

Universal Penman

NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVIDENCE ATHENÆUM

"Hark! The White Whale!"

Published just over a decade after the Athenæum opened, *Moby-Dick* is at once a tale of its time and a tale out of time entirely, mixing art, adventure, philosophy, science, and psychology in a work unlike any other. Join us to celebrate its pleasures and plumb its mysteries - and support the Athenæum at the same time! This gala evening of Athenæum-style entertainments, to unfold in our beautiful Benefit Street building, will include original music and performances by Aurea and Alec K. Redfeard and friends; a rare books exhibit featuring the Athenæum's own first edition of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick; or the Whale* (New York: 1851) and other Melvilleana; festive food by Blackstone Caterers with wines generously donated by Campus Fine Wines; an auction of delightful items and opportunities, led by Joe Wilson, Jr. of Trinity Rep; and a 50/50 Raffle. The Gala is the opening event in a year-long series of periodic programs inspired by *Moby-Dick*; don't miss this introduction to its deep, dark, unforgettable allure. (See inside for auction, raffle, exhibit, and program series details.)

Please consider sponsor level support; your extra donation helps to ensure the success of the event and is entirely tax deductible.

THANKS TO OUR GOLD DOUBLOON SPONSORS!

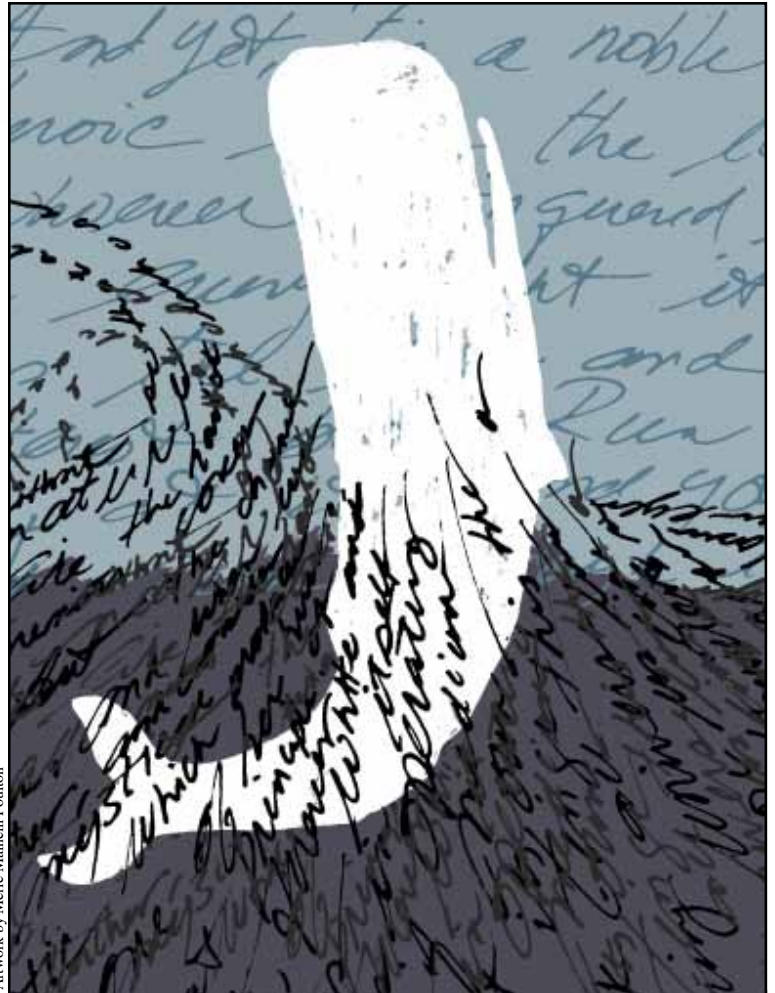
Businesses: Folio Level (\$1200): Agniel Commodities, LLC; Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge. **Octavo Level (\$600):** City Kitty Veterinary Care For Cats; Taylor, Duane, Barton & Gilman, LLP; Keough Construction; Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage, Inc.; Sullivan & Company, LLP; Vintage Pens; **Duedecimo Level (\$300):** Couture Design Associates; Elad, Inc.; Familytopia; Income Investment Group/RBC Wealth Management; Mullen Scorpio & Cerilli; The Peck Building, LLC; Providence Preservation Society; Rue De L'Espoir; Yankee Travel.

