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The Newsletter of the American Library in Paris
June 2008



Photo by David Bacher

'The indispensable Library'

Adam Gopnik at the 2008 Gala Dinner

Author Adam Gopnik crowned the Library's 2008 Gala Dinner by raising a toast to "this indispensable library, to the people who keep it alive, to Paris...and above all to the commonplace civilization which we share and which can sustain us through all the nightmares of history."

Gopnik, the New Yorker magazine essayist and author of 'Paris to the Moon,' was the featured speaker at a gathering of 180 people at the Cercle de l'Union Interalliée on the storm-drenched evening of May 27.

The Library gala showcased Gopnik and twelve other distinguished French, American and Canadian authors who were present for the annual dinner: Mavis Gallant, Alice Kaplan, Lily Tuck, Diane Johnson, Alain Decaux, C. K. Williams, Dinaw Mengestu, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Alan Riding,

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2008 Annual General Meeting of the American Library in Paris **Tuesday 17 June 19h30–21h00**

All members — and interested non-members, too — are invited to the Annual General Meeting of the American Library in Paris, Inc., a non-profit cultural association in France incorporated under the laws of Delaware.

Members of the board of trustees and the director will report on the activities of the Library since the last meeting and sketch the prospects and plans for the year ahead. This is an opportunity to learn more about the Library and to voice your opinions and suggestions about its future.

Refreshments and conversation will follow the meeting. Please come — and bring a friend.

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The Library is open in June and July on its regular schedule — Tuesday to Saturday, 10h00 to 19h00. In August, the Library is open from 12h00 to 18h00 Tuesday through Friday, and from 10h00 to 14h00 on Saturday. The Library will be closed on Friday 15 August and Saturday 16 August.

Visiting librarian named

Leslie Burger, director of the Princeton Public Library since 1999, has been named the first Julia Peterson Dede Distinguished Visiting Librarian at the American Library in Paris.

Burger will be in residence at the Library periodically during the summer and fall as she works with the board, staff, and membership to analyze the challenges facing the Library and to draw up plans for revitalization.

"Leslie Burger is ideally suited to give the Library the benefit of her experience as a public library director and consultant to libraries. She has an impressive record of accomplishment, and her energy and imagination are sure to bring us incalculable benefits," said Charles Trueheart, director of the Library.

Burger, 56, is the immediate past president of the American

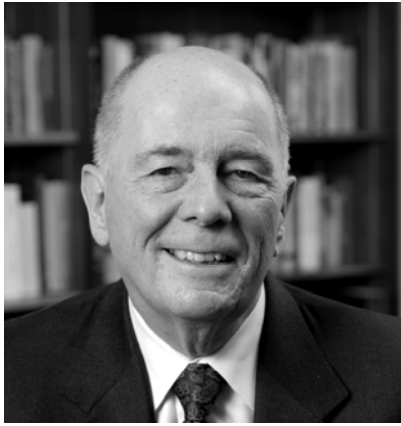
Library Association in the United States. Her consulting firm, Library Development Solutions, has guided more than 100 urban, suburban, and rural public libraries, academic and special libraries, state libraries, and single and multi-type library cooperatives across the



United States in strategic planning, space needs assessments, evaluation, and program implementation.

As director of the Princeton Public Library, Burger was responsible for designing and funding a new 58,000 square foot facility earlier in this decade. She built partnerships with civic

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Winston Tabb

Hopkins librarian chosen as new ALA representative on board

Winston Tabb, Dean of University Libraries and Vice Provost for the Arts at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, has been selected by the American Library Association as its new representative on the board of the American Library in Paris. Tabb succeeds Patricia Glass Schuman, the ALA representative since 2003, when her term expires this month. He will be present at the Annual General Meeting of the Library on June 17, and at subsequent board meetings during the year.

Book groups returning

The three book groups launched at the Library in March were quickly filled and have been giving new energy to the reading room on Mondays, when the Library is otherwise closed.

The groups are taking a summer break, and will return in the fall with new reading lists. Clydette de Groot and Leslie de Galbert's memoir-reading group will carry on, and is looking for new members; Mary Fleming's group, now reading fiction drawing on World War II, will continue with a new theme to be announced; and 'Strangers in a Strange Land' will resume under new leadership, as current leader Pamela Druckerman will be on maternity leave this fall.

