

THE RING

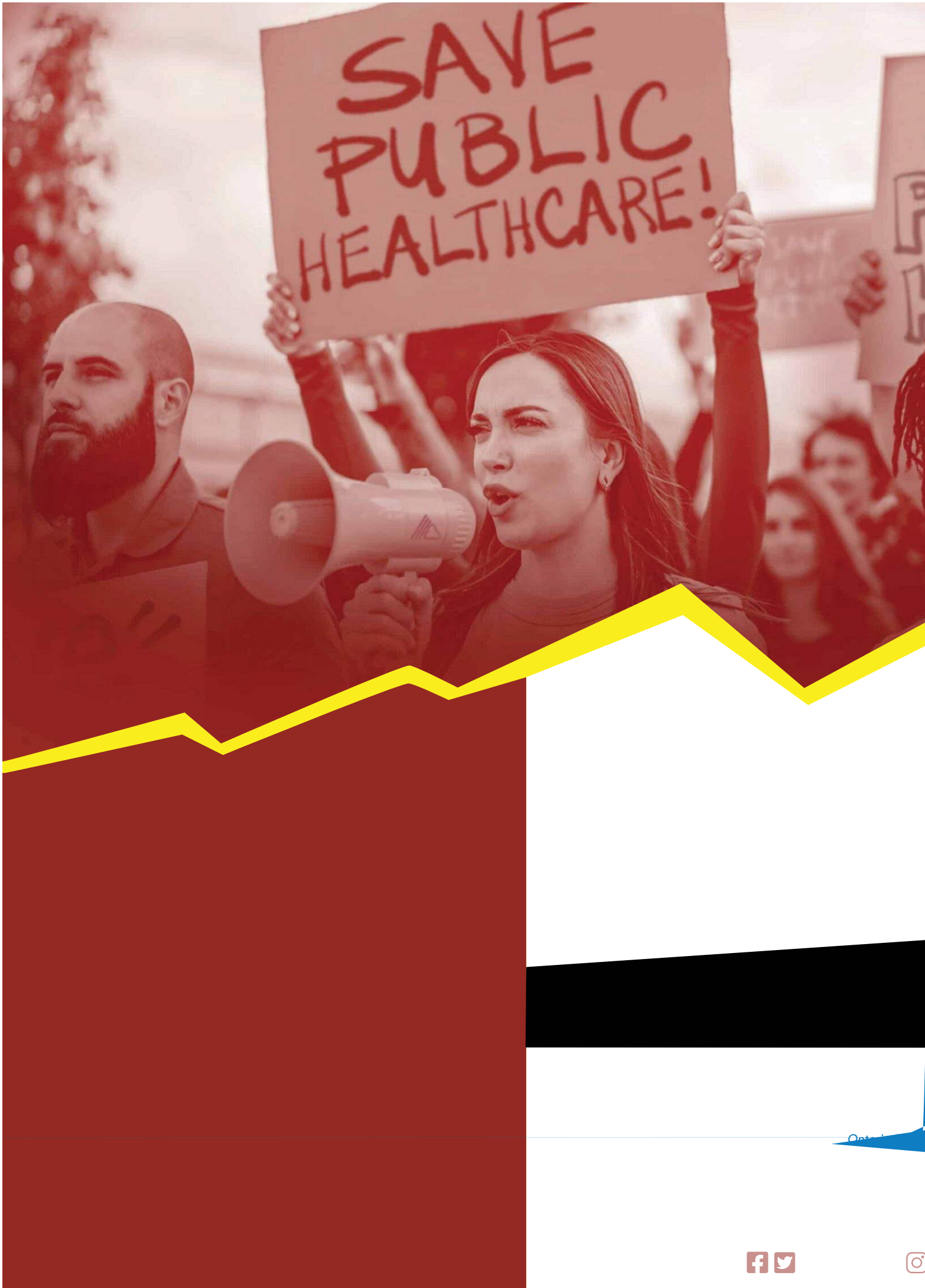
March 2023

EVENT LISTINGS | ADRIA KAIN | HOROSCOPES | CROSSWORDS



FREE!
ISSUE 3 VOL 1

**EX-MAYOR'S BUDGET CUTS TTC SERVICE,
GIVES \$48M MORE TO COPS**



FEBRUARY / MARCH 2023

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The Grind Magazine Toronto

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Tima Shah, president of Centennial College Students' Association, speaks at a TTC riders press conference against service cuts, January 2023.

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A huge thank you to:

THE END OF MARINELAND?

Not everyone loves Marineland and its treatment of marine mammals like Kiska the Orca. So some rejoiced when news broke that the owners of Marineland filed a registration to lobby the Ontario government about the "Sale of Marineland of Canada Inc."

NEW LEGAL PRECEDENT SET FOR ENCAMPMENT CLEARINGS

An Ontario judge ruled this winter that the City of Waterloo, ON, could not evict un-housed people from encampments if the city does not provide adequate, accessible shelter spaces. Doing so would violate peoples' right to life, liberty, and security under Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the judge stated.

Toronto regularly evicts people from tents

I appreciate that you've included a puzzle section in your publication. For your December/January issue, however, I am not sure if I'm missing something or if the puzzle has massive misprints. I do crosswords all the time, as do some of my friends, and none of us have been able to understand. That said, thanks so much for including a puzzle section!

