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NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVIDENCE ATHENÆUM

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"There is no value in life except what you choose to place upon it and no happiness in any place except what you bring to it yourself".

Henry David Thoreau

A warm welcome back to all! We've been busy this summer. You'll find the shelves brimming with new books. If you haven't read it yet, begin your fall reading with *People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks. You won't be disappointed! Our adult and children's programs and the ever-popular Salons resume soon. Be sure to post the Calendar Cards and Owlet program dates in a conspicuous place! We also look forward to the grand opening of the RISD Museum's brand new Chace Center. Stay tuned for a collaborative Athenaeum and Museum program with children's literature historian Leonard Marcus at the Chase Center in January. And until election day in November, we are witness to the riveting national theater of the 2008 presidential campaign. On October 14, come discuss this history-in-the-making with former Senator Lincoln Chafee and historian Ted Widmer.

This IS an exciting time...an eventful time...a hopeful time! It is also a time that fosters reflection as we contemplate the future, not only in terms of the leadership and direction of our country, but of our own lives and those of the institutions we love. Hence, the Athenaeum's new program series *The Once and Future Library* is no thematic accident but symbolic of the conversations that will take place as we grapple with the pursuit of our mission and the preservation of organizational and financial viability. And because of you, we enter these conversations with a renewed sense of purpose and appreciation.

To the entire Athenaeum community, I speak with a full heart. This past year you rose to our financial challenge. One by one you responded, each in your own personal way, enabling us to not only meet our budgeted income goals for the 2007-08 fiscal year, but to exceed them. As a community, you spoke volumes, stating with clarity and commitment that the Athenaeum is worthy of our investment. This message of value is deeply gratifying and compelling as we embrace a new year.

Alison Maffee

P.S. Oh no! Lions and tigers and bears! No, it was Camp Theo! A very special thank you to Lindsay and all those who participated this year (including my daughters Olivia and Delaney and good friend Elizabeth) in making Camp Theo such a huge success.

THE ONCE AND FUTURE LIBRARY

In 1753, the Providence Library Company, antecedent to the Providence Athenaeum, was created to make available a collection of books beyond the financial capacity of any one gentleman. In 1836 the Athenaeum's founders sought to make widely available a collection of books that would help ensure democracy's promise of equal opportunity to its citizens. By 1878, newer forces created the Providence Public Library, and one hundred and thirty years later the citizenry is still debating its role. In between and since then, Providence's many colleges and universities have created and recreated their own libraries as well, making this a book-rich city of long standing.

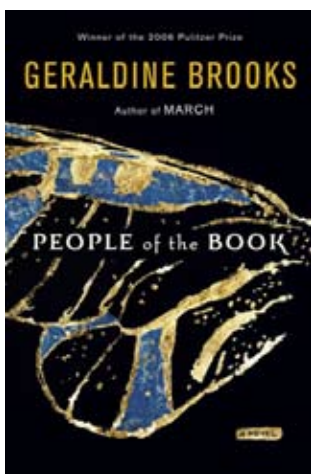
Meanwhile, three years ago the University of Texas revamped its library to eliminate the books, leaving in their wake an electronic "information commons". This year Amazon introduced "Kindle", a wireless "reading device" that can deliver the *New York Times*, the latest Stephen King, or even *Moby Dick*. The National Library of Ireland's current exhibition on Yeats includes an actual copy of one of his notebooks, under glass and shrouded to prevent light damage, next to a digitized version that a viewer can examine page by page.

In this year's program and Salon series *The Once and Future Library* we will consider the role of the library past, present, and future. In October we will learn about the early history of private and membership libraries that preceded the Providence Public Library; in November we'll hear about the history of PPL itself. Both conversations will examine the way that the growth of the city reflected the growth of its library community and vice versa. Future topics include, among others, the radical act of reading books in an electronic age; the philosophical and practical considerations of digitizing a collection of rare printed works; the relationship between the delivery system and the message delivered, or, in the race to the e-future, what gets left on the printing room floor, and what gets lost in translation?

In the world of the World Wide Web, whither the library? Are we in a world of one or the other? Does one become the other?

Join us for a year of conversation about the libraries we have grown out of, grown up in, known and loved, anticipated, and never imagined. The conversation starts in the library - and we can't start without you!

See our Calendar Cards and website for specific topics and dates. Many thanks to Dan Siegel of M&S Rare Books for sponsoring this series.





