

Shelf life

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS AND VIEWS

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PHOTO BY ANDREW J. RYHER, OLA



The Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, Minister of Culture, presented the Minister's Award for Innovation to City Librarian Josephine Bryant and Board Chair Gillian Mason.

Ontario History Quest wins prestigious Minister's Award for Innovation

Learning resource received 168,610 virtual visits in 2004

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY'S Ontario History Quest (OHQ) website won the prestigious Minister's Award for Innovation at the Ontario Public Library Service Awards dinner Feb. 4, 2005. Presented by the Ontario Ministry of Culture, the award recognizes successful new approaches that demonstrate a positive impact in a community.

Ontario History Quest (<http://ontariohistoryquest.torontopubliclibrary.ca/>), an online learning resource for Ontario students in grades 7, 8, 10 and 12 studying history from 1820 to 1970, has already earned several awards. It complements the Ontario Ministry of Education

history curriculum through its learning resources and online digital collections.

The OHQ is a partnership project between the Toronto Public Library, the Archives of Ontario, the City of Toronto Archives and Library and Archives Canada.

Later in February, the Library was thrilled to learn that Ontario History Quest was also recognized with the CGR Bronze e-Award 2004 – Working Outside the Box. The CGR e-Government Awards salute those projects that demonstrate cooperation and synergy among two or more levels of government in providing service delivery to citizens.



Lauren Collins, a.k.a. Paige, spoke at the Toronto Reference Library for Freedom to Read Week.

Degrassi Speaks Out (way out) at the library

HOW DOES A 15-year-old actor prepare herself for a date rape episode? How does an executive producer decide that a bullying storyline should progress into a school shooting? How does a writer take a concept and turn it into a story for a deeply committed 'tween, teen and adult audience? Members of the crew from *Degrassi: The Next*

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Generation spoke Feb. 22 at the Toronto Reference Library about these dilemmas as part of the library's Freedom to Read Week commemorations.

The actor, Lauren Collins, Paige on *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, trusts that her writer and executive producer will give her the tools, manage the set and make sure her Mom – who is watching – is okay.

For executive producer, Nicole Hamilton, the story has to speak, not preach, to the audience. It has to play to an international market – where the opinions of parents and sponsors can prevent a show from being aired.

The writer, Shelley Scarrow, listens to the teen actors to learn what resonates. She trusts the actors' instincts. She trusts the executive producer to know what lines not to cross. Stories about kids taking drugs have to show the bad side.

These three women from *Degrassi* presented a powerful message for Freedom to Read Week 2005. This annual event is all about our right to intellectual freedom and freedom of expression. *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, the current evolution of the *Degrassi* shows, builds on a 25-year history of getting it right.

Ange Zhang TD Summer Reading Club illustrator

Art through adversity is gift to all

RED LAND YELLOW RIVER tells the story of Ange Zhang's childhood in China and the rise of Mao Zedong's communist government. In 1966, Ange was a teenager living with his family in Beijing when Chairman Mao unleashed the Cultural Revolution. His world changed completely as he and his family were later sent to labour camps in the countryside to be re-educated as farmers. In adversity Ange discovered his life's path when a box of oil paints was given to him. In Ange's words, "I had found my own path at last, the path that would allow me to express myself as a human being." Even if he remained a farmer, he would also be an artist, following a road that would lead to a place full of colour, beauty, joy and kindness.

The Library is thrilled to announce that Ange is the illustrator for the 2005 TD Summer Reading Club. He is already hard at work designing this year's poster. Ange Zhang is an esteemed artist, illustrator, noted author and an internationally known theatre designer who

designed for the National Opera Theatre in Beijing before coming to Canada. Since arriving in Canada in 1989, he has designed more than 25 theatre productions across the country. He worked at the Banff Centre for the Arts and then obtained a position as assistant set designer at the Stratford Festival. Currently, he works as an animation artist for Nelvana where, among other tasks, he creates animated backgrounds for the cartoon *Braceface*. He lives in Toronto with his wife and son.

Ange has illustrated many children's books, including *Thor* by W.D. Valgardson, which won a Mr. Christie's Book Award in 1995, and *The Kid Line*, *The Stoneboat* and *The Fishing Summer* written by Teddy Jam. *Red Land Yellow River: A Story from the Cultural Revolution* won the coveted BolognaRagazzi Award, 2005, for non-fiction and was nominated for a 2004 Governor-General's Award for Children's Literature.