— Sara Taylor (via email)

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THIS issue of *The Grind*, dear reader, goes to the printer as we enter a brief period without a mayor. John Tory, elected in 2014, then again in 2018 and 2022, officially submitted his resignation on February 15. This came after *The Toronto Star* broke the news that Tory, in his late 60s, had a sexual relationship with a staff member in his office who seems to have been 29 when it started.

Tory is out, and good riddance.

But we're left living with his budget. And the majority of City Council shares his vision for the city.

What that means practically is that if you're reading this on the TTC, you already had to pay the extra 10 cent fare increase, or will soon. And the wait times for buses and subways have gotten longer.

It also means the police got another \$48 million on top of their already obscene budget to hire 200 more cops.

In a city known for violent encampment evictions, inadequate shelter space, unbearably high rents, mediocre public transit, an endlessly-growing wealth gap, and a dwindling number of music venues, giving the police more money

THE 2023 Toronto city budget didn't go to a vote. With the "Strong Mayor" powers granted by Doug Ford's PC government, now-former Mayor John Tory prepared the budget, and that's it. All City Council could do was propose minor amendments to the budget and vote on those.

In the past, councillors debated and voted on the City budgets. But the mayor is now much more powerful.

Tory's budget came in at \$16 billion. City Council made amendments to spending totalling around \$8 million. That amounts to changes to 0.05 per cent of the spending.

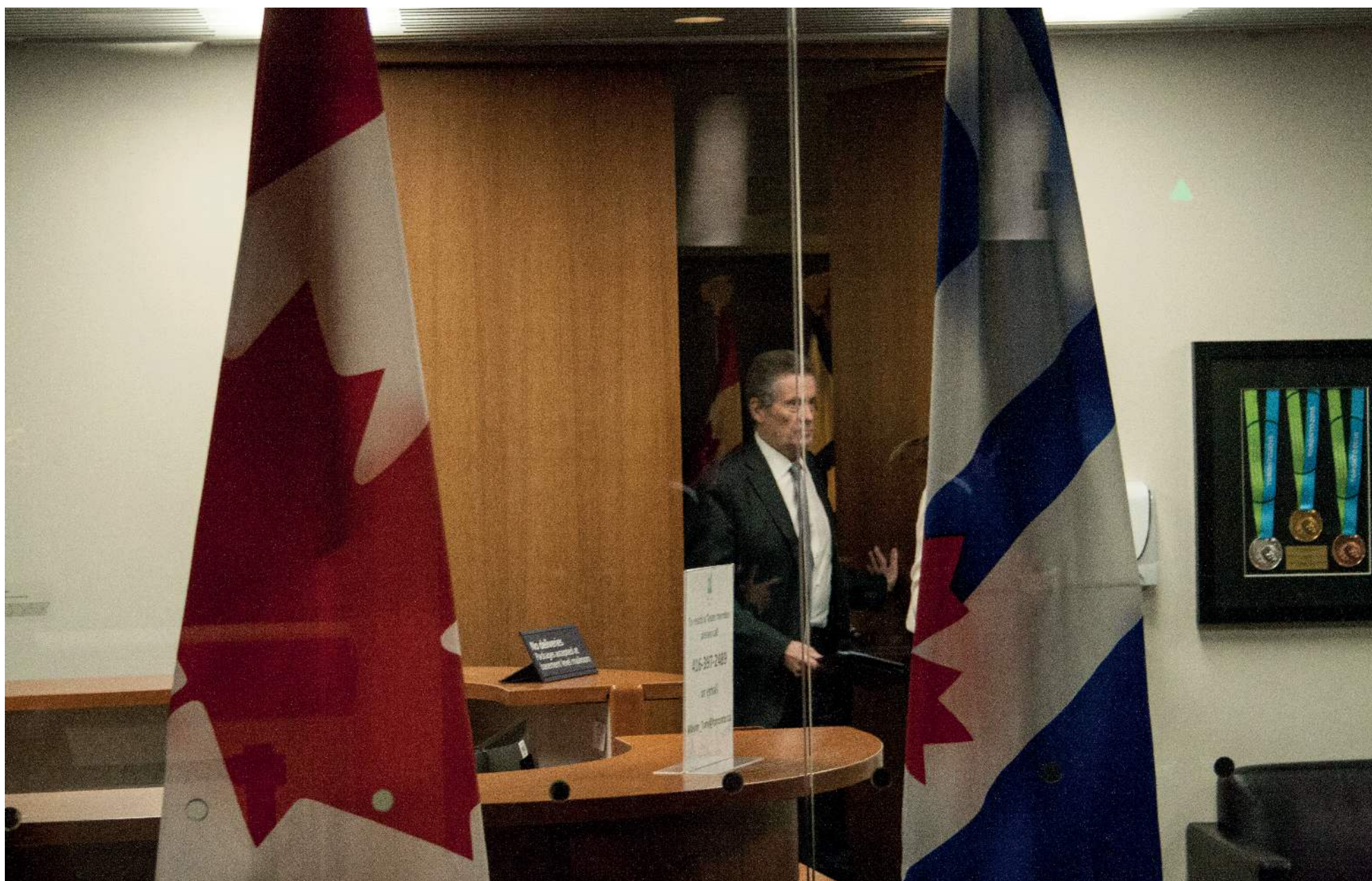
There was the largest property tax increase in years, at 5.5 per cent, plus a 1.5 per cent rise in the building levy. There was a smaller commercial property tax increase of 2.75 percent.

