

Universal Penman

NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVIDENCE ATHENÆUM

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called *Opportunity* and its first chapter is *New Year's Day*."
- Edith Lovejoy Pierce

New Year's Eve builds on a tradition of reflection, celebration, expectancy, and resolution. It's a time to take inventory, honor successes, and look forward to new goals. We hope this new year finds each of you filled with resolve and ready to embrace the future.

In the tradition of reflection, our series *The Once and Future Library* will continue to create engaging discussions on the library's role in developing community in contemporary society and pose provocative questions about how that role might evolve in the future with the integration of new technologies. In the tradition of celebration, we look forward to a bicentennial homage to arguably our most famous patron ever, Edgar Allan Poe, born in 1809; join us for a fundraiser celebrating the passionate attachments he formed at the Athenæum, and not just to the books! In the traditions of expectancy and resolution, we resolve to fulfill our mission despite troubled waters, assessing which services mean most to our members and planning purposefully in accordance with that assessment. Both your vision of what the Athenæum can be and your ongoing support as we navigate difficult currents are critical to our success in ensuring that the library remains a sustainable cultural leader for many more "new years" to come. We hope that each of you will resolve to enjoy all the Athenæum offers and that you will make that experience known in the wider community, encouraging civic engagement within and outside our walls. We look forward with great expectancy to 2009, and wish a happy New Year to all our members and friends!

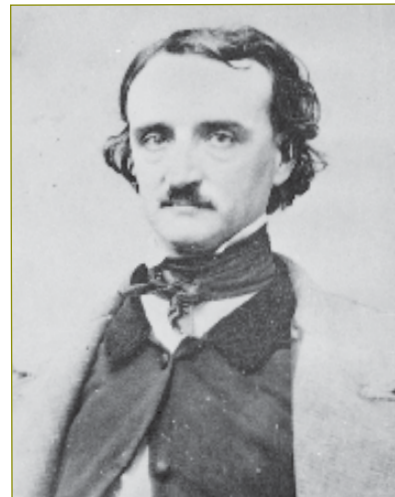
Alison Maffee

*And ye who have met with Adversity's blast,
And been bow'd to the earth by its fury;
To whom the Twelve Months, that have recently pass'd
Were as harsh as a prejudiced jury –
Still, fill to the Future! and join in our chime,
The regrets of remembrance to cozen,
And having obtained a New Trial of Time,
Shout in hopes of a kindlier dozen."* -Thomas Hood (1799-1845)

SAVE THE DATE:

SEX, LIES, AND EDGAR ALLAN POE...

Join us Friday, January 30th at 7pm at the Providence Athenæum for *Sex, Lies, and Edgar Allan Poe*, a fundraiser to benefit the library!



January 2009 marks the 200th anniversary of Poe's birth. His library of choice in Providence was the Athenæum, where he and his fiancée, poet Sarah Helen Whitman, courted (away from her mother's disapproving eye). Here, too, their betrothal ended, in perfect Poe fashion - suddenly, violently, and irrevocably - though

her regard for his work survived their furious parting and even his death. What drew them together? What tore them asunder? *And... what about the other woman he was importuning at the very same time?* Join us to celebrate Poe the lovelorn, a liar perhaps, but no Lothario (no one suffered for his lapses more than he). And reimagine the library as a lair for love, where desire fed on what couldn't be said - only read. Enjoy dramatic readings from Poe and Whitman, including torrid correspondence; an exhibit of rare Poe printed matter, featuring items on loan from collector Susan Jaffe Tane; suitably haunting music by Alec K. Redfearn; food for the soul; and the means by which you can drink to forget (thanks to Campus Fine Wines). The dress code is *Raven*-hued. Why regret your non-attendance evermore? Buy your tickets now! Tickets are \$75, call 421-6970 or order on-line, providenceathenaeum.org.





THE OWLET
News From The Children's Library
JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2009

Welcome 2009! Welcome to all of our old and new friends! Welcome to fun days in the Children's Library! Nancy and I are full of ideas for activities to fill the chilly winter days. We wish one and all the Happiest New Year!

PLEASE NOTE: We sometimes close in the event of snow, sleet, ice storms etc. so please call before venturing out to the library!

JANUARY

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10 AT 2PM

Pub Quiz Kids! Teams of four compete with one another to see who can answer the most questions. Example: What is the name of Harry Potter's house at Hogwarts? Come test your wits with lively trivia, win prizes, and munch on "bad-for-you" snacks like TMM&M's, root beer, popcorn, chips and TMSprite as well. We must have at least three teams of four, so bring your friends.

Ages 7-10. \$1 snack fee. RSVP a must; the Pub Quiz will be cancelled if too few sign up.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16 AT 5:30PM

Family Movie Night

The Great Muppet Caper

Join Kermit, Miss Piggy and the gang as they travel the streets of London to solve the mystery of a stolen necklace! Lots of giggles, snacks and fun! Pizza, juice boxes, and Hoodies as always!

