

Chair's Report
June 7, 2011

Partnerships

An initiative called **New to the Neighbourhood** will see the Library offering free open houses for newcomers to Toronto and those new to the neighbourhood, featuring food and entertainment, and a chance for people to get acquainted with their neighbourhood library branch. This outreach and registration program is generously sponsored by Canadian Tire. In addition to providing promotion and event support, Canadian Tire will be promoting the New to the Neighbourhood program in local stores, and will be offering prizes at the open houses. Also, with every new library card registration during the program period, customers will also receive a \$5 Canadian Tire gift coupon that can be applied to a purchase of \$20 or more at participating Canadian Tire stores. The open houses will be held on Saturday, June 18 at participating branches, including Albert Campbell, Amesbury Park, Cedarbrae, Fairview, Malvern, Morningside, Northern District, Parliament Street, Richview, Weston and Runnymede. Many thanks to Toronto Public Library Foundation for securing Canadian Tire as the sponsor for this program.

About 15,000 guests attended this year's **Toronto Comic Arts Festival**, held at the Toronto Reference Library, over the May 7 and 8 weekend. Guests enjoyed book signings, workshops, panels, a display of TPL comics, graphic novels and manga, and a German cartoonist exhibit by the Goethe Institute. The Owl Kids space – organized by TCAF Kids Programming Co-ordinator and TPL librarian Scott Robins – was also a big hit. This year's guest line-up had the largest international flavour yet, with artists from Germany, Italy, the UK, and Japan joining their Canadian and American cohorts. Feedback from guests, the media, blogs and the Twitterverse – where TCAF was a trending topic – has been positive, with many calling TCAF the best comic book event they've been to. Acclaimed American artist Adrian Tomine said that "... the decision to set the event in a beautiful, welcoming, and respectable venue could legitimately be called revolutionary... [Toronto Reference Library] has played a significant role in the development, promotion, and longevity of the comic/graphic novel art form, and is an integral part of why I love attending TCAF." TCAF has garnered significant high profile media attention, including write-ups in the *Toronto Star*, *The Globe and Mail*, *The National Post*, and cover stories in both *Eye* and *NOW* magazines.

At a Toronto Elections event recognizing the organizations that helped deliver **outreach and communication efforts in support of the electoral process** during the past municipal election, Toronto Public Library was awarded a certificate that stated, in part: "your passion and spirit not only show through your involvement and a strong commitment to engaging electors on the electoral process, but also commitment to broadening the knowledge of democracy, accessibility and ability to participate in the municipal elections." As part of its efforts to support the electoral process, the Library helped promote a Toronto Elections poster contest for youth; the winning entry was by a 17-year-old who learned about the contest at Malvern Branch.

Fifteen entrepreneurs are participating in an innovative **new series that provides support to new businesses in the city**. Toronto Public Library is working in partnership with the Toronto Business Development Centre (TBDC), a local business incubator, and the City of Toronto's Economic Development & Culture Division to deliver the program. During the series, participants will not only be able to network with other entrepreneurs; they will prepare a business plan and gain access to a business advisor along with other valuable business resources. Toronto Public Library staff are conducting two of the sessions that highlight our online business resources. At the conclusion of the program, candidates will obtain a Business Seminar Series Certificate of Completion from the TBDC and have an opportunity to apply for a small business loan. The eight-week program began at Fairview Branch in late April; more than 100 applicants competed for the 15 spots.

Volunteers

More than eighty **youth library volunteers** from across the city made their way to North York Central Library on Saturday, May 7 for an event to celebrate their contribution to library service in the city. Library Board member Okeima Lawrence joined TPL manager Mark Williams in handing out awards at a celebration themed around art. Participants stencilled designs onto reusable bags, made posters and enjoyed an exhibit of artwork from Young Voices 2010. Special thanks to keynote speaker, Toronto artist Michael Brown, who is a library volunteer himself, heading up the team that chooses the art for Young Voices magazine each year.

