



# EX LIBRIS

The Newsletter of the American Library in Paris  
December 2007

## Wednesday evenings are for authors

• **France and the Founding Fathers:** The fall season of evenings with authors ends **Wednesday 5 December** with a presentation on the French origins of and contributions to the American experiment. The speakers are two distinguished local writers — and Library members — who have each published new books: James R. Gaines, author of “For Liberty and Glory: Washington, Lafayette, and Their Revolutions,” and Michael Oreskes, co-author of “The Genius of America: How the Constitution Saved Our Country — and Why it Can Again.” Gaines, a former editor of *Time*, *Life* and *People*, is the author of books on Glenn Gould, the Algonquin Round Table, and Bach and Frederick the Great. Oreskes is the executive editor of the *International Herald Tribune*.

• **GI Joe and Mademoiselle:** The 2008 season begins on **Wednesday 9 January** with a talk by historian Hilary Kaiser, whose “French War Brides in America: An Oral History” has just appeared in English. In her book, Kaiser follows the tales of war brides from World War I and World War II, the men who wooed and wed them, and their often difficult adjustment to new lives in the United States.

• **The Zeitgeist in Retrospect:** Alan Riding, the Paris-based European cultural correspondent of the *New York Times* since 1995, has recently retired from the post. He will join us on **Wednesday 16 January** for a look back at memorable moments, pivotal figures and discernible trends in a talk entitled “Hearts and Minds: A Reporter’s Journey Through the Arts.” Riding is the co-author of recent books on opera and Shakespeare and author of the critically-acclaimed book on Mexico, “Distant Neighbors.”

• **Stranger in a Strange Land:** On **Wednesday 23 January** the Library is honored to host one of the past year’s literary sensations in the United States — 29-year-old Dinaw Mengestu, the Ethiopian-American author of “The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears.” The novel tells the story of an Ethiopian immigrant in Washington who, in *Esquire* magazine’s précis, “spends his days behind the counter of his failing deli trying to figure out how America works and how he can make it work for him. Instead of caring about wealth or standard status symbols like owning a home, he worries instead about achieving a different American Dream -- making this fickle country feel like home.” The book is just out in French as “Les Belles Choses Que Porte Le Ciel.”

All these Wednesday events begin at 19h30 and are followed by refreshments and book signing by the authors. Bring a friend!



## HOLIDAY PARTY!

*Saturday 8 December*  
*16h00-18h00*

*Holiday craft-making. Christmas and Hannukah stories. Santa Claus with bags of books. Carol-singing. Food and drink.*

Please plan to join us for this popular annual event. Children’s librarian Helen Stathopoulos and a cast of enthusiastic volunteers, including Girl Scouts, are planning a memorable event you won’t want to miss.

The holiday party takes place this year at the American Cathedral in Paris, 23, avenue George V in the 8ème arrondissement, just across the Alma bridge from the Library. Metro: Alma-Marceau or George V.

Space is limited, so please reserve now by mailing a check to the American Library in Paris: adults 20€ children 10€ Please provide your name, address, telephone, email address, and the names and ages of each child attending — so that Santa’s helpers can prepare the gift books. Reservations are a must.

For more information or to check whether space remains, please check the website, or send a message to [communications@americanlibraryinparis.org](mailto:communications@americanlibraryinparis.org) or call Catherine at 06 8949 8240.

### Holiday hours

The Library will be closed **Tuesday 25 December, Wednesday 26 December, and Tuesday 1 January**. The Library will close one hour early, at 18h00, on **Saturday 29 December**.

## Charge it!

Good news for the membership: Beginning in January, if not sooner, you will be able to join the Library or renew your membership by credit card (CB, Visa or Mastercard). You will also be able to pay fines and photocopying fees and make used-book purchases by credit card (8€ minimum). Please inquire at the front desk for details.



## Are you registered to vote?

American voters overseas must register in their home states in order to vote in primaries and the general election in 2008. As a service to Library members who are U.S. citizens — approximately one third of our membership — personnel from the American Embassy in Paris will be opening an information booth in the Library with state-by-state laws, deadlines, and contact numbers and addresses as well as universal registration forms. The booth will be open throughout December, and Embassy personnel will be on hand from 17h00 to 19h30 on **Wednesday 5 December** to answer questions.

## Join a Library focus group

If you've ever wanted to participate in a focus group, or if you have things to say about your library, here is your chance.

