



EX LIBRIS

The Newsletter of the American Library in Paris

March 2008

Feedback from the membership: The findings

More than 400 members of the American Library participated in independent marketing research about the Library during December and January by taking a two-page survey, on line or on paper, or by volunteering to join an intensive focus group.

The survey found broad levels of satisfaction with the Library's collections, facilities, and service, while the focus groups tended to reflect a strong demand for improvements and renewal.

The membership analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, was recently submitted to the board of trus-

tees by TBWA Ressources/Nonprofit, the marketing and fundraising firm retained last year with a portion of the funds from a special gift to the Library. TBWA also worked with board members and other Library "stakeholders" on developing an important fundraising tool: the "case for support" the Library can take to potential donors – including members.

Participation in the survey was above the norm in such exercises, according to TBWA – there were 411 respondents, most of them members. Analysis of a separate "non-members" survey, conducted by poll-takers at selected public locations in

Paris – English-language bookstores and universities, for example – is ongoing.

The survey was a snapshot of the Library population, but not a scientific one. That is, the survey-takers may not necessarily reflect the demographics, habits or views of the actual population of the membership. But the statistics yielded by the responses are worth noting.

Almost half of the respondents were over the age of 50. Almost 70 percent were female; 40 percent were

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BOOK GROUPS ARE HERE!

By popular demand of the membership, the Library is pleased to offer three book groups this spring. The meetings will take place Mondays at various times, and are being organized by well-read volunteers with diverse interests, backgrounds, and skills.

These groups are pilots – experiments that will help test the interest of the membership in participating, explore different approaches to how each group is organized, and iron out logistical wrinkles. These groups will meet four times before the summer break, and according to the will of the groups, resume their reading and meeting in September – perhaps joined by new groups reading books on other themes.

Please see page 5 for a full listing of groups and sign-up information.

Word for Word: 'Sonny's Blues'

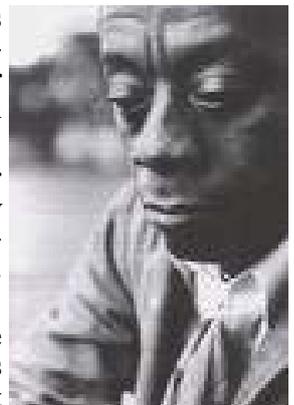
When he was about as old as the boys in my classes, his face had been bright and open, there was a lot of copper in it; and he'd had wonderfully direct brown eyes, and great gentleness and privacy. I wondered what he looked like now. He had been picked up, the evening before, in a raid on an apartment downtown ...

James Baldwin's 1957 story "Sonny's Blues" has been transformed for the stage by the extraordinary San Francisco performing troupe Word for Word, beloved of Library members for its original productions here every year since 1995.

Under the guidance of W4W creative director Susan Harloe, this talented company brings to new life small masterpieces of fiction by authors as different as Amy Tan, Tobias Wolff, Mavis Gallant, Michael Chabon, and Baldwin.

This year the Library and Word for Word invite you to a special benefit performance of "Sonny's Blues" that will continue with a post-show party at the Salle Adyar, one block from the Library, featuring live jazz by Marcus Shelby, the San Francisco musician who composed the original score for this production.

Please see page 7 of *Ex Libris* for details. Word for Word's performances usually sell out, so please reserve early.



New faces at the Library

The Library welcomes three new members of the staff:

□ **Naida Kendrick Culshaw** joins the Library as executive assistant to the director, with special responsibility for institutional outreach and membership development – creating and nourishing our partnerships with schools, colleges, associations, businesses and government agencies that heighten the Library's profile and visibility and draw new people through our doors.



Before moving to Paris in 2004, Naida was senior programs manager at The Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose, California, and has more than 12 years of experience in marketing and advertising. She has been an active volunteer at WICE, the continuing education association in Paris, serving as chair of the *Money Matters for Women* conference, vice president for programs, and president. Naida has a master's degree in museum studies/non-profit administration from John F. Kennedy University.