This will raise additional revenues, but the city continues facing shortfalls, and is appealing to the provincial and federal governments to chip in funds. Some funds have been promised but not yet delivered.

Toronto Police got a \$48 million increase to their budget,

which was a bit over a billion dollars a year already.

Alejandra Bravo, city councillor for Davenport, introduced an amendment to take \$900,000 off of that increase and allocate it to 24/7 warming centres so that unhoused peo-



Media's focus on TTC violence

Is the TTC really more dangerous than it used to be? If we're going by what we hear from the police, John Tory, and the news, we would have reason to think so.

But what if it's not so much an increase in violence as it is an increase in its reporting?

Managing editor of the online media outlet Passage, Davide Mastracci, recently dug into the data.

Looking a few years back, between the years 2019 and 2020, and accounting for the drop in ridership due to the pandemic, offenses against customers reported by the TTC increased by more than 100 per cent. This jump, Mastracci found, translated to 13 per cent more news coverage.

Yet, an 18 per cent increase of offenses between 2021 and 2022 translated into a whopping 300 per cent increase in news articles about it. This includes 191 news articles containing the words "TTC" and "violence," according to Mastracci's search of the Canadian Newsstream database.

In January 2023 alone, the month the new municipal budget was announced, there were 180 media hits.

By comparison, there were only 82, 93 and 63 such articles in the entire years of 2019, 2020, and 2021, respectively.

So, what gives?

HOME care is what it sounds like: care in the home. The large majority of home care work is conducted by Personal Support Workers (PSWs). PSWs deliver about three quarters of all home care. The people they help are usually referred to as “clients.” These clients are often outpatients from hospitals and long-term care homes.

Home care work is hard work. PSWs do non-medical work. Many clients need help getting out of bed or off a couch. They need help bathing, moving around, getting dressed and much more. PSWs routinely conduct heavy lifts, expose themselves to disease and face a wide range of emotional and physical responses from clients, some of which can be violent. Injuries are common.

In the 1980s, healthcare and patients’ rights advocates argued that home care was a safer and more humane form of care. Institutionalizing people in hospitals when they could easily be at home was viewed as unnecessary and even dangerous in terms of exposure to other illnesses.

Home care advocates also argued that there were major cost savings. Researchers demonstrated how home care was far cheaper per patient and could free up hospital beds.

In the early 1990s, Bob Rae’s NDP government took the ideas to heart and set about

ACCORDING to Ontario's Financial Accountability Office (FAO), current spending plans from Doug Ford's government will leave hospital beds in the province understaffed until 2026.

Ontario's health care system has been in and out of crisis since the start of the pandemic, owing to years of funding cuts and wage freezes.

Across the system, influxes of patients are overwhelming short-staffed facilities, especially hospitals and, more recently, children's hospitals – both by COVID-19 cases and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) cases.

“We have the lowest nurse: patient ratio per capita in the country,” Angela Preocanin, First Vice President of the Ontario Nurses Association, told PressProgress. “Typically where you'd have a nurse: patient ratio of 1:5 on a medical unit, it's now 1:8.”

“In Intensive Care Units (ICUs) with significant, critically ill patients, 1:1 would be the norm. Now? 1:3 is not unheard of.”

But according to the FAO, the government's current spending plans suggest the staffing crisis

DR. Adom Bondzi-Simpson hasn't forgotten how the words sounded. "Where's the Black doctor!?"

"I think it was the power and strength of how he spoke those words. It was the fact that when I stepped outside of the room, I could hear him shouting. I could hear his call and pain or frustration."

"It was something that just always stuck with me," says Dr. Bondzi-Simpson. He had been told by colleagues that the elderly man was being difficult, but when Dr. Bondzi-Simpson spoke with him he understood that the patient was afraid and unsure if he could trust the advice he was receiving.

Speaking with Dr. Bondzi-Simpson put the patient at ease and he eventually consented to surgery. But as Dr. Bondzi-Simpson left the OR, he heard the patient shout those words. Dr. Bondzi-Simpson returned to the patient and held his hand, not letting go until he was fully sedated for surgery.

Years later, Dr. Bondzi-Simpson wrote an article about this experience, which was published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal last year.

That patient is not alone in his fears and frustrations. According to the 2016 census, 4.7 per cent of Ontario's population is Black, yet Black physicians make up only about 2.3 per cent of the physician population, as of 2015.

Dr. Bondzi-Simpson, 31, was born in Toronto to a South African-Canadian mother and a Ghanaian father. He was raised in North York

dren to Canada in the 60s. His paternal grandfather was also a trailblazer, part of one of the first classes of Black physicians in Ghana.

“A lot of that molded me in terms of what I could do, what I thought was feasible and achievable,” says Dr. Bondzi-Simpson.

