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NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVIDENCE ATHENÆUM

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALISON MAXELL

*"Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now."*

Alan Lakein

In our year-long strategic planning process we have defined the library's vision and articulated the goals that will enable us to fulfill it. Under consultant Peggy Latimer's expert direction, the board, staff, membership, and select community stakeholders have designed *Vision 2015*, our plan to guide the library's progress into the future. The plan "sets a strategic course of action that builds on our current strengths; maximizes economies; incorporates substantive input from board, staff, members, and community stakeholders; takes into account the changing nature of libraries and new technologies; and recognizes the Athenaeum's evolving position in the community." It leverages our current successes in a concerted effort to expand our community presence and broaden our support base by means of five key goals: to focus on building capacity through growing our membership and donor base; increase accessibility to collections and programs; expand community and educational partnerships; ensure a welcoming environment; and manage resources effectively.

With the future of libraries in question, the Athenaeum, as a model of civic engagement, spirited discourse, and intellectual discovery, has an unprecedented opportunity to establish itself as a prominent contributor to the city's cultural and economic vitality. *Vision 2015* realizes this opportunity with goals that are timely, relevant to our community, and aligned with its own strategic outcomes as well as those of the city's cultural plan, *Creative Providence*.

*Vision 2015* represents the collaborative efforts of the board, staff, membership, and community. It will take the collaboration of an even greater group of diverse, dedicated stakeholders to lead the Athenaeum to fulfill its goals. As stewards of the Athenaeum, we will collectively insure that this treasured institution continues to serve a vital role for future generations. Look for *Vision 2015* in your mail in October!

*We gratefully acknowledge The Rhode Island Foundation, the state's community foundation, for its generous support of our strategic planning initiative.*

At Right: c. 1859 Panoramic Photograph of the Coliseum in Rome, attributed to Tommaso Cuccioni. Collection of the Providence Athenaeum. Gift of Albert Jenkins Jones, 1860.

## CURRENTLY ON DISPLAY: OUR COLOSSAL COLISEUM!

Collections Librarian Kate Wodehouse and Custodial Assistant Stephen Garrepy recently made an astonishing rediscovery in a hidden storage space: a five-foot wide, panoramic photograph of the Coliseum in Rome, taken by one of the most famous Italian architectural photographers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Tommaso Cuccioni. Given to the Athenaeum in 1860 by art critic Albert Jenkins Jones (1821-1887), it hung for decades on the library's main floor. Cuccioni, noted for these exceptional large-format photographs, had shown at an important 1859 art photography exhibition in Paris, held alongside the official *Salon*.

Jones's gift was a significant, early act of public arts patronage. A founding member of the RI Art Association in 1853, Jones left for Italy in 1854 to become art critic and European correspondent for the *Providence Journal* and *New York Times*, and likely bought the Coliseum photograph at Cuccioni's Roman studio. One is tempted to imagine conversations between Jones, Cuccioni, and Jones' companion in Italy that year, the brilliant young architect Thomas Tefft, who died only months later in Florence. Tefft's final design proposal for downtown Providence? A dramatic free-standing coliseum-shaped office building.

This colossal photograph is the centerpiece of the exhibit "The RI Art Association & the Ecology of Culture in Pre-Civil War RI," which runs through September 23, 2010 in the Philbrick Rare Book Room. Guest-curated by Nancy Austin, it includes items from the collections of the Athenaeum, Brown University, the Redwood Athenaeum, RI School of Design, and Austin's own collection. On September 3, 8, and 23, from noon to 1pm, she will offer free, informal talks on the exhibit. On Gallery Night, Thursday, September 16, the exhibit opens at 5pm; at 6:30 Austin will discuss the works on display, and at 7 depart the Athenaeum to lead a one-hour walking tour highlighting Providence's early art world. We thank her for her exciting and tireless scholarship on this discovery!



## A BOOK LOVER'S BEQUEST: THE NINO D. B. SCOTTI COLLECTION

Nino Scotti, an authority on antiques, rare books and papers, and the history of RI and southern New England, died in Providence in 2008. A research historian with particular expertise in the China Trade, American silver, and marine painting, Nino was also a successful antiques dealer, appraiser, and auctioneer. From childhood, he had a passionate interest in the Athenaeum and spent many hours within its walls. Accordingly, Nino's beneficiaries have generously donated a collection of his books to the Athenaeum, in memory of two long-time library staff members, Miss Clara Mowry and Miss Katherine Burlingame, whom Nino knew well and who worked here for a combined total of 108 years! Both retired in 1968. The collection, to be known as the "NDBS Collection," reflects Nino's life-long interest in history, and includes treatises on colonial Providence and RI, journals on voyages and travel in the Far East and Crimea, and books on wild life on the frontier, shipbuilding, the Gaspee, the Dorr Rebellion, and Edgar Allan Poe. The Athenaeum is honored to be the recipient of this wonderful collection.