Individuals: Octavo Level (\$600): Anonymous, David Berman, Dr. and Mrs. Arthur. Bert, Harrison and Arria Bilodeau, Roy and Laura Brady, Stephen and Melanie Coon, Carl and Grace Farmer, Bill and Helena Foulkes, Kinnaird Howland and Meredith Swan, Drs. Ethan H. Kisch and Helene Kisch-Pniewski, Eugene and Brooke Lee, Dale Lesh and Alayne Barnicoat, Peter and Deborah Lipman, Arnold Ludwig and Helen Jones, Anthony and Jacqueline Marro, Peter and Kay Scheidler, Stephen and Jenny Schweich, Deming and Jane Sherman, Terry Tullis and Connie Worthington. **Duedecimo Level (\$300):** Kqantu Bent, Eliza Collins, John and Alison Maxell, Richard A. Olsen, James and Ann Scott.

REPLY CARD IS ENCLOSED.

PLEASE RESPOND BY JANUARY 21, 2011.

Tickets are also available at the library and providenceathenaeum.org.



Artwork by Merle Mainelli Poulton

YOUR INVITATION!

The board and staff of the Providence Athenæum request the pleasure of your company at
"Hark! The White Whale!"
a gala celebration
of the majesty, music, and mystery of *Moby-Dick*
on the 160th anniversary of its publication!

Friday, February 4, 2011 at 7pm
at The Providence Athenæum
251 Benefit Street

Tickets are \$150 per person, and only 135 will be sold,
please respond by Friday, January 21, 2011.

Proceeds to benefit The Providence Athenæum

"Hark! The White Whale!"

GALA AUCTION PREVIEW: Join us to bid on a sailing excursion of Narragansett Bay, a stay at a light-filled cottage on Potter's Pond, an expert to do your taxes, a food and wine tasting menu for six at Chez Pascal, plus original artwork, cooking classes, a season of cakes baked just for you, and other delights!

50/50 RAFFLE NOW IN PROGRESS - BUY THE WINNING TICKET! Can't make it to the Gala? You can still be part of the fun and fundraising by participating in the 50/50 Raffle now in progress. The amount raised in raffle ticket sales will be split between the winning ticket holder and the Athenaeum – the more the Athenaeum raises, the more the winner wins! Tickets are priced at one for \$5 or five for \$20, and can be purchased December 8 through February 4 (including at the Gala), at the library, at providenceathenaeum.org, or by filling out the enclosed reply card. The winning ticket buyer need not be present to win. Call 401-421-6970 for more information.

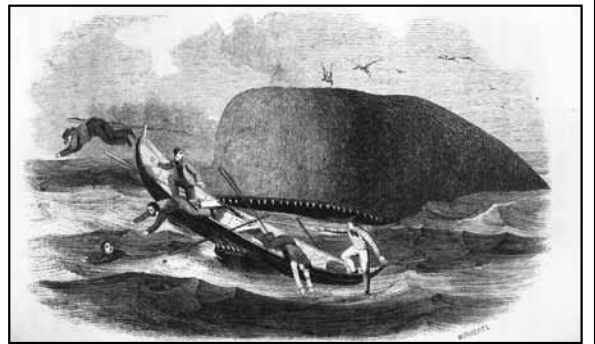
Thanks to our Gala Committee: Kqantu Bent (Chair), Holly Gabriault, Sheila Hughes, Helene Kisch-Pniewski, Allen Kurzweil, Linn Mangano, Sophie Philbrick, and Merle Mainelli Poulton.

Thanks to our Membership/Development Committee: Stephen Coon (Chair), Kristi Agniel, Kqantu Bent, Danielle Kemsley, Pam Murphy, and Meredith Swan.

"HARK! THE WHITE WHALE!" MELVILLE & THE STORY OF MOBY-DICK

an exhibit curated by Kate Wodehouse, Collections Librarian
on view February 4 – April 18, 2011

Centered on the Athenaeum's own first edition of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick; or The Whale* (New York: 1851), the exhibit will highlight Melville's reading habits, book collection, research into the whaling industry, and experience aboard the *Acushnet*, a whaler on which he sailed out of New Bedford in 1841.