□ **Abigail Altman** will be serving as the Library's communications officer during the maternity leave of Emmy Slatni, who has been with the Library since early 2006. Abigail will be working closely with the director on all aspects of evening programming, publicity and communications.

Abigail comes to the Library from the Red Wheelbarrow Bookstore in the Marais, of which she was co-owner until last year, and from experience at Brentano's in Paris, the French Library and Cultural Center in Boston, and Schoenhof's Foreign Books in Cambridge. A graduate of Emma Willard School and Tufts University, Abigail is studying for a master's degree in library science. She has lived in Paris since 2000.



□ **Eudaldo Aguila** is the newest member of the circulation staff. He holds a master's degree in library science from Florida State University and is a former reference librarian at the New York Public Library. Ed spent much of his subsequent career as a manager of information technology systems for large enterprises, for the last 15 years in Paris. He will also be advising the Library as it moves to upgrade its information technology services.



Ed succeeds Carol Leimroth, a Library employee in the reference and circulation departments for 11 years, who recently moved to California and new challenges working at a law firm. The Library wishes Carol happiness and prosperity in her new surroundings, and Emmy all the joys of motherhood and a growing family. Please welcome Naida, Abigail and Ed when you meet them.

Charles Trueheart

A major gift: A visiting librarian

The Library has received a significant gift to establish a new consultancy designed to enrich our collections and services by drawing on the wisdom and experience of seasoned American librarians.

The Julia Peterson Dede Distinguished Visiting Librarian, as the consultancy is known, will be in residence at the Library for a period of three months to conduct, on behalf of the director and the board of trustees, an analysis of institutional challenges and objectives essential to the Library's development.

The Library is currently examining all aspects of its holdings, facilities, staffing, and services with an eye to revitalizing the institution. Drawing on a background steeped in library science, non-profit management, and information technology, the visiting librarian will work with the director and staff on a specific project that reflects his or her interests and expertise. This person will become active in the life of the institution, serving as a resource to the director, the staff, the board, and the membership.

The first of the visiting librarians will be in place by the summer months of 2008.

In making this anonymous gift, the donor, a Library member of longstanding, wishes to honor the memory of Julia Peterson Dede (1902-1987). The donor writes: "Julia was an African-American woman of humble origins who, though she never attended a day of school, had a profound influence on the lives of the children whom she helped to raise. Through her love and her natural gifts for storytelling and song, she awakened our imagination and nourished our desire to explore the wide world that lay far beyond the one which was her own, and that she never left." A library, too, awakens our imagination and nourishes our desire to explore the wide world.

Questions about this new consultancy, or recommendations of candidates, should be directed to Charles Trueheart, the Library director at trueheart@americanlibraryinparis.org.

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

TO BEE OR NOT TO BEE

Mark your calendars for a big children's spelling bee at the Library on **Sunday 8 June** from 15h00 to 17h30.

The competition is open to all members' children aged 7 to 13, and is being organized by volunteers from Gifted in Paris, a parent-to-parent support group aimed at helping parents understand the educational, emotional and social needs of gifted children.

Helen Sahin Connelly, one of the organizers of the event, notes: "Spelling bees help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts, and develop correct English. Children learn the etymology of words, the country of origin, meanings of prefixes and suffixes, and some spelling rules. We hope to have a lot of fun doing this project, which as far as we know is the first of its kind in Paris."

Children interested in participating, or their parents, should contact Helen Connelly at giftedinparis@gmail.com to learn more about the event, and for the latest information about preliminary events to prepare the children for the bee – explaining the rules, playing Scrabble, viewing the movies "Akeelah and the Bee" and "Spellbound," and the like. Gifted in Paris recommends attending three of the spring spelling events to participate in the June bee. All will take place on Sunday afternoons at locations to be announced.