After completing his studies in Medical Sciences at Brock University, Dr. Bondzi-Simpson moved to Calgary for a Master’s degree in Immunology. He stayed to attend The University of Calgary Cumming School of Medicine. Throughout his time in medical school, Dr. Bondzi-Simpson frequently wondered: where are the Black medical students?

“Going through med school in Calgary, I myself was one of two [Black medical students]. It was a class of about 160.”

Dr. Bondzi-Simpson mentions that the school has improved its diversity in recent years by creating a Black application program, based on the University of Toronto’s Black Student Application Program (BSAP). The minimum requirements for these application programs are unchanged, but there are key differences, like having Black community members and Black physicians, faculty members, and students take part in admissions re-

How many people did cops kill last year?

CRIMINOLOGIST **JEFF SHANTZ** TALLIES HOW MANY PEOPLE CANADIAN POLICE HAVE KILLED, AND HOW MANY POLICE HAVE BEEN KILLED

Jeff Shantz

THERE were at least 117 people who lost their lives in “police-involved deaths” in 2022.

This is according to my own tracking of police killings, drawing from police oversight agency reports, police communications, media coverage, and in some cases family reporting.

This is up from 2021, when there were at least 104 people who lost their lives.

Police-involved deaths are incidents in which police interact with someone and that person ends up dead. In some cases, police have actively killed someone, as in a shooting, beating, or vehicular homicide. It also includes in-custody deaths where police were responsible for someone’s care. And in other cases, police interactions may have impacted a person’s actions, as in a fall by someone in distress.

In 2022, in Ontario alone, there were 12 firearm deaths, meaning people shot and killed by the police; 14 deaths in police custody, including holding cells; four vehicle deaths, which may

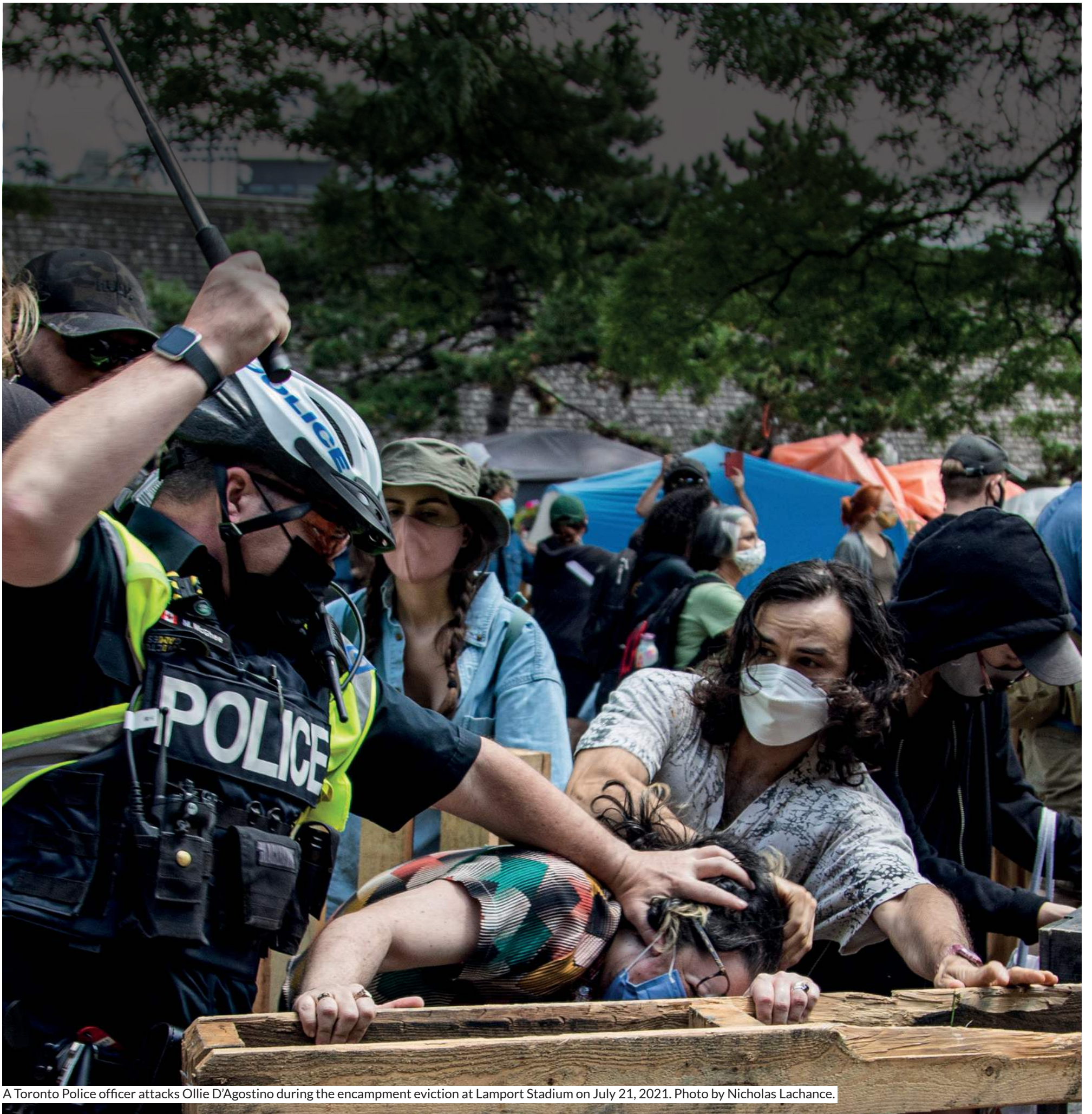


IN response to outgoing mayor John Tory's \$48 million dollar increase to the Toronto Police budget, which already topped \$1 billion, Claudette Beals-Clayton had a lot to say. "\$50 million for what?! It's not the rich [who take care of the poor], it's the poor. Take that money and put it back into the community." Beals-Clayton is the mother of Regis Korchinski-Paquet, a woman she says was killed by police on May 27, 2020.

