

# Shelf life

Toronto Public Library News & Views

June 2008



## Toronto “jewel” shines brighter with arrival of Wallace archives

Beloved children’s author Ian Wallace offers his original artwork to Osborne

WATCHING 30 YEARS of history go out the door of his Toronto home a few days before he was to depart for his new home in Boston, Ian Wallace felt a strong mix of emotions. “I knew it was the right thing to do, but it was tough watching thirty years of my life being taken away.”

The 30 years of history came in the form of over 400 pieces of Wallace’s original artwork, created for his award-winning children’s picture books, destined for their new home in Toronto Public Library’s Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books.

Along with artwork from 21 picture books, Wallace has included rough pencil drawings, drafts for published and unpublished manuscripts, correspondence with publishers, teachers, librarians and children, book layouts and press proofs, work from his student days at the Ontario College of Art, and other material related to each book.

“We are delighted to be in a position to provide access to Mr. Wallace’s work,” says Osborne Collection head Leslie McGrath. “Part of the Wallace collection will be available in the near future for display, and for research by members of the public. Eventually, we hope to have the entire body of work as part of the Osborne’s permanent collection.”

Wallace’s connection to libraries is rooted deeply in his past. “When I was a young boy, maybe three or four years old, my mom regularly took my brothers and me to our neighbourhood branch of the Niagara Falls Public Library. I remember loving the experience.”

In fact, Wallace’s first big break as an artist came at the library when he was just eight years



S. Walter Stewart Branch, located in the East York community, reopened to an enthusiastic crowd greeted by Dewey, the library’s KidsSpace mascot, May 29.

## “Way cool” library branch reopens in East York Neighbourhood enriched by “architectural tour de force”

**Woman:** So I’m meeting Janet at the library.

**Teen boy:** The library?

**Woman:** Yeah, it’s opening today.

**Teen boy:** OUR library? OUR library is opening today?

Hang on, I’ll come with you.

– overheard on a bus by a library staff member  
travelling to work on the day S. Walter Stewart Branch  
reopened after extensive renovations

WHEN THE DOORS OF S. Walter Stewart branch of Toronto Public Library opened for the first time in nearly two years, a flood of people poured in, checking out the newly renovated branch and exclaiming over its beauty.

“It was like everyone in the neighbourhood was there,” says library manager Patricia Eastman. “I heard one teenager say, ‘Cool,’ and then his friend said, ‘No – WAY cool!’”

“Cool” might be an understatement. Comments recorded opening day in the guest book ranged from “magnificent” to “groovy” to “absolutely stunning” to “an architectural tour de force.”

SEE FIRST KIDSTOP OPENS, PAGE 3...

SEE WALLACE ARCHIVES, PAGE 2...

Detail from original watercolour illustration for *Morgan the Magnificent*, written and illustrated by Ian Wallace, Groundwood (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987).

## Wallace Archives

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old and he won a drawing competition sponsored by the Niagara Falls Public Library. Both the picture that won him the competition and the book prize he received are part of the Wallace archives at the Osborne.

Winner of over 50 awards and accolades for his work, and one of Canada's most beloved creators of children's literature and artwork, Wallace

user of the reference library picture collection. "Throughout my career, public libraries have played a critical role in the success of my books. Like many artists in Toronto I have found the Picture Loan Collection and its staff to be of enormous value. I couldn't have accomplished what I have done without libraries and librarians."

Besides being of interest to people who have grown up with Wallace's timeless storybooks, the Wallace collection at Osborne will offer an important resource for researchers interested in Canadian publishing.

According to Wallace: "My body of work at the Osborne in a tangible way represents a small piece in the history of Canadian publishing for young people, and children's literature in this country over the past 34 years."

Wallace's work will be in good company at the Osborne, which holds original artwork by many well-known children's authors and illustrators, including Marie-Louise Gay, Robin Muller, László Gál and Harvey Chan.

The Osborne Collection had its beginnings in a visit by a British librarian, Edgar Osborne, to Toronto Public Library's Boys and Girls House branch in 1934. Osborne was impressed by the range and quality of children's services established and flourishing under the library's first head of children's services, Lillian H. Smith.

Osborne donated his personal collection of some 2,000 rare and notable children's books to Toronto Public Library in 1949, as a research collection in historical

children's literature. From this beginning, the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books has grown to over 80,000 rare and notable modern children's books, comprising three collections: the Osborne Collection of books published to the end of 1910; the Lillian H. Smith Collection of modern notable titles; and the Canadiana Collection of materials written, published, or substantially related to Canada. Each of these collections includes book-related art, literary archives, games and ephemera.

The Osborne is currently in the process of making its holdings more accessible via the library's online catalogue, which will make it easier to use for researchers, both in Toronto and beyond.

