Over the summer, nature and nurture

If you’re just returning from the summer holidays you may notice some physical changes to the library since your last visit – a mixture of the happily intentional and the wholly accidental.

- During the night of August 6-7 a severe summer storm overpowered the drainage systems in the roof over the research center and women’s restroom, while high winds blew open the windows in the reading room. Floors were drenched, the microfilm drawers suffered some losses, and a few books were irrevocably destroyed. But mercifully all but a fraction of our collection was spared. Library staff provided heroic service the day after the storm in cleaning up. A professional cleaning of the carpets has been ordered.

- We mean to correct the drainage problem and repair the collateral damage as soon as possible, as we have plans to revive the research center with new computer work stations to go with new database offerings. We appreciate your patience with the work as it gets under way.

- As for the things that are happening on purpose, you’ll notice new information signage around the Library and a more open feel in the front. You’ll be seeing other changes in the way we organize our collections and display all that we have on offer.

- In July, Leslie Burger, the Library’s first Distinguished Visiting Librarian — in real life, the director of the Princeton Public Library — engaged with the staff on the question of our collections and helped us to see more clearly how much of it is accessed and how often. The staff worked together with Burger on how we organize the collections to serve the most pressing needs of our members and weigh them against our other functions as a library — as a place for study, or conversation, or access to online databases, or public events, or children’s activities.

Burger has drafted a new collections development policy that the board of directors is expected to approve soon and will be implemented gradually over the next year or two. The new policy will be reviewed annually by the director and the board. We are looking forward to new and different ways of thinking about what we have and what we need to be.

In your mailbox: e-Libris

The Library is constantly seeking to communicate better with its members, its potential members, and the community at large. In that spirit, letting our friends and audiences know about what’s happening at the Library is taking two new forms.

Members with an email address probably have begun receiving our new bimonthly electronic newsletter, e-Libris. Our quarterly printed newsletter, Ex Libris, will continue to be published and mailed to you, but its young sibling will be providing timely bulletins between issues.

Any member or non-member who would like to receive e-Libris, or who thinks a friend might enjoy it, please send an e-mail requesting to be added to the list to elibris@americanlibraryinparis.org.

If you think you should have been receiving it already, please let us know your up-to-date email address by writing elibris@americanlibraryinparis.org or stopping by the circulation desk.

If you would prefer not to receive it, please reply to any issue of e-Libris with “Unsubscribe” in the subject line or simply click on the link provided at the bottom of each issue.

Very shortly we will be unveiling a completely upgraded and redesigned Library website that showcases everything you need to know about us. We can hardly wait for you to see it. We’ll let you know when it’s up and running – via e-Libris.

Come to the Open House!

Saturday 20 September 13h00–19h00

Participate in activities for adults and children. Learn about the Library’s resources and services. Take a staff-led tour of the Library, including a look behind the scenes. Meet Leslie Burger, our Distinguished Visiting Librarian. All are welcome.

Share the library with a friend — bring more than one! As our most trusted ambassadors, we encourage you to bring someone new to the Open House. It’s an opportunity for us to showcase what we have to offer and to encourage new members to join us.

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trustees will review in September. She will share some of her preliminary findings with the board while she is here — and with you, too, at the Town Meeting that will conclude our Open House. She’d like to hear from you as well, so please mark your calendars for September 20.

- Given the timing of the thunderstorm and Leslie Burger’s visit, providencial might be the right word for the gift the library received this summer from the Search Foundation, a long-generous source of support to The American Library in Paris. We’re deeply grateful for this €30,000 grant to enhance our collections — of books, of periodicals, of reference works, and of the virtual library offered electronically in so many new ways.

- Last but not least, please help support the Library and spread the word by purchasing one of our dandy new tote bags. These navy blue, heavy-duty cotton bags (31 x 27 x 10cm) have long shoulder straps, are made by Enviro-Tote of New Hampshire, and are yours for €10 apiece.

— Charles Trueheart, Director

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 very good condition at an unbeatable price — one euro for small paperbacks, two euros and up for other books. Look for other items on sale including magazines and audio-visual materials. Proceeds from these sales enable us to buy more new books for the permanent collection.

For the best selection, come early on the first Saturday of each month, from 10h00: 6 September, 4 October and 8 November.

Texas Bluebonnet honorees arrive

The Library would like to thank the Wurzer family for their gift of books to the Children’s department. This annual donation of new releases for young adults, all nominees for the Texas Bluebonnet Award, was inspired by Molly Wurzer a decade ago. We are continually grateful to receive such a well-chosen selection of titles to enrich our children’s collection.

Volunteer at the Library

You are invited to join our elite corps of dedicated volunteers. Volunteers play a vital role at The American Library in Paris. By donating your time, talent, and skills, you can help support and enhance the Library’s programs, services and mission.

Library volunteers work side by side with staff in every Library activity. There is an ongoing need for help checking books in and out, sorting and shelving, assisting with special projects, answering phones, shelf-reading, and more.

As a volunteer, you will be able to...

