

Universal Penman

NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVIDENCE ATHENÆUM

Wilde at Heart

"There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about."

Flamboyant, theatrical, witty, idiosyncratic, and brilliant, Oscar Wilde assiduously cultivated attention, gossip, and even scandal – and then created the unforgettable bon mots with which to describe his exploits. Where better to celebrate the fantastic life, wit, and style of this extraordinary man than at the Athenaeum, a venue that has itself become the talk of the town? Don't miss this one-of-a-kind opportunity to support the library while enjoying a profusion of Wildean wit and epigrams; theatrical surprises; an exhibit highlighting Wilde's notorious 1882 lecture tour of America; a menu of traditional British fare by Blackstone Caterers; wines and spirits generously donated by Campus Fine Wines; stunning floral arrangements created and donated with Wildean inspiration by Jephry Floral Studio; an auction of aesthetically desirable items and experiences; and a 50/50 Raffle - because as Wilde observed, *"When I was young I thought that money was the most important thing in life; now that I am old I know that it is."*

Please consider becoming an individual sponsor of the event; your extra donation above and beyond the ticket price helps to ensure the success of the event when we can only sell a limited number of tickets for capacity reasons.

MANY THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS!

(as of December 6, 2011):

BUSINESSES: Aesthetes (\$1,200): Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP. **Decadents (\$600):** City Kitty Veterinary Care for Cats; hollysmithrugs.com; R-Keough Construction; Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage, Inc.; Taylor Duane Barton & Gilman LLP.; vintagepens.com. **Wits (\$300):** Couture Design Associates; Elad, Inc.; InsureMyTrip.com; Louis Goldman of Morgan Stanley Smith Barney; M&S Rare Books, Inc.; The Peck Building, LLC; Providence Preservation Society; Residential Properties; Jillian Siqueland of Residential Properties; Yankee Travel.

INDIVIDUALS: Decadents (\$600): Alayne Barnicoat and Dale Lesh; Roy and Laura Brady; Stephen and Melanie Coon; Carl and Grace Farmer; Drs. Ethan H. Kisch and Helene Kisch-Pniewski; Thomas and Erika Lamb; Anthony and Jacqueline Marro; Pamelee and Raymond Murphy, Jr.; Stephen and Jenny Schweich; Deming and Jane Sherman; Terry Tullis and Connie Worthington. **Wits (\$300):** Kqantu and Andrew Bent; David Berman; Sheila Hughes; Danielle Kemsley; John and Alison Maxell; Suzanne Scanlan; James and Ann Scott.

FLORAL SPONSOR: Jephry Floral Studio

WINE & SPIRITS SPONSOR: Campus Fine Wines

All sponsorships received by Friday, January 20, 2012, will be acknowledged in the event program book and spring edition of the *Universal Penman*.

REPLY CARD IS ENCLOSED.
PLEASE RESPOND BY JANUARY 20, 2012.



original art by Holly Gaboriault

YOUR INVITATION!

The Board and Staff of the Providence Athenaeum request the pleasure of your company at

Wilde at Heart

a gala celebration of the life, wit, and style of Oscar Wilde

Friday, February 3, 2012 at 7pm
at The Providence Athenaeum
251 Benefit Street

Attire: Flamboyant/creative/colorful/dandy
*"One should either be a work of art,
or wear a work of art."*

Tickets are \$150 per person, and only 135 will be sold.

Please respond by January 20, 2012 –
and remember, tickets sold out early last year,
so you may wish to act soon to ensure your spot!

Proceeds to benefit The Providence Athenaeum

MESSAGE FROM DEMING SHERMAN, BOARD PRESIDENT

To Our Members:

If you have attended any of our Salons this fall, I am sure you have noticed that they are usually full and sometimes overflowing! Consistent with our mission to be an important community resource and “to engage a diverse public in spirited conversation,” we have opened all our Salons to the public, not just some as in years past. This has resulted in many new faces coming through our doors and a 25% increase in the number of new members from that of the same period last fall. It is important to note that while the Athenaeum is a membership library, it also has – and has always had – a public mission. We recognize that sometimes things are a little crowded, and we will address this, but the popularity of the programs is a tribute to Christina’s programming talents as well as a wider community interest in the Athenaeum itself. We will continue to pursue this mission.

In other respects as well, the Athenaeum, under Alison’s leadership, is thriving. Our collections, new acquisitions, and children’s programs are terrific. Maintaining a 170-year-old building is a challenge, but I can report that we were spared and suffered no damage from Hurricane Irene. Over time we will have to invest more in the building, and we are beginning to create a plan to address improvements.

