said Mazuryk.

While the lockout continues, the Ministry of Transporta-



KATRINA ROZAL/The Observer

Instructors from Central Driving School are upset that the “forgotten” strike has cut down student attendance by 80 per cent because passing students cannot get their licences.

tation is providing extensions for drivers like Kiatipis, who require testing in order to be eligible for renewal. With her licence due to expire in December, she has only two months remaining before an extension will apply. This extension will last until Driv-

eTest services resume, upon which there will undoubtedly be a massive rush to reschedule and renew.

Also, drivers who require testing as a result of poor driving records (collisions, demerit points, etc.) are granted test-free driving privileges under

temporary regulation until the strike is over. This can pose a serious safety hazard for all who share the road.

“I’m a concerned citizen because we have licences for a purpose. We have to go take our test to make sure that we are capable of driving,” said

Robin Kiatipis.

Among these are drivers, classified or commercial, who continue to share the road without a valid licence.

One TTC driver walked up to the doors of the DriveTest to drop off medical documentation, required in order to keep

his licence.

“All we would have had to do is enter it into the system and he would be fine,” said Mazuryk.

The driver must now go through the ministry’s Driver Improvement Office, in order to send the records.

Without medical clearance on classified drivers, children on school buses and commuters on the TTC could be passengers in a potentially life-threatening situation.

“It’s a problem because they are taking care of other people and they are going to be without their licence. Who knows if they’re actually qualified to be driving those buses?” said Kiatipis.

It seems a resolution is at the bottom of their priority list.

One DriveTest protester insists nothing will get done. Kiatipis says she hopes that the government will pay more attention and take more action to fix the problem, for the sake of safer roads.

“People definitely should be more concerned, and there should be way more media attention towards it because I don’t think a lot of people even know about it. It affects everyone.”

Numb to the election scare

Recently in Canadian media, we've had constant talk of the possibility yet another federal election being called. Indicators point to a possible election within the next few weeks, just one year after the last one.

Now, if you switch to an American news network, chances are you'll hear about the controversial proposed changes to the American health-care system and the massive backlash it's producing in Congress.

There's something noteworthy about that second story. When have we ever seen something like this in Canada? Last year, many members of this paper covered the fall election, and a running concern of many of the interviewed MPs, including the ones representing our coverage areas of wards 38, 43 and 44, seemed to be getting people to care more about politics.

This apathy is a far cry from the extreme fervour in America, where there is an active revolt in Congress and people protesting in the streets, even bringing guns to presidential speeches. While that last bit of behaviour isn't exactly admirable, it does at least demonstrate a level of interest unseen up here.

Why do Canadians have such apathy towards politics? Perhaps it's because we've had four major elections in five years, each of them caused by a no-confidence vote. We never see anything as controversial as the American health-care fiasco because each new government fails to get to point of introducing provocative changes.

If Obama were prime minister and he tried to table something as large as health-care reform here, he would soon be in the middle of yet another election. Therefore, with our government we never see anything so ambitious because everyone is afraid of yet another election being called. It seems that very little really gets done in Canada, where politics is less about governing and more about political parties out-manoeuvring one another.

At the same time, everyone remembers the eight straight years of Bush, and to our credit, it is unlikely that anything like that would have taken place in Canada.

But do we really want the type of chaos that's gripping America? Then again, is apathy really so much better? Perhaps it's better to feel something, even if it's militant fanaticism, than nothing at all.

Regardless of your political stance, you've got to hand it to Stephen Harper for at least attempting to avoid an election. If another were to be called so soon, it'd be difficult to see why anyone would bother going to the polls.

— Anthony Geremia

Political focus needed in communities

In Paradise, Nfld., a 19-year-old political science student ran for mayor and almost won. He received overwhelming support from members of his community seeking change.

Often, politicians lose focus on working for the benefit of their constituents to play political chess. Sometimes one finds that the only way communities get things done is by working together on issues they know are relevant to them, rather than waiting for the government to get things done.

The whole point of a democratic government is that representatives of the people are elected to stand for people's rights, so it is unfortunate when they lose sight of this mandate.

However, when a politician works hand-in-hand with the community to try and make things work, that is an example of what a government should be like.

