

Chair's Report
February 9, 2009

Programs

Black History Month is being celebrated across the system throughout February, with programs at over a dozen locations. Dubbed Lyrical Fireworks, the series was launched last Thursday at York Woods branch with readings and performances by prominent Toronto poets.

For the 12th year in a row, the Library will Partner with PEN Canada to celebrate **Freedom to Read Week**, as they present a passionate panel of environmental activists at the Toronto Reference Library on the evening of February 27. Guests include biographer and historian Ken McGoogan; Saskatchewan naturalist, writer and illustrator Trevor Herriot; Montreal author Taras Grescoe and music icon Sarah Harmer. The evening will be hosted by Matt Galloway, host of CBC Radio One's *Here and Now*.

March Break will be a busy time at Toronto Library branches, as usual. Virtually every branch has a centrally planned March Break program for children and more than 15 branches have teen programs planned. In addition, every year, branches plan plenty of local programming to keep kids busy and having fun.

This is the fourth year the Library is partnering with CBC Radio 99.1 to celebrate **Canada Reads**. The media and arts community are busy discussing the five nominated books, *The Book of Negroes* by Lawrence Hill, *The Fat Woman Next Door is Pregnant* by Michel Tremblay, *Fruit* by Brian Francis, *Mercy Among the Children* by David Adams Richards, and *The Outlander* by Gil Adamson. Toronto Reference Library will host a Canada Reads event this Friday, February 13, with host Matt Galloway of CBC Radio's *Here and Now*, featuring authors David Adams Richards, Gil Adamson, Brian Francis, actor Nicholas Campbell and more. Past year's events have all been very successful drawing in approximately 200 people each.

In a new partnership with Toronto's comic making community, **The Toronto Comic Arts Festival** will be happening this year at Toronto Reference Library. The festival is still a ways off, on May 9 and 10, but already there has been a fair amount of media coverage announcing the event and the significance of the Library's involvement.

The eh List, a new author's series, will begin in March, subsuming the uptown and downtown author series and spreading the readings across the city to include midtown and east and west area events. The series will feature the Canadian books and writers everybody's reading, from the musings of author and broadcaster Bill Richardson to the gothic romance of Andrew Davidson's *Gargoyle*. Launching at eight locations across the city this spring, the series is a round-up of this season's best in Canadian literature. Austin Clarke, Donna Morrissey, Joy Fielding, Edeet Ravel, Miriam Toews, Mary Lou Finlay and Nino Ricci are all names known by book clubs far and wide, and will form the backbone of the program.

The Foundation's fourth annual **The Book Lover's Ball** is this Thursday, featuring over 50 authors supporting the Toronto Public Library Foundation. Authors in attendance include Margaret Atwood, Joseph Boyden, Christie Blatchford, Debbie Travis, Vincent Lam, Richard

J. Gwyn, M.G. Vassanji, and many more. Held at The Fairmont Royal York, it promises to be a night of sheer literary fun! Guests will savour exquisite hors d'oeuvres inspired by Chef Massimo Capra of Food Network Canada's "Restaurant Makeover", and enjoy an exclusive fashion show inspired by 60 years of Harlequin romance, and featuring stunning couture designs from top Canadian designers.

Black History Month Award for Okeima Lawrence

On January 29th, Okeima Lawrence was presented with a City of Toronto Black History Month Award. Okeima was nominated for this award by Kathy Gallagher Ross. Councillor Janet Davis made the presentation to Okeima at an event hosted by Dwight Drummond, CityTV News. Several staff members and Matthew Church were in attendance to recognize Okeima's accomplishments.

Ontario Library Association Conference

As always, Toronto Public Library featured prominently in the annual Ontario Library Association Conference, which was held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre January 28 to 31:

- TPL, in collaboration with the Hamilton and Kingston Frontenac public libraries was awarded the **Minister's Award for Innovation** for *Ontario Time Machine* (www.ontariotimemachine.ca) which is a website dedicated to student learning and the discovery of Ontario's early documentary heritage.
- TPL, in collaboration with Halifax, Regina and Vancouver public libraries was presented with the **OLA's President's Award for Special Achievement** for the *Working Together Project*. This award acknowledges outstanding action or contribution that has in a major or unique way enhanced or furthered librarianship in Ontario.
- The popular bus tour of TPL branches increased to two buses and 100 participants this year. The tour included three renovated branches, Dufferin/St. Clair, S. Walter Stewart and Cliffcrest.
- Library Board member Eman Ahmed and Anna Kwan presented a session about TPL's new Strategic Plan with specific attention to serving diverse audiences.
- Ken Settington, Anna Cocca, Sheilah O'Connor and Jennifer Schmitt spoke about the TD Summer Reading Club.
- Ken Sparling and Susan Kernohan made a presentation about the successful Young Voices program and TPL's Editorial Youth Advisory Group that also included presentations by two teen Library volunteers from the Editorial Youth Advisory Group, and Angela Rawlings and Emily Pohl-Weary, two Toronto authors involved in selecting work for *Young Voices* magazine.
- Foundation president Heather Rumball was part of a presentation about Fundraising.
- Anne Bailey, Ken Settington and Leesa Tossios gave a presentation on reaching children through innovative approaches, focussing on the Ready for Reading program and the new KidsStops.
- Anne Bailey also presented a session on library buildings.
- Johanna Wellheiser and Andrew Lofft made a presentation about large scale digitization at Toronto Public Library.