I encourage you to attend the upcoming Gala at the Athenaeum in February. It is one of the more creative events of its kind and is a significant fundraiser for us. Last year was a sellout, so please respond early so you will not be disappointed.

On behalf of our dedicated Board, I thank you for your wonderful support of this worthy institution, and we trust it will continue!

E-BOOKS AT THE ATHENAEUM: AN UPDATE

Mary Anne Golda, Head of Technical Services

The Nook and Kindle we purchased last December have been happily circulating for almost a year now. I have heard both cheers and jeers for the devices. I suspect that those who cheered have bought (or are planning to buy) their own devices, and those who jeered are reassured that e-readers are not for them. If you are undecided and would like to play, you can request a title at the Circulation Desk, specify which device you’d like to try out, and if the title is available in electronic format, we will purchase it for you to borrow (just like we do with print books).

According to a May 2011 Pew Internet Research Report, only 12% of U.S. households own e-readers or tablets, but that percentage had doubled since a prior report six months earlier. The trends are clear. If you would like access to more electronic content we could explore leasing an e-book collection like the public libraries do. Those of you who prefer to curl up in an alcove with a lovely old tome can still do that, too. We are a 19th century library after all – albeit one that spans the centuries.

SPRING FORWARD!

After a short winter’s nap in January we resume our programs and Salon Series on February 10th - look for your Calendar Cards to arrive in early January. First up: designer Matthew Bird returns for a Salon on American industrial design pioneers - and his own re-design of the postage stamps meant to honor them. Matthew’s legendary 2006 Salon “The Histories and Mysteries of Silver” is still a high mark in the memories of many Salon devotees, don’t miss his long-awaited follow up!

We continue the series begun in fall by our two guest salloniers: inventor/entrepreneur Kipp Bradford’s “Making Through the Ages,” sponsored by Michael, Anne, and Amelia Spalter; and Providence Preservation Society Executive Director James Hall’s “Curating the City,” sponsored by KITE Architects.

Returning with his new book, *The Friar of Carcassonne: Revolt Against the Inquisition in the Last Days of the Cathars*, historian Stephen O’Shea illuminates the tortuous power struggles among secular and religious forces in 13th and 14th century Europe. Fast-forwarding a few centuries, Taylor Polites brings us his debut novel *The Rebel Wife*, a Southern Gothic tale turned inside-out.

We’ve also got music from the Providence Singers, Aurea, and the Kingston Chamber Music Festival; art from the galleries of the RISD Museum, the gardens of Southside Community Land Trust, and the waterways of the Urban Pond Procession; choreography and brain science from Everett; plus *Policy and Pinot* from RI Public Radio and much more. Let’s raise a sherry glass to the start of our seventh scintillating season of Salons!

CURTAIN CALL! Another round of applause, please, for the sponsors and supporters whose generosity made our fall program season possible. We are so grateful to Campus Fine Wines; Dr. Joseph A. Chazan; Elad, Inc.; Fontaine, DeCarvalho & Bell, LLP - Attorney Kas DeCarvalho; KITE Architects; Allen Kurzweil and Françoise Dussart; M&S Rare Books, Inc.; The Peck Building, LLC; RI Council for the Humanities; risdworks; Jillian Siqueland of Residential Properties; Michael, Anne, and Amelia Spalter; Sally Strachan; Studio Hop; The Susan Jaffe Tane Foundation; Variable Data Printing; vintagepens.com; and Yankee Travel. Thanks also to our presenting partners, Celebrate Providence 375 Years; Community MusicWorks; the John Russell Bartlett Society; Providence Preservation Society; RI ACLU; RI Center for the Book; and Roger Williams National Memorial.

Please help us show our thanks: when shopping for gifts this holiday season, please think of our sponsors, supporters, and presenting partners first. Whether that special someone would love a great bottle of wine, a rare book, a vintage pen, a gorgeous bracelet, a new house, an addition to an old house, concert tickets, membership to an exciting cultural organization, a trip around the world, or a fine attorney, you can’t find better sources anywhere!