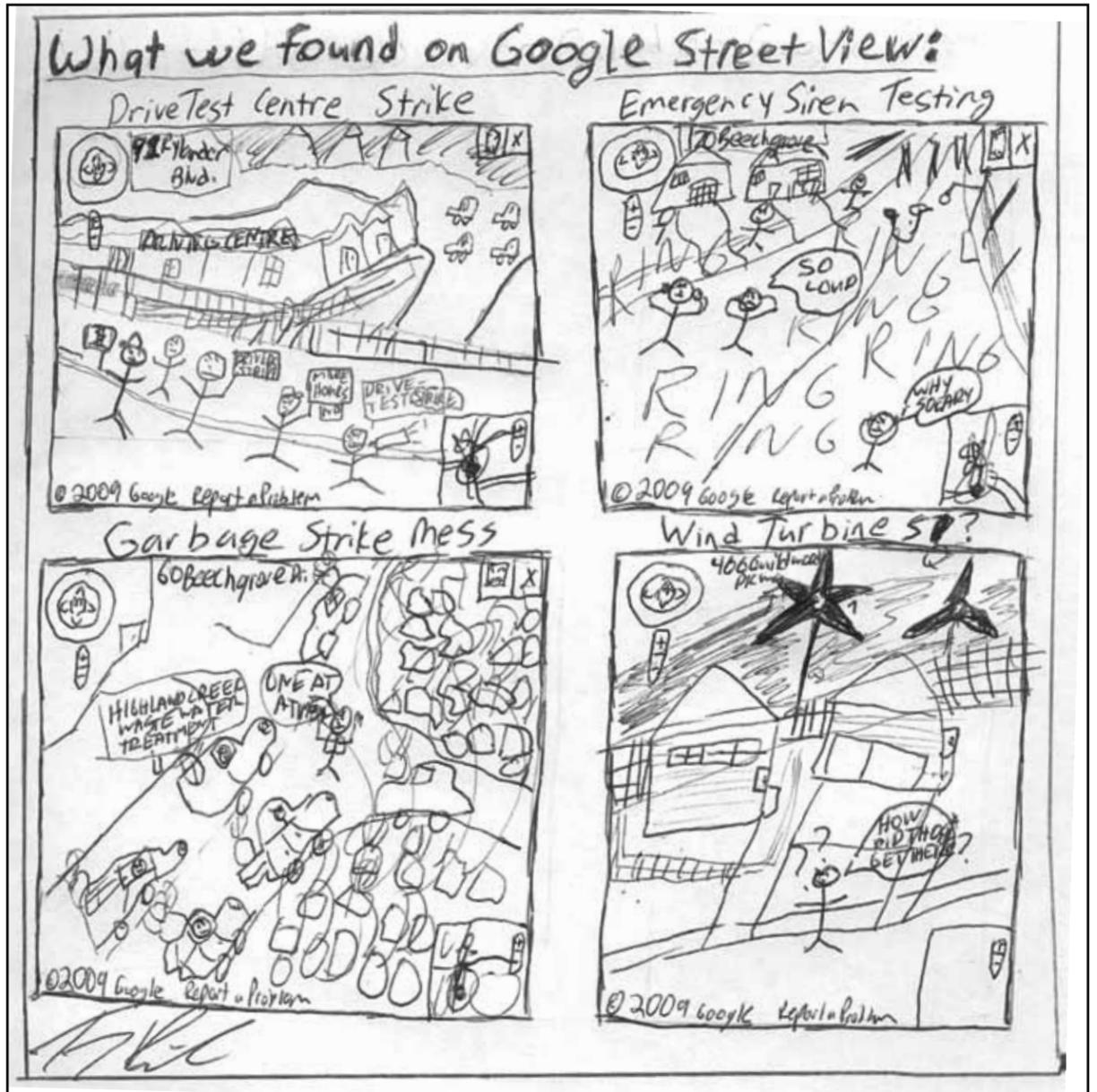
Recently, Scarborough Guildwood MPP Margaret Best held a meeting in conjunction with community organization. The Storefront to discuss affordable housing initiatives in the Kingston Galloway and Orton Park area.