Collections

E-books from Overdrive and NetLibrary continue to be hot items, as circulation rose more than 300 percent in the first quarter of 2011, over the first quarter of 2010, with more than 53,000 e-books borrowed. Toronto Public Library's e-book collection continues to grow, with 21,500 e-books as of March 2011, up nearly 100 percent over March 2010, and the number of unique titles up 30 percent at 11,250. Collections Director Vickery Bowles and her staff have been kept busy the past few months doing numerous interviews and providing data for national and local media stories about the rise of ebooks and libraries' success in innovating in this area, including CTV, Global TV, CBC, the *Toronto Star*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Maclean's Magazine* and *Quill & Quire*.

Branches

In 2006, the Foundation received a generous bequest from the Estate of Sophia Lucyk, a long-time library lover, user and donor. In her honour the Foundation created **Sophie's Studio** to support literacy, creativity, and writing skills in children at the Library. Creative workshops for children will be conducted at branches this spring and in the fall. Children will have the opportunity to learn to make a book or write a play. Full program information is available at torontopubliclibrary.ca/sophiesstudio.

A **delegation from Sweden touring the Thorncliffe neighbourhood** at the end of April stopped in at Thorncliffe Branch for a little look around. They were guests of the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office, a multicultural, multi-service agency providing community-based services to residents of Thorncliffe Park and surrounding communities. Library staff spoke about library services in general, while the Library Settlement Partnership staff member spoke about the Library's settlement resources. The delegation loved the newly renovated branch, in particular the KidsStop, where they stopped to take some photos.

Programs

The **fifth annual June Callwood Lecture**, "Dying for a Home: Fighting for our Social Programs", was held on May 19 at Toronto Reference Library. Guest lecturer Cathy Crowe gave a street-level perspective on the need for social housing and why we need social programs now more than ever. Crowe has been a street nurse in downtown Toronto for more than seventeen years and co-founded the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee. The event was hosted by city councillor Adam Vaughan and music was provided by the Common Thread Community Choir. The annual lecture, supported in part by the June Callwood Endowment Fund, through the Toronto Public Library Foundation, provides a platform for the exploration and discussion of social justice issues. A year-round June Callwood Lecture legacy page was launched on the Library website in early May to host past lectures, including videos, audio recordings and photos.

The first **Make Some Noise... Take Some Noise** event of 2011 saw legendary Toronto band The Sadies performing in the atrium of the Toronto Reference Library for nearly 500 fans. The concert generated a great deal of social media action, and some excellent media coverage, including an interview in *NOW* magazine with Children and Youth Advocate Lisa Heggum, the "mastermind" behind Make Some Noise.

Our sixth annual **Keep Toronto Reading Festival** was held in April, with record attendance of more than 6,000. There were more than 80 events in 40 branches across the city. In addition, in partnership with the TDSB, we launched "Keep Toronto Reading in School" in 16 primary schools in Scarborough. On April 29, more than 5,000 kids took part in activities that celebrated the joy of reading. Our One Book selection, *Midnight at the Dragon Café*, by Judy Fong Bates, was particularly popular this year, with extremely well-attended One Book events that ranged from author readings to Chinese opera to a how-to session on Chinese dumplings. Four-hundred high-school students also studied the book in school, and Judy met many of those students at an event at Malvern Collegiate.

To close off the annual Keep Toronto Reading festival, Toronto Public Library once again hosted **Book Bash**, a fun-filled, free children's festival featuring an all-star cast of Canadian children's authors and illustrators that drew 700 children and their caregivers to Northern District Branch on Saturday, April 30. The stellar line-up of talent included Richard Scrimger, Shane Peacock, Barbara Reid, Cary Fagan and Ruth Ohi. Free

activities for young children included opportunities to meet their favourite authors and illustrators, storytelling, puppet shows, face painting, and fun crafts and activities.

