

# Universal Penman

NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVIDENCE ATHENÆUM



Philbrick Award winner John Brush (second from left) with Philbrick brothers (left to right): Harry, Stephen, Tim, and Ben. The Philbrick Award is named in honor of their parents, Charles and Deborah Philbrick.

## TENTH ANNUAL PHILBRICK POETRY CELEBRATION

The tenth Annual Philbrick Poetry Award was presented to John Brush on Friday, May 9th, by poet Forrest Gander who judged the competition. To a lively audience of over 60 poetry-lovers, Mr. Brush read from his new chapbook, *Chrysalis*, published by The Providence Athenæum as a part of the award.

In his presentation Mr. Gander spoke of the importance of a chapbook in a beginning poet's career. He described Mr. Brush's work as poetry with "a black humor that keeps the tone buoyant but nervous." Mr. Gander also read from his own work.

Earlier that afternoon Mr. Gander participated in a workshop for students at New Urban Arts in Providence. An interdisciplinary program for high school students, New Urban Arts provides studio and exhibition space as well as mentoring for young artists in the visual, performing, and literary arts.

The students and two returning alumni who participated in the workshop were: Phillip Huerta, Jennifer Recinos, Ashley Escobedo, Janessa Frias, Michele Downing and Adrienne Adeyemi. For many of them, Mr. Gander was the first poet, other than their mentor, to hear their work. They were thrilled with his supportive feedback and inspiration. Several students later attended the reception and reading at the Athenæum.

We are thrilled to be a part of this program and thank poets Bill Allen and Forrest Gander as well as Sarah Meyer and others at New Urban Arts for making this collaboration possible!

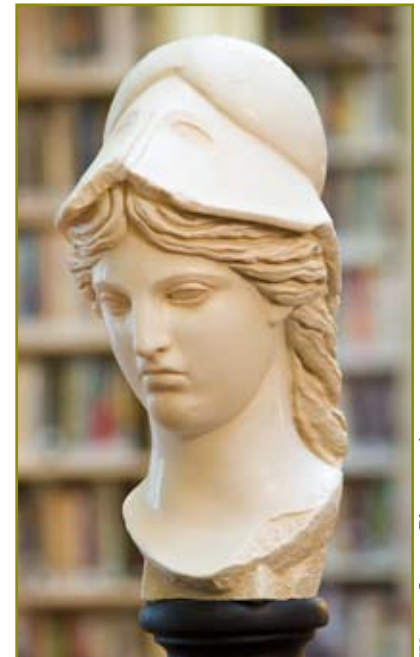
## ALL HAIL, ATHENA (AND THE ATHENÆUM, TOO)!

Join us Friday, July 11th at 7pm to celebrate the Athenæum's 170th birthday! We will mark this momentous occasion and pay tribute to our patron goddess, Athena, by installing our new bust of her above the Circulation Desk, from where she might watch over both books and members with her all-seeing and all-knowing gaze.

While many of us keenly felt the lack of her representation in the library, it was board member and resident bard Brett Rutherford who led the effort to remedy the situation, not resting until she had been found.

Fellow board member David Nishimura took up the cause as well, negotiating her actual arrival. Our induction ceremony will take its inspiration from the classical goddess-induction tradition (we'll bet you didn't even know there was one), with Brett as our guide.

Brett is ideally suited to this project. Each year the highlight of his annual Halloween poetry program is his reading of Poe's *The Raven*, a poem which ends with the image of the raven "sitting on the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door...". How much more intensely will his listeners imagine that scene when it is our own bust of Pallas Athena pictured in the mind's eye! So come prepared to celebrate and inaugurate, it's not often that a goddess chooses to make our home her own! (Please note: nectar and ambrosia – or earthly facsimiles thereof – will be served.)



