



NATIONAL BOOK & MAGAZINE FESTIVAL

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Excellent attendance as The Word On The Street festivals witness first live Coast to Coast Book Launch

Toronto, ON – A staggering 275,000 Canadians attended **The Word On The Street** book and magazine festivals in **Vancouver, Toronto, Kitchener** and **Halifax** on Sunday, September 27, 2009. For the first time, the festivals were connected by **LongPen** technology to hold Canada's first live coast to coast book launch of **Margaret Atwood's** *The Year of the Flood*.

The Word On The Street festivals across Canada involved 575 authors and arts performers, participating in nearly 378 programmed events. Over 498 exhibits by book and magazine publishers along with literacy organizations celebrated Canadian literature and promoted the right to literacy.

Toronto was the host site for an interactive video-broadcast in which festival participants from Halifax and Vancouver were engaged in an intense and often witty question and answer session with Margaret Atwood. Prior to the reading, the LongPen was used to sign books in both Halifax and Vancouver.

“The growing success of The Word On The Street festivals across Canada continues to demonstrate our national passion for the written word and advocacy for literacy”, noted Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, national board chair, The Word On The Street Canada. “We expect to expand this national celebration as new cities have expressed their interest in joining The Word On The Street festival”.

Among the authors who joined Toronto's 20th festival were **Bonnie Burnard, Kenneth Opper, Elizabeth May, Leon Rooke** and **Charles Pachter**, whose iconic moose was featured on the festival's poster. Vancouver celebrated its 15th festival with authors **Michael Turner, Caroline Adderson, Susan Musgrave** and **Ivan E. Coyote** and added hilarity by teaming up with **Vancouver Global ComedyFest**. On the east coast, Halifax also celebrated their 15th festival with **John Demont, Vicki Grant** and **Jennifer McGrath Kent**. Kitchener launched their 8th festival one day early with a live reading by Margaret Atwood at the **Kitchener Public Library** and followed up the next day with readings by authors **Shane Peacock, Carolyn Beck** and **Shani Mootoo**.

The Word On The Street Canada is a national charitable organization which licenses local organizations to hold an annual book and magazine festival to celebrate reading and advocate literacy. On Sunday, September 27, festivals were held in **Library Square** in Vancouver, **Queen's Park** in Toronto, **Victoria Park** in Kitchener and the **Cunard Event Centre** on the waterfront in Halifax.

The Word On The Street Festival gratefully acknowledges funding support from national, provincial and municipal governments across Canada, from many media partners and from private sector and non-profit organizations.

Information about each festival is available at www.thewordonthestreet.ca.

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