Ages 5 and up with an adult. Limit 15. \$5 snack fee per child, adults free. RSVP a must.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21 AT 4PM

Extra Special Story Hour with story teller Mark Binder.

It is our great fortune to have Mark Binder warm and delight us with his stories for a chilly day! Come join the fun!

Best for ages 5 and up, younger siblings welcome.

Due to space restrictions RSVP a must.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 23 AT 3:30PM

PARCHEESIMONOPOLYUNOCHESSCARDSCHECKERS& MORE!

Bring your friends and enjoy an afternoon fun, games and (healthy) snacks. Ages 6 and up. Limit 15. 50¢ snack fee. RSVP a must.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24 AT 2:30PM

Let it Snow! Nancy Whitcomb will teach us how to create beautiful snow flakes that won't melt! Spend a cozy afternoon making festive flakes to decorate your windows at home.

Ages 5 and up with an adult. Must be able to use scissors. Limit 12. RSVP a must.

FEBRUARY

MONDAYS, FEBRUARY 2, 9, AND 23 AT 4PM

Theater Workshops - Learn to walk and talk like the animals at a workshop led by recent English and theater grad Hollie Quigley. Hollie (a seasoned performer) will teach you the tricks of the trade using famous story book animals as inspiration for her techniques.

Ages 7 - 10. Limit 10. RSVP a must.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 AT 4PM

Valentine Workshop I - Theo the Children's Library owl wants to know whoooooo do you love? Nosy bird! You don't have to tell, just come in and make sparkly, colorful valentines for family and friends!

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

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7 AT 2:30PM

Valentine Workshop II - For those who missed out on Wednesday's workshop, Nancy Whitcomb will be hosting this one!

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20 AT 5:30PM

Family Movie Night: *My Neighbor Totoro* - Everyone loves Totoro!

Come see your favorite movie on the big screen!

Pizza, juice boxes, and Hoodies! Ages 5 and up with an adult.

Limit 15. \$5 snack fee per child, adults free. RSVP a must.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27 AT 3:30PM

More Fun and Games! Bring your friends and play a variety of games from board games to trivia, chess to card games; any game you like!

A healthy snack will be served.

Ages 6 and up. Limit 15. 50¢ snack fee. RSVP a must.

STORY HOURS

BEAR CUBS - TUESDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM

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

Infants to age 3.

FAWNS - WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS AT 4PM

Stories, songs, and craft activities for children ages 3 - 6.

CHIPMUNKS - THURSDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM

Songs, rhymes, stories, and craft activities. Infants to age 3.

SATURDAY MORNING MOVIES AT 10:30AM JANUARY

1/10 *Giggle, Giggle, Quack* ...and more funny stories

1/17 *Bark George* and more doggie stories

1/24 *Pingu: On Thin Ice*

1/31 *Little Polar Bear*

FEBRUARY

2/7 *Charlie and Lola*

2/14 *Richard Scarry's Best Silly Stories and Songs*

2/21 *Is your Mama a Llama* ...and More Stories...

2/28 *Rolie Polie Olie: Great Defender of Fun*

WRNI PRESENTS *POLICY AND PINOT*, A NEW DISCUSSION SERIES AT THE ATHENAEUM!



WRNI General Manager Joe O'Connor

As the cultural community works to do more with less, collaboration is the name of the game. So we were thrilled when Rhode Island's newly independent public radio station, WRNI, contacted us about a discussion series on vital issues facing the citizens of this state. We liked the idea even better when we heard that *Policy and Pinot* evenings would include enjoying a glass of wine!

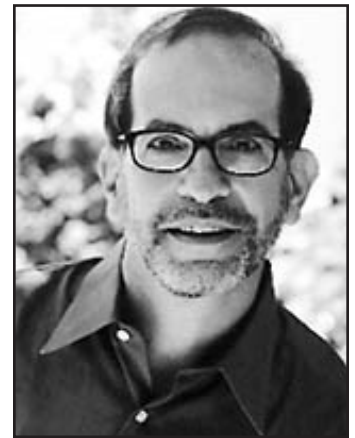
Free and open to the public, each hour-long *Policy and Pinot* event will feature the chance for audience members to discuss an important current topic with experts in the field as well as WRNI reporters and staff. The series kicks off Tuesday February 24 at 6pm at the Athenaeum with a discussion, *What Is the Way Out for the Rhode Island Economy?* WRNI General Manager Joe O'Connor says that he is grateful for the opportunity to host enriching and relevant policy discussions at the Athenaeum. "The Athenaeum's mission to educate and its history of engaging our diverse community in conversation makes it the perfect location to have these informative discussions. I'm very grateful to the library for hosting this important series." And we're very grateful to WRNI! The

second installment of *Policy and Pinot* is scheduled for April 28. For more information on this event and each session's guest policy expert, please contact WRNI Membership Director Rita Cidre at 401-351-0203.

MORE CULTURAL COLLABORATIONS!