The same community organization regularly hosts a "community speak" event where members of the community come together and discuss issues of concern to them.

The Port Union Community and Recreation Centre is a focal point for its community, frequently bringing together residents of Port Union in initiatives that benefit the whole community.

It is also where Pickering-Scarborough East MP Dan McTeague has hosted town hall meetings. In order to remain relevant to the communities they serve, political leaders need to continually go back to those communities and discover what is really important to people, rather than arguing over issues that have no bearing on daily realities.

— Gesilayefa Azorbo



TEVY PILC/The Observer

Disaster seen through Filipino eyes not heart-warming story

I am one of 13,865 Filipinos living in our newspaper's coverage area, so news of a typhoon in a country already drowning in political corruption definitely hits home.

Thankfully, none of my relatives are among the 383 people in the Philippines who lost their lives to the typhoon that gusted up to 210 kilometres per hour last month. However, the house where I grew up is in shambles, with no working refrigerator, stove or washing machine.

Relief efforts

While conversations of various relief efforts flood the Filipino community and restaurants in our coverage area, in this case I fail to relate to the idea that tragedy brings out the best in people.

If anything, my negative perceptions of Philippine corruption are intensified.

I hear of our president who, nearing the end of her tumultuous and controversial term, spent a good sum of reserved government relief funds on "investment" trips in North America before the typhoon hit.



Katrina ROZAL

If anything, my negative perceptions of Philippine corruption are intensified by this tragedy

I hear people subtly boast about how they "kindly donated money and clothes" to victims of the storm. Unfortunately, when I hear a Filipino man proudly tell a reporter about how wonderfully our community has responded to the tragedy, I simply cannot share in feeling a

genuine sense of pride for their goodwill.

If you are doing something good purely for the sake of doing something good, why do you need to broadcast what you "kindly" did? Shouldn't you be content with the knowledge that you helped someone? Why should praise from other people matter when they are not the ones you're helping?

Charity for profit

Giving material and moral support to people whose lives have been drastically changed by a merciless storm is something we universally recognize as praiseworthy.

Indeed, doing so is valiant.

But far too often such ideals have been exploited for the sake of greed and profit. The danger of donating to pseudo-Filipino charities is so real that I'd much rather trust an established non-Filipino Canadian organization.

The fact that I know I'm not the only Filipino-Canadian living here who does not trust Filipino charities is a calamity in itself.

The East Toronto OBSERVER

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Blue Devils defeat Warriors

Sir Wilfrid Laurier junior girls nearly double West Hill, 42-22, for their second win of the season

AMANDA LY
The Observer

The West Hill Warriors never stood a chance against the Sir Wilfrid Laurier Blue Devils as they lost 42-22 Oct. 5.

In their second game of the season, Laurier's junior girls basketball team showed confidence in their offence and defence.

"Our defence was good, we were shuffling with our hands up," Devils' wing and

guard Jessica Elliot said.

Laurier led the first quarter 6-2. By the second quarter, Laurier increased their lead by 10 points, dominating the scoreboard 18-8. In the third quarter, they blazed ahead with a score of 30-15.

Anika Faiz was a one-woman show, scoring more than half of the points for the Warriors.

Despite the Warriors loss both teams played a foul-filled first half, racking up a combined 20 fouls.

One of the players on the Warriors would giggle either when the ball was stolen from them or if they missed a rebound. This showed the lack of seriousness on the team's part, a far watching the game said.

Laurier's high scorers were Marielle Aguiar, 12 points, Jessica Elliot, 7 points, and Sherry Delos Santos, 6 points.

For more pictures of the game go to torontoobserver.ca



GESILAYEFA AZORBO PHOTOS/The Observer

Laurier and West Hill tussle for the ball during the second game of the season Oct. 5.

Empty bike lanes in Scarborough

IRINA LYTCHAK
The Observer

The city has fallen behind in its plans for the Bikeway Network Program initiated in 2008. But how much of a priority is this program for Scarborough residents?

"I can see physically that in my ward people are taking advantage of the bike lanes where they're built," says Ward 44 Councilor Ron Moeser. "But as far as the success [of the program], I'd say at this point, nobody knows."

