

Chair's Report
January 18, 2010

Best-selling author of *Three Cups of Tea* and *Stones into Schools*, **Greg Mortenson**, visited the **Appel Salon on January 13** to talk about his continuing efforts to promote peace through education. At \$10 apiece, the 468 tickets for the event sold out before the end of 2009, but a free closed-circuit broadcast of the event in the Toronto Reference Library atrium gave people who couldn't get tickets the opportunity to see the event; and the book signing after the event was open to all. Proceeds from ticket sales were split between the Toronto Public Library Foundation and Pennies for Peace, founded by Greg Mortenson to raise funds to build schools in Afghanistan.

Black History Month kicks off on February 4 with a gala event in the Appel Salon, Big Voices, New Voices, featuring Toronto Book Award winner Austin Clarke and poet George Elliott Clarke in discussion with emerging writers Yvette Trancoso and Stacey Marie Robinson. Another featured Black History Month event in the Appel Salon, on February 24, *A New Black Literature? Writing How You Speak*, brings our featured Black History Month events to a close. Other featured programs take place at North York Central Library. Details are available online and in a Black History Month brochure available at all branches, and included in this month's board package. Branches across the city are holding their own local Black History Month programs.

The Book Lover's Ball is set to take place on February 11 at the Fairmont Royal York. It promises to be an exciting event, with Catherine Gildiner, Anne Michaels, Vincent Lam, and Lawrence Hill, among the nearly 50 authors confirmed to attend. Anyone interested in purchasing tickets should contact Foundation President Heather Rumball.

On February 17, at the Scarborough Civic Centre, Toronto Public Library will hold the **first public consultation for the new Scarborough Centre library branch**. Scheduled to open by the end of 2014, the new 15,000 square foot facility will be located on Borough Drive and will house a collection size of 50,000 items for all ages. It will include bookable meeting rooms, study spaces, zones for adults, teens and children, comfortable reading lounges, free access to high-speed internet, wireless internet, express check-out and check-in, outdoor reading and public plaza spaces.

The Library is a new partner in the **Toronto Star's annual short story contest**, which was launched at Toronto Reference Library on January 8. Our own Toronto Public Library Board Chair Matthew Church and City Librarian Jane Pyper will be part of the distinguished panel of judges for the contest, along with acclaimed Toronto author Elyse Friedman, Star columnists Richard Ouzounian (theatre critic) and Geoff Pevere (Books columnist). The contest is the biggest and most lucrative of its kind in Canada, with a grand prize of \$5,000 and tuition for the creative writing correspondence program at the Humber School for Writers, and second and third prizes of \$2,000 and \$1,000 respectively. The Library will host the awards event during Keep Toronto Reading month.

The annual **Young Voices winter writing workshops** are set to take place, with the first happening at Malvern on January 26, featuring *Young Voices* guest editor, Toronto poet Kevin Connolly. The other two workshops will take place February 17 at Centennial Branch, and March 20 at Bloor/Gladstone and will feature, respectively, Toronto poet and Ryerson teacher Camille Martin, and the newest *Young Voices* poetry guest editor Souvankham Thammavongsa. The workshops are meant to encourage teens to submit to *Young Voices* 2010 (submission deadline: April 10) and to give them an opportunity to work with professional writers to develop their creative writing skills.

In celebration of **Family Literacy Day on January 27**, the Library is offering a number of special family literacy programs, as well as several storytelling workshops, at branches around the city.

Toronto Public Library's ongoing **writer-in-residence program** continues as noted Toronto futurist and science fiction writer Karl Schroeder takes office at The Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy, located at Lillian H. Smith Branch. In addition to critiquing manuscripts and giving marketing advice to writers, Schroeder will be doing two readings at Toronto Reference Library and three workshops at the Merrill Collection.

The rental section of the **website for the Bram & Bluma Appel Salon**, designed to help generate private rentals of the space, was launched on January 8, to coincide with the Appel Salon's appearance at Canada's Bridal Show at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Later in January, the Appel Salon will host an industry event to promote the venue and generate sales.