Focus on Bloor District

Part of an occasional ongoing series of library branch profiles

A MICROCOSM OF Toronto, the Bloor District personifies diversity and neighbourhoods. The district's nine branches serve a wide range of patrons – from the residents of exclusive Baby Point to the Queen Street homeless, as well as residents who speak at least 80 languages in total. The area is home to various immigrant reception areas and Eastern European and Italian shopping areas.

Six of the branch buildings were built before 1930, each an important cornerstone of its neighbourhood:

- Runnymede, a Canadian architectural gem, has a postage stamp in its honour and a stunning renovation underway.
- So far, one section of the beautiful murals in the Dufferin/St. Clair branch has been restored.
- The two Carnegie-funded branches – High Park and Annette Street branches – were recently refreshed, renewing their charm.
- The Bloor/Gladstone branch is the next historically designated library in the District to be up for a major renovation.

This politically active, dynamic series of neighbourhoods offers numerous village-like commercial areas including Roncesvalles Ave. and Bloor West Village; the Junction Triangle (where the Perth/Dupont branch is the only city service within the intersection of three railway tracks); and Dufferin Mall (where community services share the commercial space).

The Library has built strong partnerships with many community agencies in the District including Working Women Community Center, St. Christopher House and several ethno-specific agencies.

Library staff nominated for CityWatch award

City staff work to make Toronto a safer place

ALTHOUGH THE LIBRARY has participated for only a little over a year, five Toronto Public Library staff members have already been nominated for CityWatch awards, a municipal initiative that encourages City of Toronto staff to work proactively for a safer city. Through this initiative, municipal employees receive recognition for stepping forward and summoning professional help when they witness an accident, criminal activity or other emergency in the community or the workplace.

Home Library Service staffer Randy Sookram won a CityWatch monthly award after he aided a 78-year-old man who had fallen on the sidewalk and broken both wrists one icy day last November in the city's west end. Randy was out delivering library books when he spotted the man.

Home Library Service staff members Carol Pazitka and Jo-Anne Slessor were co-winners of the March 2004 CityWatch Award after they went out of their way to assist a housebound library patron who had no phone service.



City Councillor Gloria Lindsay Luby presents the monthly CityWatch award to library staff member Randy Sookram.

Margot Clarke, Branch Head at Richview Library, was leaving work last May when she encountered a very disoriented elderly woman on the street who appeared ill and was apparently suffering from memory loss. Margot took the woman into the library where she noticed the woman was wearing a Medic Alert badge. The badge noted that the police should be contacted, which Margot did and then kept the woman calm until police arrived. Margot stayed until the police drove the woman home.

Toronto Reference Library staffer Norma Grech assisted a woman using the Centre for People with Disabilities when her purse was stolen. Norma filed a police report on her behalf and called in cancellations of the woman's bank and credit cards.

Both Margot and Norma received letters of recognition.

Library makes the most of OLA Super Conference

Staff demonstrate expertise; first recruitment booth in over two decades

SEVENTEEN TORONTO PUBLIC Library staff showed off their skills at 12 sessions of the recent Ontario Library Association (OLA) Super Conference (Feb. 3-5) speaking on topics as wide-ranging as censorship, service for teens, marketing, volunteers and adult literacy. Sessions also highlighted the Library's electronic services including the award-winning Ontario History Quest (see page 1) and the new Virtual Reference Library. The VRL (<http://vrl.torontopubliclibrary.ca/>) uses portal technology to build web

services, making research a breeze.

About 160 other Toronto Public Library staff attended the OLA Super Conference. Professional development was not the only objective; with 25 percent of Toronto Public Library staff currently eligible for retirement, succession planning was also on the agenda. For the first time since the 80s, the Library had a recruitment booth conducting prescreening interviews at OLA. Twenty-eight interviews took place over the two days.

Express Check-out @ Toronto Public Library

Multilingual pilot project saves time and material handling

CHECK OUT YOUR own library books, in Tamil, no less? It's true! Express check-out is now an option for patrons at the Malvern and St. James Town branches. Using a touch screen monitor, with instructions in five languages, patrons can sign out their own materials and be on their way. Patrons can check out multiple items at once, in seconds, just by placing them on a pad and following a few simple steps. The titles appear on the screen, check-out is confirmed and a receipt issued.

This system employs RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology, increasingly popular in library systems around the globe as well as in other industries. Staff use the system to check in multiple items, meaning a significant reduction in materials handling; another major benefit is simplified tracking of library materials. Toronto Public Library maintains its ongoing commitment to protecting the privacy of our patrons by encoding only the barcode information on the RFID tag – no personal or even title/author information is revealed.