Hours:

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

Holiday Closings

Christmas: closed Saturday 12/24 through Monday 12/26, re-opening Tuesday 12/27 at 9am

New Year’s: closing at 1pm on New Year’s Eve, Saturday 12/31; closed Sunday 1/1 and Monday 1/2, re-opening Tuesday 1/3 at 9am

Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday: closed Monday 1/16; Athenaeum Gala: closed Friday, 2/3, reopening Saturday, 2/4 at noon;

Presidents Day: closed Monday, 2/20; Easter: closed Sunday 4/8

WHY I SUPPORT THE ATHENAEUM

Candy Adriance: Five years ago, when I first became a member of the Athenaeum, I felt as though I was getting away with something. I couldn't believe that for such a small amount of money I could enhance my education, see museum quality, historic objects, have access to an amazing collection of rare and new books and resource materials, AND be invited to uniquely enriching, entertaining programs that were also social gatherings where I always met new, interesting people.

In a way, I had been getting away with something. I began to realize that in order to be a responsible member of a great and historic institution, and be a good citizen, I would have to help to ensure that the Athenaeum could continue its original objective - as stated by Francis Wayland, one of its early supporters, in 1838: "It is to provide the means for the universal diffusion of Knowledge, of knowledge in its most extensive signification among the citizens of Providence."

In order to ensure that the cultural, intellectual, and historic heart and soul of the Athenaeum remain accessible to everyone in Rhode Island (not just Providence), I needed to give more - a lot more.

We all need to be stewards of the great cultural institutions in our state. The reason is simple: if we don't, they will cease to exist. To understand the void that would create, one need only envision Rhode Island without the deeply humanizing influence of the Providence Athenaeum.

Heather and Ronald Florence: We are donors to the Athenaeum because it is the last refuge of real books and genuine discourse in our community. In an era when even the New York Public Library is discussing removing the books from its reading rooms and converting them to performance spaces, the Athenaeum treasures the written word, cherishes an atmosphere of books on the shelves and comfortable places to settle with a book, and offers a program of forums focused on open and civil discourse.

Jenny Schweich: When I moved to Providence two years ago, I walked into the Athenaeum and discovered not only a treasure house of books, but a delightful hive of cultural activity. From the evening Salons to the children's events, the Athenaeum fosters an atmosphere of ongoing learning and growth for the entire family. For me, the Athenaeum upholds what is increasingly important in the blur of the Information Age -- a defined locus where thought and culture are actively nurtured.

Ginger and John Harkey: We are donors to the Athenaeum because we want to help keep this exquisite building and its programs available to the community for generations to come.

Jillian Siqueland: Why do I support the Athenaeum? Let me count the ways. She is a library of course but oh! so much more: a welcoming hub of many friends, the Salons that intrigue the mind, the other occasions to celebrate authors and lovers of books, the exquisite displays in the rare book section, the history of the building alone, the ambiance therein, and that wonderful old book smell. The Athenaeum is a so special a part of my life.

SAVE THE DATE!

The Athenaeum Annual Meeting
will be held on Sunday, March 4th at 3pm.

AFFIRM YOUR BELIEF

IN ALL THAT THE ATHENAEUM STANDS FOR!

As we approach December 31st and you consider your charitable giving plans for the end of the year, we ask you to join Candy, Heather and Ronald, Jenny, Ginger and John, and Jillian by making a contribution of any amount in recognition of the knowledge and stimulation that this unique library and cultural center gives not just to you personally, but those in the wider community of Providence and Rhode Island.

Ways to give:

- Mail (via the enclosed gift envelope)
- Telephone (call Danielle Kemsley at 401-421-6970 x15)
- Online (providenceathenaeum.org/donate/donate.html)

Thank you so much for your generosity and we hope to see you at our donor appreciation lunch in the New Year!

FROM THE REFERENCE DESK...

Carol Tatian, Reference Librarian

There is wonderful news from JSTOR, the electronic database of full-text journal articles. The following information was published this past October. We don't subscribe to this database because of the cost, and the idea that they would actually make out-of-copyright articles free to everyone warms my heart.

Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Now Free to Anyone in the World

The JSTOR journal archive is making nearly 500,000 public domain journal articles from more than 200 journals, about six percent of JSTOR's total content, freely available for use by "anyone, without registration and regardless of institution affiliation."

The material, entitled Early Journal Content, will be rolled out in batches beginning September 2011. It includes content published in the United States before 1923 and international material published before 1870, which ensures that all the content is firmly in the public domain. JSTOR said that the move was a "first step in a larger effort to provide more access options" to JSTOR content for independent scholars and others unaffiliated with universities.

On the JSTOR website, about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content, use live links to access a quick video tutorial, browse a list of available content by discipline or by title, and read their Frequently Asked Questions.



GIVE THE GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP: ALWAYS THE PERFECT SIZE, ALWAYS IN SEASON!

