

Chair's Report
February 16, 2010

Branch News

Yorkville Branch reopened on January 25 after a month-long closure for interior renovations. The Branch has been reconfigured to create more open spaces, and is now equipped with self-serve checkout stations to support the extension of open hours at the Branch. The renovation also includes a full replica of the original tile floor in the foyer of this historic Carnegie building – the culmination of a fundraising effort by the Toronto Public Library Foundation launched at the Branch's 100th anniversary celebration. With \$15,000 raised by the end of 2009, the tile work was undertaken while the Branch was closed for the retrofit.

A February 2 **open house at Malvern Branch** gave the public a chance to see the exciting changes in store for their library, including the addition of a 13,650 square foot outdoor multipurpose public square/commons featuring a reading garden and staging facility for all-year cultural and community events. Also being added, a 3,770 square foot indoor Youth Hub with a ProTech Media Centre. Architects Phillip H. Carter and Ellen Vera Allen were on hand to present the design concept for the addition and public square. Members of the public unable to attend the open house are being invited to provide their ideas and input via the Library website.

The **Library partnered with the ROM for a guided bus tour** last month called "Beyond Gutenberg", featuring a look at how libraries are responding to the evolution of information and literature. Thirty-six participants were shown a fly-through of the planned Toronto Reference Library renovation that illustrates how the Library is responding to changing use patterns.

The tour included stops at Bloor/Gladstone and Dufferin/St. Clair branches, and the Toronto Reference Library, as well as drive-bys of Yorkville and Lillian H. Smith. The group was wowed by renovations at both Bloor/Gladstone and Dufferin/St. Clair, as they heard commentary from Library manager Brigitte Richter, Library specialist Barb Myrvold and ROM curator of European Decorative Arts Corey Keeble. Keeble called the restored Dufferin/St. Clair murals by George Reid and Doris McCarthy a "national treasure" that was all the more amazing for being in a public library. He said the murals rivalled anything you might find in the National Gallery in Ottawa. In addition to the visits to Library branches, participants saw the Gerstein Science Information Centre, the Legislative Library and the City of Toronto Archives.

Library Programs

Activist and author of *The Value of Nothing*, Raj Patel visited the Appel Salon on February 1, drawing a capacity crowd of over 400. Patel answered questions and signed books for about 60 ardent fans after the reading.

Also in the Appel Salon in February, the Black History Month kickoff on February 4 featured established writers Austin Clarke and George Elliott Clarke introducing up-and-coming writers Yvette Trancoso and Stacey Marie Robinson. Okeima Lawrence welcomed the audience to the event. For more details on upcoming Appel Salon events, check out the Appel Salon postcard in your package.

Once again this February, Toronto Public Library partners with PEN Canada in celebration of **Freedom to Read Week** with a program called *Child Soldiers: Banned in Canada?* The event takes place in the Toronto Reference Library atrium on February 26, starting at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$10 at the door (minimum donation) with proceeds going to PEN Canada.

March Break (March 15-20) promises to be busy as usual at the Library, with programs at branches across the city for children and teens.

The eh List starts a little earlier than usual this year with **UK author Kate Pullinger** making a stop in Toronto and appearing in the Reference Library atrium on the afternoon of February 26. Pullinger, who won a 2009 Governor General's Award for *The Mistress of Nothing*, is in Toronto just briefly on her way to the Banff School for the Arts.

The Book Lover's Ball, the Toronto Public Library Foundation's annual gala fundraiser, took place on February 11, with more than 500 people gathering at the Fairmont Royal York to meet and socialize with over 50 of Canada's leading authors, including Lawrence Hill, Catherine Gildiner, Graeme Gibson, Linwood Barclay, Anne Michaels, Nino Ricci, Richard J. Gwyn, Wayson Choy and Linda McQuaig. Other notable guests included honorary chair Mayor David Miller, and chair of The Book Lovers' Ball Committee John Cruickshank, publisher of the *Toronto Star*. Diana Swain, host of CBC News Toronto, once again acted as Master of Ceremonies.

Guests showed their support for the Toronto Public Library Foundation through silent auction and raffle ticket purchases. Wrapping up the evening was a fashion show that featured top Canadian designers inspired by a selection of both modern and classic books. The Foundation is grateful to its many sponsors, including Whitehots Inc., BMO Capital Markets, OSSTF, Harlequin, TD Bank Financial Group, The Remington Group, The Toronto Star, CBC, Hello! Canada, Air Canada Vacations, and Fairmont Hotels & Resorts.