Moeser says about 50 per cent of the initially planned bike lanes have been installed throughout the city so far as part of a Bike Plan put forth more than eight years ago. The project, costing \$7 million each year, was to be completed by 2011 but

has now been postponed until 2013.

Although most of the project centers on the city's downtown core, a lot of the unfinished bike routes were designed for the boroughs of the city, including Scarborough.

"The problem we have is that people that are in the suburbs themselves are not used to the bicycle systems," says Moeser. Most people who find themselves in the suburbs are generally used to driving or taking the TTC, he says.

"The big question is always, if we build, will they come? Or are they still used to their cars so much?" says Moeser.

Lucasz Pawloski, senior engineer for the Cycling Infrastructure and Program



Group, says there have been a number of reasons behind the delays in the project's completion.

"The installation season usually runs from May to October, so it's very difficult for us to actually install anything new in November and later just because of the weather conditions," says Pawloski. "Whenever we have approvals for something later in the year, normally those projects end up by default having to be followed up in the next year."

Pawloski also says this year's city strike came at the

IRINA LYTCHAK/The Observer peak season of the work period for his company and greatly affected the process of installing the bike lanes since most of the staff working on the project are unionized.

"Right now, especially in the suburbs, we've got sections of lanes or routes in some areas that are a little disconnected from each other, there's remnants of bike sections that are not connected to the network," says Pawloski. "But the real benefit of a particular piece is seen once you get the connection to the remainder of the network."

Blues' season hits the web

SELENA MANN
The Observer

University of Toronto will be streaming all Varsity Blues sports games online for the 2009-10 season.

The Varsity Blues teams will stream live webcasts through the Streaming Sports Network (SSN), making all of the home games between U of T and other universities viewable online.

This will make the games viewable by potential recruits and fans from all over. Parents and alumni can watch the games online without having to attend the games.

U of T's director of athletics is excited to have partnered with SSN.

SSN president Bengt Neathery agrees that the partnership was beneficial to U of T.

"Their commitment to equipment and resources for their broadcasting should prove exciting for all fans in upcoming season," Neathery

said.

Filming the games will be beneficial to students in high school who are planning to join sports teams in university.

They will be able to see how the teams are organized, how players play and how good they have to be in order to join the Varsity Blues' team.

"Potential recruits have the opportunity to see our successful intercollegiate programs from a distance," Hoffman said in a press release. The next game against the Waterloo Warriors, will be streamed on Oct. 17 at 1 p.m.

"Our objective for providing access to the best of university sports broadcasting has been brought up a level by the inclusion of U of T, and we believe this relationship further enhances our position in growing the exposure of our brand and Canadian athletics as a whole," Neathery said.

ARTS



Turning junk into ART

Liz Magor is on a mission to complicate the definition of beauty. Objects typically found in the garbage now reside in a gallery as items in her disorienting exhibit

MONICA VALENCIA
The Observer

What do people do with their stored junk? Throw it away, donate it to a thrift store or organize a garage sale? Why not create an art exhibit?

Artist Liz Magor decided to make something extraordinary out of the ordinary and she's sharing it with Scarborough residents. Magor's artwork is being displayed at the Doris McCarthy Gallery until Oct. 25. The exhibit includes candy, cigarettes, jackets, logs, liquor bottles, rats and deer heads that were cast in polymers.

"To me, [Magor's art] is a bit shocking and innovative because this is not traditional art," says Bryan Nguyen, a fan of Magor's work. "It's impressive and abstract. But for artwork like this, everyone's going to have their own opinion on what's going on."

Her drive to explore everyday objects comes from the simple question "what's behind what I see?" says Magor. "We're constantly judging based on appearances because we don't have time to analyze, but art forces us to slow down and think about what we see."

Polymerized raccoon and deer heads may be gruesome to most but Magor attempts to make these objects aesthetically pleasing to the eye.



Photos by
MONICA VALENCIA

Clockwise from top: *Dresser* is displayed under soft light to resemble an item in a high-end boutique; Liz Magor displays *Bedside*; the *One-Bedroom Apartment* and the *Raccoon*.