

FROM THE REFERENCE DESK

How can libraries be especially useful during difficult times? Let me count the ways...

In Reference we have *Consumer Reports* back to 2001, plus the annual buying guides, always helpful for making an important purchase.

They also put out guides for new and used cars. The *2007-2008 New Car Buying Guide* has unbiased ratings, a chapter on how to get the best price, easy-to-use comparison charts, ratings and real-world gas mileage, and the pros and cons of buying online. The *2008 Used Car Buying Guide* lists the best and worst used cars, how to choose the right vehicle, how to get the best price, and much more. For all of the different *Consumer Reports*, the best part is the unbiased ratings and reviews.

We also have free copies of *Funding Education Beyond High School; the Guide to Federal Student Aid, 2008-2009* from the U.S. Department of Education, which helps you through the process of applying for federal financial aid. The three types of federal student aid are Grants, Work-Study, and Loans. If you have someone heading off to college next year, come in and pick up a copy.

We are always happy to answer questions, help with any research you or your children may be doing, and work with anyone who wants to learn computer skills. So much valuable information is free and at our fingertips!

Carol Tatian, Reference Librarian



Moderator Christopher Lydon, violist Sebastian Ruth, violinist Jessie Montgomery, cellist Sara Stalnaker, and violinist Jesse Holstein at the Providence String Quartet Shostakovich performance in February

SUPPORT OUR SPRING SPONSORS!

All our thanks to our generous sponsors of April Salons and events; their community-minded support makes our programming possible – we hope you'll make it a point to seek them out and thank them: Antiques and Interiors, Dan Siegel of M&S Rare Books, and Studio Hop. Thanks also to our programming partners the John Russell Bartlett Society, the Providence Public Library, and WRNI. And as always, we are grateful to Greg Matta, Liz Steely, and everyone at Campus Fine Wines for their generosity, support, and peerless service. Also thanks to Variable Data Printing, who have donated the printing of our Calendar Cards for 2008-2009 - a most appreciated gift!

FROM SOME RECENT SALONS AND PROGRAMS:



WRNI political reporters Ian Donnis and Scott MacKay, economist Len Lardaro, and WRNI's Bob Seay at *Policy and Pinot* in February



Wild Dreams editor Carol Bonomo Albright; *Capitol Men* author Philip Dray; RI Philharmonic Conductor Francisco Noya; and ECAS Theatre Artistic Director Francis Para



Wild Dreams Salon audience, including presenters poet Peter Covino (far left) and fiction writer Mary Caponegro (next to him, seated)



Dazzle Camouflage Salon presenters: Imaging Specialist Denise Bastien, Visual Resources Librarian Marta Bustillo, and Readers' Services Librarian Claudia Covert, all of RISD

Photos by John Chiuffalo

Universal Penman

NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVIDENCE ATHENÆUM

ANNUAL GALA TO HONOR THE CHAMPLIN FOUNDATIONS, CHAMPIONS OF ONCE AND FUTURE LIBRARIES!

The Athenæum's Annual Gala *The Once and Future Library*, will be held this year at the Rhode Island State House on Saturday, May 2, when the 2009 Stephen Hopkins Philanthropic Award will be presented to The Champlin Foundations for their unique role in supporting and strengthening not only the Athenæum, but libraries all over Rhode Island. Our Honorary Chair for the event is U.S. Senator Jack Reed, and our hosts are award-winning author Ann Hood and her husband, community philanthropist Lorne Adrain. Music by Athenæum favorites Minor Swing will keep the festivities lively!



George S. Champlin

In considering the libraries of our past, present, and future, there can be no more worthy honoree than The Champlin Foundations, which for many years have funded construction, renovation, and improvement of libraries, and equipped them with essential technological capabilities. Their unique and visionary support has not only strengthened individual libraries for the future, but as major funders of the statewide libraries consortium (now called Ocean State Libraries), Champlin has contributed significantly to creating and strengthening the network of libraries as well.

Please join Honorary Chair Senator Reed, hosts Ann Hood, Lorne Adrain, and the board and staff of the Athenæum in honoring The Champlin Foundations at this year's Gala. The State House will serve as not only a beautiful backdrop to the event but also as a reminder of the role that libraries have played in educating citizens and encouraging the civic engagement so essential to a vibrant democracy.



Senator Jack Reed



Lorne Adrain and Ann Hood

And we have not forgotten the food, wine, and music so essential to a vibrant celebration! Blackstone Caterers and Campus Fine Wines will be on hand with an array of surprises and Minor Swing will raise spirits even higher. Come help ensure your favorite library's future and honor ALL libraries, too!

CAROLINE SCHIMMEL, WOMEN OF THE WILDERNESS, AND THE MARGARET B. STILLWELL BOOK COLLECTING AWARDS

Isabella L. Bird (1831-1904) in Hawaiian Riding Dress. *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*. 2nd Ed. New York: Putnam, 1879.