THE OWLET News From The Children's Library SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 2008

September? October? Where did the summer go? Well, we're not letting it go without a fight! Story hours at the Brown Street Park have been such fun we have decided to extend them through September. Let's enjoy these last weeks of summer with stories and activities in the great outdoors! Our ever-popular summer reading program, the Book Worm Club, concludes on Friday, September 19. Be sure to stop by with a list of books you've read this summer and pick up your prizes.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 3, 10, 17 & 24 at 4PM

Story Hours in the Brown Street Park
We're holding on to summer for yet another month! Join us at the Brown Street Park for more tales and activities. Please call the library first if there is a threat of rain, thunderstorms, a hurricane or snow.....
Ages 3 and up. Free and open to the public.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 AT 12 NOON

A Teddy Bears Picnic at the Brown Street Park
Bring your favorite teddy bear and your lunch to the park. There will be teddy bear stories and cookies for dessert! If it rains we will picnic in the Children's Library.
Ages 3 - 5 (siblings of all ages welcome). R.S.V.P. a must!



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16 AT 4PM

Bon Appetit Bugs! Believe it or not, crickets and other bugs are not just the ingredients of a witch's brew. These insects are crustaceans (think lobsters and shrimp) and can really and truly be food for all of us non-witches and warlocks! Join us for a lively exploration of these crispy critters as a food source and a cooking demonstration with multi-talented David Gracer of Sunrise Land Shrimp (slshrimp.com). **Tasting is optional. Children with allergies to shellfish or sea food should avoid tasting.** Ages 6-11. Limit 15. R.S.V.P. a must!

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24 AT 5:30PM

Family Movie Night: Spooky Halloween!
Walt Disney's *The Adventures of Ichabod* and *Mr. Toad*
Lots of giggles with Mr. Toad from *Wind in the Willows*, followed with a spooky comedy about Ichabod Crane and the headless horseman! Pizza, juice boxes, and Hoodsie ice cream treats.
Ages 5 and up with an adult. \$5 snack fee per child (adults free). Limit: 15. R.S.V.P. a must!

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28 AT 4PM

Whoooooo's ready for our annual Halloween Party? Don your costumes and come for treats, stories and maybe a trick or two! For a special treat, tandem story tellers Cindy Killavey and Marie Forer will entertain us with their not-so-scary Halloween stories.
Ages 3 and up with an adult (siblings of all ages welcome). \$5 snack fee per child. R.S.V.P. a must!
As always, guests welcome unless otherwise noted!

STORY HOURS

BEAR CUBS - TUESDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM

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

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 for toddlers 24 to 34 months.

(NO STORY HOUR 10/2)

Children's Librarian Lindsay Shaw holds her audience rapt at The Brown Street Park Story Hour.

THANK YOU, 1772 FOUNDATION!

The Athenaeum has received a \$50,000 grant award from the 1772 Foundation toward its project to stabilize the Special Collections area in the 1914 Isham addition. This is our first award from the 1772 Foundation, whose mission is to preserve and enhance American historical entities for future generations to enjoy. To learn more about the 1772 Foundation, go to 1772foundation.org.

MORE BRICKS & MORE MORTAR... QUITE LITERALLY!

Special projects on our agenda this fall include remedial work to address delaminating stucco on the front façade, stabilization of the special collections area (basement level of the 1914 Isham addition), and re-painting Athenaeum signage and lines in the parking lot.

ATHENA'S DEBUT!



Photo: John Chirafalo

On July 11 over 90 Athenaeum members and friends celebrated the library's 170th birthday by inducting our new bust of Athena into her proper home. The traditional journey of a goddess icon - travel in a flower-filled wooden oxen-drawn cart - was amended only slightly; the goddess lay in a flower-strewn wheelbarrow - with gold-colored oxen head paper silhouettes by



Photo: Kate Woodhouse

Children's Librarian Lindsay Shaw taped to the sides - which was pushed gently down the hill by Circulation Assistant Kieran Ayton, accompanied by other ivy-wreathed board and staff members, as well as the elegant

Olivia Zurier-Bell, fitted with oxen "horns" for the occasion and an "OX" sign around her neck (lest anyone mistake her for a dog).

A standout in the entourage was historian Robert O. Jones, sporting little but a short, diaphanous toga and carrying a serpent-encircled staff. As Athena was placed on an ivy-draped pedestal, the master of the mysteries Brett Rutherford led poet Alan Boegehold, actress Wendy Feller, actor Hal Hamilton, reader Dale Lesh, and Program Director Christina Bevilacqua through his original play,

Who Is Athena?, written just for the occasion and containing many references to Athena, from classical literature to today's. After the rousing performance attendees enjoyed nectar and ambrosia - a fitting finale for this heavenly occasion! Many thanks to Brett for his inspiration and imagination, and to all the wonderful performers. If you missed the ceremony, you can pay homage to the goddess on your own - she now resides over the Circulation Desk, and presides over us all!



