

Shelf life

Toronto Public Library News & Views

February 2008



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Teens help Keep Toronto Reading: Teens at the Humber Summit Branch of Toronto Public Library are stoked for the annual Keep Toronto Reading celebration of books in all their many forms. The month long celebration ran throughout February drawing thousands of Torontonians into libraries across the city for author visits, books-into-film screenings, literary wine tastings and more. See the fun on page 3.

Merril Collection now in catalogue

Library sci-fi collection made more accessible

AS OF DECEMBER 2007, anyone interested in science fiction and fantasy will be in a better position to utilize Toronto Public Library's vast and unique array of resources, as the Merrill Collection

of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy is now fully catalogued – all 40,000 fiction, non-fiction and anthology titles sitting on the shelves of the Merrill can now be located through the Toronto Public

Library's online catalogue.

"Now anyone with access to a computer can see the Merrill Collection holdings – Torontonians as well as off-site researchers," says Merrill Collection Head Lorna Toolis.

Until very recently, the only way to find out what was in the Merrill Collection was to go to the third floor of the Lillian H. Smith Branch, where the Merrill Collection resides, and look through an old-fashioned paper card catalogue.

"Toronto Public Library's database is the best outreach tool," says Toolis. "Now we get a lot of patrons walking into the Merrill Collection saying, 'Do you really have this book?' They are surprised and pleased to find obscure and out of print titles."

With 40,000+ titles to catalogue, the project took several years, with the last 8,000 items being catalogued in 2007. The Toronto Public Library catalogues approximately 90,000 titles annually into a bibliographic database of over 3.5 million titles.

With over 64,000 items, the Merrill Collection is Canada's major collection of speculative fiction and one of the world's finest popular culture collections. For more information about the Merrill, click the Collections link on the library website www.torontopubliclibrary.ca.



www.torontopubliclibrary.ca

BOOK LOVER'S BALL

Foundation fun fortifies vital public service

Literary lovers and celebrity authors gather in support of the library

THE SIGNATURE FUNDRAISING event of Keep Toronto Reading month, the third annual *Book Lover's Ball*, was held on January 31 in support of Toronto's library.

Over 50 celebrity authors and nearly 500 literary lovers and library supporters congregated in the Fairmont Royal York Canadian Room to feast on food from celebrity chef Jamie Kennedy, enjoy a fashion show inspired by HarperCollins books, bid on a Gibson guitar signed by Guns N' Roses guitar-slinger Slash, and just generally have a lot of fun, all in support of Toronto Public Library Foundation.

"The *Book Lover's Ball* seems to just keep getting better and better every year," says Foundation President Heather Rumball. "It was very heartening to see so many of Toronto's literary elite mixing with some of our most influential city-builders – and all in the name of making Toronto's library the best in the world."

Award-winning crime writer Peter Robinson, creator of the bestselling



City Librarian Josephine Bryant presents crime writer Peter Robinson with the Toronto Public Library Celebrates Reading Award.

Inspector Banks series, was presented with the Toronto Public Library Celebrates Reading Award, previously awarded to Robert J. Sawyer in 2007 and Margaret Atwood in 2006.

The fashion show once again provided a unique twist to the evening with some of Canada's top designers providing fashion based on HarperCollins books such as *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Slash* and *The Assassination of Jesse James*.

"We're very grateful to our presenting sponsor, The Printing House," adds Rumball, "as well as for the invaluable

support from HarperCollins, S&B Books, TD Bank Financial Group, Whitehots, *Toronto Star*, *Quill & Quire*, and *Toronto Life*."

Of special note: At this year's *Book Lover's Ball*, the Foundation launched an exciting new brand: "Toronto's Library. Absolutely Vital."

The Foundation's new website is also now up and running at www.tplfoundation.ca and the promotional video that was unveiled at *The Book Lover's Ball* is available for viewing.