Join us at the Providence Athenæum on Thursday, April 16 at 6pm as we present Caroline Schimmel and the Margaret B. Stillwell Book Collecting Awards, sponsored by the John Russell Bartlett Society.

Noted collector Schimmel will discuss her passion for collecting narratives of women in the American wilderness, 1492-1992, in a talk entitled *The Second Mrs. Pinkerton*.

A former librarian and editor who studied bibliography at the Library Company of Philadelphia and worked at Parke-Bernet auction galleries cataloguing the famed Thomas Streeter collection of Americana in the 1960's, Schimmel started buying women's travel books just as the feminist movement got started, when very few people were collecting books by women authors. Although the scope of her collection is women in the American wilderness, 1492-1992, she says "I can expand or contract the collection whenever I want." Her collection is now over 13,500 volumes and she claims to have a wish list just as long! Join us to learn about her amazing collection, view an exhibit of related 19th century women's travel books from the Athenæum's collection, and hear undergraduates present their own book collections for the Margaret B. Stillwell Book Collecting Awards.

The Margaret B. Stillwell Book Collecting Awards were created to stimulate the interest of RI undergraduates in books and printing, and encourage students to share Stillwell's lifelong pleasure in reading and book collecting. Stillwell was Brown University's first woman Professor of Bibliography and a renowned scholar of early printing. This event is sponsored by the John Russell Bartlett Society: http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/John_Carter_Brown_Library/jrbwebdesk/events.html

The event is free & open to the public!



THE OWLET

Notes From
The Children's Library

APRIL 2009

SATURDAY, APRIL 4 AT 2:30

Library Treasure Hunt

Treasure waits for all who dare to follow the clues and find the treasures stashed in the nooks and crannies of the Athenaeum. Bring your friends and share the fun! Ages 6 - 10. Limit 15. \$1 snack fee. RSVP a must (for prizes and snacks counts purposes).

THIS MONTH WEDNESDAYS ARE GOING TO BE DIFFERENT! NO FOOLING! BEGINNING WITH...

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8 AT 4PM

The Kingdom of Riddles

With Sparky's Puppets! The noble knight is on a quest, only you can help him solve the riddles and reach his goal! The Princess and the Pea will also be among the cast of entertaining characters.

Ages 3 and up. RSVP for seating purposes a must.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 22, 29 AT 4PM

People Pictures with Kristen Ramsey

Kristen Ramsey is our friend and a wonderful teacher of art. This month she will be teaching three classes in portraiture using three different techniques. This is a terrific opportunity to learn and have fun and it's free!

Ages 6 - 10. Limit 10. RSVP for supplies and seating a must.

THURSDAY, APRIL 16 AT 10:30AM

An extra special morning with musical story teller, Lindsay Meehan...

We'll sing, jump, and dance the stories right off the page!

All ages. Limit 15. RSVP a must.

FRIDAY, APRIL 24 AT 5:30PM

Family Movie Night

The Horse in the Gray Flannel Suit

This is a Disney, live-action, comedy adventure classic. Starring a horse, a father, a little girl, and a young Kurt Russell! All that and pizza, Hoodsies™, and juice boxes!

Ages 5 and up with an adult. Limit 15. \$5 snack fee.

RSVP a must.

SATURDAY, APRIL 25 AT 2PM

May Basket Madness!

It's that time again for our annual May Basket workshop. Join Nancy in creating this old fashioned sign of spring and friendship.

Ages 3 and up with an adult. Limit 12. RSVP a must.

SATURDAY MORNING MOVIES WILL RESUME IN NOVEMBER!

STORY HOURS

BEAR CUBS - TUESDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM

Songs, rhymes, and clapping games for the very young.

For infants to age 2.

FAWNS - WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS AT 4PM

Stories, songs, and craft activities.

For ages 3 and up with an adult.

SPECIAL activities rather than story hour on 4/8, 15, 22, 29 (see calendar for details).

CHIPMUNKS - THURSDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM

Songs, rhymes, stories and craft activities.

For infants to age 2.

PLEASE NOTE: Story hour at the Brown Street Park will begin in June!

NEW! RHODE ISLAND BIOGRAPHY GROUP

In choosing a biographical subject we can face an embarrassment of riches as he (most often a man) has left an extensive paper trail, neatly catalogued and archived, just waiting to be mined. Another life worth telling (more often someone female, or black, or poor) has left few traces; the biographer must be highly creative in pursuing the story.

At the first meeting of the Rhode Island Biography Group two experienced biographers will discuss the challenges and delights of archival research. Eileen Warburton, who wrote the highly-praised, definitive biography of author John Fowles, (*The Magus, The French Lieutenant's Woman*) faced an enormous volume of letters and diaries, while Jane Lancaster's current project involves a woman who lived for ninety years, became notorious, but was seen almost entirely through the words and eyes of others; less than a half dozen of her letters survive. Both biographers confront problems of evidence.

