

# Shelf life

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS AND VIEWS

VOLUME 5 • NUMBER 1 • JANUARY 2005



Architects Phillip Carter and Colin Kingsland have seamlessly melded the old library with the new, even using the original wood beams in the new building.

## Malvern District Branch reopened after extensive renovation

### *Branch already a hit with residents*

THE LATEST LIBRARY BRANCH to undergo renovation, Malvern District Branch, opened January 6, 2005 to a small but enthusiastic group who braved a raging blizzard to attend. The expanded Malvern District Branch is already the pride of the community. The first week had over 6,000 eager patrons exploring all 25,000 square feet of books, computers, periodicals and audiovisual materials just waiting to be used or borrowed.

Architects Phillip Carter and Colin Kingsland have created a striking new building, incorporating the original wood beams from the old library into the new, as well as many new elements including a dramatic wooden cathedral ceiling, clerestory windows and four palm trees. The branch is the second

one to implement the new express self check-out system, first piloted at St. James Town Branch. The multi-language interface and convenience of self check-out is so popular that one day when the system was down, a patron declined staff's offer to check out her materials,

preferring to come back when she could do it on her own!

The Multilingual and Children's areas are much more prominent than in the old library, the Children's area featuring a roomy picture book section with lots of bench seating beneath panoramic windows. Flanked by two towers, the entrance to the Storytime area naturally attracts children and their parents. Teens are well served by a comfortable lounge framed by a large south-facing bay window. Everyone appreciates the additional public computers (now totalling 43), ten of which are housed in a new Le@rning Centre where staff conduct training.

District Manager Magdalena Vanderkooy says, "Everyone is very excited and keeps commenting about how beautiful and big the branch is. They love the furnishings (especially the funky lounge chairs in the teen area) and kids adore the 'Castle' (the story room) where they can climb the stairs, poke their heads through the holes and play with puppets.

"One teacher told our children's librarian that when she announced our re-opening to her class, the kids had tears of joy, they were so excited to hear we were back in business." •



Opening day at Malvern (from L to R) Russell Hanley, Branch Head; Vickery Bowles, Director, North/East Region; Raymond Cho, City Councillor; and Magdalena Vanderkooy, District Manager.



Anne Bailey, Director, Branches, left, presents a cheque on behalf of all Toronto Public Library staff to Anita McMaster of the United Way.

## Library staff rally for United Way

*Donations surpass goal, new Library record of \$157,917 established*

THE 2004 UNITED WAY workplace campaign at Toronto Public Library was a great success, a record year for pledges, leaders, canvassers and special events. As part of the City of Toronto's United Way campaign, library staff raised an impressive \$157,917. The average donation increased from \$224 to \$251. The number of leaders who pledged over \$1,000 increased from 29 to 37. The corps of staff canvassers increased to 144, and

the CN Tower climb attracted a record number, with 41 library staff participating along with their families and friends.

The United Way helps thousands of Torontonians in need — young children, youth, seniors, abused women, homeless people, newcomers and people with disabilities. The generous support of library staff will help build stronger neighbourhoods and create a healthier, more vibrant city for us all. •

## Drawn-out Stories

### *Art of Graphic Novels*

**An exhibition of original artwork and books, January 22 - March 20.**

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING completely different in the Toronto Reference Library's TD Gallery, a show highlighting the creativity and dramatic impact of 'graphic novels.' Encompassing books that combine the visual style of comics with the narrative techniques of literature, the genre emerged in the 1990s and continues to grow in popularity, particularly among young adults. It evolved from a long line of illustrated

books including the work of artists such as William Blake, Giotto and Jacques Callot. The gallery show also highlights the works of six contemporary graphic novelists who have achieved international recognition including four Canadians — Chester Brown, Julie Doucet, Ho Che Anderson and Michel Rabagliati, and two Americans — Joe Sacco and Adrian Tomine.

*Drawn-out Stories; Art of Graphic Novels*, TD Gallery, Toronto Reference Library, until March 20. For more information, call Answerline at 416-393-7131 or check the website [www.torontopubliclibrary.ca](http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca).