At least three more groups will be formed for the rentrée. Watch the website and the September newsletter for details and signup information.

Preparing for the SAT

Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions is a leader in preparing students for admission to American universities. In July, the Library is sponsoring two sessions with Kaplan speakers: an informational session for prospective applicants and their parents on **Tuesday 1 July at 19h30**, and then a "test drive" of a sample SAT on **Monday 7 July from 12h30 to 16h00**; students will receive results and feedback from the test drive a week later.

Both sessions are free and open to the public. To reserve a place, please call Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions directly at 01 45 66 55 33.

The First Saturday Book 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 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 each month beginning at 10h00 and continuing until closing time — **7 June, 5 July, 2 August, 6 September**.

Images from David Bacher

Paris photographer David Bacher was asked to capture the 2008 Gala Dinner as well as daily life at the Library. An exhibition of his work — including the Gala images, and samples of his extensive portfolio of photographs of more distant and exotic places — will be inaugurated on **Tuesday 17 June**, the evening of the Annual General Meeting, and run in the Library exhibit space for the rest of the summer.



Leslie Burger...

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and community leaders and convinced donors to contribute \$21 million to the library's capital and endowment campaigns. Burger raised the profile of the library by challenging her community's notion of what a public library is all about and redefining what the public library means for local residents.

The Distinguished Visiting Librarian position was created thanks to a gift from an anonymous patron of the Library. The initial grant will permit the Library to bring a second seasoned librarian from the United States for another sequence of working visits during the winter and spring of 2009.

The American Library in Paris

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A night for authors

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John Baxter, Philippe Labro, and Jake Lamar. The United States Ambassador to France, Craig Roberts Stapleton, was a special guest at the gala, and made brief remarks during the dinner.

The guests, who included members, trustees, sponsors, patrons, and other friends of the Library, sat at tables named for illustrious authors whom the Library touched over the years: Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, Henry Miller, Janet Flanner, E. E. Cummings, Thornton Wilder, Julia Child, Art Buchwald, Ford Madox Ford, Edith Wharton, Sylvia Beach, Mary McCarthy, William Styron, John Dos Passos, Anais Nin, Richard Wright, John Kenneth Galbraith, and Arthur Koestler.

Gopnik, the New Yorker's Paris correspondent in the late 1990s, reflected on his own days of research in the Library, preparing a Harvard University lecture about the landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. "I would walk home in the twilight down the rue St. Dominique and pick up food for dinner that night as well as chocolate, brooding on what I had learned and read about Olmsted that day," he said. "I've never been happier than at that time."

Gopnik expatiated on Olmsted's notion of a "commonplace civilization," of civic bonds larger than the family and smaller than the state, the common belief among the French and the Americans in a "shared, liberal civilization." As examples he cited Olmsted's Central Park, along with "glee clubs, fireworks displays, baseball clubs, picnics, and also newspapers."

But, he went on: "What institution is more important to a society than a library.... It's impossible to imagine a democratic, republican, liberal society without two institutions: libraries and cafés. People are brought together, and conversation turns around books and ideas."

Gopnik asked: "Are we looking at libraries today like we looked at carriages and buggies at the beginning of the 20th century, as charming but outdated? I don't think so."

The dinner, the Library's major annual fundraising event, was sponsored by Air France, Alpha, The Annenberg Foundation, Hotel Pont Royal, International Herald Tribune, Mr. and Mrs. Edouard-François de Lencquesaing, Mr. and Mrs. Jean-François Méjanès, Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, Unison Site Management and Dewey K. Shay, and Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Wais.



Photo by David Bacher

Watch the website for photographs of the gala by David Bacher and for excerpts from Adam Gopnik's remarks.

Adam Gopnik, at left, with U.S. Ambassador Craig Stapleton, at right, and board chairman William Torchiana.

June and July at the Library

Wednesday 4 June 19h30

Presidential biographer and political analyst **Richard Reeves** reflects on presidential campaigns past and present.

Wednesday 11 June 19h30

Journalist **Alexandra Harney**, author of 'The China Price: The True Cost of Chinese Competitive Advantage.'