If you are currently writing, have written, or are thinking of writing a biography or a memoir, or simply like reading about other peoples' lives, please join us at the Athenaeum on Tuesday, April 21 from 5 to 6:45pm for the inaugural meeting of the RIBG. We'll go for a Dutch treat dinner afterwards.

Parking is available behind the Athenaeum, on Benefit Street, or in any Brown lot after 5pm. Please RSVP by email to Jane Lancaster at jane@janelancaster.com or leave a message with Sandy Markley at 401-421-6970 x 13 to let us know if you will attend, and if you will join us for dinner.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT: AN ATHENAEUM STIMULUS PROJECT

It seems that everyone needs a stimulus of one kind or another right now. My hope is to find the means by which the Athenaeum might maintain its course. As Board President, I envision the following needs:

First, we must meet our Annual Appeal goal of \$115,000. At this writing, we have received almost \$69,000. The available draw from the endowment will likely be decreasing for some time due to the economic down turn, therefore we must meet the Annual Appeal objective and - better yet - surpass it. If all members would give as generously as possible before July 1 we can make this objective. Every time four people give \$25, it's another hundred, ten people giving \$100 nets another thousand, 20 people giving a thousand puts us \$20,000 ahead, and so on. It's not the amount of each gift, it's the generous participation of the total membership which will make the difference. Please help us to reach our goal, and in so doing, maintain the quality of our services to members.

The next facet is membership. We need you to renew your memberships, but also ask you to bring friends to the Athenaeum who might consider joining. An introductory membership for 6 months is only \$50. Just characterize what makes the Athenaeum important to you, we will reveal all the other wonders that make it such a unique institution. Who could resist?

The last factor is participation. If you are not currently availing yourselves of the plethora of program opportunities offered to members - adults and children - give it a try. The Athenaeum is now an integral part of the cultural fabric of Providence. We hope that attending events will broaden your enthusiasm for the library community, and in turn will give the incentive to contribute and to deepen your history with us.

Alayne Barnicoat

LITTLE BITS CAN MEAN A LOT!

We have been so heartened by the support of our members, especially over the past year of increasing financial uncertainty. We have noticed a growing trend in giving multiple gifts throughout the year, and are grateful to know that members are thinking about how they can support the library on an ongoing basis. One great way to do this is by pledging a monthly amount to the library, which is charged to your credit card automatically. It's often easier to give a gift in small increments than all at one time. You set the limits of the gift - one year at a time; after the year we come to you to ask for the next year's support, it is not automatically carried over, so you are always in control of the amount you're giving. If you'd like to set up a donation to be paid out monthly over the year, just give us a call, the arrangements couldn't be easier. Many thanks!



Philbrick poet judge Marilyn Nelson

ELEVENTH ANNUAL PHILBRICK POETRY AWARD

Poet Marilyn Nelson has selected Jennifer Whitten's manuscript *Auction* as the Eleventh Annual Philbrick Poetry Award winner, commenting, "There are many things to like about these poems.

Their daring inventiveness, their ability to toss up memorable and beautiful phrases as if it were easy to do so. This collection is full of delights." Chosen from ten finalists, *Auction* will be published this spring as a chapbook by the Athenaeum, and on Friday, May 8 at 7pm Ms. Whitten will accept her award and both poets will read from their work. Please join us for the celebration!

A resident of Portsmouth, NH, Ms. Whitten holds an MFA from the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop and is Director of the Writing Studio at the New Hampshire Institute of Art.

Poet and translator Nelson's books include *The Fields of Praise: New and Selected Poems, Magnificat, Mama's Promises, and For the Body*. Her book *The Homeplace* won the 1992 Annisfield-Wolf Award and was a finalist for the 1991 National Book Award. She is the former Poet Laureate of Connecticut and founder/director of the writers' colony Soul Mountain Retreat.

The Athenaeum's Philbrick Poetry Project is named for long-time Athenaeum members Charles Philbrick, a noted poet, and his wife Deborah, a mentor to many poets, and fosters the art of poetry in Rhode Island and New England. In addition to the juried selection and publication of an outstanding manuscript by an emerging poet and a public reading by the honoree and a nationally-known judge, the Project engages youth of diverse backgrounds from New Urban Arts and School One in activities intended to increase understanding and appreciation of poetry as an art form.

A WORD TO THE WISE

We've heard from our members that parking is being more strictly enforced around the Athenaeum. Please observe neighborhood signs when parking!

LIBRARY HOURS

Monday-Thursday 9am to 7pm
Friday & Saturday 9am to 5pm
Sunday 1pm to 5pm

The library will be closed on Easter Sunday, April 12.