What is the ideal holiday gift for a book lover, a family with small children, a new retiree, or a just-moved-in neighbor? Why, Athenaeum membership, of course! For the price of just \$60, a six-month Introductory Membership gives the recipient and family access to the Athenaeum's comprehensive collections of books - from rare to just-published, as well as periodicals, movies, music, books on tape, and programs for ALL ages plus, printed publications and discounted admission to ticketed events. We will happily supply a gift packet with handmade card for your recipients, and can take care of mailing, too, if you'd like - just contact Danielle Kemsley, Director of Member Services and Development, to order your gift memberships!

Wilde at Heart

THANKS TO OUR GALA COMMITTEE: Julie Andrews, Kqantu Bent (Chair), Stephen Coon, Rhoda Flaxman, Holly Gaboriault, Sheila Hughes, Thom Jones, Helene Kisch-Pniewski, Allen Kurzweil, Cathy Lund, Pamelee Murphy, Sophie Philbrick, Merle Mainelli Poulton, and Jillian Siqueland.

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 12 through February 3 (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.

EXHIBITIONS

Kate Wodehouse, Collections Librarian

Gazing at Lilies: Oscar Wilde's American Lecture Tour

February 3 – April 30, 2012

Exhibition at the Athenaeum

"Perhaps, after all, America never has been discovered. I myself would say that it had merely been detected." – Oscar Wilde

Did you know that Oscar Wilde made star appearances in Providence, Pawtucket, North Attleboro, and Newport? In 1882 he traveled across America dressed in knee breeches, velvet jacket, floppy tie, and a "wide-awake" hat as he lectured on good taste and the mores of the Aesthetic Movement. He was widely ridiculed as the icon of the Aesthetes in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* and was a popular target for journalists and cartoonists. *Gazing at Lilies*, the companion exhibit to our 2012 gala event, *Wilde at Heart*, will explore the Aesthetic movement through Oscar Wilde's tour of America. We are grateful to our colleagues at the RI Historical Society, the Newport Historical Society, and the John Hay Library at Brown University for their generous loans of special items for the exhibit.

Dard Hunter & the Roycroft Print Shop

January 13 – March 30, 2012

Exhibition at the Fleet Library at RISD

The Providence Athenaeum's Roycroft Collection of books and periodicals was generously donated to the library several years ago by poet and Athenaeum Board member Brett Rutherford. The collection contains approximately 300 volumes, with the bulk of the material printed between 1895 and 1925. The items in the collection were hand-printed, often on handmade papers, at the Roycroft Print Shop in East Aurora, NY. The Roycroft community was founded by Elbert Hubbard in 1895 and took its inspiration from William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement. Besides running the print shop, the Roycrofters, as they were known, produced furniture, copper and iron works, leather work, and home furnishings. The collection includes early works of the noted paper historian, designer, and printer Dard Hunter and the illustrator W.W. Denslow, who is best remembered today for his illustrations for the *Wizard of Oz* books. RISD Librarian Robert Garzillo has been cataloging the Athenaeum's Roycroft collection during a sabbatical from the library and will be curating selected works for his exhibition,

Dard Hunter & the Roycroft Print Shop, which will be on view at the Fleet Library at RISD from January 13 to March 30, 2012. On Wednesday, March 14 at 6PM print historian Walker Rumble will give a free talk on the Roycrofters at the Fleet Library at RISD.



Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 1882



Theodora and Justinian by Elbert & Alice Hubbard. New York: Roycrofters, 1906. Designed by Dard Hunter.

The Haven

by C.B. (with apologies to Edgar Allan Poe)

Here upon a hill not dreary, a well-lit beacon for the weary,
Filled with many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
Is a library made for browsing by the day, and for night carousing,
Made for every man or woman, boy or girl who would explore
History, arts, ideas, fiction, science, philosophy, math, and more –
All of this, just open the door.

Ah, distinctly please remember, even in the bleak December,
When each separate day is shorter even than the one before,
Still inside the lights are burning, that eager minds might still be learning,
Borrowing books on every topic known in mankind's limitless store,
Books of new and books of old, books inviting all to pore.
Quoth Athena, "Evermore?"

Think as well of rooms well-lighted, filled with people all excited,
Eating scones and drinking sherry, generally making merry,
All while waiting for a speaker who will thrill them to the core.
Or a room of children joyous, praising Lindsay in a chorus,
Petting visiting volls and rabbits, learning wondrous animal lore.
Quoth Athena, "Evermore?"

