

Future's not all bleak: Atwood

Famed writer's latest novel full of devastation

Toronto visit part of 25-city, four-country tour

NICHOLAS KEUNG
STAFF REPORTER

There is a brown box in Margaret Atwood's office where she keeps articles on geological and weather change, diseases and genetic modification, new developments in bio-technology, even details of biometric security devices such as iris scanners.

The acclaimed Canadian writer and her research team collected the material during the writing of her latest novel, *Oryx and Crake*, which is set in a near-future world devastated by ecological and scientific disaster.

Although Atwood says her book is not "anti-science," a lot of the things she wrote about do worry her.

"Books about the future are about us — here, now, and our dreams and desires and fears, and the emotions that drive all human action," Atwood told about 160 guests at a Canadian Club luncheon in Toronto's Royal York hotel yesterday.

"I didn't put anything into (the story) that's unsupported by real-life trends, trains of thought already under way or inventions we already have or are working on," she said.

Over the past 10 weeks, Atwood, whose *The Blind Assassin* won the 2000 Booker Prize, has travelled to four countries and 25 cities to promote her new book — and she describes the experience of going on a book tour

as "Death-of-a-Salesman travelling" and a "long-drawn-out mind-bending orgy."

"You wake up afterwards and think, 'What did I do? Who did I do it with? Where did I do it?'" Atwood joked to the laughter of the audience. "Except with a book tour, you don't get sex."

Atwood's 11th novel, published by McClelland & Stewart, is narrated by Snowman, who, during his slow death by starvation around the year 2050, laments the loss of two characters known as Oryx and Crake.

Atwood said she first encountered the name Crake during a previous book tour in Australia, when she looked over a balcony railing to see a small Red-necked Crake, a bird that's quickly becoming extinct.

Atwood said there can be good and useful science, and bad and destructive science. Sometimes what begins as good turns out to be bad, she added.

"Often a piece of science is so narrowly goal-driven or grant-driven that the down-the-road consequences haven't been taken into consideration, or even contemplated," she warned.

"And scientists are human beings and subject to error, and subject also to all the emotions that other people have, including the desire for status and the love of money."

Atwood still has hope for the future, though. "This story will make you feel much better, because no matter how awful things are in your life, they're worse in the book," she said with a chuckle.

She said human beings are still in control of their destiny, pointing to trends such as organic farming, wildlife preservation and environmentally friendly technology.



Margaret Atwood, accompanied by her husband, writer Graeme Gibson, arrives at the 25th anniversary party of Brick literary magazine yesterday at the Berkeley Church on Queen St. E. The artwork held by Atwood (by famed former Star cartoonist Duncan Macpherson) was for a silent auction.

Millions raised for medical research

\$8.4M will fund heart studies

Crucial work is 'cutting edge'

GAVIN TAYLOR
STAFF REPORTER

Heart and stroke research in Toronto will get an \$8.4 million injection of funds from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario over the next year.

At the North York Civic Centre last night, the charitable foundation's president, Andrew Scipio del Campo, presented an oversized cheque to the dozens of specialists who will receive grants to study the causes and treatment of stroke and heart disease.

The foundation spent \$47 million on research nationwide in 2001-2002 and accounts for more than 60 per cent of research into heart disease and strokes in the country.

"I've depended on Heart and Stroke Foundation funds throughout my career," said Dr. Ren-Ke Li, who, along with Dr. Jane Irvine, accepted the cheque on behalf of all researchers in Toronto.

Dr. Li, who works at the Toronto General Hospital, looks at how cells drawn from healthy tissue can help repair damaged hearts.

About 15 people work in his lab, which conducts research he describes as "cutting edge."

He has received \$52,000 from the foundation since 2001, and will be getting \$80,000 a year over the next four years.

No new grants were announced last night, but this spring the foundation helped to establish a network devoted to research into the care and recovery of stroke victims.

The network brings together medical and psychiatric specialists from Toronto and Ottawa, and will receive \$6.5 million — fully half its funding — from the foundation over the next 10 years.

"It's really the only program of its kind in the world," said Dr. Sandra Black.

Black heads the stroke research centre at Sunnybrook & Women's College Health Sciences Centre.

With the grant money, Sunnybrook will be able to buy new equipment and fund research by students and young specialists with newly minted medical degrees.

"Those are the people who bring energy and enthusiasm to their research," Black said.

Man accused of threatening Fantino acquitted

Police received bomb threats

Caller said chief's days numbered

NICK PRON
COURTS BUREAU

A 44-year-old man who was accused of threatening Toronto police Chief Julian Fantino and warning about a bomb at Metro Hall has been acquitted of all charges.

Patrick Brown smiled and hugged his lawyer, Daniel Stein, moments after the eight women and four men on the jury found

him not guilty after nearly five hours of deliberation yesterday.

"This has been a long and arduous process for Mr. Brown," Stein said in a later interview. "He appreciates the verdict. It is a proper verdict."

Brown, who lives in an apartment behind police headquarters on College St., had predicted he would be acquitted as he anxiously paced in the corridor outside the University Ave. courthouse awaiting the verdict.