Beales-Clayton spoke at a unique event where, for the first time, mothers of those murdered by police in the GTA had organized a community event to share their stories with the community. On a cold January evening, she urged the packed halls of the downtown Church of the Holy Trinity to reconsider how we view public safety. "I made a call," Beales-Clayton says, "and I lost my daughter."

As arctic temperatures swept the city at the the end of January, shelter advocates, through tears, reported having to turn away close to 1,500 human beings into temperatures that would likely result in frostbite, loss of limbs, or death.

That meant nothing to then-mayor John Tory and the 14 other city councillors who voted against keeping warming centres open 24/7. That would have cost about \$400,000 a month. Adding 80 cops to harass and displace the unhoused from the TTC? Over \$1



A Toronto Police officer attacks Ollie D'Agostino during the encampment eviction at Lamport Stadium on July 21, 2021. Photo by Nicholas Lachance.

AS mayor of Toronto, John Tory was loyal to the rich, and a fierce enemy of the poor.

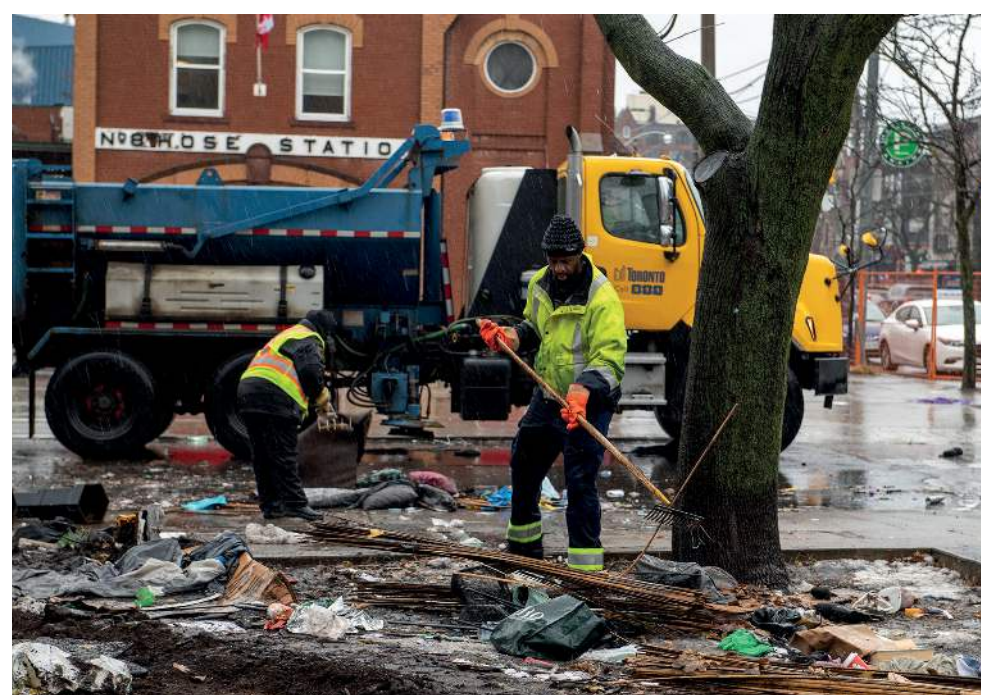
Born into a Toronto dynasty family, he represented old-school, white, wealthy, cringe Toronto.