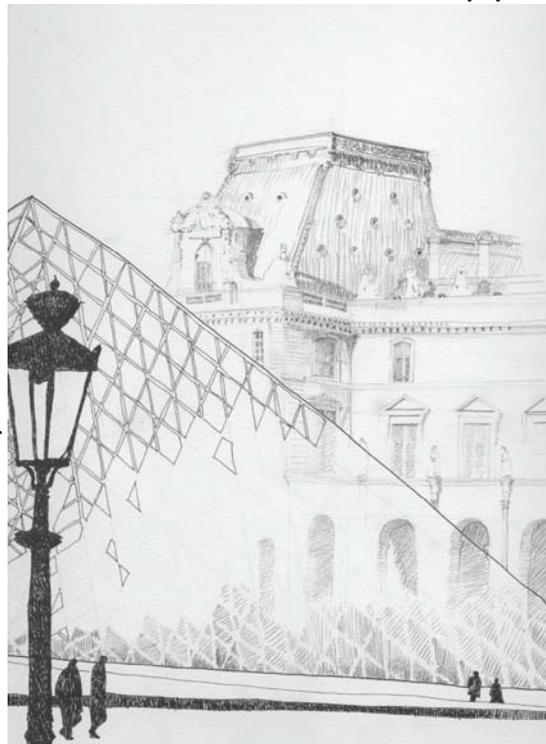
Gifted in Paris also has organized another event at the Library, 'The Passionate Reader's Journey,' on **Saturday 22 March** from 16h00 to 17h30. Young readers aged 9 to 11 are invited to find out how a library works, the treasures it holds, and participate in a scavenger hunt. Children's Librarian Helen Stathopulos will lead this event to help nurture the needs of gifted readers. Future Passionate Readers' Journey events will require parent participation from our group. So, come forward if you are interested in helping, even just with one event for our readers. Please RSVP by 15 March. The contact is as above: giftedinparis@gmail.com



Denny Lynch

Spring Library exhibits

Denny Lynch, a Baltimore-based photographer, returns to the American Library this month with "An Irish Heritage," an exhibit of his striking color photographs of Ireland. He'll be discussing his explorations of his ancestral island at a vernissage and slide presentation on **Wednesday 12 March** at 19h30. The exhibit continues through **Saturday 19 April**.



Nathalie Tournesac

From **Tuesday 6 May** to **Saturday 7 June**, the Library will be exhibiting the Louvre sketchbooks of Nathalie Tournesac, a Paris architect who has created an entire book of sketches, watercolors and other impressions of the Louvre – an illustrated tour of the approaches, exteriors, and contents of this monument and museum.

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 March, 5 April, 3 May, and 7 June**.

A salute to the volunteers

Dozens of volunteers ensure that the Library runs smoothly, and in the deepest sense their gifts of time and talent make it possible for the Library to operate. The dedication of volunteers is sometimes visible to the membership — as when they check out books or reading to children — and sometimes it is hidden — as when they are shelving books or setting up chairs for an evening event. In every case they are appreciated, and once a year we like to say so.

Might you have a few regular hours to spare every week to contribute to the Library? If so, please contact Adele Witt at the Library. Telephone 01 53 59 12 65 or write adwitt@americanlibraryinparis.org



Assistant Director Adele Witt (center) toasts Library volunteers who attended the annual volunteer appreciation galette in January. Left to right: Susan Byrd, Kathi Niebergall, Mary Schmemann, Jacqueline Nafziger.

