***APPROACHING THE PAST* – Guidelines for Setting Up a Series**

**WHO WE ARE**

[*Approaching the Past*](http://sites.google.com/site/approachingthepasttoronto/home) began in June 2010 as a quarterly workshop series in Toronto, Ontario focused on bringing together educators who work in schools, universities, archives and museums to discuss teaching history in a variety of contexts.

The goal of the series is to create and strengthen ties between history educators in the Greater Toronto Area. Free workshops offer the opportunity to connect with colleagues, meet people teaching history in unique and engaging ways, and be challenged to teach history in ways that connect more deeply with students and the general public.

The Toronto *Approaching the Past* series is sponsored by The History Education Network/Histoire et éducation en réseau (thenhier.ca) and includes a board made up of members of various history education institutions within the Toronto area.

**MEMBERS 2012-2013**

The *Approaching the Past* series has been led by a board since 2011. Current Board members are:

Rose Fine-Meyer (sessional lecturer: OISE)

Brittany Luby (graduate student and Aboriginal educator)

Gillian Reddyhoff (Supervisor, Reference and Outreach: City of Toronto Archives)

Jan Haskings-Winner (TDSB, OHASSTA President)

Katy Whitfield (graduate student and TDSB teacher)

Kate Zankowicz (graduate student and museum educator)

Mary Chaktsiris (graduate student and history educator)

Philip Cheong (Toronto Museums: Colborne Lodge)

Samantha Cutrara (Senior Coordinator, Educational Programming and Exhibitions, Archives of Ontario)

Scott Pollock (graduate student and TDSB teacher)

**PROCEDURE**

The board meets several times throughout the year to plan events, gather resources and stuff teacher packages before each event. At the board meetings, which also include a light dinner, ideas and resources are brought forward and each person networks within their own diverse educational community. These events are known publicly to a broad range of history educators in museums, schools, universities and historic sites. In 2011/12, we met approximately eight times throughout the year: these meetings combined planning and/or preparation for each event.

Minutes are taken at each planning meeting and lists of duties are assigned via email after each meeting. This allows equitable participation on the part of each board member.

Board members should reflect a diverse history education scene and are asked to participate based on the communities they have access to: members are encouraged to reach out to their communities by passing along posters and information about each event to colleagues and associates. They are encouraged to be *ATP* ambassadors, promoting the events within their sphere of influence and supporting events in the form of resource materials, curricula development, attendance at meetings and events, and maintaining contact with other board members. The board functions in an advisory capacity, with the hopes that they will reach out to and solidify networks for *ATP* events, and ultimately be actively involved.

*ATP* Toronto has partnered with particular institutions in order to strengthen our mandate of linking historical communities: Archives of Ontario, City of Toronto Archives, Heritage Toronto, Toronto Museums, Active History, and OHASSTA. We also turn to broad groups of people who are looking to share historical materials, such as at the event at the St. James Cathedral, which featured material from the office of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

**FOLDERS**

Each event includes a folder of resources for teachers and other educators. The folders, provided by the Toronto Archives and the Archives of Ontario, include materials related to the talk. Some members commit to meeting before the event to help stuff the folders. We usually create 45 folders and then transport them to each event.

**EVENTS**

Each *ATP* event is meant to provide a deeper understanding of Toronto’s local history. Curriculum links are made through the resource material provided and are often the guiding inspiration for talk selection. Since its inception, the board has been committed to organizing events that are critical examinations of the past: events have showcased Geoffrey Reaume’s work on ‘mad history,’ Native Earth’s monologues, and Coll Thrush’s work on indigenous perspectives of the monarchy. We feel it is important to include at least one First Nations perspective at each event, and we look forward to challenging historical narratives with diverse, multiple perspectives over the course of each year.

Events are held in local historical sites, buildings, museums and archives, usually with direct links to the talk in question; often the site inspires the talk topic. Where appropriate, events begin with a tour of archives or historical spaces, or are linked to particular exhibits. Each event begins with light refreshments and networking.

**AUDIENCES**

*ATP* reaches a broad range of history educators in various stages of their careers. Question periods often focus on how to bring concepts and information introduced in the talk into classrooms and programs, and how to deepen students’ understandings of the past. The audiences usually include classes of teacher candidates from either the University of Toronto or York University, history teachers and other educators, as well as staff in education programs in archives and museums. Each talk is usually attended by 40 to 60 people.

**Interesting in starting an *Approaching the Past* series in your area? Please contact THEN/HiER Network Manager, annemarie.goodfellow@ubc.ca**