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT, DEMING SHERMAN

Is there a better place to introduce a child to books than the Athenaeum? I don't think so. When my three-year-old granddaughter visits, we routinely trek to the children's nook to read and borrow books and videos, revisiting what my wife and I did with our own children when small. The children's library continues to be an important feature of the Athenaeum, and Lindsay Shaw and Nancy Whitcomb make sure it's a welcoming, special place. Our children's programming will be augmented when in February we again participate actively in the Providence Children's Film Festival, now in its second exciting year.

Collaborations like this make the Athenaeum a vibrant community institution. Other collaborative partners this year have included Aurea, Access/RI, the American Civil Liberties Union of RI, Common Cause RI, Community MusicWorks, the Museum of Art at RISD, Networks, Not About the Buildings, the Providence Preservation Society, the RI Historical Society, and WRNI Public Radio. Our Salons and events often highlight local musicians, authors, artists, and performers, adding to Providence's cultural vibrancy and carrying out our mission to serve as not only a library but a cultural center as well. The packed attendance at our weekly Salons, organized by Christina Bevilacqua, is a testament to this.

I encourage you to use the collections, attend events, and continue to support the Athenaeum financially (note the Gala in February). Our indefatigable staff under the direction of Alison Maxell makes the most of our tight resources. To carry out the vision of our new Strategic Plan, we will need your increased financial support, and we trust that you will respond. Thank you, your support is truly appreciated.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

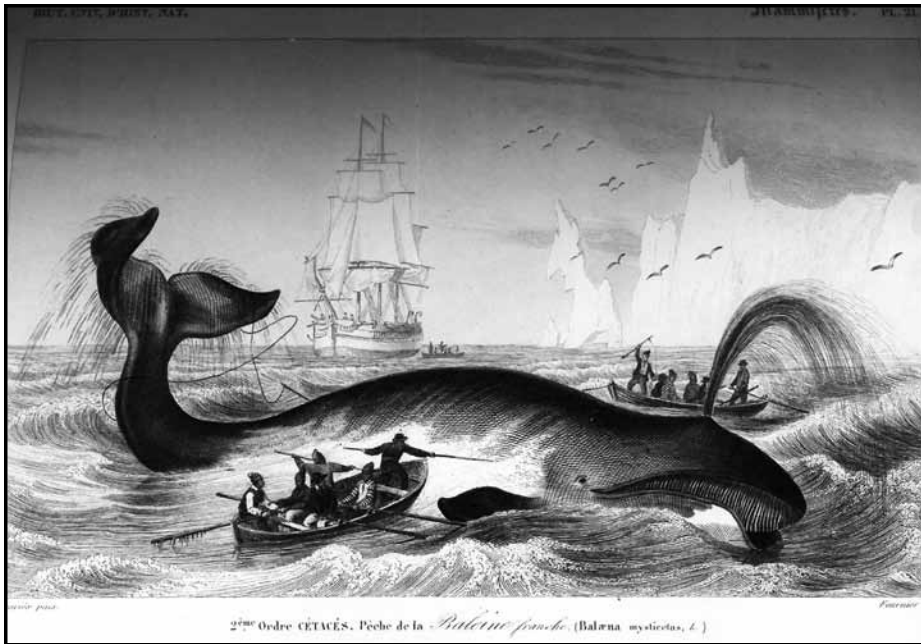
We concluded construction this fall by completing a small events kitchen off the Reading Room. This new prep area improves significantly on the second floor "scullery," offering efficient program set up and clean up, and enhancing the facility for renters as well. The Champlin Foundations' support helped make this possible, and thanks go also to Keough Construction, CVS, Dick Congdon, and members of the Building and Grounds Committee. And a very special thank you to our program support volunteers for five years of tirelessly trekking platters and sherry glasses up and down the stairs!

CIRCULATION'S PEREGRINATIONS

Last month we bid farewell to Circulation Assistant Shannon Berndtson, now a full-time Reference Librarian at Narragansett's Maury Loontjens Memorial Library. This month we welcome two new assistants. Raechel J. Doughty (R.J.) is a recent graduate of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams, where she earned her BA last spring in Writing and Women's Studies, and a resident of South County. Abby Saunders is a full-time library student in the MLIS program at Simmons in Boston, and a resident of Providence, where she has been very active in the arts community.