Photo: John Chirafalo

UNDENIABLE APPEAL

In May, as our fiscal year drew to a close with shortfalls to our budgeted income goals totaling \$30,000, we came to you, the members, to ask for your support in meeting them. No mere request for money, we saw this appeal more deeply as a referendum on the institution and its direction and management, as well as a request for your investment in the sustainable future of the Athenaeum.

We held our breath, but not for long. Generous challenges from Candy Adriance, Dick and Sheila Congdon, and board members Alayne Barnicoat, Jonathan Bell, Ellen Hayes, Mindy Matouk, Deming Sherman, and Meredith Swan allowed the value of gifts to be doubled, and you came through with immediate and sustained giving, many of you sending two and even three donations. We were incredibly heartened by the response, and are thrilled and grateful to announce that thanks to your support, we met our goals, and even exceeded them by \$4,365. Thank you again to all who contributed so generously to this effort!

OUR ANGEL IS AT IT AGAIN!

Salon and program attendees are still exclaiming over the beautiful, comfortable folding chairs that made their debut in the Reading Room last fall, thanks to a very special angel who asked for our wish list and set about making those wishes come true. A restless angel, she had no sooner provided the chairs than she began the search for a high quality projection screen that could be affixed to the wall permanently and pulled down with ease. Well, it is now up and ready for our fall season. Not only does it make program set-up much easier, it also allows for more efficient use of space and affords better sight lines from all parts of the room. Members will definitely notice the improvement. Thank you, Angel!

AND NOW, INTRODUCING.....

...our newest staff members! Please welcome our brand new Head of Technical Services, Mary Anne Golda, who hails from South County and loves the beaches, technology, and reading Buddhist literature and mysteries. She joins us from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy Library in New London, Connecticut, and looks very forward to meeting everyone!

New to the Circulation Desk is Jason Bloom, Circulation Assistant, now in his second semester at URI's Master of Library and Information Science program. His background includes work in the theater and teaching secondary education; Japanese anime / manga is a particular interest of his.

Stop by to say hi next time you're in the library!



Mary Anne Golda



Jason Bloom

RESPONSIVE SPONSORS!

In carrying out our program mission, we strive not only to bring you interesting presenters, but to create a program experience unique to the Athenaeum, one that includes interaction, opportunity to meet new people, and of course the basics of conviviality, food and wine. Without the enthusiastic support of our sponsors we simply could not provide this level of programming. They make your Athenaeum experience possible.

Like everyone, we face fiscal uncertainties this year. Fortunately, our sponsors have come forth to ensure that we can continue to provide our signature programming to our membership and the community. Our heartfelt thanks to those small business owners / managers sponsoring an individual Salon in September / October (ALL of whom also have sponsored in previous seasons): Marian Clark, Benefit Street Antiques; Matthew Bird, The Curatorium; Jillian Siqueland, Residential Properties; Dr. Jodi Glass, Audiologist; Matthew Johnson, risdworks; Nina Tegu, Studio Hop; and Candy Adriance, Yankee Travel. We also have two new types of sponsorship. Dan Siegel of M&S Rare Books will be sponsoring *The Once and Future Library*, our new series of eight programs / Salons to be presented throughout spring and fall. And Mindy Matouk's Downcity shop Butterfield will be our Fall Season Sponsor, providing additional financial support to each event in our fall lineup. We are thrilled and grateful for the generosity of all these local businesses.

Thanks as well to our generous friends at Variable Data Printing for donating the printing of our calendar cards for the 2008-09 program year. We get so many compliments on the crisp, clear look of our printed cards and newsletters, all printed by VDP. In addition to producing fine results, they provide fast, friendly, economical, and reliable service. President Lisa Nofi explains their donation: "Because of what we do in our industry, VDP believes in giving back to the community in ways that promote learning and creative thinking."

And we again thank Greg Matta, Liz Steely, and the whole staff at Campus Fine Wines for their generous discounts, donations, and impeccable service.

We are all in this economy together. If you value the programs and Salons at the Athenaeum, please help support the community-minded businesses that bring them to you. We encourage you to use their services and let them know how much their sponsorship means to you!

FALL HOURS

(starting September 2)

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

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Labor Day: Sunday 8/31 & Monday 9/1
Columbus Day: Sunday 10/12 & Monday 10/13

POLITE PARKING, PLEASE!

When parking in the Athenaeum lot, please use ONLY the first five parking spots, which are marked. All others belong to our good friends and neighbors of Athenaeum Row – please help us be good neighbors, too! Finally, our parking spots are narrow – if you drive a large vehicle, please be considerate and steer carefully into the center of the spot so that other drivers can fit into the spaces on either side of you. Thank you!