

# Shelf life

Toronto Public Library News & Views

April 2009



Adopt a Word, pg 3



Jane/Sheppard community residents await the grand opening of their new library branch on April 2. Within a few hours of opening, the branch had already welcomed more than 900 visitors.

## New library branch reaches out to the neighbourhood

Relocated Jane/Sheppard Branch incorporates community input

WITHIN THE FIRST few hours of opening for the first time on April 2, the newly built Jane/Sheppard Branch of Toronto Public Library had welcomed more than 900 people from the neighbourhood through the doors.

"The fact that we were able to relocate the Jane/Sheppard Branch from a relatively small store in a mall into a brand new 7,000 square foot building, twice the size of the old branch, and

specifically designed to be a library, gave us the opportunity to incorporate a great deal of community input into the design of the building and the development of collections and services," says Library Board Chair Matthew Church.

"Above all, it is our goal to make every person in the community aware of their new 'home away from home,'" Church told the crowd at the official opening. "It's exciting for

us to work with the community, our staff, architects and many partners to continue to develop our public library spaces, and to ensure they continue to be made available, free-of-charge, for the benefit of everyone in the city."

One important partnership in the development of Jane/Sheppard has seen Microsoft put refurbished laptops into the branch, making it the first library branch

SEE JANE/SHEPPARD ON PAGE 2...

## Toronto Comic Arts Festival brings comic culture to Toronto Reference Library, May 9 and 10

STARTING OUT AT Harbourfront Centre on Friday, May 8, with an evening featuring world-renowned graphic artists/novelists Seth, Yoshihiro Tatsumi and Adrian Tomine, the Toronto Comic Arts Festival will move up to the heart of the city, Toronto Reference Library (Yonge north of Bloor), on Saturday morning, for the main event, May 9 and May 10.

"Not too many people associate the library with comics," says Chief Librarian Jane Pyper. "By presenting the Toronto Comic Arts Festival, the library hopes to attract new customers, as we show off our graphic novel, anime and manga collections, along with some of our other less known non-traditional library resources."

First held in 2003, The Toronto Comic Arts Festival was conceived to provide interaction between the creative community and the public, and was modeled on similar festivals around the world.

"The Festival will feature over 15,000 square feet of attractions within the Reference Library complex, more than 200 cartoonists, and more than two weeks of programming and events leading up to the two-day exhibition extravaganza,"

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# Jane/Sheppard

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in Toronto to loan laptops for use in the library.

"Partnerships help us extend our resources, allowing the library to reach out to, and help more people in Toronto," said Chief Librarian Jane Pyper. "The partnership with Microsoft has allowed us to more than quadruple the number of free computer workstations available to the Jane/Sheppard community."

Jane/Sheppard is the 34<sup>th</sup> branch to incorporate free WiFi into their service, and the second, after the recently renovated Dufferin/St. Clair, to extend that WiFi service to an outdoor reading garden.

"The library is an important public space," says Anne Bailey, Director of Branch Libraries. "We provide quiet study space for individuals, group study space for students working on projects, and public meeting space for community organizations.

There are also great spaces in the library set aside for children, and, elsewhere, for teens — places that will spark young imaginations and connect youth to information, to knowledge, to a world of possibility."

"The branch is seeing more parents and grandparents," according to library manager Katherine Palmer. "There is always a youngster on the purple Dial-a-Story phone. Hundreds of board books have been borrowed. Teens are amazed that we have an area just for them, and gaming and laptops are big hits. The listening station draws a steady line up of people all ages. I heard one ten-year-old say, 'Wow, cool,' when he got his turn on the listening station, which I think pretty much sums up people's reaction to the entire branch."



## Library Board member profile: Tina Edan



TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY board member Tina Edan says she is proud to serve an organization

that "pushes boundaries through innovation and creativity. There is no other place in the city that offers book signings via Long Pen; stilt walkers and acrobatic dancing, which we have at Nuit Blanche; exemplary services for new Canadians through our Library Settlement Partnerships; connections to other cultural institutions, such as our SunLife Museum and Arts Passes;

culinary tours, explorations into electronic worlds, workshops with local writers, magic shows — AND books!"

As well as being a member of the library board for the past two years, Edan is a writer and social activist. "Writers make sense of the world with words, which form containers of meaning," says Edan. "I'm a text-junkie. I read everything on my sight path," she continues. "As a writer, I feel the library has always been a deep well of ideas from which I create characters and contexts."

