

Shelf life

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS AND VIEWS

VOLUME 4 • NUMBER 2 • FEBRUARY 2004



Super Shusher: Seattle librarian Nancy Pearl, author of *Book Lust* and model for the librarian action figure, says of her profession: "The role of a librarian is to make sense of the world of information. If that's not a qualification for superherodom, what is?"

Library board takes stand on library hours

After reviewing dozens of options to cut spending, the Toronto Public Library (TPL) board endorsed a budget of \$129.8 million – an increase over last year of 6.6 percent – designed to protect the city's library services, programs and collections.

The board, which had previously approved an 8.4 percent increase over last year to meet skyrocketing service demands, was faced with tough choices to meet the city's fiscal targets for 2004, according to Board Chair Gillian Mason.

"We said in the Fall that we need \$10.2 million to keep pace with demand and avoid service cuts," Mason said. "Under the city's guidelines this simply wouldn't be possible this year."

The board rejected a city-proposed envelope that would have required them to cut Friday evening and Sunday service hours as well as reduce the collections budget. In the end the board only endorsed a standardization of Friday closing times and reductions in the maintenance and IT budgets.

The board is encouraging people to have their say about TPL's proposed budget by attending the March 30 City Budget Advisory Committee meeting. It also encourages citizens to call their local councillors, or log onto the TPL website,

www.tpl.toronto.on.ca, to comment.

Where technology meets poetry



"The need for human interaction is so vital. And what's better at that than a community place called the library?" – U of T Professor David Booth speaking at a February 2 community consultation at Cedarbrae Branch of Toronto Public Library.

"There are so many different kinds of literacy," according to University of Toronto Professor Emeritus David Booth. Speaking at Toronto Public Library's (TPL) third public consultation, designed to help determine the library's strategic direction over the next three years, Booth wove together an eclectic array of sources – from *Time* and *New Yorker* articles to Zit comics – to develop a disarmingly elegant argument in favour of celebrating both poetry and computers at the library.

"Schools and libraries still can do this strange thing with young people – share the world through the ear and the eye."

– David Booth

Libraries & Learning: Opening Doors to Education and Employment was the theme of an evening that featured a panel presentation with lots of audience participation. Joining Professor Booth on the panel were Canadian Senator Vivienne Poy and Toronto Settlement

Coordinator Huma Nauman. CTV AM news anchor Marci Ien facilitated.

"In our world of telephones and computers and email," Booth argued, "we can still read poems to children. Only schools and libraries do that, by the way. You won't find that at any gas station.



"Libraries are our windows on the world," according to Senator Vivienne Poy.

My doctor seldom reads me a poem. But schools and libraries still can do this strange thing with young people – share the world through the ear and the eye."

Senator Poy spoke passionately about the importance of libraries in the life of newcomers to Canada. "Our libraries provide access to materials in many languages, which is a source of comfort for new Canadians," Poy explained. She pointed out that Toronto's libraries have "over 100 languages which represent 15 percent of the total circulation."

"I consider public libraries to be absolutely essential."

–Senator Vivienne Poy

Public input from the evening, combined with that gathered at other public and library staff consultations, has revealed four areas where the library might decide to focus its resources over the next three years:

- Books and culture
- Youth
- Newcomers
- High-needs communities.

"Our aim, as always, is to serve the information and literary needs of all the people of Toronto," says City Librarian Josephine Bryant. "We will continue to provide the services we have always provided; our hope is to arrive at a few priorities and thus focus on bolstering service in areas where the public has told us they most need enhancing."

Meetings with community stakeholders start this month. The library is also asking the public to comment on the emerging themes or to contribute new ones. To add your voice, drop into your local library branch or log onto the library's website, www.tpl.toronto.on.ca.

"Real literacy rates in Canada should be 100 percent," Poy declared, "and frequent use of our libraries is our best chance of ensuring that increase." Booth summed up the evening well: "The need for human interaction is so vital. And what's better at that than a community place called the library. We gather together to celebrate, making the most meaning we can with all the resources we have in our lives. Let's help each other make the most sense of it we can."

Library cards for kids



With its promotional campaign at the midway point, Toronto Public Library (TPL) is now halfway toward its goal of offering kindergarten kids an opportunity to learn about the library, meet library staff, and sign up for their own library card.

Start Smart, sponsored by TD Bank Financial Group, targets 52,000 junior and senior kindergarten children in Toronto with a family-friendly packet of information delivered to the children and their families in collaboration with Toronto school boards. The package includes a special invitation to the kids to come in and register for their own library card and library cardholder.

"We are delighted to be part of a program that encourages children and families to use the library," says TD Bank Senior Vice President Kerry Peacock. "We certainly know how important reading is to school success and improved opportunities in life in general."

The kindergarten years are critical turning points in a child's reading development, says TPL Children and Youth Advocate, Ken Settington. Kindergarten children are learning the basics of literacy.

For more information about *Start*

Smart, or to find out how to register a child, parents can call or visit their nearest library branch.

TD Bank Financial Group is committed to supporting education and literacy in Canada. In addition to *Start Smart*, the *TD Summer Reading Club* and the TD Gallery at Toronto Reference Library, TD Bank Financial Group sponsors *The TVO Reading Rangers*, *TD Canadian Children's Book Week* and the TD Canada Trust Scholarships for Community Leadership, as well as a variety of local, regional and national programs across Canada, promoting health, education and the environment.

"TD Bank has been extremely generous in its support of the community through Toronto Public Library," says TPL Foundation President Heather Rumball. "In particular, they help us bring reading and literacy to Toronto's children, a good investment in the future, indeed."