TBWA, the marketing firm currently undertaking a wide-ranging study of the Library in preparation for a membership drive and fundraising campaign, will be conducting six focus groups on two successive Mondays in December. Six to eight people per group will meet with TBWA focus group leaders to discuss their opinions of and ideas about the library.



The schedule of sessions is below. If you would like to participate, write to [communications@americanlibraryinparis.org](mailto:communications@americanlibraryinparis.org) with your coordinates and the group you wish to join, or call 01 5363 1267 and leave a message with that information. You may also sign up at the front desk of the Library.

### Monday 3 December

10h00-11h30—Family membership holders  
12h30-14h00—Student membership holders  
17h00-18h30— Individual membership holders

### Monday 10 December

10h00-11h30 - Individual membership holders  
12h30-14h00 - Family membership holders  
17h00-18h30— Student membership holders.

We hope you will want to volunteer for this important exercise.

## Becoming a Trustee

The American Library in Paris welcomes at all times recommendations for its pool of candidates to its Board of Trustees.

If you would like the Board's nominating committee to consider a person, please send his or her name, pertinent information, and contact details to the Library, addressed to the chairman of the nominating committee, Sarah de Lencquesaing.

All recommendations are treated confidentially. The nominating committee looks forward to hearing from you.

## A grant and a bequest

The American Library in Paris is pleased to report two recent major gifts.

One is a special U.S. government grant for the purchase of American books, arranged through the good offices of the Honorable Craig Stapleton, the United States Ambassador to France.

The other is a bequest from the estate of Reine Van Dyk Ackerman, a longtime Paris resident and Library member, who died last year.

The Library is honored by these acts of generosity and grateful for the commitment and confidence of all its members and supporters.

## The American Library in Paris

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*Ex Libris is published four times a year, in March, June, September and December.*

## 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 beginning at 10h00 — **1 December, 5 January, 2 February, 1 March.**

# R.I.P.

**Grace Paley**, who died in August at 84, was best known for her 1974 novel “Enormous Changes at the Last Minute” and other works that captured the lives of ordinary mothers and wives, women whose voices tended to resonate with the author’s Jewish upbringing in New York City. In its obituary, *The New York Times* noted that Paley “focused especially on single mothers, whose days were an exquisite mix of sexual yearning and pulverizing fatigue. In a sense, her work was about what happened to the women that Roth and Bellow and Malamud’s men had loved and left behind.” The other two Paley novels are “The Little Disturbances of Man” (1959) and “Later the Same Day” (1985). Her “Collected Stories” (1994) was a finalist for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, and was reissued this year. Among her honors, Paley served as New York’s first official state author and as poet laureate of Vermont. Paley also cut a swath throughout her mature life as a political activist — as a visitor to Hanoi during the Vietnam War, as an anti-nuclear agitator, and as a tireless leafletter for progressive causes in Greenwich Village.



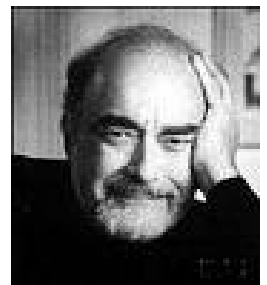
**Norman Mailer**, who died November 10 at 84, was one of the literary titans of his generation almost from the moment he published his first novel, “The Naked and the Dead,” in 1948 — when he was a student on the GI Bill in Paris. Mailer was a prodigious (and uneven) writer of novels late into his life, but also wrote essays (“The White Negro”) and biographies (“Marilyn”) and was a pioneer of the kind of non-fiction that became associated with the New Journalism, notably in his Vietnam-era book ‘The Armies of the Night’ and his book on the criminal Gary Gilmore, “The Executioner’s Song,” both of which won him Pulitzer Prizes. He was as well known for his wild personal life — six marriages, nine children, a run for the

New York City mayoralty, drink, drugs, fights in bars, the near-fatal stabbing of his second wife, and near-fisticuffs on television, memorably with Gore Vidal and Germaine Greer. Charles McGrath, in his obituary in the *New York Times*, wrote that Mailer “belonged to the old literary school that regarded novel writing as a heroic enterprise undertaken by heroic characters with egos to match. He was the most transparently ambitious writer of his era, seeing himself in competition not just with his contemporaries but with the likes of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. He was also the least shy and risk-averse of writers. ... His big ears, barrel chest, striking blue eyes and helmet of seemingly electrified hair — jet black at first and ultimately snow white — made him instantly recognizable, a celebrity long before most authors were lured out into the limelight.”