L to R: Katharine D.P. Burlingame, Annie S. Coggeshall (Cooke), Minne E. Davies, Clara B. Mowry

Highlights include: *A Voyage in the Indian Ocean and to Bengal, Undertaken in the Years 1789 and 1790. Containing an Account of the Sechelles Islands and Trincomale ...* translated from the French of Louis de Grandpré, 1803; *The Ladies' Magazine, April, 1824*, printed by John Miller; *An Authentic Narrative of the Seminole War; and of the Miraculous Escape of Mrs. Mary Godfrey, and Her Four Female Children. Annexed is a Minute Detail of the Horrid Massacres of the Whites, by the Indians and Negroes in Florida*, printed for F. Blanchard, and others, 1836; *The Campaign of 1856, Fremont Songs for the People, Original and Selected*, compiled by Thomas Drew, 1856; *Miners and Travelers' Guide to Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado, via the Missouri and Columbia Rivers*, prepared by Captain John Mullan, 1865; *The Landing of the French Atlantic Cable at Duxbury, Mass., July, 1869*, A. Mudge & Son, 1869; and *A Denial of the Charges of Forgery in Connection with the Sachems' Deed to Roger Williams*, by George T. Paine, 1896.

For additional information about the NDBS Collection please ask at the Reference Desk for a list of titles, or contact Kate Wodehouse, Collections Librarian, [kwodehouse@providenceathenaeum.org](mailto:kwodehouse@providenceathenaeum.org).

### PRESENTING POEMS AND PICTURES: A MuseoLibrary Discussion Group - Space is limited!

We're SO excited to collaborate with our neighbors at the RISD Museum to offer this course exploring *ekphrasis*, or the literary presentation of visual art, and works of art inspired by poetry. Brief readings will span Ovid to Keats and include 20th-century poetry by Auden and William Carlos Williams, among many others. Discussions are led by Dr. Rhoda L. Flaxman, who recently retired from teaching 19th-century literature and art history at Wheaton College and Brown University. Sessions meet at the Athenaeum and Museum. Tuition cost for members of either organization is \$225; for non-members it's \$250 (no additional discount to members of both organizations). Group is limited to 15 participants! Please sign-up with the Museum's Visitor Services: 401-709-8402.

### DO YOU WRITE HI FI (HISTORICAL FICTION)?

Announcing a new writing group in Providence: The HiFi Collaborative! Would you like feedback on your stories from other historical fiction writers? Would you welcome advice from librarians on accessing the amazing book collections in Providence? If so, then, consider joining the HiFi Collaborative, a forum for historical fiction writers to critique each other's work, discuss effective research methods, and learn more about primary sources available at local libraries. The group will meet monthly, alternating between The Providence Public Library and The Providence Athenaeum. For more information, please contact Ilene Weismehl ([iweismehl@yahoo.com](mailto:iweismehl@yahoo.com)) by October 1.

### BUSY WITH BUILDING AND GROUNDS

**Thanks to fastidious oversight by Building and Grounds Committee Chair Richard Congdon and Keough Construction our latest building project came in under budget.** With remaining funds we replaced the Art Room Air Handling Unit, reinforced window framing and replaced air conditioner in Children's Library, installed exterior motion lights, put in wood decking and mounted rails in the attic, completed support pin replacements at the rear east entrance bridge, repaired and painted exterior railing, surveyed and documented electrical system upgrades, added telephone service to the new Bound and Special Collections area, and are installing a small caterer's kitchen off the Reading Room. This was all made possible by generous support of The Champlin Foundations, and we are deeply grateful. **Led by volunteer Wendy Ingram, the B&G brigade pruned, weeded, planted, and watered the grounds this spring and summer.** Thanks also to volunteers Steve Coon, Lewis Dana, Peggy Edwards, Grace Farmer, Ginger Harkey, Linn Mangano, Alice Miles, Cynthia Patterson, Sheila Zompa, and our custodian Smokey Turnbull and his assistant Stephen Garrepy. **And thanks to everyone for well wishes for Smokey, who returned this spring after a brief illness.** We are thrilled to have him back!