Warren Jagger Photography

## ATHENÆUM SUMMER HOURS

June 1 through September 1:

Monday through Friday: 9am to 7pm

Saturday: 9am to 1pm

Sunday - closed



# THE OWLET

## News From The Children's Library

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST

### THURSDAY, JUNE 26 at 4:00

The Book Worm Club Opening Day Party: Would you like to be a Book Worm and read your way to fun and prizes? Well, come and join the Book Worm Club! There will be refreshments and a Book Worm activity too! All Ages.

### Starting: MONDAY, JUNE 30 at 10:30

Camp Theo: A Safari of Fun  
Gorillas and Pandas and Whales...Oh Wow!  
From June 30 – July 28, Monday mornings will roar, snuffle, and spout as we explore the world of animals, with informative activities, stories, and refreshments.  
6/30 Gorillas, 7/7 Pandas, 7/14 Elephants,  
7/21 Whales, 7/28 Giraffes  
Ages 3 – 6. Limit 12. RSVP by June 25.

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 16, 23, 30 AND AUGUST 20, 27 at 4:00

FAWNS in the Brown Street Park: This summer we are taking Story Hour on the road! Our readings will be held

on sunny days in the shade at the Brown Street Park (behind Hope High School). If it rains we will meet here in the library. Story Hours for children ages 3 – 7.

### THURSDAY, JULY 10, 17, 24, 31 AND AUGUST 21, 28 AT 3:30

Cool Summer Movies Begin: Relax in the cool Children's Library, and enjoy a film and a snack. Ages 2 and up.

## STORY HOURS

### BEAR CUBS - TUESDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30

Songs, rhymes, and clapping games for the very young. Infants to age 3.

### FAWNS - WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS AT 4:00

Stories, songs, and craft activities for children ages 3 - 6. Meeting on sunny days at the Brown Street Park.

### CHIPMUNKS - THURSDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30

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

**NO STORY HOURS** The Library will be closed 8/5 to 8/14. Story Hours will resume Tuesday 8/19.

Be on the lookout for more special events and activities coming in September!

## WHAT I'VE BEEN READING

By Amelia Nishimura

Here are some books that I have been reading lately and why they're awesome!

**The Percy Jackson series:** These books are about a boy who lives with his mom in New York. He finds out in the first book that the Greek gods, monsters, and heroes are real and that he's the son of Poseidon, the ocean god! He has lots of adventures with Annabeth, daughter of Athena, and Grover, a satyr. If you like reading Greek myths, this is the series for you! By the way the author is Rick Riordan.

**The Molly Moon series:** These books are about a girl called Molly Moon. She is an orphan at Hardwick House and one day at the library she finds a book on hypnotism. She discovers she's a natural and has all sorts of adventures with her hypnotic powers! My sister Cecily really enjoys these books and thinks that the author, Georgia Byng, did a great job.

More books that I've been reading lately:  
*The Septimus Heap* series by Angie Sage  
*The Anybodies* by N.E. Bode  
*Redwall* by Brian Jacques  
*The Homework Machine* by Dan Gutman  
*Getting Air* by Dan Gutman

Here are some graphic novels Cecily and I like:  
*Bone* by Jeff Smith, *Kaput and Zosky* by Lewis Trondheim and Eric Cartier, *Sardine in Outer Space* by Emmanuel Guibert.

**Note From Lindsay:** Thank you to Amelia Nishimura for her thoughtful and interesting book recommendations. I'll be reading Percy Jackson this summer for sure!

We'll be looking for more reader's recommendations to publish throughout the year. If you are interested in contributing please contact Lindsay ASAP at 421-6970 x 17 to schedule your review!



Meet the worms! "Worm Ladies" Nancy Warner and Lois Fulton introducing their crawly friends to curious young Athenaeum members.

## PROGRESS REPORT (WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS!)

An Athenaeum member before I was lucky enough to work here, I came aboard with an almost irrational love of this library's idiosyncratic collections, programs, and building, but loved most the history of its enduringly precarious existence. Now, if possible, I love the library even more, but I no longer romanticize the precariousness of its future. As the world changes around it, the Athenaeum's holdings, history, and mission become all the more unique, making it more, not less, vital to the community it serves. The job of all of us who love the Athenaeum is to ensure that vitality in perpetuity. That's why we are members.