As noted in our special December "Financial Update" issue of the Penman, we are focusing our spring programming efforts on Salons, including opening one each month to the public as a way to introduce more potential new members to the library. But we are also engaged in collaborative programming with other organizations, thus creating additional opportunities for Athenaeum members to attend stimulating events that don't depend entirely upon Athenaeum production, staffing, or expenses.

In addition to our February and April *Policy and Pinot* collaborations with WRNI, which take place here at the library, we will co-present two programs at other locations. On January 21, we co-present with the Museum of Art at RISD the noted writer, critic, and historian of children's literature, Leonard Marcus, on his newest book, *Minders of Make Believe: Idealists, Entrepreneurs, and the Shaping of American Children's Literature* (2008), the first-ever history of children's book publishing from colonial times to Harry Potter. The talk is at 7pm in the Metcalf Auditorium at the Museum's beautiful new Chace Center, and is free and open to the public. All our thanks to the many Museum staff members who have worked hard to make this possible.



Children's literature historian
Leonard Marcus

On March 26, we co-present with Community MusicWorks and the Providence Public Library Central Branch a Composers Forum, moderated by Christopher Lydon and featuring a host of local composers who worked with CMW last year for their very successful Listen Local project. The program will take place at PPL Central Branch on Empire Street, time and precise location within the building will be announced in our March calendar card and website listings, so stay tuned! We are delighted to again work with our friends at CMW, excited to collaborate with PPL's resourceful program staff, and look forward to seeing lots of our members there. Don't miss this chance to hear a fascinating conversation, and to hear it in yet another of Providence's beautiful, historic libraries!

FROM THE REFERENCE DESK by Carol Tatian, Reference Librarian

Did you read the Providence Journal's 11/30/08 article on our Rhode Island author, Jhumpa Lahiri? She has written the Rhode Island entry in *State by State: A Panoramic Portrait of America*, a new anthology of 50 essays by 50 authors, one from each state.

The article explained that this book project "was inspired by the state guides issued in the 1930s, as part of the Work Projects Administration. Launched by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the New Deal project put more than 6,000 American writers to work." You may be interested to know that we have our Rhode Island state guide in Reference, and use it often.

Under the heading "Rhode Island: the General Background" there are a number of essays most useful to anyone doing Rhode Island history. In addition, the sections on Education, Religion, Architecture, Art and Artists, Literature and Journalism, Music, and The Theater each has a synopsis on the topic starting from the 1600s to the time the book was being written, about 1934. It is very helpful to have all this information gathered in one book.

If you are interested in having a look at it, the title is *Rhode Island; a Guide to the Smallest State*, and it is on the shelf in the Reference Room, call number 917.45 F31R.

OUR THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

Many thanks to all of you who recently gave to this year's Annual Appeal – we have been heartened by the membership's generous response to our December mailing. If you have not yet given a gift we hope to hear from you in the new year, when we will be working more resourcefully than ever to earn your continued support of the library. It is needed now more than ever!

Thanks, too, to those of you who supported our fall fundraising efforts, *Music and Wine from the World of Marcel Proust* and *Holiday High Spirits!* We are so grateful for your celebratory confirmations of - and contributions to - the Athenaeum community, and we greatly appreciated and truly enjoyed your participation. Thanks also to those who contributed to the events through donations and / or discounts, including the Aurea Ensemble, Blackstone Caterers, Campus Fine Wines, Cathy Clasper-Torch, Robb Dimmick, Mike Fischman, and IO Labs. Thanks also to Hegeman and Company Fine Jewelry and Butterfield for helping to sponsor these important fundraisers.

Thanks, finally, to January and February sponsors and co-presenters of Salons and programs: Dr. Jodi L. Glass, Audiologist; Jillian Siqueland of Residential Properties; Dan Siegel of M&S Rare Books; Museum of Art, RISD; the Rhode Island Foundation; and WRNI.

A PROUST POSSE, POSSIBLY?

"The only real voyage of discovery...consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes, in seeing the universe with eyes of another, of a hundred others, in seeing the hundred universes that each of them sees."

"Every reader reads himself. The writer's work is merely a kind of optical instrument that makes it possible for the reader to discern what, without this book, he would perhaps never have seen in himself."

-Marcel Proust

In response to several inquiries, we are considering starting a monthly Proust reading group, aimed at those who have always wanted to read (or finish!) *In Search of Lost Time* but are overwhelmed at the thought of going it alone. The group would provide a structure to the project and a band of supporters to cheer each other along. If you are interested in such a group, please contact Christina Bevilacqua at 421-6970 x28 or cbevilacqua@providenceathenaeum.org. Stay tuned for further developments!



Lisa Dady, Joanna Doherty, and Sarah Zurier sharpen their wits at a recent pub quiz.



Photo by John Chiafalo

Erudite Proust enthusiasts Henry Schwarz and Tony Lancaster discuss literature and Champagne at our November 16 fundraiser.

WINTER HOURS

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

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
Sunday, January 18 and Monday, January 19
Presidents' Day
Sunday, February 15 and Monday, February 16

Photo by John Chiafalo