



# EX LIBRIS

The Newsletter of the American Library in Paris  
May 2007

## Annual General Meeting of the Library Tuesday 19 June 19h30—21h00

All members are welcome

*Please check the Library website  
for updates on the meeting*

## Coming Wednesdays in June

You may have heard the **Buddy DiCollette Band** playing on the Petit Pont St Louis or on market streets such as rue Mouffetard. On **Wednesday 6 June** the band will charge the ALP reading room with its lively interpretations of blues, swing, gospel and American Songbook tunes. Please join us for this musical evening at 19h30.

John Updike once cited **Ann Beattie's** fiction for its "restless immersion in the stoic bewilderment of a generation without a cause." More than 30 years after her sensational debut in *The New Yorker* and the publication of *Chilly Scenes of Winter*, with seventeen novels and short-story collections now in print, Beattie will talk about writing and read from her work at the American Library on **Wednesday 13 June**.



**Alice Kaplan** won a place in the hearts of Francophiles with her celebrated memoir *French Lessons*. Since then the Duke University professor and part-time Paris resident has written a notable book, *The Collaborator*, about the postwar trial of a Vichyite intellectual. At the Library on **Wednesday 20 June** she will discuss her new book, *The Interpreter*, about the crimes and US Army court-martials of two black GIs in Brittany at the end of World War II, and the French novelist drafted to interpret the proceedings.



Photo by Emmy Slatni

**All about kids** Turn to page 4 for previews of coming attractions: the summer reading club ... an introduction to cheerleading ... 1001 Nights... story hours for the youngest children ... improvisational storytelling ... classic fairy tales ... and the return of the teen acting workshop.

## A new director for the ALP

I am pleased to announce that Charles Trueheart joined us in March to assume the direction of the Library until the autumn.

Charlie brings to this position a long career in journalism, including 15 years at *The Washington Post*, and a decade of volunteer service to another distinguished institution in Paris, the American Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. He writes regularly for magazines such as *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The American Scholar*, often on literary topics. You may read more about him—and by him—by visiting the Library website.

Charlie has agreed to serve as director during the coming months as the library's Search Committee begins its interviews of all candidates for the position.

**Charmaine Donnelly**

*Chairman of the Board of Trustees*

## LIBRARY CLOSINGS

Saturday 14 July

Wednesday 15 August

August hours:

Tuesday-Friday 12h00-18h00

Saturday 10h00-14h00

## What a deal!

### The First Saturday Sale

Don't miss out on this popular event — the best of our duplicates and books bidding farewell to the stacks. Most books are in very good condition at an unbeatable price — one euro for paperbacks, two euros for hardbacks. Proceeds from these sales permit us to buy more new books for our permanent collection.

For the best selection, come early on the first Saturday of the month:  
**June 2, July 7, August 4....**

## John Gunther Dean collection update

The John Gunther Dean diplomatic archives, established at the Library last year with donations from friends and admirers of the retired U.S. ambassador and longtime Paris resident, has moved to a permanent home in Atlanta at the Carter Center.

There, thanks to oral histories of hundreds of US diplomats, scholars are able to research key periods and places in late 20th-century history. Over the course of his distinguished career Ambassador Dean served in Vietnam, Cambodia, Lebanon, Thailand, India, Togo, Mali, Denmark and France.

## The American Library in Paris

10, rue du General Camou

75007 Paris France

01 5359 1260

[www.americanlibraryinparis.org](http://www.americanlibraryinparis.org)

# The man who loves books

Last year the Library catalogued and shelved more than 9,000 new books. Many of these were purchased from the book budget, of course, ensuring that the most recently published books—the most enlightening, the most important for research, and even the most talked about and entertaining—were available for our readers.

Just as important however, because official book budgets are never large enough, are the books donated to us, and last year, the Library was grateful to accept some 30,000 such books. Many of them were donated by literary agents, by the estates of people who wanted the Library to have their collections, or by members and others who have read a book, perhaps, and wanted to share it.

Most of these donated books were sorted through for determination by the Library staff. What condition were the books in, were they duplicates, and where should they wind up? In general, about one-third of donated books are appropriate for us and are catalogued and shelved. Others that for one reason or another we can't use are offered at our "first Saturday of the month sale," and then if not sold are displayed on the "for sale" carts that you'll see at the front of the Library when you come in. And, fortunately, only a very few are not for us.



