

Shelf life

Toronto Public Library News & Views

January 2008



Help Keep Toronto Reading throughout February

Celebrate the brilliance of the book — in all its forms!

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY is inviting everyone in the city to be part of its annual festival of books and culture this February, as the third annual Keep Toronto Reading celebration gets underway. Many of the city's cultural movers and shakers will be participating in nearly 50 Keep Toronto Reading events being held at library branches and partner locations all over the city.

"Keep Toronto Reading is bigger and better than ever this year," according to City Librarian Josephine Bryant. "We're holding 47 events in 25 library locations, and at a variety of partner locations across the city. In fact, we didn't think February was long enough to fit in all the fun, so

we're jumping the gun by holding the third annual Booklover's Ball on Thursday, January 31."

A major fund-raising initiative of the Toronto Public Library Foundation, and one of the highlights of Keep Toronto Reading, the Book Lover's Ball will take place at the lovely Fairmont Royal York hotel.

"It promises to be a brilliant affair again this year," says library foundation president Heather Rumball. "Mayor David Miller has said it's the most desired event ticket in the city."

As well as tried-and-true programs combining literature with food, wine,

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TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY is encouraging everyone in the city to read Michael Redhill's book, *Consolation*, during February.

Besides dramatic readings from Michael Redhill's book, *Consolation*, the February 4 kickoff of the library's new Keep Toronto Reading One Book initiative

will include music by Mary Lou Fallis. "Mary Lou will be channelling Jenny Lind, the Swedish singer who drove America into a frenzy with her songs in the 1850s," says Srebotnjak. "Another interesting One Book event is the candlelit dinner with Michael at historic Gibson House."

The historic connection comes from the fact that much of *Consolation* is set in Victorian Toronto. As part of the celebration, a number of exhibits will portray Toronto as it was as both Toronto Reference Library and the City of Toronto Archives will feature exhibits both on location and online.

"Both the Reference Library and the City of Toronto Archives hold the 13 photos taken by Armstrong, Beere and Hime in the late 1850s that inspired Michael Redhill to write the book," explains Srebotnjak.

The photos are permanently on display at the Toronto Archives, and

SEE ONE BOOK , PAGE 2...

www.torontopubliclibrary.ca



One Book

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are part of a panorama on exhibit at the Reference Library throughout February.

Online, at KeepTorontoReading.ca, the library will also illuminate the historical references made in the book with an annotated virtual chapter of *Consolation*. The library's page-turning technology lets readers click on key words in the text to bring up photographs, maps and notes supplied by librarians. Also online, an interactive map of Toronto past and present shows real and fictional locations in the book, and reveals the changing shape of the city's shoreline over time.

The library is also partnering with four Toronto high schools to bring Redhill together with students to talk about his book.

Each of the high schools will go on to participate in a different way, with students doing projects that take innovative approaches to the book.

"One school is doing something they call 'storienteering,'" explains Srebotnjak. "Students will travel around the city on foot, searching for 'haunted' locations — places enchanted by past events, freighted with narrative, wanting to be told... The students will use maps to find clues and take notes, and then research the stories to flesh them out and connect them, link them with themes to create storylines."

In order to stimulate all this talk about *Consolation*, the library has prepared a One Book Reader's Guide, which is available to book clubs, in libraries and bookstores, and online for those interested in discussing the book and its cultural and historic ramifications.

"We're inviting Torontonians to discuss the themes of *Consolation*," says Srebotnjak. "How should a city preserve its past, how do newcomers deal with the shock and loneliness of leaving home... the Reader's Guide is designed to stimulate that sort of discussion."

KeepToronto Reading

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art and fun, Keep Toronto Reading will feature a couple of new initiatives this year.

One book brings lit community together

THE KEEP TORONTO Reading One Book program (see sidebars, page 1 & 2) spans the entire month of February. Everyone in the city is encouraged to read Michael Redhill's award-winning book, *Consolation*, which is set in Toronto. Redhill will be doing a reading, attending a library book club meeting and signing books. He will also answer questions and discuss his book online via the library's online book club at bookbuzz.torontopubliclibrary.ca.

"Michael is living in France at the moment," explains Keep Toronto Reading program director Tina Srebotnjak, "But he will be coming home to Toronto in the first week of February, courtesy of Random House, to help us launch our One Book events."

The other new Keep Toronto Reading initiative this year is KTR for Kids. Festivities for kids come courtesy of some fantastic new partnerships between the library and other cultural organizations that serve our city. From TVOKids *Big Backyard*, Gisèle will be at seven library branches throughout February to spread her love of reading. Other partners providing interactive storytelling fun throughout February include the Ontario Science Centre, the ROM and the National Film Board of Canada.