**Madeleine L'Engle**, who died in September at 88, was a prolific American writer best known for her young adult fiction, particularly the Newbery Medal-winning “A Wrinkle in Time” and its sequels “A Wind in the Door,” “A Swiftly Tilting Planet,” and “Many Waters.” Born to privilege in New York City and raised, among other places, in the French Alps, L'Engle wrote more than sixty books, and her interests ranged widely, from science to faith to art. She mixed genres too, drawing on the events of her own life and her family heritage in writing her novels, while inventing people, places and events in her published journals. L'Engle also had a long association with the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, where she was for many years the librarian.

**Ira Levin**, who was 78 years old when he died November 12, was once called “the finest hack writer in America.” Levin produced ingeniously plotted novels of horror and suspense whose movie incarnations three times became classics: “The Stepford Wives,” “The Boys from Brazil,” and “Rosemary’s Baby.” Many critics believed his best novel was his first, written when he was 22; “A Kiss Before Dying” (1953) is the story of a college student who murders his pregnant girlfriend. “The brilliance of the book,” wrote the *Daily Telegraph* in its obituary, “lies in its structure. The lengthy opening section, narrated from the standpoint of the killer, establishes him as a character both credible and disturbingly sympathetic.”



# Kids

Saturday 1 December

## Roald Dahl, big and small

Join the librarian for a reading of two beloved Roald Dahl stories, featuring an enormous crocodile and a band of tiny forest dwellers...

14h00-15h00 For children ages 6-12

Saturday 8 December

## Holiday party!

This year at the American Cathedral, y'all. See front page of this newsletter for details.

Saturday 15 December

## Dreaming of snow

A new season is in the air...will we get any snow in Paris this year? Join the children's librarian to contemplate winter and snow in fact and fiction. Then use your artistic talents to help us decorate the children's room for this new, snowy season.

15h00-16h00 For children ages 6-12.

Saturday 22 December

## How the Grinch Stole Christmas

Before heading off to holiday celebrations, join us in the children's room to watch the classic animated holiday film of Dr. Seuss's beloved book.

1500-16h00 For children ages 6-12

*(No children's programs between Christmas and New Year's Day. Have a super holiday.)*

Saturday 5 January

## The books of Tomie DePaola

A reading of these modern children's classics written and illustrated by Tomie dePaola. Meet or rediscover Strega Nona, Big Anthony, Jamie O'Rourke, and more.

15h00-16h00 For children ages 6-12

Saturday 12 January

## We Love Amelia Bedelia!

Join us for stories, stickers, and activities about the fumbling, kind-hearted, overly-literal children's book character, Amelia Bedelia. What kind of trouble will she get into next?

15h00-16h00 For children ages 6-12



## *The Nutcracker in a nutshell*

The children's department is thrilled to welcome back Brooke Desnoës, director of the Académie Américaine de Danse à Paris, to present a children's dance workshop called "The Nutcracker in a Nutshell." Learn more about the history of this famous ballet, and enjoy a performance by the Academie's talented young dancers. Join us in the Library's main reading room for this early evening event: the workshop is sure to be a hit!

**Tuesday 4 December 17h30-19h00**

For children ages 5 years and older. Parents welcome.

## Teen workshops

### 'Acting' Up Close

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. Get a sense of how your favorite actors move, scare, or thrill you. And learn what it takes to do the same. Ages 12 and up — and beginners welcome.

**Saturday 15 December 19h00-20h30**

### Express yourself!

Join us for an intimate evening of creative writing with professional writer, editor and teacher Janet Charles. Come ready to read, write and express yourself. For young adults 12 and up. Beginning writers welcome.

**Saturday 19 January 19h00-20h30**

*Teens: Looking for internships or volunteer opportunities? Want to be added to the mailing list? Please send your ideas to Helen Stathopoulos at [hstath@americanlibraryinparis.org](mailto:hstath@americanlibraryinparis.org), or drop by the Library and chat.*

**And always.....** Mother Goose Lap Sit for ages 1-3. Thursdays 10h30-11h00 Drop in sessions: No sign-up needed. Songs, stories and rhymes. Toddlers must have a lap to sit on! December 6 and 20, January 3 and 31. .... **Wednesday Story Hour** for ages 3-5. 10h30-11h30 and 14h30-15h30. All year long.