Part of the reason Ian Wallace has decided to offer his collection to the Osborne

at this stage in his career is the accessibility a public library collection allows, along with the possibility of keeping his work together.

"Since the creation of *Chin Chiang and the Dragon's Dance*, I've wanted to keep my body of work together, if at all possible," explains Wallace. "Each book was created as a complete entity and I felt each one should remain complete and not disappear into many different households as they would have been had they been sold in a gallery. I also began to imagine that all the books should stay together as a record of how one artist approached the art of illustration."

"The Osborne Collection is a jewel in Toronto," concludes Wallace. "I wanted my work to be associated with this remarkable collection and with the other writers and illustrators represented there."



has remained a devoted fan of the public library.

In 2005, while Wallace was working on an illustrated version of *The Huron Carol*, Jamie Hunter, the Director of the Huronia Museum, in Midland, directed Wallace to a book called *Codex Canadiensis*. "I'd been discussing with him the clothing worn by the Hurons in the mid-1600s and the difficulty I was having finding any visual references," explains Wallace. "Jamie told me of a rare book in the collection of the Toronto Reference Library that contained two drawings, one of a native of the Ottawa tribe and another of a Chief of the Illinois Nation. I checked it out, and sure enough, the book was there."

Wallace is also a frequent

### TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION

## Library supporter leaves his legacy

Hy Isenbaum believed a great library was fundamental to a great city

Hy Isenbaum, one of the founding members of the Toronto Public Library Foundation, passed away on Tuesday, April 15, 2008. A strong supporter of the library and the Foundation, Isenbaum was instrumental in securing substantial donations over the years, including significant support from the Samuel Lunenfeld Charitable Foundation.

"Hy's invaluable support as a founding member of the Toronto Public Library Foundation and his continued efforts on behalf of the Foundation and the library over the past decade and through his illness will always be remembered and appreciated by all who knew and worked with him," says library foundation chair Janet McKelvey.

Isenbaum's numerous accomplishments involving his work as a chartered accountant and his involvement with Mount Sinai hospital complemented his efforts to help build great library service in Toronto, which he believed to be "fundamental for a city to achieve its full social and economic potential," according to McKelvey.

"Hy was an inspiration to me, personally," concludes McKelvey, "and to all foundation directors and staff who had the opportunity to work with him."





Librarian Dorothy Ashbridge accepts *Gatineau Hills* – one of several A.Y. Jackson paintings on permanent display at S. Walter Stewart Branch – donated by Mr. Stewart at the official branch opening, October 3, 1960.

### Toronto Public Library remembers S. Walter Stewart

First opened in its current location in 1960, the S. Walter Stewart Branch was named for a distinguished public-spirited citizen whose membership on the East York Library Board and earlier efforts on behalf of library service in East York spanned more than a quarter of a century. Stewart served on the East York Public Library Board from its establishment in 1946 until his death on March 22, 1969, many of those years as chair. He helped build East York Library service from a few small library rooms in schools, to a system with a number of branches and an outreach service for seniors. East York Council recognized Stewart's contribution with a resolution in 1969, at the time of his death, that concluded: "Walter's wise counsel, gift of diplomacy and gaiety of spirit will be deeply missed by his colleagues and the whole community for years to come."



"Can we come back tomorrow and the tomorrow after that?"



Special guests cut the ribbon for S. Walter Stewart branch's long awaited reopening. From left, Architect Phillip Carter; Branch Head Jean Kowalewski; City Librarian Josephine Bryant; Ross Ridout, son of John Ridout (see "John Ridout," below); Maxwell (Maxie) Dowsett, daughter of S. Walter Stewart; City Councillor Case Ootes; Library Board member City Councillor Janet Davis; and City Councillor Paul Ainslie.

### First KidsStop opens at new S. Walter Stewart

THE NEWLY RENOVATED S. Walter Stewart Branch includes the first in a series of KidsStops planned for Toronto Public Library branches. Hands-on, interactive, literacy-based discovery centres, KidsStops are designed to be a fun way to encourage interaction among parents and their children in an effort to promote early literacy. The S. Walter Stewart Branch KidsStop is themed around outer space. "It was wonderful watching the kids discover the KidsStop," exclaims library manager Patricia Eastman. "Their excitement and squeals as they saw the spaceship were a joy to hear!" Scheduled to open this fall, the library's second KidsStop – located at the Dufferin/St. Clair Branch, which is currently under renovation – will be themed around fairy tales and will feature elements of Robert Munsch's classic and beloved *Paperbag Princess*. Following that, there will be KidsStops at Thorncliffe and Cedarbrae branches, and at other locations as opportunity arises.

A portion of this KidsStop is supported by Sophie's Studio. Created through a bequest from the late Sophia Lucyk, a longtime library user and generous supporter, Sophie's Studio supports programs that emphasize creativity and the enhancement of reading and writing skills in children from a young age.

