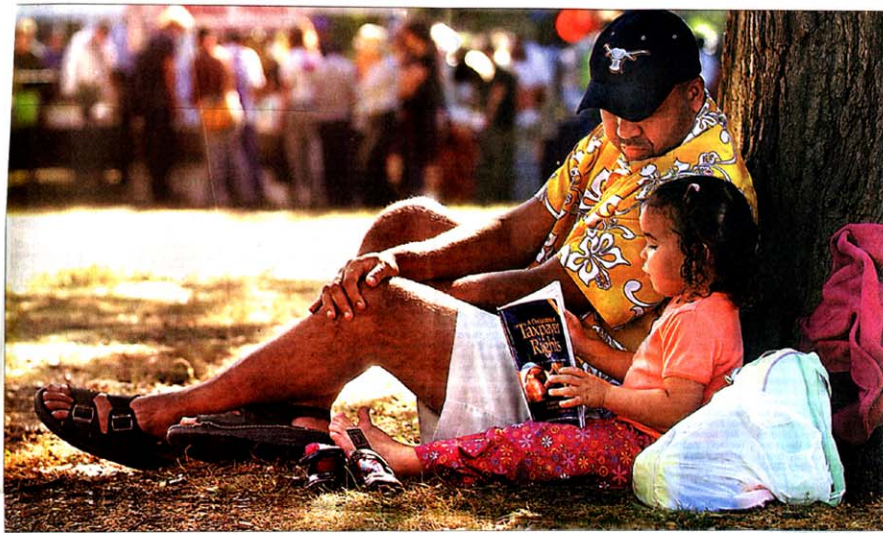


Word on the Street

New chapter for book festival



Hanna Itabumuyi, 3, checks out a copy of *Taxpayer Rights* with dad Kola at the Word on the Street festival yesterday. The annual poean to literature took place for the first time in Queen's Park.

After 14 years on Queen St., park venue a hit with Wordies
Reading and writing extravaganza draws big numbers

MARK ZWOLINSKI
STAFF REPORTER

Word on the Street became Word in the Park yesterday — and everybody seemed delighted with the change.

With its shift from 14 years along trendy Queen St. W. to the glens of Queen's Park, the festival rocked like a pop concert, with thousands of readers soaking up a brilliantly sunny day and some cutting-edge presentations of their timeless love, the book.

"Wow," said producer Judith Keenan, as people streamed through tents featuring publishers, small presses, booksellers, magazines, poets and filmmakers.

"It's just such a beautiful day

and being in a park-like setting really works for this kind of event. I've been to (Word on the Street) for a long time now, and I hope they keep this venue."

Crowds estimated in excess of last year's 170,000 got what they came for — and then some — from the 250 tents dotting Queen's Park.

Stephen Page of the Barenaked Ladies stood with just guitar and microphone and belted out tunes in support of CITY TV's tent.

Toronto Star authors Peter Edwards, Ellen Roseman, Richard Ouzounian and Linwood Barclay fielded questions about their books at the paper's tent while entertainment writers Geoff Pevere, Rob Salem and Ri-

ta Zekas got giggles with their tales from the front lines of the recent Toronto film festival.

Keenan's table featured information on her new film, *What Casanova Told Me*, a seven-minute adaptation of Susan Swan's latest novel, starring Deborah Hay and Jaymz Bee. It's being hailed as the medium that can do for books what video did for music.

"I've read lately that there are fewer books being sold," said Keenan, whose next project centres on *A Quiet Courage*, a collection of inspiring short stories from TVO's Paula Todd, co-host of *Studio 2* and a former *Toronto Star* reporter.

"That may reflect the movement of this type of medium and

others... a book publisher may now have to shift his or her thinking. They may have to look at the fact that literature is not the sole domain of books anymore. It's now entertainment, and everyone who has anything to do with books might be forced into at least acknowledging that."

Nearby throngs listened to spoken-word poetry from Toronto poets Cynthia Gould, Stuart Ross and Wakefield Brewster.

Books, information and all forms of literature were in fact showing up at the festival in the form of music, spoken word, animation and picture screens.

John Mighton, whose approach to teaching math is being touted as revolutionary, demonstrated some of those techniques in an interactive session at the *Star's* Brand New Planet

youth tent (no books or blackboards here). Brand New Planet is published weekly for youth aged 8 to 14.

"I've been coming to these things (book festivals) for years and the book world is really opening up to every medium out there to get the word across," said Jennifer Lee, 22, a University of Toronto literature stu-

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dent who enjoys anything cutting edge in music and books.

With thousands of people taking in one of the most varied book festivals in memory, magazine publishers and book sellers

from all major publishers saw brisk business at the sales bins.

Joyce Byrne, who publishes *This*, a lively, no-nonsense magazine discussing politics and consumer issues, said she hasn't seen a day like yesterday in 10 years at the festival.

"This was our single biggest day in terms of subscription and revenue sales," said Byrne, who carries on a tradition of radical political writing established in 1966 by Toronto teachers.

"It's a great day to meet our readers. Instead of reading marketing copy, you can talk with readers.

They'll tell you what they like and don't like. The best thing is when someone comes up to you and says, 'I've been a reader for 40 years and I just wanted to introduce myself.'"