

Shelf life

Toronto Public Library News & Views

February 2010



Library "ambassador" has profound impact on homeless woman

Showing exceptional kindness and acting as a fine ambassador for Toronto Public Library, Parliament Branch Page Justin Lee had a profound impact on a woman he encountered asking for spare change when he came out of a café in Toronto this past September. Lee did more than just give the woman some change. A few months later, the woman sent an email to library staff, thanking Justin for his selfless behaviour and describing the impact that a subsequent visit to the library had on her life. Below are some excerpts from her letter.

I CAME TO THIS CITY a few years ago from Western Canada looking for work. Circumstances had not worked out the way that I wanted them to, and I found myself living on the streets of Toronto. This past September, I came across a young gentleman who was just coming out of a café with food in hand. My request for spare change was met with him offering me his coffee and croissant. I was taken aback, first with the random act of kindness, but also the fact that this young man actually cared where so many young people these days are indifferent to the troubles of the world.

I was obviously in some distress as I had been crying for a while, and the young man asked if I was alright and had anywhere to stay. I told him no. He told me that he works for the library, and suggested the two closest branches [Parliament Street where he works, and St. James Town Branch] as a place to warm up and perhaps start looking for help. He told

CONTINUES ON PAGE 3...

Black History Month celebrated at libraries across the city

City-wide events give voice to established and emerging artists

"I AM OVER the moon with happiness. I am so glad that I came to this conference. I can't wait to share my experience at school. Did I mention that I am definitely coming back next year?" These words from high school student Olivia, who attended the third annual Black History Month Conference at North York Central Library on February 6, were shared by many other attendees at the event. Participants came from as far as Hamilton and Brampton to attend the conference, hosted by FLOW 93.5 FM DJ Jeni McKenzie.

Spoken word artist Al St. Louis urged youth to strive for their dreams but to always keep their eyes open for new opportunities. Stacey McKenzie shared her story of fighting to make it in the modelling industry without giving up her sense of self. The Public Enemy Dance Group, made up of youth ages 16-19, dazzled the audience with their moves. Juno-award winning reggae artist Humble reminded youth that dreams are there for a reason, and should be pursued.

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Black History Month Conference participants (l-r) rapper Humble, FLOW 93.5 DJ Jeni McKenzie, spoken word artist Al St. Louis, and model Stacey McKenzie.



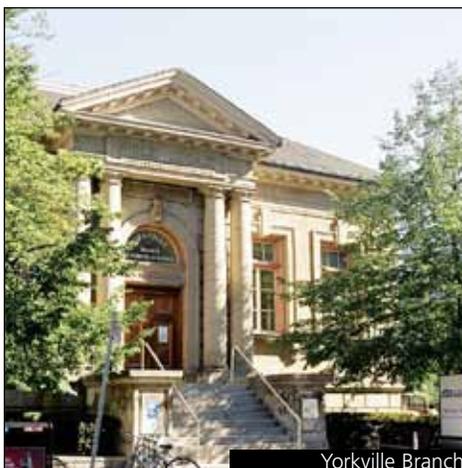
Toronto Public Library branch snapshot

Malvern to get media centre; Yorkville gets old entrance back; ROM patrons tour library branches



Malvern Branch

A FEBRUARY 2 open house at Malvern Branch gave the public a chance to see the exciting changes in store for their library, and to comment and make suggestions. The renovation includes the addition of a 13,650 square foot outdoor multipurpose public square/commons featuring a reading garden and staging facility for year-round cultural and community events. Also being added is a 3,770 square foot indoor Youth Hub with a ProTech Media Centre. Members of the public are also invited to provide their ideas and input via the library website torontopubliclibrary.ca.



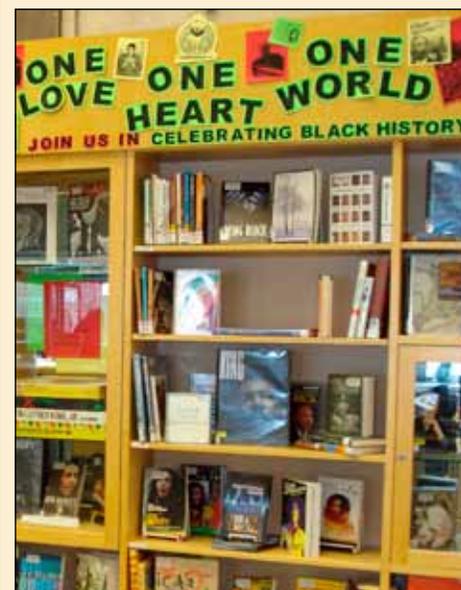
Yorkville Branch

YORKVILLE BRANCH REOPENED on January 25 after a month-long closure for interior renovations. The branch has been reconfigured to create more open spaces, and is now equipped with self-serve checkout stations to support the extension of open hours at the branch. The renovation also includes a full replica of the original tile floor in the foyer of this historic Carnegie building – the culmination of a fundraising effort by the Toronto Public Library Foundation launched at the Branch’s 100th anniversary celebration. With \$15,000 raised by the end of 2009, the tile work was undertaken while the Branch was closed for the retrofit.