The gallery is opened Mon-Thurs 10-8, Fri-Sat 10-5, Sun 1:30-5. •



## Focus on Maria A. Shchuka District

*Part of an occasional series of library branch profiles*

THE FORMER CITY OF York — now part of the City of Toronto — has had library service much longer than many people realize. But did you know that Maria A. Shchuka District's six branches — Maria A. Shchuka District Branch, Weston, Mount Dennis, Evelyn Gregory, Jane/Dundas and Oakwood Village Library and Arts Centre — have been making history in other ways? For example:



- The former York Public Library used to circulate bright green umbrellas complete with the system logo on rainy days.
- Although the Weston Branch started life as a Mechanics Institute in the nineteenth century, in 1914 a beautiful building complete with stained-glass windows replaced it — one of the original Carnegie libraries. An addition and renovation was completed in 1982.
- Mount Dennis branch has been in existence since 1923.
- Bookmobile service was initiated in 1948.
- The Evelyn Gregory Branch opened in 1968, named after the former Chief Librarian.
- 1997 saw the opening of the Oakwood Village Library and Arts Centre — a unique neighbourhood branch with a theatre space complete with sprung wood floor to accommodate dance.
- Maria A. Shchuka Branch underwent a complete rebuild and reopened in August of 2003 — circulation and other library use figures have skyrocketed since then.
- York was one of the first library systems to circulate CD-ROMs; they also initiated public word processing in several branches just prior to City of Toronto amalgamation in 1999. •

# Library Rovers popular with computer novices

*Travelling trainers help hundreds navigate the Net*

HELPING LIBRARY USERS SURF the Internet and navigate Library online resources is the mission of Toronto Public Library Rovers, travelling computer trainers

who bring their services to library branches across the city. Rovers work either with small groups or one-on-one to meet the unique needs of each library patron.

## Services for people with disabilities

### *Library continues to develop strategies to promote inclusiveness*

WHEN EIGHT CHILDREN WITH hearing disabilities walked through the doors of the Palmerston Branch of Toronto Public Library last fall, library staff was ready. Palmerston librarian Elsa Ngan had arranged for sign language interpreters for the students from St. Raymond Catholic School, visiting the branch for a scheduled library program.

"The visit went very well," according to Ngan. "The kids were awesome, easy going and, along with their teachers and parents, enjoyed the visit. The two interpreters were very interactive and expressive. The students had fun."

Any library patron with a hearing disability can arrange to have sign language interpretation for library programs – contact branch staff in advance to make arrangements.

A diverse array of library services and products are available for people with disabilities including magnifiers; book stands; page turners; reading lamps; assistive listening systems;

The Rovers program offered computer-training sessions from mid-October to the end of December; the program has been extended at Malvern into the new year. In total, the Rovers offered 1,219 computer-training sessions and worked with a total of 2,484 participants.

The most popular training has been the one-on-one sessions where a Rover tailors

training to the participant's needs. Some of the resources covered so far include Career Bookmarks, Homework Help, Kids' Space, the library catalogue and other databases. One group of seniors from a local residence came to their Rover meeting admitting to a fear of using computers; after the training session was over, they had become surfing seniors. •



**Holiday magic:** Minister of Education Gerard Kennedy reads a seasonal folktale to the delight of children from Parkdale Public School Child Care Centre at Parkdale Branch in December.

## Education Minister visits Parkdale Branch

*"Give the gift of reading," Kennedy says*

EDUCATION MINISTER GERARD KENNEDY had a message for parents and caregivers when he visited Parkdale Branch in late December: "Take some time to give the gift of reading over the holidays. It's a perfect time to make it a part of your family fun. Kids do better in school when families get behind them on reading."

For the kids from Parkdale Public School Child Care Centre, it was the medium that was the message.

Kennedy read *The Mitten* by Jan Brett. Based on a Ukrainian folktale, the story enchanted the children as Kennedy showed them the pictures and encouraged their participation.

The visit was part of Kennedy's ongoing effort to promote reading and literacy throughout the province. •



## Long Branch Library to close for renovation

ON JANUARY 29 AT 5 p.m., the Long Branch Library will close for renovation.

The renovation will bring improved building access, better community meeting space, new shelving, new furniture and equipment and beautiful exterior landscaping. Care will be taken to preserve the unique art deco inspired front entrance. Interested in making a donation towards new books or the branch's exterior landscaping? Call Toronto Public Library Foundation at 416-393-7123 today or complete a donation form available in any of the district's branches.

## Library Board Highlights

January 2005

### 2005 Interim Operating Budget

The Board adopted the 2005 interim operating budget, as approved by City Council, in accordance with the Library's Financial Control Policy.

### Chair and Vice-Chair appointments

Gillian Mason was re-elected Library Board Chair. Bill Booth was re-elected Library Board Vice-Chair.