He had pleaded not guilty to threatening death, conveying a false message and assault with intent to resist arrest.

Brown just smiled and declined to comment, deferring to

his lawyer, as he left the courthouse with his wife, Tessa, and his mother.

His arrest came less than two months after the heightened tensions following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York City, at a time when Toronto police were described as "being on edge," the Superior Court of Justice trial heard.

An officer arrested a man outside police headquarters early on Nov. 4, 2001, when he was seen throwing objects at the building and yelling at the people who had left the police station following a bomb threat.

When investigators learned his name, he was subsequently

charged with threatening Fantino and also accused of calling police operators, warning of bombs planted at headquarters, Metro Hall and the North York Civic Centre.

A man identifying himself as Patrick Brown, saying he lived close to headquarters, told an operator: "Tell Julian Fantino that his days are numbered and the countdown begins at noon," the jurors heard on a tape played in court.

Although the issue of Brown's mental health was not raised during the trial, it was clearly on the minds of jurors. Midway through deliberations, they returned to court to ask Madam

Justice Wailan Low if they should consider his mental state when deciding on a verdict.

She told the jurors that Brown's mental health was not raised during the trial, so they had to assume he didn't suffer from a mental disorder.

The man who called the police switchboard said at one point, on a tape played in court, that he was crazy.

In another call, a man saying he was Inspector Clouseau warned of a suspicious car parked in front of police headquarters. When police found the car, they evacuated the building, but there was no bomb in the vehicle, the trial heard.

Mom worsens after surgery on her hands

NICHOLAS KEUNG
STAFF REPORTER

A Scarborough mother of five whose hands were chopped off in a machete attack last week is back in intensive care due to respiratory distress, the victim's sister says.

Madelene Monast, 44, was attacked Wednesday at her Chester Le Blvd. townhouse. She underwent surgery to reattach her hands at Toronto Western Hospital and was briefly out of the intensive care unit, but developed respiratory problems on the weekend, said Dawn Irwin.

"They (hospital staff) believed that it's all because of the visitors who came to see her, and they are restricting visitations," Irwin said yesterday.

Monast's 24-year-old son is looking after her other children, three boys and a girl ranging in age from 11 to 22, Irwin said. "They need a lot of moral support and financial support. The kids are having a really difficult time," she said. "The twin boys are turning 15 next week. It's the worst birthday they would ever have."

A neighbour who was charged with aggravated assault is to appear in court for a bail hearing Thursday. She cannot be named to protect the identity of her children, who are in the custody of the Children's Aid Society.

Meanwhile, a trust fund, called Madelene's Hope, has been set up by the CAS to help the Monast family. You can donate by calling 416-923-0924, sending a cheque to Toronto CAS, 25 Spadina Rd., Toronto, M5R 2S9, or contacting the CAS through www.cafdn.org.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING PROPOSED REINFORCEMENT OF NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Enbridge Gas Distribution is planning to apply to the Ontario Energy Board for approval to construct approximately 6.5 kilometres of 36-inch (914 mm) diameter natural gas pipeline to parallel an existing 30-inch (762 mm) natural gas main in the Toronto area. The proposed pipeline will assist in meeting an anticipated increase in the demand for natural gas in the Toronto area. If approved by the Ontario Energy Board, construction of the proposed pipeline would be scheduled for late Spring or Fall of 2005.

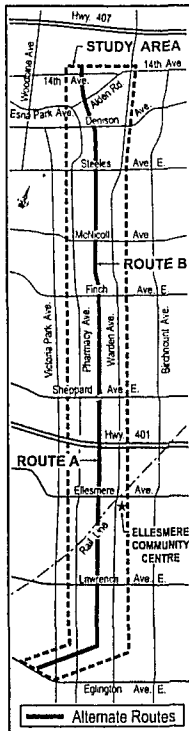
SENES Consultants Limited has been retained to prepare a route selection, environmental and socio-economic impact assessment of the project. Two Alternate Routes for the proposed pipeline have been selected along-side an existing natural gas main. The existing main is located within a utility corridor and is illustrated by a solid line on the map to the right. The study area boundary for this project is indicated by the dashed line.

We would appreciate your input and welcome you to attend an Open House Meeting to be held on Monday June 23, 2003, between the hours of 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Ellesmere Community Centre, located at 20 Canadian Road, next to the COSTCO Outlet. Representatives of Enbridge Gas Distribution and SENES will be in attendance with background information on the study and Alternate Routes. Public input from the Open House meeting will be used in the selection of the Preferred Route for the pipeline.

For further information, please visit the project web site at www.enbridge.com/torontoportlands or call one of the two individuals listed below.

Mario Buszynski, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Manager, Environmental Assessment and Energy Projects
SENES Consultants Limited
121 Granton Drive, Unit 12
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3N4
Telephone: (905) 764-9380
E-mail: mbsuzynski@senes.ca

Brad Nichols
Specialist,
Environment, Health and Safety
Enbridge Gas Distribution
P.O. Box 650
Scarborough, ON M1K 5E3
Telephone: (416) 495-3991
E-Mail: brad.nichols@epbridge.com



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