"HARK! THE WHITE WHALE!" 2011 PROGRAM SERIES

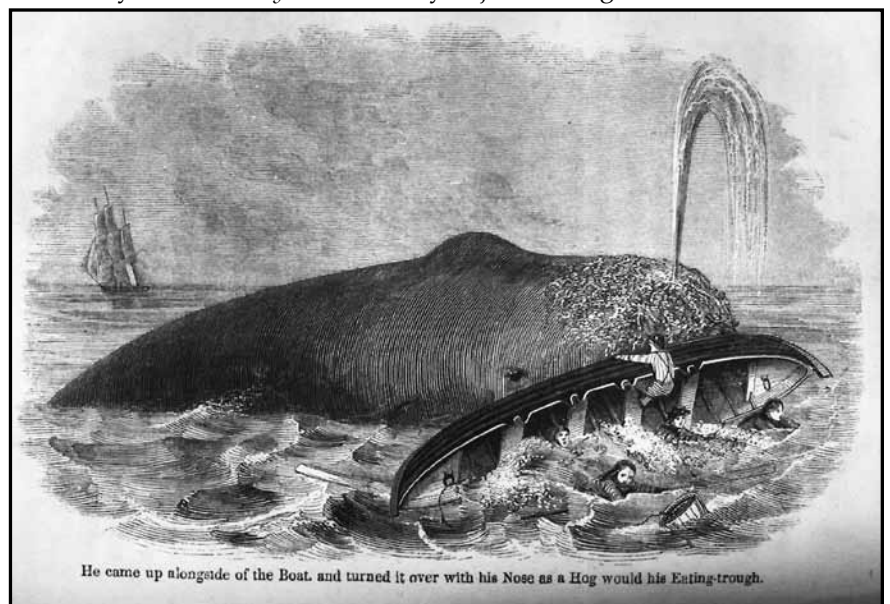
Herman Melville's 1851 novel *Moby-Dick* is as capacious and unknowable in its entirety as the whale himself, encompassing and connecting stories of industry, adventure, religion, myth, natural science, natural history, philosophy, psychology, geography, literature, and music, to name a very few, in a narrative voice that ranges from hilarious satire to almost unbearable realism and hits every note in between. Its startlingly modern literary experimentalism qualifies it as a work open to endless formal exegesis, as do its philosophical and religious questions; its commentary on man's relationship to the natural world - on his classifying of it in the service of exploiting it - is perhaps even more recognizably relevant today than when it was written; its pleasures and terrors as a book of adventure are unsurpassed. And more gripping than what it describes directly is the mystery that surrounds the whole, its insistent sense of something unsaid, so that to read it is to pursue something inchoate, elusive, and ultimately unpossessable - which description also sums up the subject of the book.



Throughout the spring and fall of 2011 we'll feature programs variously inspired the novel. In February historian Jamie Jones identifies the 18th and 19th century whaling industry's influence on the cultural life of Melville's time. In March we welcome San Francisco writer, editor, and translator Damion Searls, who, in response to a 2007 radical edit of the novel - which focused solely on the adventure plot and deleted passages deemed superfluous to it (some of them the most idiosyncratic and celebrated of the book) - published all those bits left out, under the title *; or The Whale* (the excised 1851 subtitle of *Moby-Dick*). Searls's exercise asks us to consider whether a "more readable" *Moby-Dick* is better, or just less? In April, Ray Huling, a writer and third generation quahaugger, uses the Rhode Island quahaugging industry's almost serendipitous history of sustainable practices to discuss our changing notions of hunting and harvesting.

And in May, David Dowling, lecturer of English at the University of Iowa, presents his new book, *Chasing the White Whale, The Moby-Dick Marathon; or, What Melville Means Today*, on the novel's continuing relevance to readers of all ages and backgrounds. We'll also partner with Not About the Buildings for a read-aloud program of Poe's *The Raven* and Melville's *Bartelby the Scrivener* - join us to consider whether "Nevermore!" inspired "I would prefer not to." In the fall we'll look at Melville's life; artwork inspired by the history of the whaling routes between New England and Portugal, the Azores, and Cape Verde; and the evolving meaning and future of the whale, among other subjects - stay tuned!