Dufferin/St. Clair Branch

THE LIBRARY PARTNERED with the ROM for a guided bus tour last month called Beyond Gutenberg, featuring a look at how libraries are responding to the evolution of information and literature. Thirty-six participants were shown a fly-through of the planned Toronto Reference Library renovation that illustrates how the library is responding to changing use patterns. The tour included stops at Bloor/Gladstone and Dufferin/St. Clair branches, and the Toronto Reference Library, as well as drive-bys of Yorkville and Lillian H. Smith. The group was wowed by renovations at both Bloor/Gladstone and Dufferin/St. Clair, as they heard commentary from library manager Brigitte Richter, library specialist Barb Myrvold and ROM curator of European Decorative Arts Corey Keeble. Keeble called the restored Dufferin/St. Clair murals by George Reid and Doris McCarthy a “national treasure” that was all the more amazing for being in a public library. He said the murals rivalled anything you might find in the National Gallery in Ottawa.



The Rita Cox Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection

Available at Malvern, Maria A. Shchuka, Parkdale, and York Woods branches, the 16,000-item Rita Cox Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection sees a marked increase in demand during Black History Month each year.

Black History Month displays at branches around the city account for some of this increase. Parkdale librarian Elton D’Costa says they base their displays on the theme of the year and “...on what we think customers would like. We have a mixture of fiction and non-fiction. The non-fiction titles focus more on specific people that had a prominent role to play in the black struggles and the struggles in establishing a black community in Canada.”

The collection was started in the 1970s by its namesake, Rita Cox, former head librarian of the Parkdale branch. The collection currently includes materials in a number of formats, including books, CDs and movies.

“The children’s materials are really very popular and they represent almost half of the usage of the collection,” according to library multicultural senior services specialist Joan McCatty.

The Rita Cox Collection is supported in part by the Rita Cox Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection Endowment Fund at the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

Black History Month

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He encouraged youth not to let obstacles stand in their way and to persevere.

The conference was just one of many Black History Month events happening all over the city throughout February. The celebrations kicked off on February 4 at the Appel Salon, Toronto Reference Library as well-known authors Austin Clarke and George Elliott Clarke were joined by emerging authors Yvette Trancoso and Stacey Marie Robinson in a discussion about being black and writing in Canada. Austin Clarke's book, *More*, which won the Toronto Book Award, will be Toronto Public Library's One Book during the Keep Toronto Reading Festival in April. Watch for exciting One Book events at the Keep Toronto Reading website keptorontoreading.ca.

Toronto Public Library thanks the Royal Bank of Canada for its support of Black History Month at the library.

Library ambassador

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me about the various resources available to me, including free Internet access. I had no idea this was available from the library.

I decided to visit the [St. James Town Branch] where I was able to access the Internet (with the assistance of your fine staff there), create this email account, and manage to get a hold of some family back out West. Over the next few weeks, I've managed to mend some fences and I am on my way back home to a waiting job and a place to live.

This young man...will probably never know how his actions and words of encouragement have impacted me... Last week, I made an attempt to visit him and thank him for his kindness but as soon as I saw him working I started crying again and I left not wanting to embarrass him in front of his peers. I believe a staff member called him Justin. He is a wonderful ambassador for the library... he represented his (and your) library with pride and distinction...

The ease at which tragedy, hardship and hopelessness can befall a person is shocking. [Justin's] caring empowered me to find my path again and I can only hope that my grandchildren (with whom I've recently just been re-acquainted) have even a fraction of Justin's heart.

Toronto's Library. Absolutely Vital.



CBC's Mary Ito chats with author Nino Ricci.

Book Lover's Ball gathers literary luminaries

Lawrence Hill, Nino Ricci, Anne Michaels among celebrity authors supporting Toronto's library

THE BOOK LOVER'S Ball, the Toronto Public Library Foundation annual gala fundraiser, took place on February 11, with more than 500 people gathering at the Fairmont Royal York. Over 50 of Canada's leading authors attended, including Lawrence Hill, Catherine Gildiner, Graeme Gibson, Linwood Barclay, Anne Michaels, Nino Ricci, Richard J. Gwyn, Wayson Choy and Linda McQuaig. Other notable guests included honorary chair Mayor David Miller, and chair of The Book Lovers' Ball Committee

John Cruickshank, publisher of the *Toronto Star*. Diana Swain, host of *CBC News Toronto*, once again acted as Master of Ceremonies.