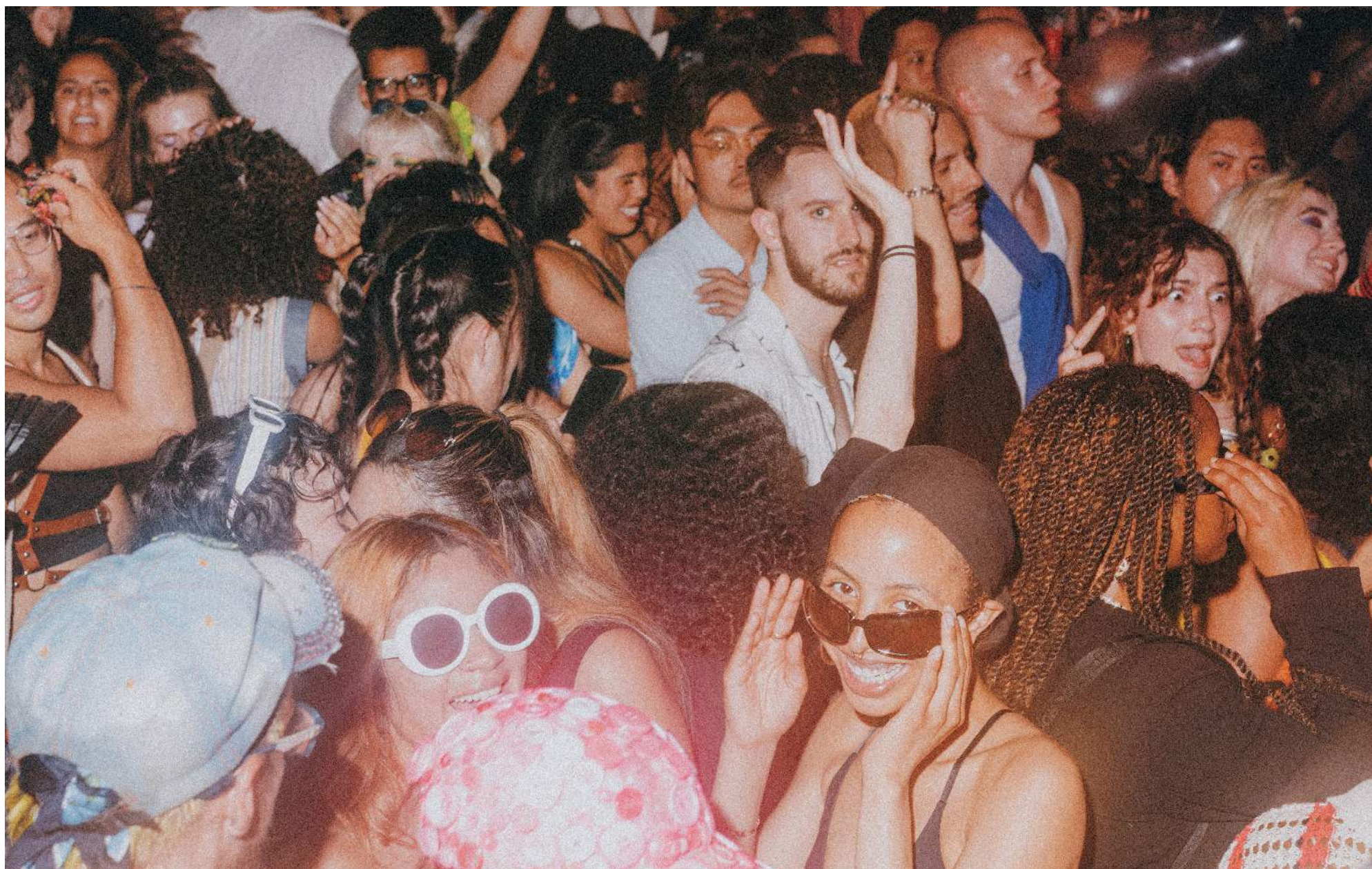
Before politics, he worked in media, getting his start in the Rogers media empire, where he still works.

Once in politics, he was obsessive about communications and the media, manipulating it to his aims. He had help along the way from high-powered media and public relations professionals like Amanda Galbraith (a principal at PR firm Navigator), as well as the city's communications channels. For years, city comms was headed by Brad Ross, who regularly played loose with the facts on files such as encampments.

Perhaps Team Tory's greatest achievement was convincing so many people he was reasonable and compassionate, while he enacted policies that were just the opposite.

Tory routinely oversaw city staff and private security, working with the police, as they pushed tenants and unhoused people out of their homes, whether apartments or tents around the city. And the city lied over and over





Ash, BAMBII, Marcus Visionary, Myst Milano, and a live performance by Debby Friday, whose noisy, experimental rap songs are right at home among the fast-paced techno, drum 'n' bass, and jungle booming out of the DIY speakers affixed to the concrete ceilings. The party continues

AT 3:00 a.m. on a Saturday in late September, 2 000 eager Toronto dance music fans are gathered in an industrial warehouse north of the city for a cavernous two-room rave. Organized by local queer and BIPOC-centred party collective Pep Rally and multimedia arts publication *Lotion Magazine*, the night's theme is "candy couture," which the youthful crowd has interpreted to mean plenty of beaded bracelets, mesh tops, thigh-high furry boots, and at least one partier wearing a rainbow LED cape, like a raver Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.

While the night's headliners are from overseas, the rest of the lineup is a microcosm of the most innovative and exhilarating underground club music in Toronto right now. There are DJ sets from Chippy Nonstop, Karim Olen

We need to properly have a system and throw actual parties with safety measures,” says Nonstop.

As restrictions on indoor events eased in 2021, Pep Rally was able to put on a handful of half-capacity parties at Annex club CODA, one of the few mid-size music venues catering to electronic music left in Toronto. But this scarcity, combined with the creative and management-imposed limitations of more traditional venues, led them to pivoting again to DIY spaces. “Chippy and I did Pep Rally because we weren’t getting booked at these big clubs; we had to create our own space,” says Olen Ash.

The duo say that, post-pandemic, the audience is hungry. “Before, a lot of our parties were just our friends and a little bit of word of mouth, now people do research,” says Nonstop. “Younger people who weren’t really going out before are figuring out who they are and what they like.”