"We want to give families with young children more of a chance to be a part of the fun," says Bryant. "And we're thrilled to be partnering with such an array of Toronto's other important culture providers."

Encore, encore: back by popular demand

"THE TWO NEW Keep Toronto Reading programs will nicely complement programs returning after great success last year," says Srebotnjak. "Among others, these include our Lit Lunch series and our PEN Canada Freedom to Read Week celebration.

"Our theme this year is Get Lit," adds Srebotnjak, "and we're featuring three exciting programming streams: Get Connected, Get Fulfilled and Get

Perspective."

The **Get Connected** stream includes: Black History Month celebrations; PEN Canada's annual Freedom to Read Week presentation, this year dubbed Writers Under Siege; Common Denominator: Reading the New Toronto, presented by Diaspora Dialogues (see "Spotlight: Dwayne Morgan"); and a special Toronto celebration of the CBC Canada Reads battle of the books.

Get Fulfilled will feature the return of last year's wildly successful Lit Lunch series, featuring readings and discussions with literary luminaries including Barry Callaghan, Paul Quarrington, Guy Gavriel Kay and Linwood Barclay, to name just a few. Also on the Get Fulfilled bill: Literary Buzz, a literary discussion and guided wine tasting; and Think Globally, Eat Locally, a discussion about how to reduce your dinner's carbon footprint.

Finally, **Get Perspective** invites Toronto lit lovers to explore how books are adapted into other art forms. Programs include: BookArtBook, an exploration of the magical metamorphosis between art and the book; Books Into Film: *The Englishman's Boy*, which will include a preview of the upcoming CBC mini-series based on Guy Vanderhaeghe's acclaimed novel, *The Englishman's Boy*; and Graphically Speaking, a visit with graphic novel creators Kazu Kibuishi and Kean Soo.

"We want everyone in Toronto to get out and share good books, good company and good fun," concludes Srebotnjak.



BookArtBook: *Motherhood and Procreation*, 2007, Stephanie Kervin, from the Art Under Cover TD Gallery exhibit at Toronto Reference Library.

Spotlight on Keep Toronto Reading 2008



Spotlight: **Dwayne Morgan**

A spoken word artist since 1993, Morgan is the founder of Up From The Roots entertainment, promoting artistic contributions by African Canadian and urban-influenced artists. He has worked with Kardinal Offishal, Choclair, Jully Black, K-OS, and Nelly Furtado. Morgan has also worked with the library on a number of projects, including *Young Voices* magazine, where, as a guest editor, Morgan works with a teen editorial board to help select poetry for the annual publication. **Awards:** African Canadian Achievement Award for Youth Achievement; Harry Jerome Award for Excellence in the Arts; Canadian Urban Music Award for Best Spoken Word Recording (three times!).

Meet Dwayne Morgan
February 15, 7 p.m. at Palmerston Branch
for week two of three weekly Disapora Dialogues programs, Common Denominator: Reading the New Toronto.



Spotlight: **Souvankham Thammavongsa**

Born in Thailand, Souvankham Thammavongsa was raised in Toronto. She is the author of *Small Arguments* (Pedlar Press, 2003), which started off as a series of chapbooks printed by the author and bound with Elmer's glue. Thammavongsa has also been featured at Harbourfront's Premiere Dance Theatre and International Reading Series. **Awards:** ReLit Award for excellence in poetry; Alcuin Society citation for excellence in book design.

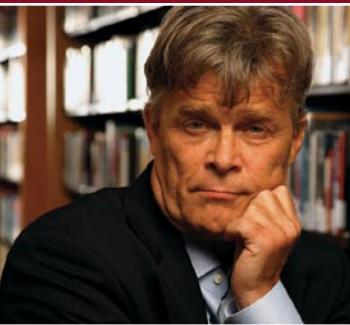
Meet Souvankham Thammavongsa
February 27, 12:30 p.m. at Runnymede Branch
for the final of nine Lit Lunches presented at subway accessible library branches across the city.



Spotlight: **Jeanne Beker**

Host of *FT-Fashion Television*, Citytv's most widely syndicated show, with viewers across Canada and in over 80 countries around the world, Beker began her career in show business at the age of 16 and never looked back. Besides her *FT* duties, Jeanne is currently editor-in-chief for *FQ Magazine* and *SIR Magazine*; a regular featured columnist with *The Globe and Mail*; and a monthly style columnist for *Inside Entertainment Magazine*. She is also the author of *Passion for Fashion: Careers in Style*. **Awards:** Vantage Women of Originality Award, awarded to women who are pioneers in their chosen field; Variety Club Diamond Award.