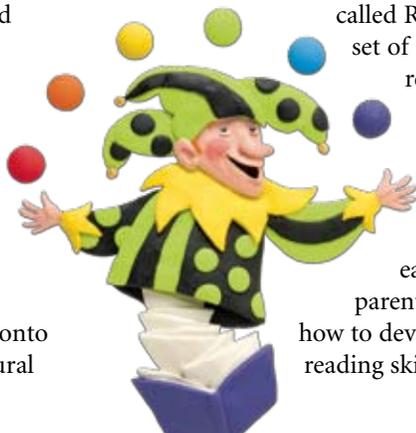
EARLY LITERACY

Library picks best books for kids

First & Best Booklist features top 10 Canadian books of 2007 for preschoolers

THE LIBRARY HAS always had storytimes for babies, toddlers and older preschoolers, but now these programs are placing an increased emphasis on sending parents and caregivers home with the skills they need to help their children develop into strong readers.

A recent initiative designed to help achieve this goal is Toronto Public Library's inaugural First & Best booklist.



"First & Best '07 includes our top picks for kids for this publishing year," says Ken Settington, Children and Youth Advocate for Library Services at Toronto Public Library. "The books meet all the usual standards for excellence in children's literature," he says, "but in addition, we're recommending them as the best of the year for building reading readiness in children five and under."

The First & Best booklist is the latest initiative in the library's ongoing program called Ready for Reading – a full set of programs, services and resources for children, birth to five years of age, and their parents and caregivers. The program emphasizes the importance of early literacy and teaches parents and caregivers how to develop important pre-reading skills in their children.



Eats
Marthe Jocelyn

Goodnight, Sweet Pig
Linda Bailey

Grumpy Bird
Jeremy Tankard

Lickety-Split
Robert Heidbreder

Out Came the Sun: A Day in Nursery Rhymes
Heather Collins

Please, Louise!
Frieda Wishinsky

Shoe Shakes
Loris Lesynski

Sing a Song Of Mother Goose
Barbara Reid

Welcome Song for Baby: A Lullaby For Newborns
Richard Van Camp

What Am I?
Linda Granfield

Spotlight on Keep Toronto Reading 2008



Spotlight: WinterCity

After hearing a famous fairytale, *The Snow Queen*, told by Toronto Public Library Children and Youth Advocate, Ken Settrington, a little toddler tries her hand at the folk art of scherenschnitt at WinterCity celebration on February 2.



Spotlight: Mike Holmes

Holmes on Homes host and author of *Make it Right*, Michael Holmes had his own style as he made his catwalk debut at the Book Lover's Ball, Toronto Public Library Foundation's signature fundraising event. (see "Foundation fun fortifies vital public service" opposite page)



Spotlight: Boonaa Mohammed

Poet Boonaa Mohammed brought the house down at the launch of Toronto Public Library's Black History Month celebration at Toronto Reference Library on February 7. Thank you to RBC for their support of Black History Month at the library..



Spotlight: Gisèle

Well over 1,000 children and their caregivers showed up when TVO's Gisèle brought her Big Backyard to seven Toronto Public Library branches throughout February. At Sanderson Branch, when Gisèle stepped into the audience to assist a toddler who was not sitting beside her parent, two older preschoolers cried out, "She's coming closer!"



Spotlight: Mayor David Miller

For the Keep Toronto Reading launch on January 24, Mayor David Miller was at the Toronto Reference Library and author Michael Redhill was in France, but did that stop them from having a chat? Nope. They talked via LongPen video link, with both Redhill and Miller expressing their pleasure at the library's One Book initiative, which invited everyone in Toronto to read Redhill's book, *Consolation*. The library worked with community and city partners to present author events, book discussions, walking tours, historic photo displays and other programs that brought to life the themes and ideas of Redhill's novel, which is set in Toronto, past and present.

Visit www.KeepTorontoReading.ca for more information.