### The following appointments were made to the Board's Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups:

- Budget – Gillian Mason, Bill Booth, Kathy Gallagher Ross, Councillor Janet Davis
- Collective Bargaining – Gillian Mason,

Bill Booth, Councillor Janet Davis, Matthew Church

- Federation of Ontario Public Libraries – Gillian Mason, Matthew Church
- Ontario Library Boards Association – Okeima Lawrence
- TPL Celebrates Reading Award Nomination – Bill Booth

### Presentation from the Toronto Public Library Foundation

Achievements over the Foundation's history were highlighted and an overview of the 2005 strategy was provided. The Foundation has raised \$11 million in support of the library since its inception in 1997.

### Information Technology

A presentation highlighting the challenges, services and plans for the Library's IT department. Of note is the comparison of Toronto Public Library to 14 other large North American urban

public library systems. Toronto offers more computers per capita than any other system and our website handled substantially more electronic visits.

### Morningside Branch closure for relocation

The Board approved the closure of Morningside Branch for approximately one year and the provision of bookmobile service for the duration of the closure.

### Improved Internet accessibility

The Board approved a business plan to improve Internet accessibility, as requested by Toronto e-City Committee. The plan includes increasing the number of public PCs and increasing branch open hours based upon funding approvals.

### Toronto Public Library Board meetings

The Board approved a motion to continue their monthly meetings at the Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON.

## Calendar of Events

### January/February 2005

#### Beaches Branch Reopening

Thursday, January 20, 1:30 p.m.  
Open House, Saturday, January 22, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

#### Malvern Branch Official Reopening

Friday, January 28, 11:30 a.m.

#### Long Branch Library closing for renovations

Saturday, January 29, at 5 p.m.  
(for approximately eight months)

#### Library night at St. Mike's

Thursday, February 10, 7:30 p.m.  
Teen services librarians invite you to join them for a night of fun as Toronto St. Michael's Majors Hockey Club takes on the Sarnia Sting. Ticket info at the St. Mike's website [www.stmichaelsmajors.com](http://www.stmichaelsmajors.com) or call Ticketmaster, 416-872-5000. St. Mike's Arena, 1515 Bathurst Street (just north of St. Clair)

### Freedom to Read Week Events

February 20 – 26, 2005

#### Degrassi Speaks Out (way out)

Tuesday, February 22, 7:30 p.m.  
Associate Producer Nicole Hamilton, Executive Story Editor/Writer Shelley Scarrow and Actor Lauren Collins (aka 'Paige' from *Degrassi: the Next Generation!*) talk about being a part of the bold and outspoken Canadian TV show. Film clip and Q&A. Free. Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St.

#### Poet with a Pulse

Friday, February 25, 7:30 p.m.  
Upcoming Canadian poets Karen Connolly, Sheng Xue, Aaron Berhane, Belladonna, Ken Babstock, Bill Kennedy and Jay MillAr perform. Moses Znaimer hosts. Presented by PEN Canada and Toronto Public Library. Suggested donation \$10. (All proceeds go to PEN Canada.) Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St.

**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.

Next Board Meeting: Monday, February 14, 2005.

The Toronto Public Library Board meets monthly at 6 p.m., September through June, in the Elizabeth Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street, Toronto. Meetings are open to the public. Board Contact: Nancy Marshall 416-393-7215.

**Board Members**  
Gillian Mason, Chair  
William Booth, Vice-Chair  
Louise Aspin  
Matthew Church  
Councillor Gay Cowbourne  
Councillor Janet Davis

Murthy Ghandikota  
Okeima Lawrence  
Councillor Kyle Rae  
Kathy Gallagher Ross  
Councillor Karen Stintz  
Councillor Sylvia Watson  
Kate Wilson

# Update

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SUPPLEMENT TO SHELF LIFE • VOLUME 5 • NUMBER 1 • JANUARY 2005

## Renewed libraries speak volumes

*They make a little go a very long way*



CHRISTOPHER HUME  
from the *Toronto Star*  
January 27, 2005

AMALGAMATION hasn't had many happy endings yet, but there is one: the Toronto Public Library.

Not only is the TPL the second largest library system in the world (after Hong Kong's), it's growing and getting better all the time. Despite the inevitable budget cuts imposed by a city that thinks it's poor, the TPL goes from strength to strength.