- acquire new skills and gain recognized work experience
- expand your social horizons
- keep up with the latest books
- help, and be appreciated for it
- Take pride in volunteering for the largest English-language lending library on the European continent

Our volunteers range in age from teens to seniors. Some do short-term projects, and some stay for decades. We welcome your gift of time, whatever it may be. If you’d like to volunteer, please contact the Assistant Director, Adele Witt, at adwitt@americanlibraryinparis.org.

Tex Libris is published four times a year, in March, June, September, and December. e-Libris, our e-newsletter, is published bi-monthly.

Check our website for additions to the Events Calendar or sign-up for e-Libris. Details on page one.

The Library subscribes to over 250 English-language magazines and newspapers.
Authors, journalists, artists, and more

Wednesday 17 September  19h30  
Evenings with an Author  
David Lodge  speaks about his latest novel, ‘Deaf Sentence.’

Saturday 20 September  18h00—19h00  
Town Meeting  
Meet Leslie Burger, the Library’s Distinguished Visiting Librarian at the Town Meeting that concludes our Open House. See page one for details.

Tuesday 23 September  19h30  
WICE@The Library — Writers on Writing  
Mystery writer Cara Black discusses her experiences writing her latest book, ‘Murder in the Rue de Paradis.’

Wednesday 24 September  19h30  
Evenings with an Author  
Journalist Donald Morrison reflects on ‘The Death of French Culture.’

Wednesday 1 October  19h30  
Evenings with an Author  
Novelist Preeta Samarasan reads from ‘Evening is the Whole Day.’

Tuesday 7 October  19h30  
Talk about Art  
Chris Boïcos on ‘Gertrude Stein: An Extraordinary American in Paris.’ A lecture and slide show.

Wednesday 8 October  19h30  
Evenings with an Author  

Tuesday 14 October  19h30  
WICE@The Library — Writers on Writing  
Victoria Zackheim, author of ‘For Keeps: Women Tell the Truth About Their Bodies, Growing Older, and Acceptance.’

Wednesday 15 October  19h30  
Evenings of American Culture  
The stakes in the US presidential election.  
A conversation with journalist Ted Stanger and other participants to be announced.

Thursday 16 October  19h30  
Preparing for the SAT and ACT. An information session presented by Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions.

Thursday 21 October  19h30  
SCBWI@The Library — Savoir Faire  
Discover the ins and outs of professional writing for children. Speaker to be announced.

Wednesday 22 October  19h30  
Evenings with an Author  
Pulitzer Prize-winning poet C. K. Williams reads from four decades worth of his poetry.

Wednesday 29 October  19h30  
Evenings with an Author  
Author Jerome Charyn presents ‘Johnny One-Eye: A Tale of the American Revolution.’

Evenings with an Author  are free and open to the public thanks to the continuing support of the Annenberg Foundation.
Five book groups for autumn

The Library's three book discussion groups, launched last spring, were big successes. This fall we're offering five, each with four monthly sessions through December. As three groups are continuing from the spring, they are already heavily subscribed, but will be considering additional members. The other two are new and wide open.

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. Here are a few tips to signing up and getting started:

- Please write bookgroups@americanlibraryinparis.org and indicate — in the subject line, please — which group you wish to join. The group leader 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. 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 either in the main reading room or the research center of the Library. The Library is otherwise closed to the public on Mondays. (Please 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.

Book group members are responsible for cleanup and keeping the Library spotless.

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

Self and Society

The Death of Ivan Ilyich, by Leo Tolstoy
Dubliners, by James Joyce
Howards End, by E. M. Forster
The Heart of the Matter, by Graham Greene

Societies impose upon individuals, with varying degrees of subtlety, paradigms of thought which explain human existence and allocate value to conduct. Sometimes these paradigms falsify life; always they fall short as explanations. We will discuss four works of fiction which variously portray individuals coming to the realization that the truth of experience is altogether more mysterious, uncontainable, and ambiguously moral than supposed.

Peter Fellowes, recently retired as the president of the European division of Fellowes, Inc, serves today as Vice Chair of the company. A graduate of Colgate University (B.A.), The Johns Hopkins University (M.A.), and the University of Virginia (Ph.D.), Mr. Fellowes was formerly Dean of Faculty and Professor of English at North Park University. He is senior warden of the American Cathedral in Paris and a trustee of The American Library.

10h00 to 11h30 Mondays: 15 September, 20 October, 17 November, 15 December, 2009 dates to be announced.

History Lessons: Changing Times

The Leopard, by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa
The Radetzky March, by Joseph Roth
The Sound and the Fury, by William Faulkner
Brideshead Revisited, by Evelyn Waugh

Novelists often use times of change, when one world is giving way to another, as a cornerstone for their works of fiction. The group will read four classic 20th century novels in which the stresses, strains, and challenges of these periods of transition affect families living through them.

We’ll start with The Leopard, the best-selling Italian novel on which the Visconti film was based. Set in Sicily during the second half of the 19th century, it tells the story of the old aristocratic Salina family and how its values and way of life are turned upside-down by the arrival of Garibaldi’s republican forces and the unification of Italy.

Next we’ll read The Radetzky March. Published in 1939 and long recognized as a masterpiece in continental Europe, it was only translated into English in 2002. It traces the decline of the Austro-Hungarian Empire through three generations of the hapless Trotta family.