BRUSH UP YOUR MELVILLE! Has it been a while since you read *Moby-Dick*? Have you just never gotten around to it? If all this Melvilleana makes you want to read it but you're wondering where you'll find the time, join Program Director Christina Bevilacqua and artist and Athenaeum member Merle Poulton at the 2011 *Moby-Dick* Marathon at the New Bedford Whaling Museum, starting Saturday, January 8 at noon and ending a mere 25 hours later on Sunday, January 9 at 1pm. You can sign up to read, just come and listen, arrive and depart at any time, even bring a sleeping bag and nap! Christina and Merle did the 2009 Marathon, and have vowed to do it again in 2011 and 2012, to bookend the Athenaeum's *Moby-Dick* year and encourage others to read or re-read this inimitable classic. It's an unforgettable experience - join us! For more on the Marathon, and to sign up to read, go to www.whalingmuseum.org/prog/marathon.html. Call or email Christina with any questions, 421-6970 x 28 or cbevilacqua@providenceathenaeum.org.



MEDITATIONS ON THE ATHENAEUM

When I first walked in
I wanted never to leave
My Athenaeum.

On a wintry day,
Pale sun streams through the window.
I open my book.

My paper on bees
Is due. Carol smiles, hands me
The Apiary.

It's Friday at five.
I leave work tired, cheerless.
The Salon beckons.

"*Ulalume* by Poe,"
Says Kate, showing an old tome.
"Signed by him," she adds.

The children gather.
Lindsay is introducing
An armadillo.

I longed and wondered.
Then I made the great breakthrough:
I joined the Proust Group.

On our daily walk
My dog insists that we stop.
He dreams of biscuits.

Great news from Mary:
"The new le Carré is in,
And you get it first!"

Old books, ceiling high.
Shelves bright with new arrivals.
All the world is mine.

We each have our own reasons for valuing the Athenaeum and its future, and we each have a role to play in ensuring its continued viability and vitality. Please stop and meditate on the memories, ideas, inspirations, promises, relationships, and experiences that the Athenaeum has made possible for you, and then honor those by making a gift in support of the library. Our needs in the present are undiminished, our goals for the future are ambitious, and we truly need your help to meet both. Thank you for your continued support!

E-READERS AT THE ATHENAEUM by Mary Anne Golda, Head of Technical Services

So, should the Athenaeum embrace the latest reading technology or remain bound to the book in boards? E-books have been around since Project Gutenberg, the first digitization project of books in the public domain, began in 1971, but Amazon's Kindle has suddenly pushed e-books into the mainstream. Discussions of e-books and the devices that play them are everywhere. The Wikipedia entry on e-readers includes over 25 models; the big four are Kindle, Nook, Sony, and iPad. The first three are e-readers, the fourth is something else. The iPad can play all of the creative new versions of books like "vooks" (with embedded video) and books that use QR codes to link out to digital objects (websites, maps, pictures) that relate to the text. The book is evolving before our eyes - where it will end? Who knows? In the meantime, we modestly propose that the Athenaeum purchase a few e-readers, in keeping with our Strategic Plan's promise to be a library that "celebrates the unique qualities of the printed word, and offers technological amenities." The iPad is beyond our resources, but a couple of Kindles and a Nook will let us dabble in the e-book universe. Look for these new devices in early spring!

YOUR STARRING ROLE IN OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN by Executive Director, Alison Maxell

In October, along with the Annual Appeal, we sent to members our new Strategic Plan, *Vision 2015*. Your responses have been positive and reaffirming, but to help us meet our ambitious goals, your endorsement must come with a determination to engage.

The board, its committees, and the staff are now working diligently to fulfill the objectives laid out in our first-year "action plan" of the day-by-day, month-by-month steps toward our goals. As members, you have an active role, too. How can you "engage"? Renew or upgrade your membership! Give a gift membership! Enjoy your membership! Come to the library often! Attend a program, and invite a friend! Be a voice in your community - help create the buzz! Spread the word about how excited you are with what is happening at the Athenaeum! Sponsor and attend the Gala! Encourage your friends and favorite businesses to sponsor and attend! Celebrate the Athenaeum wherever you go!