Simone Adhemar
Morgan Bell
Leon Bromell
Susan E. Byrd
Bethany Farmer
Alice Gay
Susanne Gurney
Fanny Isnard

Tamara King
Christian LeConte
Dani Lippoldt
Joanna Margueritte
Jean Martin
Jacqueline Nafziger
Kathi Niebergall
Charlie Pineda

Raksha Parekn
Anne Raynaud
Celeste Rhoads
Mary Schmemann
Cecily Spiers
Meredith Van Deman
Maggie Villa
David Witter

The Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (SCBWI) France welcomes

The 2007 National Book Award finalist for
'A Resurrection of Magic: Skin Hunger'

Kathleen Duey

to the American Library in Paris for a special

Paris Mentorship/Master Class Program

Master classes at 19h30 on

Tuesday 25 March 25 and Tuesday 8 April

plus two 30-minute individual mentoring meetings

One-on-one mentoring for your work-in-progress

Deadline for manuscripts (3 chapters, no more
than 25 pages + synopsis): **10 March 2008**

For more information about Kathleen Duey, please visit
www.kathleenduey.com

For more information, or to register for the master class
and mentoring, please visit www.scbwifrance.com

In grateful appreciation

The Library recently received an unrestricted gift of \$10,000 in memory of Laura and Amory Houghton. Amory Houghton was the US Ambassador to France from 1957 to 1961. The Library thanks the Houghton family and the Windhover Foundation for this act of support. The ambassador's grandson James Houghton, his wife, Connie Coburn, and their two daughters, who live in Boston, are active members of the American Library during a sabbatical year they are spending in Paris.

The ALP's collection of books about libraries and library science was recently enhanced by an in-kind donation of new titles from Neal-Schuman Publishers in New York. We are grateful to Patricia Glass Schuman, the American Library Association's representative on our board of trustees, for this gift.

Three new Library book groups

Signing up and getting started

Any member of the American Library in Paris may participate, and anyone who wishes to participate may join the American Library. There is no fee for the book groups.

Please write bookgroups@americanlibraryinparis.org and indicate — in the subject line, please — which group you wish to join. The group leaders will confirm your participation (up to twelve members per group).

Please come to the first session prepared to discuss the first book on the list (Orwell, Némirovsky, or Rieff, as the case may be). Arriving 15 minutes early will allow everyone to become acquainted.

Men are most welcome in these book groups.

The book groups are organized at the Library's initiative, but the group leaders — and members — will have broad discretion in how they unfold.

The book group meetings will take place in the main reading room of the Library. The Library is otherwise closed to the public on Mondays. (Ring the doorbell.) The Library will provide coffee, tea, and water for the book groups, whose members may also wish to bring other refreshments or snacks at their own discretion. Book group members are responsible for cleanup and keeping the reading room spotless.

The Library is alerting local English-language bookstores to the reading lists for the groups.

I. Strangers in a Strange Land Pamela Druckerman Not sure where home is anymore? We'll explore the themes of exile, expatriation and identity through the eyes of four very different writers. We start out in Paris with George Orwell's classic, **Down and Out in Paris and London**, in which the Eton-educated journalist works as a dishwasher at the Hotel Crillon. Then we move on to characters who have gone abroad because they have to: the restless Holocaust survivors who search for love in New York in Isaac Bashevis Singer's pathos-filled but very funny **Enemies, a Love Story**. From there we travel to an unnamed country in post-colonial Africa, where the Indian merchant of V.S. Naipaul's **A Bend in the River** faces both personal and political crises. We end up in Tehran, where the heroine of Marjane Satrapi's animated, autobiographical novel **Persepolis** is preparing to start a new, secular life in Vienna. *Pamela Druckerman is a journalist and the author of "Lust in Translation," a nonfiction book about infidelity around the world. She lives in Paris with her English husband and native-born daughter.*

12h30 to 14h30 Mondays: March 10, April 7, May 12, June 9.