Meet Jeanne Beker
February 21, 7 p.m. at Yorkville Branch
for the second of three literary discussion and wine tasting programs held at three library branches in Toronto.



Spotlight: **Nicholas Campbell**

Critically acclaimed actor Nicholas Campbell has played everything from handsome charismatic leading men to undercover cops to psychopaths. Born in Toronto and raised in Montreal, Campbell studied acting in England. His portrayal of Dominic Da Vinci in *Da Vinci's Inquest*, once Canada's most popular dramatic series, garnered him three Gemini nominations. In addition to acting, he is also an accomplished filmmaker. Campbell plays Shorty McAdoo in the CBC TV adaptation of *The Englishman's Boy*. **Award:** Gemini for Best Performance by an Actor in a continuing leading dramatic role.

Meet Nicholas Campbell
February 26, 6:30 p.m. at Toronto Reference Library
for Books Into Film: *The Englishman's Boy*, a CBC mini-series preview followed by discussion.

Visit www.KeepTorontoReading.ca for more information.



Experience the brilliance of the book in its many forms

Get details for all 47 Keep Toronto Reading 2008 events:

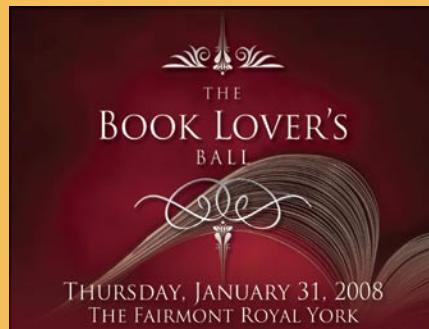
- Get *What's More* at any library branch
- Visit the Keep Toronto Reading website www.KeepTorontoReading.ca
- Call Answerline 416-393-7131



Foundations of literature

Funds raised keep library thriving

BESIDES PROVIDING AN opportunity for Torontonians to connect and Get Lit in February, Keep Toronto Reading allows the Toronto Public Library Foundation to generate support for the library. The success of the annual "I Keep Toronto Reading" fundraising campaign attests to the goodwill the people of Toronto feel for their library system. Along with the Book Lover's Ball, which will be held on January 31, the "I Keep Toronto Reading" campaign includes branch sales of buttons for a toonie, and beautiful book bags for \$5. This initiative raises much-needed funds and helps position the Foundation to do the kind of corporate fundraising necessary to maintain a thriving library system in Toronto.



Library Board Highlights

January 21, 2008

Interim operating budget adopted

The board adopted the 2008 interim operating budget of \$65.726 million gross (\$59.871 million net), as approved by City Council. The board also approved reduction options totalling \$700,000 in order to meet the City Manager's recommended 2008 operating budget target of \$169.988 million gross (\$155.674 million net) or a four percent increase over the prior year.

Okeima Lawrence elected vice-chair of library board



The youngest-ever member of the Toronto Public Library Board when he was appointed in 2005, Okeima Lawrence was elected vice-chair of the board at the January 21, 2008 meeting.

"I'm honoured and excited to take on this role in working with the other members of the board in our ongoing efforts to advocate for and help develop strong library service for all people in Toronto," says Lawrence, "and in particular, from my perspective, for the youth of the city."

A library user since he

was five years old, Lawrence's formal association with the library began a number of years ago, when he was invited to speak to members of the Youth Advisory Group at Maria A. Shchuka Branch about strategies for strengthening the relationship between library staff and neighbourhood youth. Not long after that, he was appointed to the library board.

"One recent initiative I'm very pleased to have been associated with, as a member of the board," says Lawrence, "was a pilot project that offered youth a break on their library fines. I had been approached by young people who told me they no longer went to the library because they had fines they couldn't pay, so it was good to see this issue addressed."

The fine forgiveness coupon, distributed to youth in the fall of 2005 through schools, community service agencies and library branches, was used by thousands of Toronto teens, bringing them back to the library and, in many cases, resulting in return visits.

"I'm glad to be able to play a role in making sure youth get every opportunity to take advantage of libraries as a means of helping them make positive contributions to our city," concludes Lawrence.

Also at their January 21 meeting, the board re-elected Kathy Gallagher Ross to the position of chair. A profile of Gallagher Ross will appear in the February issue of *Shelf Life*.

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

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