To the non-techies among us, the manner in which a pile of items instantaneously checks out is simply magic! Visit St. James Town or Malvern branches to experience it.



Stamp of Approval

First Canadian to design American stamp

ARTIST AND ILLUSTRATOR Albert Slark has been a regular user of the Picture Collection at Toronto Reference Library since coming to Toronto from Calgary in 1994. Until recently, Albert was primarily known for his art on the covers of Harlequin romance, science fiction and action-adventure novels. Now the spotlight has shifted to his dramatic and detailed portrait work.

Albert Slark's portrait of pioneering African-American soprano Marian Anderson is featured on a United States Postal Service stamp unveiled January 27 at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. The stamp, part of the Black Heritage series, is the first American stamp to feature an illustration by a Canadian artist.



ramp goes offline

Talking to teens about the library

RAMP OFFLINE, Toronto Public Library's newsletter inviting teens to visit the library, made its debut in February. Developed by library teen services specialists, it highlights events and services geared to Toronto's youth, including volunteer opportunities, homework help clubs and March Break programs.

ramp offline will be sent out four times a year to schools, community service agencies, city councillors and departments, and media so that more teens will become aware of all that Toronto Public Library has to offer.

Check out ramp offline on the library's teen website, ramp, at www.torontopubliclibrary.ca

Library Board Highlights

February 2005

2005 Operating Budget – BAC Recommended Budget

The Board recommended that the funds for enhanced services in at-risk neighbourhoods remain in the 2005 Operating Budget.

2005-2009 Capital Budget – BAC Recommended Budget

The Board adopted the 2005-2009 Capital Budget – BAC Recommended Budget report, which results in a capital funding envelope of 10.0 million net, which includes the planning and design phase of Thorncliffe Branch.

Transfer of Administration of Trust Funds

The Board approved the transfer of administrative responsibility for library trust funds to the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

West Region – Adjustment of Branch Hours

In accordance with the Service Delivery Model, the Board approved an adjustment of branch open hours in the West region in order to provide a band of 40 open hours over five days (excluding Sunday and Monday) as is done elsewhere in the Library system.

Book Club To Go

A pilot project of the Toronto Public Library

Your book club can now borrow multiple copies of one book – a Book Club Set. They are available at:

Albert Campbell North York Central
Barbara Frum Northern District
Richview

For more information, ask staff, phone Answerline (416-393-7131) or go to

www.torontopubliclibrary.ca and select "Recommended Reading."

Calendar of Events

February/March 2005

Lieutenant Governor of Ontario to visit the Library

The Hon. James K. Bartleman will be reading from his books *On Six Continents* and *Rollercoaster*, followed by a Q&A and book signing.

Saturday, Mar. 5, 2 p.m., Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

In the Children's Room

An exhibit featuring the amazing stories of Hans Christian Andersen. Come and celebrate the 200th anniversary of Andersen's birth by viewing a variety of illustrated versions and collections of some of the best-loved children's stories of all time. Feb. 1-Mar. 21, Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books, Lillian H. Smith Branch, 239 College Street, 4th floor. Admission free. Call 416-393-7753

Lucy Waverman and James Chatto

will talk about their recent book *A Matter of Taste* and discuss food, wine and writing.

Q & A to follow.

Thursday, Mar. 31, 7 p.m., Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

Drawn-out Stories: Art of Graphic Novels

An exhibition of original artwork and books. On display are the works of six contemporary graphic novelists who have achieved international recognition including four Canadians: Chester Brown, Julie Doucet, Ho Che Anderson and Michel Rabagliati; and two Americans: Joe Sacco and Adrian Tomine.

Jan. 22-Mar. 20, TD Gallery, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

Business Information Centre Seminar

SmallbizXpress: New small business gateway for Ontario

A hands-on introduction to SmallbizXpress, funded by Industry Canada, Toronto Public Library's small business Internet gateway for Ontario entrepreneurs.

Friday, Mar. 18, 2-3:30 p.m., Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street

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Marketing & Communications Office: 416-393-7117.

Next Board Meeting: Monday, March 7, 2005.

The Toronto Public Library Board meets monthly at 6 p.m., September through June, in the Elizabeth Beeton Auditorium, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street, Toronto. Meetings are open to the public. Board Contact: Nancy Marshall 416-393-7215.

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