II. History Lessons: World War II in Contemporary Fiction Mary Fleming The war has continued to inspire novelists and fascinate readers right up to the end of the 20th century and beyond. Participants will read four widely-acclaimed novels in this vein. The first, Irène Némirovsky's **Suite Française**, was actually written in the early days of the German occupation but only published in 2004, when it received the Prix Renaudot. Bernard Schlink's **The Reader** explores how the generation of Germans born after the War is still haunted by the war. **A Gesture Life**, by Chang-Rae Lee, is the story of a Korean-Japanese immigrant who lives an ordered, uneventful and prosperous life in a New York suburb but who has flashbacks of his experience as a medic in the Japanese army during the war. And Jonathan Safran Foer's **Everything Is Illuminated** traces a young American's search for the woman in the Ukraine who saved his grandfather's life during the war. *Mary Fleming has lived in Paris since 1981 and worked as a freelance journalist and consultant and as the French representative for The German Marshall Fund of the United States. For the last ten years she has been writing fiction.*

16h00 to 18h00 Mondays: March 17, April 21, May 26, June 16

III. Memoir Leslie de Galbert and Clydette de Groot We look forward to an exciting and rich voyage into the land of lives lived and reflected upon. At our first meeting we shall discuss **Swimming in a Sea of Death: A Son's Memoir**, by David Rieff. Please bring suggestions of memoirs you would like to read; the group will choose the list for the coming year. Each participant will prepare and lead the group discussion for the session in which his or her suggestion is discussed. Other titles to consider: **Istanbul** by Orhan Pamuk, **Night** by Elie Wiesel, **Waiting for Snow in Havana** by Carlos Eire, **Reading, Writing and Leaving Home** by Lynn Freed, **Fierce Attachments** by Vivian Gornik, **Lost in Translation** by Eva Hoffman, **Native Realm** by Czeslaw Milosz, **Speak, Memory** by Vladimir Nabokov, **Maniac: A Memoir** by Terri Cheney, **Infidel** by Ayaan Hirsi, **The Middle Place** by Kelly Corrigan, **Kabul Beauty School** by Deborah Rodrique, **The Year of Magical Thinking** by Joan Didion, and **Animal, Vegetable, Miracle**, by Barbara Kingsolver. *Leslie de Galbert, a New Orleans native and Hollins University graduate, earned her degree in clinical psychology from the University of Paris and trained as a psychoanalyst at the Jungian Institute of Paris. Clydette de Groot holds a doctorate in counseling psychology and spent 27 years in graduate medical education as a director of behavioral sciences in family medicine residency training programs affiliated with the University of Colorado.*

10h-12h Mondays: March 17, April 21, May 26, June 16

COMING EVENTS



Adam Gopnik

The former Paris correspondent of *The New Yorker*, the author of 'Paris to the Moon,' 'Americans in Paris: A Literary Anthology,' and 'The King in the Window,' Adam Gopnik will be the featured speaker at the 2008 American Library gala dinner on the evening of **Tuesday 27 May**. Please watch for the invitation in early April and make plans — for you and your friends — to be a part of this elegant evening and important fundraising event for the Library.

The calendar

MARCH Wednesday 5

March: Novelist Lily Tuck reads from her latest book and her work in progress ... **Wednesday 12 March:** An Irish Heritage: The photographs of Denny Lynch ... **Wednesday 19 March:** A Library town meeting to discuss the results of the latest membership survey and focus groups.

APRIL **Tuesday 1 April:** Applying to college in the United States — an evening with admissions expert Joyce Reed ... **Wednesday 2 April:** Novelist Sara Paretsky discusses her latest book

MAY **Wednesday 28 May:** Mary Duncan, author of 'Henry Miller Is Under My Bed'

JUNE **Wednesday 4 June:** Political journalist and presidential biographer Richard Reeves. ... **Tuesday 17 June:** The annual general meeting of the Library.

All events begin at 19h30

WORD

FOR
WORD

PERFORMING ARTS COMPANY

For the 13th year, the acclaimed San Francisco troupe will create an unforgettable experience — at the intersection of literature and drama — for a Paris audience. This year:

SONNY'S BLUES

by James
Baldwin

Directed by Margo Hall
Original score by Marcus Shelby



Clayton Lord

*Choose from two performances, both
at Salle Adyar, 4, square Rapp, 75007 Paris*

Saturday 12 April 20h00

Free and open to the public. Contributions welcome.