Censored images, disappearing languages

Library events to support Freedom to Read Week, February 22-28

In collaboration with PEN Canada, Toronto Public Library (TPL) presents two Freedom to Read Week events at Toronto Reference Library (789 Yonge, north of Bloor). *eye* magazine comic artist Matthew Blackett hosts a talk about comic and graphic novels on February 26 at 7 p.m. Blackett will use images from the Museum of Cartoon Art, including banned works, to examine the social stigma associated with creating and reading these "alternative" forms of literature.

PEN and TPL present CBC radio personality Avril Benoit hosting readings by Mark Abley, Marilyn Dumont, Deborah Ellis, Beatriz Hausner, Frances Itani, Levi Namaseb, David Sacks and Benjamin Santamaria Ochoa on February 27 at 6:30 p.m. The event, dubbed *Disappearing Languages Appearing: An Evening of Readings from Marginalized Languages Slipping Towards Extinction*, will include a flamenco performance with guitar and percussion. Suggested donation at the door is \$10-\$15 and \$5-\$7 dollars for sen-

iors and students. Proceeds to PEN.

"The library embraces the concept of intellectual freedom as a fundamental element of democracy," says City Librarian Josephine Bryant. "We are pleased to partner with PEN Canada and comic artist Matthew Blackett to encourage free and open literary commerce in Toronto and throughout the world."

In brief

Library patrons willing to pay more taxes

A recent U.S. report, *The Public Library: a national survey*, by the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion, indicates that 94 percent of Americans believe it is important to have access to a public library in their community. More than 60 percent of respondents said they'd be willing to pay additional taxes to support public library service, \$49 on average. Asked to rank the importance of service priorities for libraries (other than books), respondents called for reading programs for children, open hours on evenings and weekends, computers, homework help centres and programs for older adults.

CHIS recommends...

The Consumer Health Information Service at Toronto Reference Library recommends the Canadian Health Network (CHN) website www.canadian-health-network.ca. More than 16,000 English and French Canadian resources combine with feature articles and health event listings to provide an excellent source of online health information. In January, there were articles about preventing the flu and SAD (seasonal affective disorder). February will focus on men's health issues. Past articles are available back to January 2003.

The site also offers a twice monthly email newsletter featuring articles, events and little-known health facts.

TRL's Consumer Health Information Service is an affiliate of the Canadian Health Network and is listed on the CHN website under the heading Complementary and Alternative Health.



What can YOU get for \$2?

- Saturday newspaper
- One ride on the Red Rocket
- Coffee and a muffin
- 60 minutes street parking
- Four stamps

26 days of service in neighbourhood branches AND 53,000 new books

HAVE YOUR SAY ABOUT THE TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY BUDGET

For more information
www.tpl.toronto.on.ca
and "Have Your Say"



The TPL bookmark to be issued to patrons throughout March 2004. The \$2 refers to the cost per household on the average property tax bill.

Library Board Highlights

February 16, 2004

Capital Budget submission approved
The Board approved a recommended capital budget submission to the city of \$10 million net.

Operating Budget submission approved
The Board approved a recommended budget submission to the city of \$128.69 million, a 6.6 percent increase over the 2003 operating budget.

Library Board to encourage civic engagement
The library actively seeks input from members of the public in determine its strategic direction and in developing plans for facilities renovations or reconstruction. The Board will undertake to formalize public consultation and

engagement policies and procedures to ensure continuity and consistency in approach to consultation initiatives.

The Toronto Public Library wants to hear from you. For information on how to get involved in influencing your library, visit our website, www.tpl.toronto.on.ca, drop into your local branch, or call Answerline, 416-393-7131.

The Library Board approved a strategy to support advocacy efforts to mobilize support for the Library's budget. It was agreed that staff would use existing newsletters, the website, a flyer and a bookmark to support outreach to patrons and stakeholders.

**Next Library Board meeting,
Monday, March 29, 2004**

Calendar of Events

March 2004

Wednesday, March 3, 6:30-8 p.m.
Your Privacy in a Wireless World
Paul Wing, co-author of *Protecting Your Money, Privacy and Identity from Theft, Loss and Misuse*, focuses on the ubiquitous, increasing use of wireless and mobile technology in today's world.
Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

Tuesday, March 9, 7:30 p.m.
Author Series: Fiction
Elizabeth Ruth reads from *Ten Good Seconds of Silence*; Mary Swan reads from *Emma's Hands*. Q&A follows.
Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

Tuesday, March 16, 7:30 p.m.
Author Series: Out of this World
Science fiction and fantasy featuring Alison Baird reading from *The Stone of the Stars* and Robert Charles Wilson reading from *Blind Lake*.
Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

Friday, March 26, 6-8 p.m.
Performing Arts Series: Judith Thompson
One of Canada's top playwrights.
Atrium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

Tuesday, March 9, 12 noon-2 p.m.
Focusing on Short Fiction
A workshop with Toronto Public Library Writer-in-Residence Dennis Bock.
Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

Wednesday, March 31, 12 noon-2 p.m.
The Art of Novel Writing
A workshop with Toronto Public Library Writer-in-Residence Dennis Bock.
Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

Friday, April 2, 6-8 p.m.
Performing Arts Series: Mary-Lou Fallis
Opera singer, comedienne and creator of five one-woman shows.
Atrium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

Shelf Life is published 10 times a year by the Toronto Public Library Board, 789 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4W 2G8. Marketing & Communications Office: 416-393-7117.
The Toronto Public Library Board meets monthly from September through June. Meetings are open to the public. The Library Board includes eight citizen members and seven City Councillors.