## A PLETHORA OF PROGRAMS...

In panoramic Athenaeum fashion, we start the Salons in Margaret Fuller's 1837 and the very next week confront our love/hate relationship with 21<sup>st</sup> century tech toys like Twitter. We've got art through the ages; a lesson on debt; distinguished memoirists and fiction writers alike; Bach-analia with Community MusicWorks; a primer on Providence preservation; and, thanks to our passion for poetry, a mini-marathon of it to end the season. Plus the ACLU for banned books; WRNI's *Policy and Pinot* to sum up the elections; and Access RI, including Common Cause RI, for a crack at the Constitution. Banish boredom, we say! See calendar cards or our website for the full fall schedule.

## ...PLUS PROUST, BIEN SÛR!



Marcel Proust



Captain Alfred Dreyfus

For our Annual Proust Event, we're seeing double: two Proust programs in three days – *parfait!* A writer known for interiority, Marcel Proust was also a keen observer of politics, society, technology, and the arts in the Paris of his day; his ability to weave his observations of these outer worlds into and around the idiosyncratic inner worlds of his characters is part of what gives his book its roundness and depth. To celebrate the 97<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of the first volume of *In Search of Lost Time*, we present "Proust, Prismatically," a series of two talks designed to illuminate Proust's work from different perspectives. On Wednesday, November 10 at 7pm, award-winning novelist and retired attorney Louis Begley will discuss his book *Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters*, on a Jewish officer framed for treason by the French Army in 1894 in an explosive case that exposed the society's virulent anti-Semitism. Writing with a lawyer's expertise and a novelist's eye, Begley uses this history to examine the situation of prisoners at Guantanamo, and calls on the writers of today to scrutinize the facts of their situation with the subtlety that Proust brought to his treatment of Dreyfus. And on Friday, November 12 at 7pm, esteemed Brown University Professor of Comparative Literature Arnold Weinstein returns to the Athenaeum with "Love in Proust: You Can't Get There from Here," a talk on three major strands of Proust's novel: homosexual love with its perceptual challenge (with Baron Charlus as the major example); the evolving saga of the narrator and his conquest of Albertine (possibly the greatest analysis of jealousy ever written); and the exquisite relationship of the narrator and his adored grandmother. "Proust, Prismatically" is sponsored by the law firm of Chace Ruttenberg & Freedman, LLP, and Studio Hop, and both events are free and open to the public. *Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters* will be available for sale and signing, thanks to Borders.

## VICTORY AT THE FINISH LINE!

Many thanks again to all the members and friends who helped us achieve our 2009-2010 Annual Appeal goal of \$125,000. Your generosity during tight financial times was especially important and especially appreciated. We were thrilled to not only make our goal but add 58 new donors at the end of the year, with the help of a challenge from member Candy Adriance and the members of the board. Thank you to both new donors and those who made an extra gift (or two!), and please be assured that your investment will be put to sound and thoughtful use.

The goals for the library's future will be set out in our strategic plan, *Vision 2015*, coming in October. If you are a donor, we hope that you will support those goals with a gift to the 2010-2011 Annual Appeal. If you have not been a donor before now, we hope that the goals will encourage you, too, to invest fully in the Athenaeum's exciting future.

Finally, many of our members take advantage of matching gift programs offered by their employers, and thus double or triple the value of their gifts. Please take a moment to inquire if your employer has such a program – for the Athenaeum it's a match made in heaven!

## FOR YOUR LISTENING PLEASURE

*From the Reference Desk...* by Carol Tatian

A few days ago, one of our members came in to select some compact discs to check out, and remarked that she only recently realized we had a CD collection. I then wondered if others didn't know about it, either. Since the CD collection lives in the Reference area, and I am a former music librarian, I will take this opportunity to write about it.

The collection in the Reference area was given to us by our board member Brett Rutherford and consists, at this time, of 3,773 items. I say "at this time" because it is constantly growing, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Rutherford.

The collection is entirely classical music and runs the gamut from madrigals to Mahler. It is shelved in accession order (numbered as received) in the black boxes on shelves to the left as you enter the Reference area. If you want a specific composer or performer you can use our online catalog, putting that person in the "author" field to get a list of titles. Or you can thumb through the CDs in their boxes and see what strikes your fancy. They check out for two weeks.

We also have reference books on music in the 780-784 section of the Reference area.