Photo by Emmy Slatni

The staff member responsible for all Collection Development is Simon Gallo, who has worked for the Library for more than 30 years. You've probably seen him sitting at the front desk, answering questions and helping people to find books. But you probably don't know much about him. From his fluent French and English, you might not know that he's Italian, from near Turin. Or that he's had connections with libraries since he was a nine-year-old schoolboy, assigned to work in the school library, a plum assignment for outstanding students. Now, all these years later, our library is fortunate to draw on his experience, for it is Simon who selects, orders, and catalogues our books, and he knows just about every book we have.

Simon is a patient sort, as he looks through the books when they arrive, determines their fate, tapes the call numbers on the spine, and then routes them to staff and volunteers to make sure they're shelved in the right place. You can find out about these books on the ALP's website under "Recommended Reading."

So, thanks to Simon for all his hard work—and primarily for his utter love of and devotion to books. And thanks to the public kind enough to donate their books, euros, and dollars to the Library to make sure our collection is *au courant*.

**Fran Gendlin**

Coming to the Library this autumn: **Dana Thomas**, author of "De Luxe: How Luxury Lost its Luster," a new expose of the French fashion industry ... **Charles Robertson**, author of a forthcoming book on the secret American plan to govern France after World War II ... **Cullen Murphy**, author of "Are We Rome? The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America" ... and more.

## The staff recommends

**Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close.** Jonathan Safran Foer. One of the first novels to deal with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. What I especially liked about this book is its innovativeness. The author uses type settings, spaces and even blank pages to give the book a visual dimension beyond the prose narrative. The photographs one narrator takes appear in the book as if inserted into a diary, for example.

*Andrea Delumeau*

**Dry Manhattan.** Michael A. Lerner. A narrative history of the Prohibition Era in New York City, and a remarkable account of how an issue captured progressive public support sufficient to generate a constitutional amendment, then lost favor within a decade as Prohibition turned most of U.S. society into criminals.

*Charles Trueheart*

**Our Girl.** Christy Bennett. A loose biography and romantic first novel dedicated to Bennett's grandparents whose enduring love blossomed over great distances during World War II. Includes the couple's historic photographs and love letters. Dedication: "May the spirit of your generation live forever."

*Emmy Slatni*

**Very Strange Bedfellows.** Jules Witcover. How the political marriage of President Richard Nixon and Vice President Spiro Agnew turned into a constitutional nightmare when the unraveling of the Watergate scandal coincided with revelations that Agnew was on the take.

*Charles Trueheart*

**April in Paris.** Michael Wallner. A brisk and thoughtful novel about a young German soldier serving as a translator in Nazi-occupied Paris who decides to lead a double life as a Frenchman named Antoine, switching identities in pursuit of a comely Parisienne and in flight from discovery by German superiors and French resistants alike.

*Charles Trueheart*

## The virtual book

According to Microsoft founder Bill Gates, in a May 8 speech in Seattle, "Reading is going to go completely on-line. We believe that as we get the smaller form factor, the screen has gotten good enough. Why is reading on-line better? It's up to date, you can navigate, you can follow links. ... In fact the only drawbacks of the digital form are the things associated with the device: how big is it, how heavy is it, how many hours of power does it have, how much do I have to spend to buy it? But those are things that once you achieve that threshold, in terms of the convenience and the cost, then you see a dramatic change in behavior. Today, for people who read newspapers and magazines, even the most avid PC user probably still does quite a bit of reading on print. As the device moves down in size and simplicity, that will change, and so somewhere in the next five-year period we'll hit that transition point, and things will be even more dramatic than they are today."

## R.I.P.

Kurt Vonnegut, whose darkly antic novels of the 1960s and 1970s captured the zeitgeist of an era and the hearts of a generation, died in New York City April 11.



He was 84. Never has a phrase he coined, a mantra from the times, been so poignant and apt: *So it goes*.

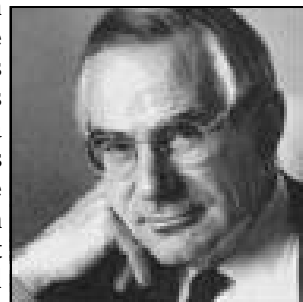
The catalog of the American Library in Paris lists 25 works by Vonnegut, including his most famous novels, **Slaughterhouse-Five**, **Cat's Cradle**, and

**God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater**, and several recordings of the author reading and speaking.

Ω

David Halberstam died in an automobile accident April 23, leaving behind two dozen books ranging from the war in Vietnam to the '64 baseball World Series. Halberstam made his name as a young New York

Times correspondent in Saigon who challenged the Kennedy administration's policies in Vietnam. His book **The Making of a Quagmire** and his sprawling 1972 study of the generation of Vietnam policymakers, **The Best and the Brightest**, added two phrases to the lexicon



that are still very much in use forty years later.