Tuesday 17 June 19h30–21h00

2008 Annual General Meeting of the American Library in Paris.

Wednesday 18 June 19h30

Patricia Wells and **Walter Wells**, authors of the new joint memoir of their life in France, 'We've Always Had Paris... and Provence.'

Wednesday 25 June 19h30

Novelist and biographer **Edmund White** reads from his latest book, 'Hotel de Dream.'

Tuesday 1 July 19h30

Preparing for the SAT. An information session presented by Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions (see article facing page).

Wednesday 2 July 19h30

An evening with three participating writers at the 20th annual Paris Writer's Workshop: Poet **Cole Swensen**, translator **Ann Snodgrass**, and essayist **Susan Tiberghien**.

Monday 7 July 12h30–16h00

Test drive the SAT with Kaplan (see article facing page).

Wednesday 9 July 19h30

Frances Gendlin presents 'Ill at Ease: Europe, Islam, and the Jews.' The author invites the audience to contribute ideas, commentaries, and personal experiences for her work in progress, notably its chapter on 'The Complexity of France.'

Saturday 19 July 19h00

Whim 'n Rhythm, Yale University's premier female *a cappella* group, in a special American Library performance.

Evening events at the Library are free and open to the public thanks to the continuing support of the Annenberg Foundation.



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AIR FRANCE



((UNISON))

SUMMER READING CLUB

Wild Things!

The club for wild readers with wild imaginations

Summer is almost here... It's time to enroll in the Library's 10th annual summer reading program. This year's theme is based on wild things and wilderness, including jungle trekking, savannah safaris...and our own wild imaginations.

Here's how it works: as early as **Saturday 7 June**, children **four years and older** may sign up at the front desk or in the children's room, and pick up their "Wild Things!" Summer Reading Club Booklet. In this booklet, children write down the titles and authors of all the books they read this summer, and then they can return to the library to get stickers for each one.

In September, we'll have an end-of-summer party with food, fun and prizes to celebrate our reading accomplishments. It's a great way to encourage reading during the summer months.

Join us for a "Wild Things!" session about jungles and grasslands, including excerpts from 'The Jungle Book' by Rudyard Kipling on Saturday 7 June from 15h00 to 16h00.



Saturday 14 June 15h00—16h00 (ages 6-12)

Father's Day is on the way

Let's get together to celebrate our dads. Father's Day is Sunday 15 June this year. So join us for facts and fun, and to make a great card for the greatest dad of all—your own.

Saturday 21 June 15h00—16h00 (ages 6-12)

Olympics: 776 BC-2008 AD

The 2008 Summer Olympics kick off in Beijing in August 2008. How much do you know about the modern Olympic games? How much do you know about their ancient history? Join us, and let the games begin.

Saturday 28 June 15h00—16h00 (ages 6-12)

Myth and magic

Join teacher, storyteller, and author Wendy Richardson for an afternoon of children's tales, featuring fantasy, seahorses, and a whole set of evocative creatures.

Saturday 19 July 15h00—16h00 (ages 6-12)

Books of Chris Van Allsburg

Join the children's librarian for readings from a favorite children's author/illustrator, the strange and inventive Chris Van Allsburg.

Saturday 26 July 15h00—16h00 (ages 6-12)

Horton hears a what?

Join us for a Dr. Seuss reading session, including the landmark *Horton Hears a Who!*

Every Saturday in July 16h00—17h00 (ages 9-12)

Scrabble Saturdays!

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 5 July 15h00—16h00

Red, White, and Blue

July 4 is Independence Day in the United States. Learn more about the colors, symbols and history of the USA, and help us decorate the children's room with some flags and creations of your own.

Saturday 12 July 15h00—16h00

Bleu, Blanc et Rouge

July 14 is the French national holiday. Learn more about this *fête nationale*, and help us decorate the children's room with symbols and colors of France.

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.

Please also check out our expanded teen collection—intelligent historical fiction like *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation* by M.T. Anderson, who spoke at the Library in late May, or lighter fare, like the *The Clique*, the bestselling young adult series by Lisi Harrison.

And always...

Mother Goose Lap Sit (ages 1-3)

Thursdays 10h30—11h00 5 June, 26 June, 3 July, and 31 July.

Wednesday Story Hour (ages 3-5)

10h30—11h30 and 14h30—15h30

These are drop-in sessions: No sign-up needed.