Guests showed their support for Toronto Public Library Foundation through silent auction and raffle ticket purchases. Wrapping up the evening, a novel-inspired fashion show featured top Canadian designers inspired by a selection of both modern and classic books, including *Twilight*, *Spartacus* and *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.

The Foundation is grateful to its many sponsors, including Whitehots Inc., BMO Capital Markets, OSSTF, Harlequin, TD Bank Financial Group, The Remington Group, the *Toronto Star*, CBC, *Hello! Canada*, Air Canada Vacations, and Fairmont Hotels & Resorts.

Are you a Literary Circle Member?

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Science Fiction and Foresight

Saturday, March 6,
7-8:15 pm
Beeton Auditorium,
Toronto Reference Library,
789 Yonge St.

Live Online Chat with Karl Schroeder

Wednesday, March 24,
7-8 pm

Integrating Idea and Story

Thursday, March 25,
5:30-8:15 pm
Lower Level,
Lillian H. Smith Branch,
239 College St.

talks

STAR

Presented in partnership
with the *Toronto Star*
Appel Salon, 2nd Floor, Toronto
Reference Library, 789 Yonge St.

Mark McEwan
with Jennifer Bain
Monday, March 8, 7 pm

Paul Beeston
with Damien Cox
Monday, March 29, 7 pm



Shakespeare Lectures
Presented in partnership
with the Stratford Festival
Four lectures at the Appel Salon,
2nd Floor, Toronto Reference
Library, 789 Yonge St.

Magic: The Tempest
Tuesday, March 9, 7 pm

Love: As You Like It
Tuesday, March 16, 7 pm

Romance: The Winter's Tale
Tuesday, March 23, 7 pm

**Comedy: Two Gentlemen
of Verona**
Tuesday, March 30, 7 pm

THE EH LIST: Spring 2010
We've got the city booked from
cover to cover. Come and meet
the writers who are making the
news and taking home the prizes!
For full program listings, from
February through June, go to
torontopubliclibrary.ca/ehlist.

Nicholas Ruddock
(The Parabolist)
Thursday, March 4, 2 pm
Richview Branch,
1806 Islington Ave.

John Bemrose
(The Last Woman)
Thursday, March 4, 7 pm
Taylor Memorial Branch,
1440 Kingston Rd.

Karen Connelly
(Burmese Lessons) AND
Diana Fitzgerald Bryden
(No Place Strange)
Thursday, March 11, 7 pm
Toronto Reference Library,
789 Yonge St.

David Rotenberg
(Shanghai)
Tuesday, March 23, 7 pm
Runnymede Branch,
2178 Bloor St. W.

Annabel Lyon
(The Golden Mean)
Wednesday, March 24, 7 pm
S. Walter Stewart Branch,
170 Memorial Park Ave.
Thursday, March 25, 12:30 pm
Toronto Reference Library,
789 Yonge St.

Lauren Kirshner
(Where We Have To Go)
Thursday, March 25, 7 pm
Barbara Frum Branch,
20 Covington Rd.

Sarah Elton and Kevin Robbins
*(City of Words: Toronto Through
Her Writers' Eyes)*
Wednesday, March 31,
12:30 pm
Northern District Branch,
40 Orchard View Blvd.

Library Board Highlights

February 16, 2010

Revised circulation and collection use policy approved

The Board approved revisions to the Circulation and Collection Use Policy. Among these, a six-week threshold for fines will be reinstated in June 2010. This means that customers who have fines older than six weeks will be unable to borrow materials or place holds until they are paid. Other revisions include a new fee structure for photographic and digital reproductions as well as the licensing of

images and policies for online registration, which the library will introduce in 2010.

Operating budget request to be reviewed

The Board was presented with the City Manager's 2010 operating budget recommendation of a 1.8% increase, which is \$208,000 less than the Board's 1.9% budget request. After reviewing reduction scenarios, the Board did not approve the reduced budget recommendation at its meeting, requesting instead that there be further consideration of reduction options and a report be made at the next Board meeting on March 22.

MARCH BREAK

Magic, music, storytelling, theatre and MUCH, MUCH MORE!
Have fun at the library during March Break with great programs for teens and children at virtually every one of the library's 99 branches. Get details in the Program section at torontopubliclibrary.ca.

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Next Board Meeting:
Monday, March 22, 2010.

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

Website: torontopubliclibrary.ca

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