As an activist, Edan values the library's role as public space. "By providing a venue for meetings and workshops, the library creates opportunities for residents to explore and engage with their creative or social interests," says Edan. "Each time we ask, people in the city

come forward to support the library. From sharing views on future directions or standing in solidarity against budget cuts, there is no doubt that GTA residents love their library. This ongoing enthusiasm is an important reminder of the library's role as a free democratic institution which has something to offer everyone."

Edan took the lead on the recent, first-ever Toronto Public Library staff/board retreat. "I have always thought of librarians and library staff as the keepers of one of the city's most valuable treasures," explains Edan.

"More than ever, I have come to appreciate the exceptional team that leads Toronto Public Library as a world class example of what a library can be."

Edan was also part of the strategic planning committee

that yielded *Our Shared Stories*, the library's strategic plan for 2008-2011. "The process was creative and inclusive and led to a four-year plan that deals with issues based in the reality of the city today. From access and programming, which address the growing income gap, to the implementation of sustainable environmental practices, the library continues to keep the bar high by setting an example for other institutions."

Edan's neighbourhood branch is High Park, "but I have been known to side track over to Palmerston, Sanderson or Parkdale on my way home from work," she says. "There is something about the Parkdale branch that always draws me in. Situated in the midst of one of the most culturally diverse

SEE TINA EDAN ON PAGE 4...

## Comic culture

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according to Chris Butcher, organizer of the festival and manager of The Beguiling, Canada's premiere comic and graphic novel store.

Comic artists and authors attending the festival include: internationally acclaimed cartoonist Michel Rabagliati; New York graphic novelist Gabrielle Bell; Emmanuel Guibert, from France; Yoshihiro Tatsumi, from Japan; and Anke Feuchetenberger, from Germany.

"The festival will also provide a chance for Toronto to show off its library, the busiest in the world," adds Pyper. "We're expecting the festival to attract an international audience."

"TCAF 2009 will be the most spectacular yet, thanks to our partnership with Toronto Public Library," says Butcher. "TCAF will showcase the talents of its guests through exhibitor presentations, gallery showings, lectures, workshops, discussion panels, interactive readings, and the 2009 Doug Wright Awards for Canadian Cartooning (taking place at the AGO)."

"It's a great way to meet other cartoonists and reach out to readers," says Dinosaur Comics creator Ryan North, who will be a guest at the festival. North thinks that having the festival at the Reference Library is a great idea. "It's an amazing space and the fact that the comic festival is in a library lends legitimacy to the medium. A comics convention can be a bit insular; you attract comics fans, but not many other folk. But everyone goes to the Toronto Public Library! The library is a great place to find out about something new."

For more details, visit [torontocomics.com](http://torontocomics.com).



# Toronto's Library. Absolutely Vital.

## Adopt a Word to Create a Story by Margaret Atwood



Adopt a Word to Create a Story invited library customers to donate a toonie to help piece together a story written especially for Toronto Public Library by Margaret Atwood.

Amid the excitement of April's Keep Toronto Reading activities, the Foundation's annual fundraising campaign caught the attention and contributions of library-goers throughout the city as they took part in revealing Margaret Atwood's *Persiflage in the Library* story, word by word in every branch. Atwood created this original story about Toronto's Library to support the Toronto Public Library Foundation's April in-branch fundraising campaign.

Beginning on April 1,

customers at all 99 branches were invited to donate a toonie or more to "adopt" a word from Atwood's story. For every minimum donation of \$2, a word from the story was revealed, with the donor's name added to it, and posted in-branch on a Story Wall of Fame.

Atwood asked that children participate in bringing her story to life. A children's illustration contest is currently running in conjunction with the Adopt a Word to Create a Story campaign. The contest is open to children 13 and under

### Foundation receives generous grants from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

A special thanks to the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for their generous grants in support of environmental collections at our branches. Their funding enables the Toronto

and runs from April 22 until May 6. Winning entries will be announced and posted on the Foundation website: [tplfoundation.ca](http://tplfoundation.ca) on May 27.

The campaign kicked off with the first 10 words adopted by Mayor David Miller during the Keep Toronto Reading launch and continued to gain momentum as customers adopted multiple words at a time, with one customer even adopting a whopping 100 words!

"Lillian H. Smith was the first branch to adopt out all its words and post the entire story on their walls – on April 14 – well before the official April 22 reveal date!" says Foundation President Heather Rumball. "Library customers across Toronto participated and enjoyed the opportunity to help bring a story to life while supporting their much loved library."

On April 22, the story was revealed in its entirety in every branch and on the Foundation's website.

Visit the Foundation's website [tplfoundation.ca](http://tplfoundation.ca) for more information.

Public Library to continue to serve the increasing need for information on environmental issues within our community and beyond.

