

Chair's Report February 27, 2012

Ontario Library Association Super Conference – February 1-4, 2012

Branch Tours

The annual **Ontario Library Association tour of library branches** was a great success again this year. On February 1, 52 OLA delegates boarded a coach bus for a tour of three library branches – North York Central Library, Richview Branch, and Mississauga Public Library's Burnhamthorpe Branch. Featured on the North York Central Library tour were the branch's new teen zone, the new self-checkout setup, the new automated sorter, and the recently renovated auditorium and performance space. The complete renovation of the first floor of the Richview branch wowed participants. Among the delegates were some representatives of out-of-province Canadian library systems, and a delegate from the Aarhus Library in Denmark. Toronto Public Library local history specialist Barbara Myrvold provided historical information about the areas of Toronto the tour passed through on the drive to each location. Comments from attendees included: "The best part of the conference"; "so interesting and useful"; "I come every year and learn so much that I can implement in my own library. Please continue the tours"; "Loved it, filled me with such excitement and ideas for my small branch"; "thank you to TPL for organizing the tour!"

Staff Presentations

The **Ontario Library Association Conference** also benefitted from Toronto Public Library involvement, with staff involved in sessions related to hosting a Human Library; effectively presenting users with information in French; storytimes for children with special needs; welcoming adults with intellectual disabilities; serving customers for whom French is a second language and who are looking for French language material; and family literacy program model innovations. TPL staff were also involved in presenting poster session material for the Child and Youth Expo, and on the topic of community mapping. Staff participated in a Canadian Urban Libraries Council presentation with representatives from Vancouver and Hamilton public libraries about making e-content more available for public library customers. City Librarian Jane Pyper joined her counterparts from Calgary and Regina public library systems in a discussion about issues facing large, urban public libraries. And, finally, joining with staff from the Toronto Business Development Centre and the Stiller Centre in London, Ontario, TPL staff provided a pre-conference session designed to answer the question "what do entrepreneurs need from the public library?"

Programs

February 26th to March 3rd, 2012 is Freedom to Read Week and the Library continued its long-standing involvement with displays, programs and information in our branches. Freedom to Read week is an annual event to recognize the importance of intellectual freedom and celebrate and explore the freedoms we enjoy and challenges we still face in ensuring unfettered access to information and the exploration of ideas. Our annual keynote event, presented in partnership with PEN for the 15th time, takes place this Friday. Titled "Right Angles: Freedom of Speech and the Conservative Mind", it examines political polarization in the media. It will be hosted by John Lorinc, and panelists are journalists from across the political spectrum.

Each year, **March Break** is one of the library's busiest weeks, and this year should be no exception, with hundreds of programs for children, teens and their families lined up at virtually every one of the city's library branches. From sing-alongs, to crafts, to puppet shows to author visits, the programs offered during March Break provide children and teens with a unique opportunity to interact with friends, do a bit of learning, but most importantly, have fun and relax during their week-long break from school.

Also during March Break, teams of teen volunteers drawn from the Library's Youth Advisory Groups will help launch the annual **Keep Toronto Reading Festival**. Decked out in KTR t-shirts and toques, four KTR Krewe will take it to the streets on March 13, distributing bookmarks and talking up the Library's annual celebration of books and reading. This year's KTR theme, Reader City, asks Torontonians to tell us what they are reading and where, celebrating both the books and the city through a wide array of events and activities for all ages.

Capital Projects

Community consultations around the planned **Fairview Branch renovation** began last year and will continue on March 7 when the architectural drawings will be presented at an open house at the branch. The Fairview Branch has been a very busy and valued part of the community for 36 years. The renovation, projected to begin in the fall of 2012, will enhance access to the building and support more efficient operations. The open house will give customers a chance to view the preliminary design concept and speak with architects and staff about the plans.

Foundation

Held on Thursday, February 9, at The Fairmont Royal York, the **seventh annual Book Lover's Ball** was a tremendous success, raising \$500K in support of Toronto's Library. Over 600 book lovers were joined by host Tracy Moore (host of Citytv's Cityline), and Red Carpet Correspondent Melanie Ng (Anchor & Reporter, CityNews) for a cocktail reception featuring decadent hors d'oeuvres presented in person by celebrity chef David Rocco. Guests clinked glasses with celebrity authors such as Stephen Leacock Medal winner Terry Fallis, nonfiction provocateur Peter C. Newman, CBC personality Kevin O'Leary, Governor General's Award-winner Miriam Toews, and Giller Prize-winner Vincent Lam. Additional authors included Alexis Troubetzkoy, Brian Francis, Erin Morgenstern, Giles Blunt, Jeff Rubin, Kathleen Winter, Lawrence Hill, Linwood Barclay, Natalie MacLean, Nino Ricci, and many more. The annual auction, which raised \$50,000, included trips to China, Italy, Hawaii and Jamaica, as well as exclusive book club packages with favourite authors, including Ron McLean, Margaret Atwood, Kim Izzo, Vincent Lam and Frankie Flowers. Guests who chose to adopt a library branch for \$500 received a Sony Reader, helping raise \$19,000. Following the reception, guests enjoyed a three-course dinner and experienced a novel-inspired fashion show, featuring top fashion designers Klaxon Howl, Monikque Jewellery, Lucian Matis, Sid Neigum, Laura Siegel, and Adrian Wu.