

Book Lover's Ball at the Toronto Reference Library - 2015

Date:	April 28, 2014
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to place before the Toronto Public Library Board a request from the Toronto Public Library Foundation to hold the 10th anniversary Book Lover's Ball at the Toronto Reference Library (TRL) in 2015.

The Foundation's request is described in the attached memorandum. It sets out the anticipated advantages for both the Foundation and the Library in hosting the Ball at TRL and the impact it would have on service to the public. It is in this context that the Board will have to consider the request. Consultation with other large central libraries indicated that on occasion they may be closed or have hours and services areas restricted for major fundraising events in support of library services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. considers the request from the Toronto Public Library Foundation to host the 2015 Book Lover's Ball at the Toronto Reference Library

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact to the Board arising from this request. Any costs associated with holding the Book Lover's Ball at TRL would be borne by the Foundation.

Proceeds from the Book Lover's Ball are used to enhance and expand library services.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Book Lover's Ball is the Foundation's annual premier fundraising event. For nine years it has been staged successfully in external event venues. For the 10th anniversary in 2015, which follows closely on the completion of the revitalization of the Toronto Reference Library, the Foundation would like to hold the Ball at TRL

COMMENTS

Holding the Book Lover's Ball at TRL as a unique one-time occurrence offers many advantages for both the Library and the Foundation. It is a chance to showcase the revitalized TRL and demonstrate in a very visual way to new audiences what today's vital and vibrant library looks like. Increased space allows for a larger audience and the introduction of an "after party" at a more affordable ticket price to attract a new audience. More people, more profile and more immediacy to library service is anticipated to increase the number of library supporters and donors.

Service Impacts

Hosting the Book Lover's Ball at TRL will have unavoidable service impacts on Thursday, February 5, 2015, and the public would need ample and advance notice of any change in hours and access. The Foundation has identified its broadest anticipated needs for space and closures. As more detailed plans are developed, it is possible that the third floor spaces, for example, may not be required.

The Yorkville Neighbourhood Branch will be open until 8:30 p. m. on the night of the Book Lover's Ball and is conveniently located for TRL users. Staff will investigate moving laptops for loan to Yorkville for the evening to increase the computer capacity in that location if TRL is closed.

Service Hours

The Foundation has requested that TRL close at 3:00 p. m. on the day of the Ball in order to complete the set up for the event itself. Normally, TRL closes at 8:30 p.m. on Thursday. The early closure will reduce public service hours on the day of the Ball by 5.5 hours.

Service Restrictions

The Foundation has requested that the entire second floor (Humanities and Social Sciences Department) be closed to the public on the day of the Ball. This is the largest service floor at TRL and is well used by students and genealogists. Study space and computers would be unavailable to the public. Staff would be able to access the floor and would be able to retrieve material from the collections for customers to use on other service floors. Additional security would need to be present to ensure that the public did not access the second floor on the day of the Ball either by the stair or elevators.

The Foundation has requested that the Main Floor Browse area along the windows on Yonge Street be closed for the full day of the Ball for staging and set up. The public would

have no access to the Browsersy circulating collection at TRL for the day or the lounge and study seating in the area. Staff would be able to retrieve holds awaiting pickup for customers as required. Another request is that the central Atrium study area be taken out of service at 1:00 p.m. This will add more pressure to the seating on the fourth and fifth floors.

The Foundation has requested that two large study seating areas on the third floor (Business, Science and Technology Department) be closed to the public at 1:00 p.m. on the day of the Ball in order to facilitate dinner setup. If these areas are closed at 1:00 p.m. pressure on remaining seating would be increased. The collection and remaining services on the floor would be available for use.

Staffing Implications

Staff would normally be scheduled to work until 8:30 p.m. on the proposed night of the Ball. Within the provisions of the Collective Agreement, and given two weeks' notice, staff schedules could be adjusted to have all staff work a day shift finishing by 5:00 p.m. at the latest. While staff would not be serving the public after 3:00 p.m. there are many activities that they could usefully perform after the Library closes at 3:00 p.m. Pages and part-time staff normally scheduled to work that evening and not able to work during the day could have their hours rescheduled at an alternate and mutually agreed upon time. Staff would also be able to use vacation for all or part of the period of closure if that was their preference.

Safety and other Environmental Issues

Most of the AV and production set up and takedown that would be most disruptive to service would take place during the nights preceding and following the Ball when the Library will be closed. However, there will be significant set up and preparation required during the day of February 5th in the areas where the Ball activities will be held. Early and partial closures of these public service spaces will contribute to a safer environment for the public and staff as they will not be in areas where set up is occurring. There will be noise, movement of furniture, pressure on elevators and other impacts not yet fully determined throughout the day.

Environmental Scan

Other large central libraries were canvassed about their practices related to closing for special events and the public reaction to any such closures. A number of libraries responded that they did host special fundraising events in their central libraries but there was mixed practice in how this was accomplished. Some libraries indicated that as their central libraries closed at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, they restricted special events to these evenings. Others do close a few hours early and close areas of the building to facilitate set up if required. The New York Public Library, for example, closes its central research library, the Stephen A Schwarzman Building for a full day each November to set up for a major fundraising gala. The libraries report that they provide early public notice of such service implications and that they have had little or no public concern voiced.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jane Pyper
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Memorandum from Heather Rumball, Toronto Public Library Foundation
requesting approval to hold the Book Lover's Ball at the Toronto Reference
Library in 2015 dated April 28, 2014