Our annual budget this year was \$835,000. Thanks to the endowment, built up over many years and protected by careful spending policies enacted in 2005, we were able to draw \$469,000 towards this year's operations (the draw is not to exceed 5% of a rolling three-year average), leaving \$366,000 that we must raise. Were we to depend only on memberships to make up difference between the costs and the draw, each membership would be nearly \$400! Instead, in the spirit of its original mission, we try to keep the library affordable. This year's membership goal of \$136,500 leaves us with about \$230,000 to bring in through various fundraising activities, including special events and the Annual Appeal.

At April's end, with shortfalls in special events and not having met our Annual Appeal target of \$100,000, we were \$30,000 from our fundraising goals, an ominous situation in today's uncertain economy. Even with careful management of our expense budget, we will enter a new fiscal year on July 1st facing inflationary pressures and unable to depend on the market to produce endowment returns as favorable as those in recent years, potentially leaving us even more dependent on fundraising. A fundraising deficit in one year becomes a greater and growing deficit in each ensuing year. We must meet revenue goals each year to achieve financial sustainability.

On May 14th, our generous member Candy Adriance issued a \$5,000 challenge, and the board issued a second \$5,000 challenge: they would match every donation from the membership up to \$10,000; success would bring us \$20,000 closer to the \$30,000 needed by June 30th. Response was hearteningly swift: by May 31st we had received \$5,335, with many members giving second and even third gifts. Delighted by the momentum, long-time supporters Sheila and Dick Congdon have issued an additional \$2,500 challenge in order to keep it going. If we are able to meet the original challenges plus this one, we will be \$25,000 toward our \$30,000 goal. Perhaps a very generous member or two will then come forward to help us to the finish line!

If you have given this year - once, twice, or more - we could not be more grateful for your support! If you have not given, or can give again, now is the time. Every dollar up to \$12,500 gets matched, so every gift goes twice as far. There are no small gifts!

The Providence Library Company started in 1753 with people pooling resources to create a library beyond the financial capacity of any one man. The Providence Athenaeum founders in 1836 funded a building and book collection to benefit the members of a vibrant and growing democracy. The library's history has always been one of contributing to a shared vision for the community. It is no different today. The Athenaeum has been a part of American history, Rhode Island history, Providence history, and all our personal histories as well. I cannot imagine my life without it. Can you?

Christina Bevilacqua

## LEAVE A LEGACY AS LASTING AS ATHENA'S!

Our patron goddess, Athena, while beautiful, has never settled for being just a pretty face. Esteemed rather for her many deep and outstanding qualities, she is philosophical, cunningly as well as morally intelligent, disciplined when warfare is called for, skilled in technique and learning, and wise and practical as well.

Hmmmm..... why, those are the very qualities that characterize supporters of the Athenaeum!

And that's why we've named our planned giving program the Athena Society.

We know that we have members who support the Athenaeum's philosophy of nurturing intellectual curiosity, understand the needs of the library and wish to help meet those needs now and in the future, address challenges with strategy, are skilled at putting strategy into

long-range action, and possess a level of experience in the world that has given them a sense of possibility informed by perspective – wisdom, that is. These are the members for whom the Athena Society was founded.

If you share these characteristics then we hope you'll join us for an introductory and informational Athena Society luncheon this summer! At the event we will tell you about the Society, answer questions you might have, and enjoy conversation over a meal as well. Please call Alison Maxell or Christina Bevilacqua with any questions, and to let us know that you'd like to be part of the occasion. We will schedule the luncheon in late June, at the convenience of those who respond that they would like to attend.

Just think – by becoming a founding member of the Athena Society you will help to ensure the future of an organization that is part of your history. And that's an Olympian accomplishment!