Does the Circ Desk's gentle counsel steer you in the right direction?
Does the Reference Desk know just exactly what you're looking for?
Are there books on tape to make the best of driving to vacation?
Can you count on Kate to find a volume loved in days of yore?
Do you think of programs for the spring and wonder what's in store?
For now, yes – but evermore?

Help us keep the lights on nightly, keep curiosity burning brightly.
Help us with your year-end gift to keep up all of this and more.
Keep the building standing steady, keep the coffers at the ready,
Help us fund the books and programs that comprise our very core.
Make your offering to Pallas, perched just below the mezzanine floor,
Promise her, "Forevermore!"

By your gift, never fleeting, so her bust will still be sitting,
On the plinth above the Circ Desk, just below the mezzanine floor.
Watching over child and elder, guest and member, first-time visitor,
Watching every face light up as all these stream in through the door,
To get their books and make their gifts, truly now her heart does soar.
Quoth Athena, "Hear me roar!"

BOOK GROUPS UPDATE (AVEC PROUST, BIEN SUR)

We've had lots of great suggestions for future book groups: Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Henry James, Tolstoy, the ancient Greeks and especially Homer, selections from the Bible... if you are interested in joining a reading group, let us know which of these appeal to you – or send another suggestion entirely. We will tally the responses to help us make our plans.

In May the members of our current Proust Reading Group, which formed in fall of 2009, will turn the final page of *Remembrance of Things Past*, and in fall of 2012 we will start another group for first-time readers. If you've ever wanted to read Proust, or maybe have even gotten part way through the first volume only to be overwhelmed by the effort, this is the group for you. It is not a class, but rather a support and appreciation group. Please contact Christina Bevilacqua with any questions or to sign up!

NEW PARKING RULES ADVISORY! Please be advised that the parking hours and regulations for the south side of College Street alongside the Athenaeum have changed. The signs there used to simply advise that there was no parking from 8am to 6pm on weekdays; everyone parked there on weekends with no problem. However, the signs now list those same hours but also say "Tow Zone" – and a staff member recently received a \$100 ticket for parking there on a Saturday morning. We are working to clarify the parking regulations for the weekend days, but until further notice, it is advisable to think twice before parking there – you could be taking a very expensive chance!

Also, whether visiting the library for books or to attend a program, please remember that the ONLY spaces available to Athenaeum members in our parking lot are the first five as you enter. All the others are assigned to our neighbors on Athenaeum Row, so please help us stay in their good graces by only parking in the spaces allotted to the Athenaeum.



THE OWLET

News from
The Children's Library
WINTER 2011 - 2012

Now is the time when the Children's Library welcomes you to enjoy a cozy haven where you and your children can while away a wintry afternoon with a book. However, if reading is not your only pursuit, we also have a flurry of wonderful programs on hand! Such as.....

Miss Renee's lively Bear Cubs Story and Activity Time For two to five year olds on Saturday mornings. This is a "must do" on a chilly morning!

Family Movie Night! If you are a film buff, join us for pizza and a movie at our monthly Family Movie Night.

Hot Cocoa and Stories Be on the lookout for the occasional story hour for older children on Saturday afternoons, complete with cocoa, cookies, and an art activity to follow.



There will be special visitors and other activities as well; here are some programs to look forward to in the coming months!

12/17 at 2PM: Illustrator Cathren Housley will share a reading of her most recently illustrated children's book, *The Christmas Cats*, by Nancy K. Wallace. Ms. Housley will also introduce us to her process when illustrating a book, and best of all, you will be able to make your own book to keep or give as a holiday gift! More info at: cathrenhousley.com

12/28 at 3:30PM: Clare Vadeboncoeur and Sarah Hemenway will perform "Zip and Zap and the Mysterious Box," a lively interactive storytelling adventure for young children. More info at: goodheartpro.com

1/11 at 3PM: "In the Snow: Who's Been There?" a special story hour with The Audubon Society of RI and a furry or feathered friend as well! More info at: asri.org

2/16 - 2/21: Don't miss the Third Annual Providence Children's Film Festival! See the lineup at providencechildrensfilmfestival.org.

3/10 at 10AM: Celtic musician Mary King will present "Jack and the Animals," a participatory musical event for children.

For specific details regarding these programs and future programs please check our website providenceathenaeum.org or call Lindsay Shaw at 421-6970.

Nancy, Renee, and Lindsay thank you all for your kind support of the Children's Library and wish you the very best for the holiday season and the year to come.