Winston Churchill said, "I never worry about action, but only inaction." *We need you!* Your individual efforts and your increased support for our Annual Appeal are actions you can take to ensure the Athenaeum's vitality. I look forward to seeing you in the library!



Annual Conference of Membership Libraries: Executive Directors from ten membership libraries across the country met in Cincinnati, Ohio, October 22 - 24, for the annual Membership Libraries Conference. Clockwise starting from back left: Tom Hardiman (The Portsmouth Athenaeum, NH); Albert Pyle (The Mercantile Library, OH); Ann Cleveland (The Charleston Society Library, SC); Erika Torri (The Athenaeum Music & Arts Library, CA); Jean Marie Prociou (The Salem Athenaeum, MA); Mark Bartlett (The New York Society Library, NY); Sandra Tatman (The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, PA); Alison Maxell (The Providence Athenaeum, RI); Paula Matthews (The Boston Athenaeum, MA); Vonda Krahn (The Lanier Library Association, NC)

FROM THE REFERENCE DESK

by Carol Tatian, Reference Librarian

You may be aware that we have moved the oversize books about Rhode Island (call number QUARTO 917.45) into the Reference area because they were so hard to access on the open shelves. They now sit on the desk top in the Reference alcove and can still be checked out. And I am now making room for them on the shelves in the Reference area so we can better label that collection and make it more browsable. I will be tightening up the Reference books to create shelf space, and during the transition you may see gaps on the shelves with no books. Don't worry - our Reference books are still here for your consultation!

New Reference books that may be of interest to researchers are six volumes in the series *Perspectives in American Social History: African Americans in the Nineteenth Century; American Revolution; British Colonial America; Early Republic; Industrial Revolution; and Women's Rights. Revolution; British Colonial America; and Early Republic; Industrial Revolution; Women's Rights.*

SAVE THE DATE! The Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday, March 6th, at 3 pm in the Reading Room.

IT'S HOLIDAY TIME - ARE YOU MAKING A LIST?

Have you checked it twice? Does it include the gift of Athenaeum membership for that favorite person of yours? A six-month gift membership to the library costs \$60, and your recipient receives the very latest in books and movies, cozy reading nooks to call his or her own, a wealth of exciting programs and events for children and adults (including signature refreshments), and a host of potential new friends in the Athenaeum community. We'll merrily create a gift package of unforgettable appeal for that special someone - call or email Christina Bevilacqua 421-6970 x28, cbevilacqua@providenceathenaeum.org with your list!

PLEASE THANK THEM FOR THE MEMORIES!

We hear weekly from our members that they love our programs and Salons. Well, we simply *could not present them* without our sponsors. This season, please visit our 2010 sponsors when looking for gifts or needed services. As Athenaeum members, please tell them how much their support means to your cultural existence! Like our program presenters, they are creative, resourceful members of our cultural eco-system - please help keep them going! All thanks to Andrea Valentini; Antiques & Interiors; Borders; Campus Fine Wines; Chace Rутtenberg & Freedman, LLP; Couture Design Associates; The Curatorium; Elad, Inc.; Green and Cleaner; Jillian Siqueland of Residential Properties; Dr. Jodi Glass, Hearing Health; Kas DeCarvalho Business Law; Lefkowitz, Garfinkel, Champi & DiRienzo P.C.; M&S Rare Books; The Peck Building; Picture This Framing Center & Gallery; risdworks; Studio Luke Harris; Studio Hop; and Variable Data Printing.

Hours:

Mon-Thurs: 9am to 7pm
Fri & Sat: 9am to 5pm, Sun: 1pm to 5pm

Holiday Closings:

Fri, December 24 - Christmas Eve
Sat, December 25 - Christmas Day
Fri, December 31 - open 9am to 1pm only
Sat, January 1 - New Year's Day
Sun & Mon, January 16 & 17 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Sun & Mon, February 20 & 21 - Presidents' Day

PARKING ETIQUETTE Please do not park along the back railing / fire lane - for the safety of our neighbors in Athenaeum Row, emergency access must be available at all times!