Monday 14 April 19h30

A special joint fundraising event for
Word for Word and the American Library in Paris,
featuring a live performance by
San Francisco jazz great **Marcus Shelby**
and a cocktail reception at the Salle Adyar.

Admission 25€

Reservations for both performances are required.
01 53 59 12 60 or alparis@americanlibraryinparis.org

These Library/Word for Word performances are made possible through the generous support of the Search Foundation and the Florence Gould Foundation.

More than 400 responses to Library survey

(continued from first page)

American, 20 percent French; 14 percent chose the designation "binational (French and American)."

Why do people use the Library? Overwhelmingly – and perhaps unsurprisingly – to read and borrow books, followed closely by consulting periodicals and doing research. Sixty percent of members never attend evening programs.

When asked about reading tastes, the most checked boxes on the survey were literature, history and biography, and bestsellers. Other categories of interest were mysteries and children's books, as well as magazines and CDs/DVDs.

There were notable levels of dissatisfaction with the Library's audio-visual collections, and only limited opinions of any kind about the Library's database offerings.

The respondent population as a whole indicated that it seldom consults the website, is happy with the level of communication from the Library, and is broadly satisfied with its service, furnishing, staff and facilities.

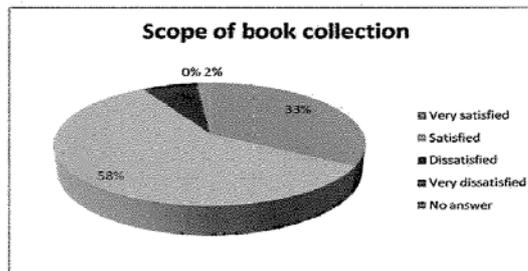
Most people, with the exception of student members, thought the prices of membership were "about right." Asked whether they would be willing to wait 48 hours for a little-circulated book or periodical, 54 percent said yes, 40 percent said no.

The survey found measurable sentiment for more Library opening hours, some frustration with the Library's location, and a pronounced demand for Library-organized book groups (see announcement of Library book groups in this issue) and other cultural events. Asked if they would like more space for meetings and informal conversation, nearly half said no, a little more than half said yes.

Of special interest to the board of trustees were survey findings pertinent to the financial situation of the Library as it re-energizes its development initiatives.

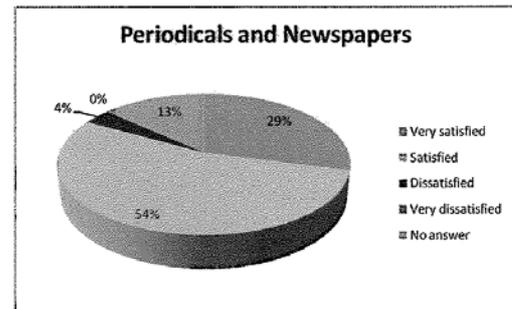
About a quarter of the membership contributes to the Library over and above annual fees – and nearly three quarters does not. Invited to indicate preferences, respondents said they would like donated funds to go to Library renovation (38 per-

3. The perception of the ALP



In their majority, members are satisfied of the book collection. 33% of them are even "highly satisfied". Only 7% are dissatisfied.

83% of the members interviewed are satisfied or very satisfied with the collection of periodicals and newspapers. Only 3% are dissatisfied and none of them are very dissatisfied.



A sample portion of the survey analysis. For a look at the complete survey, please visit www.americanlibraryinparis.org

cent), new programs (37 percent), buying books (35 percent), access to technology (29 percent), employing more staff (32 percent) – but in the latter two cases, even larger proportions said donations should *not* be used for those purposes.

TBWA's account executives on this project, Jon Duschinsky and Gael Colin, noted that the respondents' limited awareness of the Library's revenue base -- membership fees cover only about ten percent of operating costs -- offered the Library an opportunity to better educate the membership.