“There’s a new generation of youth that just wants to get back to appreciating music and connecting with people,” says Olen Ash. “Everyone looks out for another at our events, everyone’s super accepting, you can literally come as you are and you are valued.”



The Grind: We're almost exactly one year to the date that you released your album. How did you feel when it finally was out in the world and people could engage with it?

Adria Kain: The best way to describe it is a breath of fresh air. I'm still processing a lot of what's happening right now. It has been a whirlwind of events. I'm kind of just getting to the calm after the storm, as opposed to the calm before the storm. There's still a bunch of things in the works that are going to be happening throughout the new year, but right now, I'm just trying to give myself a chance to really like bask in all that is coming in, and just trying to allow myself to really take in how far I've come. I'm not used to really paying attention to how much I have actually succeeded in my career. "I think that this project could have only happened like this over the pandemic,"

The Grind: Why aren't you used to paying attention to your successes?

Adria Kain: I think I'm just so focused on constantly working because that's pretty much all I've known since I was young. You work to try to make ends meet or try to build a better life. I think that just became embedded in my mentality to the point where I almost forgot to stop, pay attention, and just give myself a pat on the back.

Two years ago, I literally didn't have much. I was sitting in a space where I didn't really know what I was doing with my music career or like where it was, what direction it

you have to try to figure out financially how you're going to take on these opportunities and how you're going to get from Toronto to the UK or to the US and then you gotta apply for a visa. There's so many hoops that you have to go through as well as an artist from Toronto.

And then when we try to make things work here, it just doesn't. It doesn't penetrate. And I don't know, I think all of us are really trying to figure out what the problem is. Because there's been so many different platforms, different writing camps, organizations and programs that have been imple-

mented to try to change things, but it doesn't really seem like it's doing much, except for maybe just something in the moment, you know, that feels inspiring.

The Grind: Who were some of your influences as an artist?

Adria Kain: Growing up, I listened to predominantly R&B. I was listening to artists like Erykah Badu, Missy Elliott, Aaliyah, Brandy, Monica-the people who were leading the R&B sound back in the early 90s. There were elements in my childhood that kind of spilled into the artist that I've be-

ART**Afrophillia | Frantz Brent-Harris**

On until Aug 31, Black Artist's Network & Dialogue Gallery, Toronto Sculpture Garden, 115 King St E, **FREE**
bandgallery.com/afrophillia

Afghanistan My Love | Artlords & Shaheer Zazai

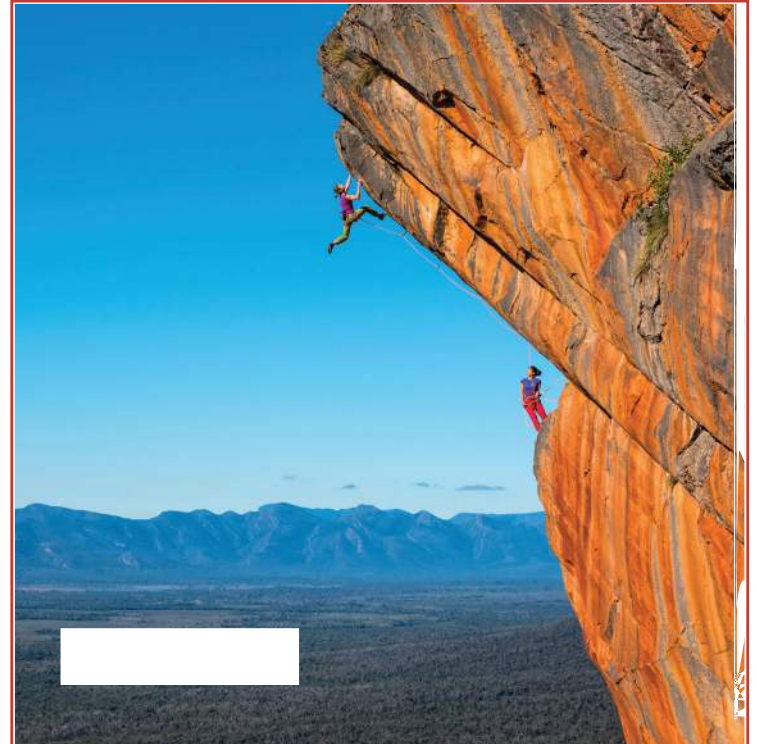
On until April 10, Aga Khan Museum, 77 Wynford Drive, **FREE** for Members; Adult **\$20**; Children **\$10**; Seniors **\$15**; Students \$10
agakhanmuseum.org/exhibitions/afghanistan-my-love

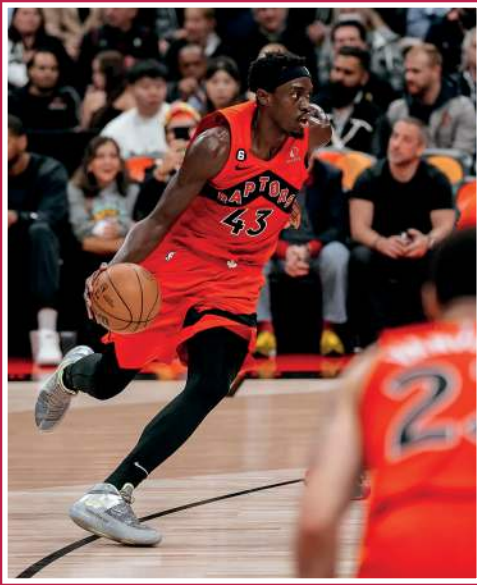
Qanuqtuurnarniq | Shuvinai Ashoona

On until March 31, Doris McCarthy Gallery, AA304, Arts & Administration Building, U of T Scarborough, 1265 Military Trail, **FREE**

