

Shelf life

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS AND VIEWS

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Senator Vivienne Poy and a bevy of talented authors, dancers and musicians kicked off a month of celebrations on April 30 at North York Central.

Celebrating Asian heritage

Literary extravaganza launches a month of special programming

SPEAKING AT THE LAUNCH of Toronto Public Library (TPL) Asian Heritage Month celebrations, award-winning author Wayson Choy began his talk by explaining to the audience that he was going to tell a ghost story. What he ended up telling was an engaging and passionate story about the ghosts from his cultural past – the restless ghosts of his ancestral literature and culture that had no place to keep their past safe because Canadian Asians in the 1950s and 60s didn't feel welcome at public libraries. Choy went on to say how glad he was to be a part of a library event that celebrated Asian culture — and to see his books on the shelves of Toronto libraries — because he felt like he was helping to break down barriers and give the ghosts of his cultural heritage a place to rest.

May is Asian Heritage Month in Canada, and TPL is partnering with the Canadian Multicultural Council – Asians in Ontario in presenting a series of

programs designed to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Canadians of both East and South Asian descent.

The celebrations were launched with a literary extravaganza featuring Senator Vivienne Poy and a bevy of talented authors, dancers and musicians on April 30 at North York Central Library. M.G. Vassanji, Joy Kogawa, Olive Senior and Lien Chao, editor of *Strike the Wok: An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Canadian Fiction*, were

on hand to welcome authors, community leaders and members of the public in an evening that featured readings by Paul Yee, Judy Fong Bates and Wayson Choy, as well as musical entertainment by Juno-nominated sarod player Randev Pandit.

"What everybody involved in the event seemed to share," according to City Librarian Josephine Bryant, "was an enormous pride in the contributions Asians are making to Canadian culture and communities. There was also an emphasis on the importance of telling and sharing stories for personal, community and cultural relationship building, both within the Asian community and among the many cultures in Canada."

Other themes that emerged were the important role the library plays in preserving and disseminating stories and the incredible wealth of talent in Toronto.

"The speakers were all so enthusiastic

Please see Asian Heritage over...

Library partners with city departments

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY (TPL) staff across the city pitched in to help with Toronto's 20-minute makeover on April 23. Public service staff in departments all over Toronto took 20 minutes off from their usual work to help pick up garbage outside their workplaces.

"We filled two large garbage bags full of urban flotsam and jetsam — cigarette butts, broken pottery, gum, teabags, coffee cups and more," says Sanderson Assistant Branch Head Eniko Rehbeli-Szabo. "Plus a lost library video!"

Other staff members reported finding clothing and some even found money. "I came across something that was small and glinting in the sun," says City Hall Branch Supervisor Nancy Jessop. "A whole dime!"

In another initiative designed to bring public service departments together to make Toronto a more liveable community, TPL participated in the Toronto Youth Police Summit on May 13, making recommendations based on the library's many years of experience dealing with youth in 98 library branches across Toronto.

Recommendations were based on library initiatives such as:

- TPL's new teen website, *ramp*, www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/ramp, the latest in a series of ongoing efforts to stay connected to youth.

- Youth Advisory Groups, currently operating out of many TPL branches, organized to get advice and assistance

Please see Partners over...

Partners

Continued...

from Toronto teens in developing library collections and in organizing events and teen spaces in libraries.

According to TPL Children and Youth Advocate Ken Setterington, "The library partners with local community organizations, including the Toronto Police, to better serve all segments of the community. The police often drop into branches just to chat with staff and members of the public. This serves to increase the community's feeling of safety and gives local officers a chance to get to know neighbourhood youth."

The Youth Police Summit was organized to bring youth, community services and Toronto Police Services together to talk about issues surrounding police and youth relations.

Asian Heritage

Continued...

about exploring their Asian heritage," says Bryant.

Find out more about Asian Heritage Month on the Canadian Multicultural Council – Asians in Ontario website, www.cmcasians.com For more information on Toronto Public Library programs, collections and services, check the library website www.tpl.toronto.on.ca.

Fast Facts:

Asian Collections & Services

Books, magazines, videos CDs and DVDs in Chinese, Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Japanese, Korean, Panjabi, Bengali, Vietnamese, Tagalog...

Top three circulating language collections in 2003:

1. Chinese – 2.23 million
2. Hindi – 354,897
3. Tamil – 310,400

Children's stories over the phone in Cantonese and Mandarin (and English, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese) through Dial-a-Story 416-395-5400.

For more, click on Multicultural Connections on the library website, www.tpl.toronto.on.ca



D-Day 60th anniversary

On June 6, the City of Toronto will commemorate the 60th anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy with a telecast, shown in Toronto City Hall rotunda, of a live televised ceremony from the beach at Normandy, attended by heads of states, Canada's Lt. Gov and the Queen.

Toronto Public Library will join in this celebration with a series of booklists and displays. Booklists will feature popular fiction from 1944, non-fiction from the 1940s and contemporary books about the war. Toronto Reference Library will mount two exhibits during the month of June.

Watch the Toronto Public Library website www.tpl.toronto.on.ca for booklists and other information about this celebration.

Board Highlights

May 2004

Working together:

community library connections

The Board was given an update on the Working Together project, funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. The three-year project involving public libraries in Toronto, Vancouver, Regina and Halifax, will test models for working with marginalized or economically disadvantaged communities. In Toronto, the project will focus on the Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe communities.

Operating budget adopted
The Board adopted the 2004 operating budget at \$129.3 million net. The 6.2 percent increase over 2003 will allow the library to address collection needs related to increased demand, upgrade information systems and assist in achieving the library's goals, objectives and budget priorities.

Capital budget adopted

The Board adopted the 2004 capital budget at \$10 million net, allowing for completion of construction of a branch at St. James Town and renovations and reconstructions to various branches.

Next Board meeting:
Monday, June 14, 2004

Calendar of Events

May/June 2004

May 8-July 3

Kabuki
Part 1: The Actors

A two-part exhibition of 18th and 19th century Japanese woodblock prints.
TD Gallery, Toronto Reference Library
789 Yonge Street

July 17-Sept. 12

Kabuki
Part 2: The Performance
TD Gallery
Toronto Reference Library
789 Yonge Street

Tuesday, June 15, 7:30 p.m.

Author Series 04: John Bemrose
Giller Prize nominee, editor, poet and playwright John Bemrose reads from his first novel *The Island Walkers*.
Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

Tuesday, June 22, 7:30 p.m.

Author Series 04: Peter Unwin
Reading from his latest, *The Wolf's Head: Writing Lake Superior, an Interpretive History of the North*.
Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

Shelf Life is published 10 times a year by the Toronto Public Library Board, 789 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4W 2G8. Marketing & Communications Office: 416-393-7117. The Toronto Public Library Board meets monthly from September through June. Meetings are open to the public. The Library Board includes eight citizen members and five City Councillors.