### Toronto Public Library remembers John S. Ridout

The John S. Ridout auditorium is named for a man who, over the years, acted as a board member of the East York Public Library Board and as a member of the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board. Ridout's many years of volunteer work for the library created a foundation on which the library still builds. As one of his fellow library board members wrote at the time of the dedication of the John S. Ridout Auditorium: "I vividly recall when I first joined the board and encountered your insight and hard work. Your ambassadorship and leadership made it comparatively easy for those of us new to the board to learn, contribute and most importantly, feel comfortable." John Ridout died in 2003. The rejuvenated John S. Ridout auditorium, graced with a small stage for meetings and programs, is also now a quiet study area and the newest of the library's juried art exhibit spaces.



**Library board member  
Kate Wilson: a profile**

Kate Wilson joined the Toronto Public Library Board in December 2004, but this wasn't her first exposure to library work. In her student years, Kate worked at Deer Park Branch of Toronto Public Library as a page and, in the 1970s, she served on the advisory board for the National Library of Canada for four years.

"I have been absolutely knocked out by the Toronto Public Library staff," says Wilson. "It's really quite extraordinary the grasp staff have on what is really a quite complex system."

Kate's professional background includes thirty years of experience in publishing, having worked for Kids Can Press, The Observer, The United Church of Canada, James Lorimer & Company and McClelland and Stewart. She has held communications positions with the Department of the Secretary of State in Canada and the Government of Botswana. Additionally, as a producer for CBC Radio, Kate produced *The Arts Hour* for CBC's flagship national radio program, *Sunday Morning*, and documentaries on cultural politics and events in Canada, the UK and Europe.

In 2003, Kate started work

in the field of Children's Mental Health, serving as project director on the policy framework consultation for Children's Mental Health Ontario. Kate is a volunteer at Child Development Services and serves as board member and chair of the Advocacy Committee for Kinark Child and Family Services.

"One project I was involved in when I joined the board was the development of a partnership between the library and Children's Mental Health Ontario," says Wilson. "Asked

to provide support during Children's Mental Health Week, the library really rose to the occasion. They got materials distributed, set up displays, and arranged programs. They got in touch with settlement organizations through their outreach connections and that was a real goldmine. After all, how do you get word out to new Canadians, that there is help available? The library did it.

"This was the first Children's Mental Health Week partnership with a major organization in the city and through it

we were able to develop the model to follow in coming years," continues Wilson. "I was proud of the library's ability to rise to a challenge and take the opportunity to serve a public education role

"Don't miss this opportunity," Wilson concludes when asked what message about the library she'd like to get out to the people of Toronto. "The library's an incredible resource, right at your fingertips, and until you visit, you'll have no idea what a great package it is."

**Library Board Highlights**

**June 16, 2008**

**Enhanced board input into sponsorship arrangements**

In order to give the library board greater opportunity to provide input into the appropriateness of sponsorships, a number of possible amendments to the library's Sponsorship Policy were referred to the September meeting for staff comment. Approved recommendations include the provision by the TPL Foundation of an annual report on sponsorships to the board; Terms of Reference for a Naming Sub-Committee which will provide concept approval of the naming component of sponsorships; and Board Members Eman Ahmed, Councillor Paul Ainslie, Mathew Church, Adam Chaleff-Freudenthaler were nominated to the Naming Sub-Committee.

**Foundation fundraising extends library's reach**

The board adopted and forwarded to the library

foundation a number of new fundraising initiatives, including a number of after-school opportunities for children. These new fundraising initiatives will extend the library's ability to provide services to users, communities and targeted groups.

**Strategic plan moves forward**

The board approved the revised *Strategic Plan 2008-2011 Themes, Goals and Strategies* as the framework for the final version of the strategic plan. Recent consultations gathered feedback from over 1,900 individuals through roundtables, focus groups and in-branch and online comment forms available in 10 languages. Some common ideas expressed during consultations included the importance of: maintaining strong collections, both print and electronic, including Internet resources; providing public space; providing support for vulnerable people; and developing partnerships to achieve common goals and greater impact. It is anticipated

that a final version of the strategic plan will be presented for approval at the September library board meeting.

**Capital improvement projects slated for two branches**

Two library branches are slated to close for major renovation before the end of the year. The Kennedy/Eglinton Branch will close for approximately six months, beginning in the summer of 2008 and Cedarbrae Branch will close for approximately 18 months for a major renovation beginning in the fall of 2008. Strategies for providing essential alternate library service in communities affected by renovation closures involve, wherever possible and when deemed appropriate, bookmobile service, relocation of community programming, alternate arrangements for holds pick ups, maintenance of a library presence in the community through participation in fairs, visits to community facilities and participation in school events.