Toronto Public Library's annual **Word Out teen summer reading** program is warning teens: Don't Read Alone this summer! Instead, they are being urged to get online at **torontopubliclibrary.ca/wordout** with hundreds of other book lovers to talk about their favourite books, hear from their favourite authors, win prizes, and read down their library fines. For children, **the TD Summer Reading Club**, happening in all library branches and online at **tdsrc.torontopubliclibrary.ca**, will once again encourage children 12 and under to read more, by engaging them in fun reading-related activities around the theme of "Splash! Celebrate Summer".

This year's **Asian Heritage Month celebrations** saw us taking a new approach to the popular themed programming the Library puts on every May. This year's programming was dubbed "Homelands Festivals". With so much geo-cultural ground to cover, eight branches were selected to spend a Saturday afternoon focused on a slice of Asian Culture and Heritage. East Asia, West Asia, South Asia and China were celebrated in branches covering the city from all angles. Each Homelands Festival featured three or four family-friendly programs which celebrated several areas of culture: food, fashion, music, dance and story. Festivals were held at Riverdale and Agincourt (China), Gerrard/Ashdale and Malvern (South Asia), NYCL and Flemingdon Park (West Asia), and Maria A. Shchuka and Lillian H. Smith (East Asia). Many thanks to Toronto Public Library Foundation for securing RBC as the sponsor for this program.

The 2010 Design-a-Bookmark contest wrapped up with a celebration for the winning children and their families and friends on May 4 at North York Central Library. Guest contest judge, author/illustrator Ruth Ohi, was joined by library board member Okeima Lawrence and Toronto Public Library children and youth advocate Lisa Heggum in congratulating the children, who each received a book gift, an enlarged colour copy of their winning bookmark, a sample of each of the other winning bookmarks, and 100 copies of their own bookmark. Ohi gave the children an art workshop on perspective, form and content and then gave them a chance to practice what they'd learned, going around and encouraging and advising them as they worked. The ever-popular bookmarks were made available at all Toronto Public Library branches shortly after the celebration event.

Capital projects

A **Richview Branch customer appreciation event** on April 18 saw Jane Pyper meeting library customers and thanking them for their patience during the recent renovation of the branch. Branch staff were also available to help orient customers to all the new library enhancements, including a complete renovation of the first floor; self-service technologies, including express check-out and check-in to improve customer service; fully accessible washrooms; and barrier-free access to all areas of the library. The renovation project was made possible in part through federal infrastructure financing.

Library customers were invited to two community open houses in May to view the proposed design concept and provide their comments for the new **Fort York/Bathurst Branch** of Toronto Public Library. The brand new, 15,000-square-foot branch in the West Waterfront and CityPlace communities, expected to open in 2014, will be located on Fort York Boulevard at Bathurst Street and will offer a full range of library services. Members of the public who attended the open houses provided a broad range of positive feedback.

Foundation

Last month, the Toronto Public Library Foundation was thrilled to announce a generous donation of \$250,000 by philanthropist Johanna Metcalf and the George Cedric Metcalf Foundation in support of the Library's Special Collections. The gift, in honour of Johanna's partner, the late Mr. Justice Robert F. Reid, has enabled the creation of the new **Robert F. Reid Special Collections Acquisition Fund**. This fund will be dedicated to acquiring items to complement, complete and enhance the Library's Canadiana and Performing Arts collections. It is the first fund of its kind ever established at Toronto Public Library. The Family also made a further gift of \$50,000 in support of the re:vitalize Campaign at Toronto Reference Library.

Last month, the Foundation announced that they have raised \$9 million of the \$10 million needed to complete the **re:vitalize – Toronto Reference Library Campaign**, and that they are on track to complete the campaign by the end of 2011. At the same time, the Foundation launched the staff and alumni campaign in support of re:vitalize. This campaign has been given a significant boost by a most generous donation from Jean Orpwood, the former Director of North York Public Library and a continued great friend of Toronto Public Library. Jean has offered to match dollar for dollar all staff and alumni gifts up to a total of \$10,000. Jean's generosity extends to library programming as well; in addition to being a volunteer with the Adult Literacy program, Jean has committed \$10,000 in 2011 to fund a pilot of the Library's Family Literacy Initiative for Adult Literacy learners.