Thanks from Toronto Public Library to our wonderful Keep Toronto Reading and One Book media and program partners
 Toronto Star
 Toronto Life
 CBC
 The Amazing Food Service

The Beguiling
 Canadian Booksellers Association
 City of Toronto Archives
 City of Toronto Culture
 Diaspora Dialogues
 Heritage Toronto
 International Readings at Harbourfront
 Jarvis Collegiate

LCBO
 LongPen
 National Film Board of Canada
 Nicholas Hoare bookstore
 Ontario College of Art and Design
 Ontario Library Association
 Ontario Science Centre
 PEN Canada
 The Printing House

Random House of Canada
 R.H. King Academy
 Royal Ontario Museum
 S&B Books
 Sir Sandford Fleming Academy spacing
 Toronto Transit Commission
 TVO
 WinterCity
 The York School

Library Board Highlights

February 25, 2008



Kathy Gallagher Ross back as board chair
Re-elected board

chair at the January 21, 2008 library board meeting, Kathy Gallagher Ross has been a member of the board since December 2004. She was elected vice-chair in January 2006 and chair in March 2007.

“Our public library,” says Gallagher Ross, “is something which is there for everyone in Toronto at all points in their lives, no matter what their economic or social status. I see fathers and mothers with their toddlers

and preschoolers, relaxed and happy, reading stories together. Babies too, climbing all over their parents, tasting, touching, hefting and bending books and through that, learning to love reading and associate it with warmth and love for all their lives. Families enjoy choosing, touching and sharing books with each other. Of course, all this is cozy, but it is also a crucial part of loving, learning and early literacy.

“Primary school children come for class visits to hear library staff tell stories, to check out books and to research projects. High school students go to the library to meet, to study, and sometimes just because they have no place else to go. Adults visit the library to get books, music, movies; to get inspiration; to do research for their jobs or their post-secondary

school studies; to meet with other people at the library’s amazing array of programs.

“Even when people are at a stage in their life when they can’t get to the library, because they are in the hospital, or can no longer travel easily, the library is there with its deposit collections in health care facilities and its Home Library Service.

“As a nurse, I know how important public healthcare is to everyone, at one point or another in their lives. As a mother, I know how important a strong public education system is, and as the director of public policy for the United Way of Greater Toronto, I know how important publicly-funded community resources are, such as emergency housing and shelters. Taken together with libraries, these institutions form the

foundation of a prosperous, literate culture, and we neglect any one of them at our peril.

“I believe all of us have a very personal stake in our libraries, and with that comes a responsibility to take an active role in their maintenance and growth. Contributing to the health of your library is one legacy that will last. It is a legacy for your loved ones and well beyond. Actively supporting public libraries means investing in a more literate, more democratic and enlightened world.

“And so I am thrilled with the opportunity to be a member of the board of such an important community-based public institution,” concludes Ross, “and to help steer its course and advocate for its continued vitality.”

Calendar of Events March 2008



Carol Schwartzott, A Brief History of the Quilt, Lilliput Press, c. 1996.

On to March 30 Art Under Cover
TD Gallery, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St.

March Break, March 8-15

Children’s programs featuring stories, puppet shows, music, magic and even some opera, as well as programs aimed specifically at the city’s youth.

Thursday, March 6, 2-3 p.m.

Book artist and teacher Mira Coviensky talks about her work along with a range of contemporary artists’ books with images and examples from her collection.
Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St.

Thursday, March 6, 7 p.m.

David Adams Richards reads from and discusses his new

book *The Lost Highway*. Part of the Research & Reference libraries’ Uptown/Downtown Author Series. Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St.

Thursday, March 27, 7 p.m.

Gil Adamson reads from her first novel, *Outlander*. Part of the Research & Reference libraries’ Uptown/Downtown Author Series. Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St.

Get a comprehensive list of all the library’s programs on the library website
www.torontopubliclibrary.ca.

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Next Board Meeting:
Tuesday, March 25, 2008.

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.

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