Our annual Halloween party brought out the beauties and the beasties!



THE OWLET
News from
The Children's Library
MID-WINTER 2010

It's time for cozy scarves and bundling up – wait, is that a snowflake?! Here in the Children's Library you will find much to do, read, and enjoy as cold weather keeps us indoors. Nancy and I wish you all every joy of the holiday season and the happiest of New Years!

Thar She Blows! Raise the sails and climb into your crow's nest! Be on the look out look for the monthly Owlet on-line or in the Children's Library. We'll have more programs than a pod of Belugas, and promise you a whale of a time in 2011 in the Children's Library. What's all this whale jargon you ask? Well, journey to the Children's Library when the winds blow fair to find out! Yo ho ho!

For information and program reservations, contact Lindsay at 421-6970 or lshaw@providenceathenaeum.org.

Note: Due to movie licensing restrictions we can no longer list films by their title or production company. Please visit or call Lindsay for film information and reservations.

DECEMBER:

Fri 12/3, 3:30PM Stamp Club: Bring your stamp collection to share and trade. Light snack provided. **Ages 5 and up. Free!**

Sat 12/4, 2:30PM Author Ryder Windham: "Writing the Clone Wars." Looking for an excuse to wear your *Star Wars* costumes to the Athenaeum? Ryder Windham, author of over 60 *Star Wars* books, talks about his work on the juvenile novels series *Star Wars: The Clone Wars – Secret Missions*. The first two *Secret Missions* books will be for sale - if you own any other *Star Wars* books by Ryder, bring them in for his signature! **Limited to Athenaeum members and their families; registration required - to register, call or email Lindsay!**

Fri 12/17, 5:30PM Family Movie Night! A special holiday-themed film suitable for all ages. Pizza, juice boxes, and Hoodsie™ ice cream served. **\$5 snack fee per child, adults free. Guests welcome - RSVP a must!**

JANUARY:

Fri 1/7, 3:30PM Stamp Club! Bring your stamp collection to share and trade. Light snack provided. **Ages 5 and up. Free!**

Sat 1/8, 2:30PM Woolly Booly: A Spinning Demo and Workshop. Artist Stephanie Goodman shares a wool and spinning demo, a story, and a simple yarn craft to follow! **Ages 5 and up. Free! Guests welcome - RSVP a must!**

Fri 1/14, 5:30PM Family Movie Night! Featuring a special film suitable for all ages. Pizza, juice boxes and Hoodsie™ ice cream treats served. **\$5 snack fee per child, adults free. Guests welcome - RSVP a must!**

Sat 1/22, 2:30PM Professor Gizmo! Gary Deslaurier aka Professor Gizmo brings elements from his workshop to inspire us! Each child will construct an object, be it a robot, car, doll house furniture, rocket – the Professor will help get your ideas off and running! Visit professorgizmosworkshop.com to learn more. **Ages 5 and up. \$5 craft fee per child. Guests welcome - RSVP a must!**

FEBRUARY:

Sat 2/26, 2:30PM Pub Quiz Kids! Sharpen your wits and pencils! Teams of five compete to see whose think tank can get the most correct answers to kid-friendly trivia questions. Make this a party - bring your friends! Refreshments served, too! **Best for ages 8 to 11. Guests welcome - RSVP a must!**

WEEKLY STORY HOURS

"There are perhaps no days of our childhood we lived so fully as those we spent with a favorite book." - Marcel Proust

Chipmunks, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:30AM (NO STORY HOUR 12/23, 12/30): Songs, clapping games and books for infants and toddlers. **Drop-in, no RSVP needed.**

Fawns, Wednesdays, 4PM: Stories and a craft activity for ages 3 to 7. **RSVP a must!**

SATURDAY MORNING FILM SERIES FOR THE VERY YOUNG, 10:30AM Call Lindsay for the monthly list of films.

An Invitation to Grandparents, Aunties, Uncles, and other Grown-up Friends: Call Lindsay at 421-6970 and we will gladly add you to our monthly email list of events for the special children in your life!

Remember: when winter storms are upon us, please call to be sure we are open before venturing out with your little ones!



Author Allen Kurzweil and son Max share the magic of *Potato Chip Science* with an eager apprentice.