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NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVIDENCE ATHENÆUM

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Greetings!

In 1917, a young girl named Dorothy was born in Providence to the Brenton Smiths. Known as Dottie, she was the granddaughter of William Dempster of Angell Street. Dottie's parents and grandfather were members of the Athenaeum. Like so many children in generations past, Dottie spent a great deal of time at the Athenaeum and came to know and appreciate the staff and the collections. Dottie became an avid artist, traveling and studying art. In 1945, Dottie married Frank Zillmer and moved to Illinois, where Frank worked for a publishing company. Dottie and Frank visited Rhode Island on vacations and eventually built a home in Little Compton, where they both pursued their ardent passion for gardening. The Zillmers then retired to Little Compton, where-upon Dottie resumed her Athenaeum membership.

In 2009, both Frank and Dottie died. However, Dottie's legacy lives on because she left a \$500,000 bequest to the Athenaeum in her will. This generous bequest is the second-largest estate gift ever received from an individual to support the Athenaeum. The bequest has been placed in the Athenaeum's endowment and will provide approximately \$25,000 in income annually for the Athenaeum's operations. The Athenaeum Board has designated ten percent of the income, to be known as the Dorothy W. Zillmer Memorial Fund, to promote reading, children's programming, and family membership outreach to the wider Providence area.

The bequest evidences Dottie's life-long passion for the Athenaeum, something that is not unusual among our members. Her generosity will help to insure the continued vitality of the institution. We rely on our endowment, together with donations from members and others, to supplement membership dues to provide the services members expect, from purchase of books to cultural programming. The incremental income from this bequest will help to offset our operating costs, but it is not a financial panacea, especially in these difficult economic times! With five months remaining in our current fiscal year and \$48,135 still to be raised through our Annual Appeal, the need for your continued investment remains very real, and we thank you for your support.

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Illustration by Ryder Windham

WHOOOOO'S READY FOR FUR, FEATHERS, FRIENDS, AND FUN?

You, that's who! Join us Sunday, May 2 from 4 to 7pm at the Hope Club for the Athenaeum's Sayles Gorham Children's Library fundraiser to celebrate its 31st birthday and support the library!

Dust your feathers, polish your beaks, gather your owlets, and fly on over to celebrate and honor all the families and friends who have made the Children's Library such a special place for generations of children!

Special guests and long-time friends of the Athenaeum, Dan Butterworth and his marionettes, will be performing, too!

Tickets are \$50 for adults and \$10 for children. Look for your invitation in the mail in late March for ALL the exciting details. It's sure to be a HOOT!

Many thanks to our Children's Library Gala Committee members: Julie Boegehold, Kathleen Bower, Kendall Brown, Kate Flanders, Alison Huff, Sandy Markley, Alison Maxell, Wendy Nilsson, Denis Roche, Lindsay Shaw, Marcy Wemple, and Kate Wodehouse.

MARCH APRIL MAY 2010

TWELFTH ANNUAL PHILBRICK POETRY PROJECT



Poet Marge Piercy has selected Kathleen M. Kelley as the Twelfth Annual Philbrick Poetry Project Honoree. Ms. Kelley's manuscript, *The Waiting Room*, was chosen from ten finalists and will be published in the spring as a chapbook by the Athenaeum.

Ms. Piercy offered these comments about *The Waiting Room*: "These poems explore pain and loss without self pity, without the persona who speaks demanding we see her as a victim. This is not a strident voice but a quiet one, strong and disciplined."

Ms. Kelley is a resident of Florence, Massachusetts, where she works as an oncology social worker. Her poetry has been published in *Peregrine*, *The Sun*, *Insight Journal*, *Mediphores* and *Earth's Daughters*. In 2008, she received the Anderbo Poetry Prize.

Marge Piercy is a poet, novelist, an essayist, and a social activist. She's the author of 17 volumes of poetry, including *Colors Passing Through Us*, *The Moon is Always Female* and *My Mother's Body*, as well as 17 novels, including the bestsellers *Gone to Soldiers* and *Braided Lives*. Ms. Piercy has received numerous honors and awards for her writing, such as the Paterson Award for Literary Achievement, the Arthur C. Clarke Award, the May Sarton Award and the Sheaffer-PEN/New England Award for Literary Excellence. She has taught, lectured, and performed her work in universities around the world. She lives in Wellfleet, Massachusetts.

On Friday, May 14, Ms. Piercy will participate in an afternoon poetry workshop at the Athenaeum with high school students from New Urban Arts and School One. At 7 pm, Ms. Piercy will present the Philbrick Poetry Project honor to Ms. Kelley in the Athenaeum's Reading Room. Both poets will then read from their work. The 7 pm presentation and reading are free and open to the public.

The Philbrick Poetry Project was established to honor the memory of Charles and Deborah Philbrick by promoting the art of poetry in New England. Charles Philbrick taught at Brown University and published several works, including *New England Suite* and *Nobody Laughs, Nobody Cries*. Deborah Philbrick acted as a mentor for many aspiring poets during her lifetime.

NO TIME TO WRITE YOUR MEMOIRS? BECOME A MICRO-MEMOIRIST!

This spring, along with our pro-writing, pro-reading friends at Not About the Buildings, we're delighted to co-present two fast, fun, participatory "Micro-Memoir" workshops, during which attendees will write and read aloud extremely short (200-word) personal memoirs based on a question to be posed by our workshop facilitator, the noted short-short prose pioneer Karen Donovan, as each session begins.