The Counter/Self | Curated by Mona Filip; Various Artists

On until March 25, Art Museum at the University of Toronto, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, 7 Hart House Circle, **FREE**





THE TEAM WILL HAVE TO PUSH THROUGH ITS PROBLEMS FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON, BUT EXPECT CHAOS IN THE OFF-SEASON

Abdul Malik

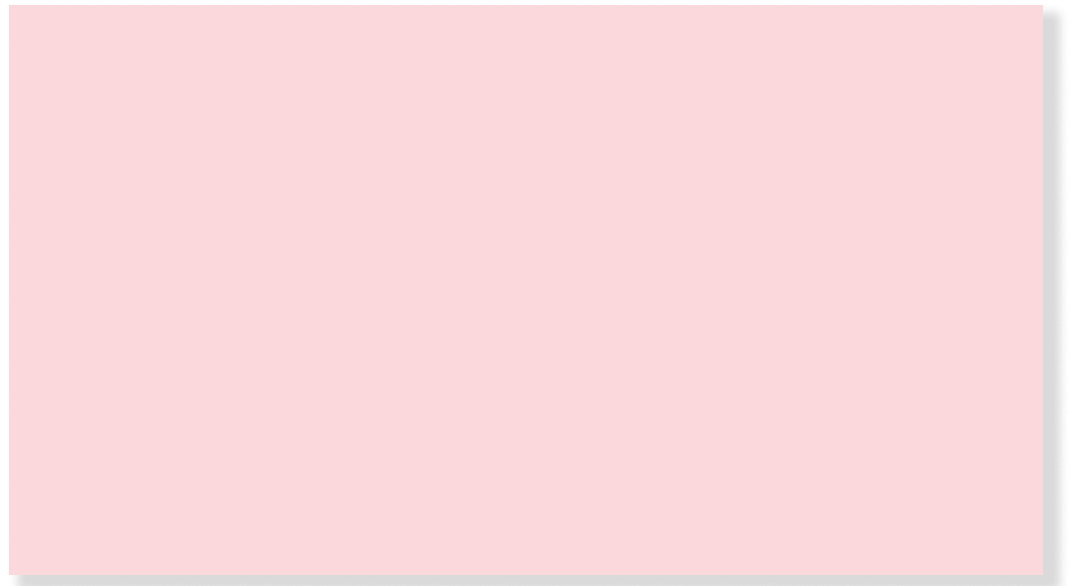
A promising start to the Toronto Raptors season gave way to an eclectic year of embarrassing losses, unfortunate injuries, and strange decisions.

Over-extended players, reports of locker room unhappiness, and lacklustre depth are all things that could have been fixed at the February 9th NBA Trade Deadline.

But they weren't.

The Raptors made one move: bringing back center Jakob Poeltl from the San Antonio Spurs. He was the other guy in the 2018 deal that brought Kawhi Leonard to Toronto. The Raptors gave up

Khem Birch, a protected first-round draft pick,



ACROSS

- 1** Puts on
5 Rosy makeup
10 Advanced degrees, in short
14 Get ___ on the back
15 Number of likes versus replies to a tweet, for example
16 Extremely long time
17 Small or unimportant
18 Friend, in Mexico
19 Landlocked body of agua
20 "I am not reclusive, I just have a ___" (quote from 58D)
23 Also
24 Scarfed down
25 Actress Tyler
26 Round-bottomed cooking vessel
27 Intelligence org.
28 Pictures of Mickey, say
32 Rant
34 "That's too bad"
36 "The ___" (novel by Marguerite Duras)
37 Epic fail
40 Comparable (with)
41 Little pictures that go far
42 Jewelry for Lisa Simpson and Veronica Lodge
44 Eyelid ailment
45 Ideological suffix
48 Ambulance inits.
49 "When r u getting here?"
51 Sri ___
53 "Sorry ___ sorry"
54 Gist
58 Singer known as "Queen of the New Age"
60

HOROSCOPES

Lee Suksi

LEO

ARIES

We hear a lot about our attention spans getting shorter. However, the ways our brains have changed can be helpful for free association, which is the base material of poetry, fantasy and dreams. When your mind is racing, see if you can watch it racing without slowing it down. See what you can do with the speed of this material.

TAURUS

Remember you can share your smoothness, your abundance, your grace. Remember that ease is a talent. Remember that generosity may leave you feeling undefended, but it will offer you something new.

GEMINI

When you're in conflict, practice persuasion in an unexpected way. Grab a journal or record yourself with your phone and try convincing yourself of the opinion or feeling you disagree with. With any luck, this will strengthen your own faith in your position.

CANCER

You're often called upon to be the peacemaker in other peoples' lives. Peace is delicate, so pay attention when it happens when you aren't trying to make it happen. Let it carry you. Take waking rests. You need them.