## From the Board President: MUSINGS ON THE GALA

*A Cabinet of Curiosities...*...the fabulous invitation picturing that antique cabinet in Paris... counting the number of replies... a beautiful April evening at the Roger Williams Park Casino... vivacious guests wearing wonderful attire... conversations overheard, "It's so wonderful to see you again, haven't seen you since last year!" "Fancy seeing you again this evening, we just ran in to each other at the Circulation Desk yesterday!" Copious cocktails and fabulous hors d'oeuvres... Minor Swing making you forget everything for an instant except being in the moment... the Mayor's here with a proclamation... up the stairs for dinner... find the table that you reserved with friends... peacock feathers adorning the centerpieces... and is Athena wearing one, too? Luscious food... "More wine, please!" Recognizing the board for all their hard work... cheers from their tables of friends... the Stephen Hopkins Award honoring Sheila and Dick Congdon... couldn't BE a better choice, they are the glue that holds the Athenaeum together... a movie of the Athenaeum narrated by... Athena herself?! (shades of Pygmalion), a wonderful piece... now the auction... Matthew Bird and James Hall... absolutely hilarious! Where is the list of auction items? Found it... that card catalogue table is to die for... was that a bid from over in the corner? Too late! It's done! Wait, is that a tray of chocolates? Well, maybe just one... Exhausted! Where do I sign up for next year?

Alayne Barnicoat



Photographs by John Markley and John Chiafalo



John Chiafalo

Bertrand Laurence serenades a young fan at his Salon on May 30th

## SPLENDID SPONSORS – OUR SUPERHEROES!

Did you attend a program or Salon this spring? We hope so, and we want to remind you that our programs would not be possible without the generous sponsors who help defray our costs. Our sponsors are all local businesses; won't you think of them the next time you're looking for the perfect gift, an unusual antique, a skilled lawyer, a rare book, an experienced travel agent, a piece of unique jewelry, counseling for you and your computer, work by a RISD-trained artist, help for your precious hearing, a beautifully printed invitation, or a fabulous new home? All our thanks to our wonderful sponsors: Antiques & Interiors, Benefit Street Antiques, The Curatorium, Figments, Jillian Siqueland of Residential Properties, Jodi Glass Audiology, Kas DeCarvalho Business Law, M&S Rare Books, risdworks, Studio Hop, Yankee Travel, and Your Computer Concierge.

Thanks also to Greg Matta and Liz Steely and all the incredibly helpful folks at Campus Fine Wines. And if you'd like contact information for any of these businesses we'd be happy to provide it, just give us a call!

## ARRRRRRRRRRRRRE YOU SEARCHING FOR TREASURE THIS SUMMER?

Avast, mateys, and hear ye this: ye needn't take to the high seas to find it! Heritage Museum & Gardens in Sandwich, MA will shiver thy timbers with their exciting exhibit, *A Short Life and Merry: Pirates of New England*, on view through October 31. You'll learn true stories of New England "pyrates", try out life on a pirate ship, sing rousing pirate songs, and handle a genuine gold "piece of eight".



The notorious Blackbeard, from *A General History...*

And why are WE so thrilled about it? Because a book on display in the exhibit is from the Athenaeum! It's called (take a deep breath) *A General History of the Lives and Adventures of the Most Famous Highwaymen, Murderers, Street-Robbers, & c. To which Is Added, a Genuine Account of the Voyages and Plunders of the Most Notorious Pyrates. Interspersed with Several Diverting Tales, and Pleasant Songs, and Adorned with the Heads of the Most Remarkable Villains, Curiously Engraved on Copper* (whew!). It's by Captain Charles Johnson, and was published all the way back in 1734! It was one of 2,000 books left to the Athenaeum by member and collector Holder Borden Bowen in 1911.

For more information on *A Short Life and Merry: Pirates of New England* go to [www.heritagemuseumsandgardens.org/pirates](http://www.heritagemuseumsandgardens.org/pirates) or call 508-888-3300. Ahoy!