## OUR NEWEST READER

Renee Perron of the Circulation Desk staff had a baby boy on July 17th. Christopher Robert Perron weighed in at 8lbs 5oz and he and Mom are doing great!

## SAVE THE DATE!

Our Annual Gala is Friday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011, at 7pm.  
Stay tuned for all the details!



**THE OWLET**  
News from  
The Children's Library  
FALL 2010

Summer is simmering down and the peepers are reminding us that fall is on the way. Until then the Children's Library will make the most of the mellow days of September with story hours at the Brown Street Park and a family movie night. Beginning in October, when everyone is settled into the back-to-school routine, there will be many opportunities to engage in entertaining and educational programming. Infants to kindergarten-age children will enjoy creative play, Saturday morning films, crafts, parties, and stories. For older children and tweens there will be crafting, author visits, junior pub quizzes, films, and other events. Finally, and most important of all, there are books, books, and more books!

**Thank You Note:** A special thank you to Sandy Markley who joined the fun with the Camp Theo campers over the summer as our official photographer and the best of helpers!

**NEW FOR ADULTS!** The Children's Library welcomes parents, their children, and interested caregivers, to join us for a wonderful all-new book group! At the brilliant suggestion of a parent/member, we are forming a monthly book discussion group for parents and caregivers of young children, with children welcome to attend. The books will range from non-fiction parenting titles, to fiction, and everything in between. The child-friendly meetings will be held on the last Friday of the month at 10:30am, starting Friday, September 24. Please watch for our e-newsletter for more details.

**SNEAK-PEEK CALENDAR:** The calendar below is a sample of fall programs – find the full list in the e-version of *The Owllet*, or pick up a paper copy in the Children's Library!

**September**

**Friday, 9/10, 3:30pm: Stamp Club** Ages 5 and up. Snack provided. RSVP Lindsay at 421-6970.

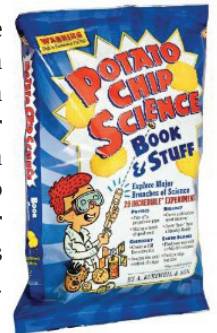
**Friday, 9/24, 5:30pm: Family Movie and Pizza Night**  
Now Showing! *Abbott and Costello go to Mars*. Ages 5 and up. \$5 snack fee per child (adults free). RSVP Lindsay at 421-6970.



Camp Theo campers observe ants in action...

**October**

**Sunday, 10/24, 2:30pm: Potato Chip Science with Allen Kurzweil!** Our big event in October will be the exciting presentation of Allen Kurzweil's newest publication for children, *Potato Chip Science, Book & Stuff*, a bag full of fun experiments all relating to our favorite snack: potato chips! The author will treat us to the story of his delicious experiments and potato chip discoveries. Don't miss the fun!



**Thursday, 10/28, 4pm: Our Annual "Littles" Halloween Party** Ages 3 to 7 (younger siblings welcome). Details to be announced in *The Owllet* e-newsletter.

**STORY HOURS: Infant & Toddlers' Sing-Along Story Hour** Tuesday and Thursday at 10:30am. Drop in - no RSVP necessary.

**Story and Craft Hour Continues at the Brown Street Park (Extended):** Best for children ages 3 and up. Wednesdays, September 1, 8, and 15 at 4pm.

**Story and Craft Hour at the Library:** Best for children ages 3 and up. Wednesdays at 4pm beginning October 6. As space is limited, PLEASE RSVP Lindsay at 421-6970.

**Fall Hours (starting Tuesday, September 7)**

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

**Holiday Closings**

Labor Day	Sunday, 9/5 & Monday, 9/6
Columbus Day	Sunday, 10/10 & Monday, 10/11
Veterans Day	Thursday, 11/11
Thanksgiving	Thursday, 11/25

**A THOUSAND THANKS!**

With nearly a thousand members, we can truly give our generous program and Salon sponsors and donors the thousand thanks they deserve! Please make it a point to seek out the following sponsors and donors and tell them how much you appreciate their generosity: Andrea Valentini; Borders; Campus Fine Wines; Chace Rutenberg & Freedman, LLP; Couture Design Associates; The Curatorium; Elad, Inc.; Dr. Jodi Glass, Hearing Health; Lefkowitz, Garfinkel, Champi & DiRienzo P.C.; M&S Rare Books; The Peck Building; Picture This Framing Center & Gallery; Jillian Siqueland of Residential Properties; Studio Luke Harris; Studio Hop; and Variable Data Printing. We truly could not bring you the Salon and Athenaeum experience without them!