

Book Lover's Ball at the Toronto Reference Library – 2016

Date:	April 20, 2015
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 (TPLF) to hold the 2016 Book Lover's Ball at the Toronto Reference Library (TRL) on Thursday, February 4th.

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.

The 2015 Book Lover's Ball at TRL was a great success for both the Library and the Foundation. It showcased the library beautifully to a large and largely new audience, and in a very tangible way that connected guests to the services they were asked to support. Through careful event planning and organization, disruption to service was minimal and library users were very understanding of the early closing for a major fundraising event in support of library services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. approves the Toronto Public Library Foundation's request to host the 2016 Book Lover's Ball at the Toronto Reference Library on Thursday, February 4th.

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.

DECISION HISTORY

The Book Lover's Ball is the Foundation's annual premier fundraising event. For nine years it was staged in external event venues. For the 10th anniversary in 2015, which followed closely on the completion of the revitalization of the Toronto Reference Library, the TPLF asked to hold the Ball at TRL. On April 28, 2014 the Board approved the request and the required early closure of TRL on the day of the Ball.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In order to stage the Book Lover's Ball at TRL, it is necessary to close the entire branch early on the day of the Ball and to close some sections of it for all or part of the day.

COMMENTS

Holding the Book Lover's Ball at TRL 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 has impacts on public service the day of the Ball, but the experience in 2015 was these could all be managed through careful event planning, ample notice to the public and setting alternative service delivery mechanisms in place. As was the case this year, the Foundation has identified its broadest anticipated needs for space and closures. As more detailed plans are developed, it is possible 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. Options will be investigated to move some staff and laptops for loan to Yorkville for the evening to increase the computer capacity in that location when TRL closes.

Service Hours

The Foundation has requested TRL close at 2:00 p. m. on the day of the Ball in order to complete the set up for the event itself. In 2015, TRL closed at 3:00 p.m., but experience has indicated an additional hour is required in order to have the main floor set up completed when guests start arriving as early as 5:30 p.m. 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 6.5 hours.

Service Restrictions

As in 2015, the Foundation has requested the following closures:

- The entire second floor (Humanities and Social Sciences Department) on the day of the Ball. 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 the public did not access the second floor on the day of the Ball either by the stair or elevators.
- The Main Floor Browse area along the windows on Yonge Street for the full day of the Ball for staging and set up. Staff would be able to retrieve holds awaiting pickup for customers as required.
- The central Atrium study area be taken out of service at 1:00 p.m.
- The two large study seating areas on the third floor (Business, Science and Technology Department) be closed to the public at 1:00 pm on the day of the Ball in order to facilitate dinner setup, if required. 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 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 2:00 p.m. there are many activities they could usefully perform after the library closes at 2:00 p.m. A few staff could be reassigned to Yorkville to support increased activity levels at that location. 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 so they would not be financially penalized by the early closure. Staff would also be able to use vacation for all or part of the period of closure if that was their preference. Answerline staff would maintain their regular schedules to 8:30 p.m. working behind the scenes to provide telephone and email information services for the system until branches close at 8:30 p.m.

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 4th 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 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

evening. 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 they provide early public notice of such service implications and they have had little or no public concern voiced.

CONTACT

Linda Mackenzie; Director, Research and Reference Libraries; Tel: 416-393-7133;
E-mail: lmackenzie@torontopubliclibrary.ca

SIGNATURE

Vickery Bowles
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 2016 dated April 20, 2015