A related finding was encouraging: Among those who were aware of the Library's need to raise funds to maintain its operations, there was high disposition to contribute in the future.

The complete survey is available to the membership on the website.

TBWA also conducted four focus groups for the Library in early December. Twenty-four people participated in these two-hour sessions, with individual responses kept confidential out of respect for the participants' privacy and anonymity.

The focus group findings in some areas, including service, governance,

collections, and facilities, are in marked contrast to the survey findings. This is not surprising, according to TBWA, given the interactive nature of a focus group process. The sentiment distilled by TBWA in its report was that focus group members often felt they were treated like the public can be by government bureaucracies, when they said they expected to be treated like the paying customers they are. "They want more value for their money," as Duschinsky put it.

Like the survey, the focus group results offer the Library's trustees and staff a rich trove of information and opinion that will become important tools in improving and renewing the institution for its members.

The Library will be reviewing the findings in the coming weeks, and invites its membership to a special forum on **Wednesday 19 March, at 19h30** in the Library, to go over these results in more detail and solicit ideas for steps the Library can take in light of the new information gleaned from the research. A number of trustees, staff members, and TBWA personnel will be on hand for this session. This is the second in a series of "town hall" meetings, and all members are encouraged to attend with their questions.

THE LIBRARY IS FOR CHILDREN



Youth fitness hour

Join athlete, teacher and coach **Jason Baseden** for a fun and interesting program about fitness. This active program will make you use your brain, your body and your energy, as Jason teaches us how to be fit, active and healthy for life.

Saturday 15 March 15h00-16h00 For children ages 6-12

Rabbits, eggs and spring!

Join us for seasonal stories, games, crafts and goodies—just in time for Easter. Help us decorate the children's room for spring.

Saturday 22 March 15h00-16h00 For children ages 6-12

Russian fairy tales

An afternoon story hour featuring children's room favorite Christian LeConte

Saturday 8 March 15h00-16h00 For children ages 6-12



Reading aloud for the very young

Ages 1-3: Mother Goose Lap Sit. Thursdays 10h30-11h00 Drop in sessions: No sign-up needed. **March 6 and 27, April 3 and 17, May 15 and 29.**

Ages 3-5: Wednesday Story Hour. 10h30-11h30 and 14h30-15h30 Drop-in sessions: No sign-up needed.

Words, words, words ...

Story Writing Workshop

From Idea to Final Draft:

Writing a Short Story for the

Red Wheelbarrow Creative Writing Contest

Interested in writing? Do you think you have a good idea for a short story? Would you like to submit a finished story to this year's creative writing contest? Join published writer **Ann Jacobus Kordahl** and Red Wheelbarrow Contest coordinator **Alice Cook** as they show young people how to craft a short story.

Saturday 1 March 15h00-16h00

For children ages 7-12

Poetry by Prelutsky

Join us for poetry, stickers and activities based on the work of **Jack Prelutsky**, America's first children's poet laureate.

Saturday 29 March 15h00-16h00

For children ages 6-12

Scrabble Saturday!

Maybe you've never played Scrabble before, or maybe you're a Scrabble champion! Beginners and pros are welcome to join us for a game of Scrabble in English.

Saturday 29 March 16h00-17h00

For children ages 9-12

Teen Workshop

Writing Down the Bones

You asked for it: less talk, more writing! Last year, brave teens wrote furiously during our whirlwind evening workshops, using some of the writing exercises made famous in the classic writers' book *Writing Down the Bones*. Take part in yet another intense writers' group. Hush your inner critics, dig deep, and let yourself write.

Friday 14 March 19h00-20h30

Ages 12 and up – and beginners welcome.

□ □ □

Attention Teens: Looking for internships or volunteer opportunities? Do you want to be added to the teen mailing list? Please email the librarian your ideas, or drop by and chat.

Helen Stathopoulos 01 53 59 12 60
hstath@americanlibraryinparis.org