Your library. Vital to you. Vital to support. Donate to Toronto Public Library Foundation today.

[tplfoundation.ca](http://tplfoundation.ca)



## Library Board Highlights—April 20, 2009

### Board adopts 2009 operating budget

The Board adopted the Council approved 2009 operating budget of \$175.777 million gross and \$162.016 million net, representing a four percent net increase over 2008. The operating budget will allow the library to maintain its current levels of service.

### Board receives report on grants

The Board received a report on Provincial and Federal grants to Toronto Public Library in 2008 that serve to supplement the approved budget funding received from the City of Toronto.

### Ontario report confirms Toronto Public Library busiest on continent

The 2007 Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative performance results indicate that Toronto Public Library continues to be the largest and busiest public library system in North America. High use of collections, programs and electronic services combined with growth in virtual branch and technology-based services has helped the library respond to increased demand while maintaining operating costs. Toronto Public Library also ranks well with strong performance when compared with other library systems in Ontario. Of nine Ontario library systems surveyed, Toronto Public Library was third lowest in terms of cost per use. The report also confirms the need for more library branch open hours, as Toronto is the fourth lowest out of nine library systems in terms of service hours per capita.

### Reference Library construction proceeding as planned

As construction on a new event space at Toronto Reference Library winds down – with a launch of the space planned for the fall — work will begin on the project's next major components: creating the new glass entrance cube; expanding the Yonge Street façade west to eliminate the colonnade; and, constructing the glass browsery at the north end of the building. The doors on Yonge Street opposite Yorkville Avenue will be retrofitted to serve as the main entrance during construction of the glass entrance cube. The work will be done in phases, so that the library can remain open throughout the renovation.

### Consumer Health Information Services to close at Reference Library

With the loss of operating funding for the Consumer Health Information Services from the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, the information service will be forced to close. From its inception, CHIS was envisioned as a provincial service with provincial funding. Library staff is in the process of developing a transition funding agreement with the Ministry and will be developing a detailed plan for closing down the provincial service and migrating the provision of consumer health information to local users in a more integrated fashion within the Toronto Reference Library.

## Calendar of Events May 2009

### ON STAGE

A series of three free talks by Canadian performing artists at the top of their game.

### Christopher House in conversation with Tina Srebrenjak

Christopher House, Artistic Director of Toronto Dance Theatre, one of Canada's leading choreographers, talks about his life and career. Interviewed by Tina Srebrenjak. The presentation includes an excerpt from his documentary *Ahead of the Curve*.

Thursday, May 14, 7-8 p.m.  
Toronto Reference Library  
Atrium

Visit [torontopubliclibrary.ca](http://torontopubliclibrary.ca) for more On Stage programs.

### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH 2009

The library joins the national celebration with free events across the city.

### Opening Night event: New Asian Writing

An evening of contemporary Asian-Canadian authors reading from their most recent works. Kerri Sakamoto (*One Hundred Million Hearts*); Saleema Nawaz (*Mother Superior*); Devyani Saltzman (*Shooting Water*); Jaspreet Singh (*Chef*). Featuring contemporary Indian dancing with Menaka Thakkar Dance Company.

Thursday, May 7, 7 p.m.  
North York Central Library

Don't miss out on other Asian Heritage Month events across the city. Visit [torontopubliclibrary.ca/asianheritage](http://torontopubliclibrary.ca/asianheritage) for details.

For all Toronto Public Library programs, visit [torontopubliclibrary.ca](http://torontopubliclibrary.ca).

## Tina Edan

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neighbourhoods in the city, alongside independent galleries, family businesses that have been around for decades, festivals, arts programming and encroaching gentrification, the branch is like a heartbeat that connects it all.

"I am amazed at how each branch has its own distinct personality," continues Edan. "High Park is like coffee with an old friend; Dufferin/St. Clair feels like walking through a storybook; the Reference Library, a skydive through airspace I've never breathed before; while Bloor/Gladstone is like a present I'm anxiously waiting to open."

Edan, who is involved with

DiverseCity: The Greater Toronto Leadership Project ([diversecitytoronto.ca](http://diversecitytoronto.ca)), as part of her work with Maytree, is committed to seeing a "leadership in the GTA that is reflective of its residents. It is a fact that Toronto is one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world - it is time for that diversity to be represented at the top of our public, private and non-profit organizations.

"Toronto Public Library's strategic plan demonstrates a very sophisticated understanding of Toronto's changing demographic," concludes Edan. "It embraces diversity as a core value through its programming, philosophy and governance."

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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.  
Website: [torontopubliclibrary.ca](http://torontopubliclibrary.ca)

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