Subsequently Halberstam's passions led to books on many other subjects, including the American media establishment (**The Powers That Be**), the U.S. automobile industry (**The Reckoning**), the civil rights movement (**The Children**), the Korean War (**The Coldest Winter**), **The Fifties**, the Clinton administration (**War in a Time of Peace**). He also wrote several books about baseball and basketball.

Ω

Janet McDonald, a young adult author who lived in Paris and a friend to the Library, died of cancer here April 11. She was 53. A child of the projects in Brooklyn, New York, McDonald went on to earn degrees in French literature from Vassar, journalism from Columbia, and law from New York University. Her memoir **Project Girl** (1999) and her six YA novels won her critical acclaim and a wide following.



Children's librarian Helen Stathopoulos recalls a "fabulous author's visit" McDonald paid to the Library just last December — "she was an intelligent, hilarious, totally unpretentious class act. She will be missed." Her last book, **Off-Color**, will be out in the fall.

# Kids



## Join the Summer Reading Club

The Summer Reading Club is a great way to keep reading throughout the summer months. Sign up as early as the first week of June for your special Club booklet. Then track your reading progress, collecting stickers for each book you read.

All participants are invited to join us at our end-of-summer Reading Club Party in September to celebrate with snacks, games and a chance to win some wonderful prizes. Booklets will be available in early June.

**Saturday 23 June 15h00-16h00 Ages 5+**



**MOTHER  
GOOSE  
LAP SIT  
(Ages 1-3)  
Thursdays**

**10h30-  
11h00  
31 May  
7 June  
28 June**

## ***We've got the spirit!***

An introduction to the world of cheerleading. Shannon Boisson will share her expertise and lead us in chanting, clapping, stomping, and inspiring fun.

Come dressed and ready to participate! Boys welcome too!

**Saturday 9 June  
15h00-16h00 Ages 8 to 12**

## ***Blood, guts, and facts***

**Creative nonfiction for young readers**

This workshop for adults, led by author Whitney Stewart, explores the essential elements of nonfiction writing for children. Participants may submit a page of nonfiction work for feedback. Please register by picking up a form at the Library or visiting the website of the sponsor, SCBWI France — [www.kidbookpros.com](http://www.kidbookpros.com) — under "Events."

**Thursday 21 June 19h00-21h00**

**Back by popular demand....**

## ***Teen Acting Workshop***

More than thirty teen superstars participated in our very cool method acting workshop in January. The Library is thrilled to welcome back acting coaches Alexa Rutherford and Nick Millett from the Method Acting Center in Paris for another interactive workshop on modern, realist acting. Beginners welcome!

**Saturday 26 May 19h00-21h00 Age 12+**

## **Once upon a time . . .**

Rumpelstiltskin, Rapunzel, Hansel and Gretel... Add the intricate paintings of Paul O. Zelinsky and you have an award-winning set of children's books to cherish. Join us for this evocative story hour and discussion.

**Saturday 26 May 15h00-16h00 Ages 6 to 12**

*Sign up at the front desk or by phone 01 5359 1260*

## **1001 Nights**

*Jamileh Talebizadeh*

*of the Sorbonne takes us to the world of  
djinnis, merchants and magic.*

**Saturday 2 June  
15h00-16h00 Ages 8-12**

## **Wednesday Story Hour**

**10h00-11h30 14h30-15h00**

**Ages 3-5 Drop in!**

**Coming up: Dogs...  
Cats....Insects....Summer!**

*And more! For information  
about programs for children  
and young people, please visit  
[www.americanlibraryinparis.org](http://www.americanlibraryinparis.org)*

## **Volunteers: Could you be one of them?**

Behind our circulation, reference and program staff are volunteers drawn from our membership who ensure the full range of library services and play a key role in making the American Library in Paris both affordable and a true community enterprise.

What needs doing? Helping circulation staff members check books in and out, welcoming people at the entrance to the library, shelving returned books, assisting in organizing evening author events, assisting the children's librarian.

Who makes a good volunteer? Someone who loves the printed word and the spirit of a library. Someone who is conscientious about details, responsive to colleagues, comfortable with strangers, and reliable about schedules. Someone who wants to be in a closer relationship with one of Paris's most interesting English-language villages — although a knowledge of French always helps.

We need you. Please speak to any staff member about becoming a volunteer, or contact the Library director, Charles Trueheart, at [trueheart@americanlibraryinparis.org](mailto:trueheart@americanlibraryinparis.org) or 01 5359 1263.