Participants will experience both the rigors and elation of writing short-short prose, and the reading aloud segment will be buoyed by the energy of surprise and speed. And because the more diverse the writing is, the more exciting the readings will be, we are inviting high school students from the Met School and members of Hamilton House, a cultural center for older adults, to participate. Met students will also work with their advisors outside the workshops on ideas and issues integral to the project, including and the craft involved in writing, editing, and reading work aloud. The intergenerational diversity and interaction will give all participants new perspectives on the different way humans view the world around them at different points in their lives.

Workshops are free and open to the public! So sharpen your pencils, mark your calendars, invite friends young and old, and join us Thursday, March 25th, and Friday, May 7th, 5:30 to 7:30 both dates!



The Philbrick Poetry Project and Micro-Memoir Workshops are made possible in part by a grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, through an appropriation by the Rhode Island General Assembly and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The Micro-Memoir Workshops are sponsored by Antiques and Interiors.

The Annual Meeting of the Providence Athenaeum will be held Sunday, March 7 at 3pm at the Athenaeum. Copies of the Annual Report for fiscal year 2008-2009 will be available. The meeting is free and open to the public.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS BRIGADE... ALL HANDS UNITE!

Not for the fearless! The Building and Grounds Committee is seeking volunteers for spring clean up of grounds later this spring, date(s) to be determined. If you are a garden enthusiast, adept



with the tools of the trade, and not afraid to get your hands dirty, then we hope you will consider joining us! Please contact Alison Maxell at amaxell@providenceathenaeum.org or call 401-421-6970 if you are interested in helping out.

A SENSATIONAL SPRING... BROUGHT TO YOU BY OUR PARTNERS AND SPONSORS!

We proudly welcome new programming partner Common Cause RI to our spring lineup, with a lively conversation about the Supreme Court's recent controversial decision on campaign finance law, led by a panel of legal experts. And welcome back to WRNI, who in April brings us another bracing round of *Policy & Pinot* – stay tuned for our timely topic! Our year-long Salon series, "So, What's the Story?" will feature conversations with directors, musicians, actors, choreographers, conductors, curators, visual artists, bibliophiles, reporters, and historians, often talking with one another and always engaging you, the Athenaeum audience. For a detailed listing of spring programs and Salons, see your calendar cards or check our website, providenceathenaeum.org.

And be sure to note our spectacular sponsors when you do! Along with our presenting partners and generous grantors, they make our Salons and programs possible. So please get to know and support these generous businesses and individuals, whose investment in the local community makes all our lives culturally richer. Our thanks to spring sponsors Antiques & Interiors; The Curatorium; Jodi L. Glass, Doctor of Audiology; M&S Rare Books; risdworks; Studio Hop; and Yankee Travel.

PROUSTIANS' PROGRESS

The Athenaeum's Proust Reading Group now boasts over 40 enthusiastic members, and at the end of its third month has just finished *Swann's Way*, volume one of this literary masterpiece. We meet monthly, with the exception of July and August, and read approximately 150 pages a month. If you are interested in joining the Proust Posse it would still be possible to catch up! Contact Christina Bevilacqua at 421-6970 x28 or cbevilacqua@providenceathenaeum.org.

FROM THE REFERENCE DESK by Carol Tatian

How does an historical thesaurus differ from a regular thesaurus? It has 3,892 pages in two volumes, is heavy to lift, took 40 years to complete, and is amazing to use! The newly published *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, with additional material from *A Thesaurus of Old English* has arrived and is on our reference shelves, QUARTO R 423.1 H629.

The preface states "*The Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary (HTOED)* is a unique new resource charting the semantic development of the huge and varied vocabulary of English. It is the first historical thesaurus ever produced for any language, containing almost every word in English from Old English to the present day. Of major interest to historians, philologists, linguists, and the general reader, *HTOED* is an unrivaled resource for the historical study of the language. It is based on a comprehensive analysis of English as found in the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and also draws on *A Thesaurus of Old English* for words restricted to the Old English period (c.700-1150 AD). All these words and their dates of recorded use are displayed within a detailed semantic framework, offering a fascinating picture of the development of the vocabulary of English from its origins in Anglo-Saxon times to the present."

When you get a chance, come in and take a look!



HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:

Sun, April 4 - Easter
Sun & Mon, May 30 & 31 – Memorial Day

Hours through end of May:
Mon – Thurs: 9am to 7pm
Fri – Sat : 9am to 5pm
Sun: 1 to 5pm

Summer hours, starting June 1:
Mon – Thurs: 9am to 7pm
Fri – 9am to 5pm
Sat : 9am to 1pm
Sun: closed



THE OWLET

News from
The Children's Library
MARCH APRIL MAY

Roaring March, promising April, and blissful May are all months filled with activities for children. From story hours to visiting authors, from our stamp club to family movie nights, we look forward to your visits all the year round!

Be sure to look for the monthly *Owlet* delivered to your e-mail account. If you do not receive *The Owlet* online and would like to, please give us your e-mail address and we will add you to our e-mailing list. Paper copies of *The Owlet* are available at the front desk and in the Children's Library.

STORY HOURS

BEAR CUBS - TUESDAYS AT 10:30AM

Songs, rhymes, stories, and clapping games for the very young. For infants to age 2.

CHIPMUNKS - THURSDAYS AT 10:30AM

Songs, rhymes, stories, and clapping games for the very young. For infants to age 2.

PLEASE NOTE!

A friendly reminder: When you RSVP for a program it allows us to plan for the correct amount of supplies, food, and seating. So please remember to call or e-mail Lindsay at 421-6970x17 or lshaw@providenceathenaeum.org in advance to reserve your place at Children's Library events. Thank you!