Tomorrow [January 28]

at 11:30 a.m., Mayor David Miller will preside over the official reopening of the newly expanded and much improved Malvern District Public Library (30 Sewells Rd.). Though there was an existing facility on the site in this troubled neighbourhood, Toronto architect Philip Carter had \$3.5 million to transform the place into a wonderfully airy and light-filled structure that looks more West Coast than suburban.

Carter, best known for the delightfully brilliant Lillian H. Smith Branch on



**Library Board member Murthy Ghandikota; City Councillor Raymond Cho; City Librarian Josephine Bryant; Mayor David Miller and friend; Library Board Chair Gillian Mason; City Councillor Michael Thompson at the official reopening of Malvern.**

College St., near Spadina, took a strictly utilitarian Scarborough building and turned it into something warm, inviting and even elegant.

Elegance, of course, was never a part of public policy in Scarborough. In fact, municipal politicians



**The Beaches branch consists of a two-storey great hall with a new addition on the west side that reaches into Kew Gardens. With its arched entrance, stone fireplaces, interior balcony and oak trim, this is the library as historical fantasy.**

there were... known for their mindless opposition to anything that isn't cheap, banal and ugly.

Fortunately, Toronto's city librarian, Josephine Bryant, has mastered the art of making a little go a long way. When amalgamation was imposed back in the late 1990s, seven library systems were merged and immediately took a \$10 million hit. That translated

*continues on reverse...*

***"TPL's circulation figures have grown 27 per cent in the last three or four years and the number of books reserved has increased an incredible 170 per cent."***

**City Librarian,  
Josephine Bryant**

continued ...

into a loss of 200 jobs.

Regardless, the TPL has carried on building, rebuilding and renovating where necessary. The system's 99th branch, St. James Town, opened just a month or two ago. Last weekend, the remarkable 1915 Beaches Community Library was unveiled following a \$1.5 million overhaul. Again, it was Carter who did the work, this time restoring and updating a Queen St. E. landmark originally designed by Eden Smith. Smith, an Arts and Crafts architect, also did many houses in Wychwood Park and Lawrence Park early in the last century.

The Beaches library, one of three by Smith, was built with money from legendary American industrialist, Andrew Carnegie, who famously funded such projects across North America. The building itself consists of a two-storey great hall with a new addition on

a feel of hotter climes to the cold, hard surfaces of Scarborough's bleak and very there-less there.

"We had to defend our use of architects and interior designers," Bryant recalls, "against going the design-build route. This isn't vanity; there's recognition that we've done a good job of creating an attractive and welcoming public

space. We've learned that if libraries aren't beautiful, if they don't add to the life and soul of a community, they bring the neighbourhood down."

To prove her argument, Bryant points out that TPL's circulation figures have grown 27 per cent in the last three or four years and the number of books reserved has increased an incredible 170 per cent.



**The newly expanded and much improved Malvern District Branch.**

as desktops. The new beams (Douglas fir) are exposed, which lowers costs but enhances appeal.

According to district librarian Magdalena Vanderkooy, since Malvern opened its doors January 6,

thoughtful and creative way."

Little wonder Bryant and the TPL won a leadership award last year from the Canadian Urban Institute. Maybe now the rest of the city could borrow a page from their book.

*"We've learned that if libraries aren't beautiful, if they don't add to the life and soul of a community, they bring the neighbourhood down."*

**City Librarian, Josephine Bryant**



the west side that reaches into Kew Gardens.

With its arched entrance, stone fireplaces, interior balcony and oak trim, this is the library as historical fantasy. Carter has made his interventions as sympathetic as possible, even using limestone and copper on the new wing.

By contrast, Malvern is all wood and glass, which brings

"I try to keep things simple," Carter says. "I try not to let the architecture cost too much. For example, you can buy stacking chairs for \$100 or \$15. We get the cheap ones then use the money we save on really nice chairs from Klaus Nienkamper."

At Malvern, timber from the old building was recycled in the furniture and bamboo flooring was used

there has been a 60 per cent jump in users, from an average of 1,000 to 1,600 daily.

"At the outset of amalgamation," Bryant points out, "Scarborough wasn't well situated to offer library services. They were closed on Sundays. This represents a huge improvement for the neighbourhood.

"We are a quiet success story," she admits, "in a very

**Left and centre; staff and customers waste no time making use of the 43 public access terminals at Malvern's reopening, January 28. Right; Dan the Music Man keeps the kids hopping at the Beaches reopening, Saturday, January 22.**