With The Sound and the Fury, we’ll move to the south of the United States, where the Compsons are having trouble adapting to a post-Civil War world.

And we’ll finish off with Brideshead Revisited, set in Britain before and during World War II, where Charles Ryder witnesses the Flyte family’s struggles not just with Catholicism but also with the dying world of the English nobility.

Mary Fleming has lived in Paris since 1981 where she has 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 17h30 Mondays: 22 September, 20 October, 17 November, 15 December, 2009 dates to be announced.
Strangers in a Strange Land

The Sheltering Sky, by Paul Bowles
Just Like Tomorrow, by Faïza Guène
Trieste and the Meaning of Nowhere, by Jan Morris
Zoli, by Colum McCann

Fascinated by identity, belonging, and the quest for a true home? Four exceptional writers guide us through intriguing emotional and geographical territory. American novelist Paul Bowles takes us into the Sahara, and into the heart of a disintegrating marriage, in his classic The Sheltering Sky.

The experience of a teenager of Maghrebian origin in a gritty Paris suburb is revealed by Faïza Guène in Just Like Tomorrow (Kiffe kiffe demain), her funny and touching debut novel.

In Trieste and the Meaning of Nowhere travel writer Jan Morris unravels the unique atmosphere of this ancient Adriatic city to illuminate what it is to be human; her reflections informed by having started life as a man.

And finally, prize-winning novelist Colum McCann charts an unsentimental journey deep into gypsy culture, beginning in 1930s Czechoslovakia. Based on the real story of a Romany poetess, Zoli is a storytelling tour de force.

Lennox Morrison is a novelist and an award-winning journalist. Born in Scotland, she lives in Paris with her English husband. She is also a coach for fiction, non-fiction and journalism. www.bespokewritingcoach.com

12h30 to 14h00 Mondays: 29 September, 20 October, 17 November, 15 December, 2009 dates to be announced.

Memoir

Three Cups of Tea, by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin
Istanbul, by Orhan Pamuk
Memoirs, by Pablo Neruda
Climbing the Mango Trees, by Madhur Jaffrey

We look forward to an exciting and rich voyage into the land of lives lived and reflected upon.

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.

10h00 to 11h30 Mondays: 8 September, 6 October, 17 November, 8 December, 2009 dates to be announced.

Young American Novelists

The History of Love, by Nicole Krauss
A Brief History of the Dead, by Kevin Brockmeier
The Dissident, by Nell Freudenberger
Absurdistan, by Gary Shteyngart

The authors we will read have all been named “Best of Young American Novelists” by Granta Magazine. Young, precocious, deserving? Previous Granta lists (each selection, British and American, is only published once every decade) lauded McEwan, Rushdie, and Ishiguro before they became literary lions. Has Granta chosen well this time?

Abigail Altman is a former bookseller who only reads books by young, precocious, and possibly undeserving Americans. She works at the Library and is studying to become a librarian.

19h00 to 20h30 Mondays: 15 September, 13 October, 3 November, 8 December, 2009 dates to be announced.

Talk About Art

A new speaker series

Paintings, architecture, photography – what is it all about? Art, what it is and what it isn’t, is a discussion completely infused with our human experience. Art can rattle your senses, it can calm and soothe, inspire, haunt, and invoke all types of responses. Join us at The American Library in Paris and let’s talk about art!

See the Fall Events Calendar on page 3 for upcoming program details.

Art on View

Céline Charpentier — A Play on Words
9 September through 18 October

Explore the world of words and images. Her work is based on the use of texts in spaces, on objects, or on canvas, having moved between one medium and another throughout the past five years.

Charpentier’s exploration of typography and the projection of words onto surfaces has led her to consider text as a visual and playful substance.

Meet Céline Charpentier at the Open House Saturday 20 September from 13h00 - 19h00

Upcoming Art on View 21 October through 5 December
Chère Ma: An American Librarian in Paris (1947 – 1953)
End-of-Summer Reading Club Party

Wild Things! For our wild readers with wild imaginations

Summer is over, and it’s back to school...but don’t be glum! Come celebrate your summer reading accomplishments with all the young folks who participated in the 2008 Summer Reading Program “Wild Things!” Join us for games, snacks, and wild facts and fiction from around the world. Bring your “Wild Things” reading booklet listing the books you read this summer for the chance to win books and other fabulous prizes, many with a “Wild Things” theme. This is sure to be a fun event, so sign up soon. See you there!

Saturday 27 September, 15h00–16h00, children 4+

Saturday fun for children 9-12

SCRAMBLE SATURDAY!

Maybe you’ve never played Scrabble before, or maybe you’re a Scrabble champion! Beginners and pros are welcome to join library volunteer Celeste Rhoads for a game of Scrabble in English. Have fun playing in teams or individually.

Saturday 13 September 15h00–16h00, for children 9-12

Poetry and Writing Café for teens

The American Library in Paris celebrates Lire en Fête with a teen writing workshop lead by Janet Skeslien Charles. Join us for a teen evening of reading, writing, food, and conviviality. Beginners are welcome and encouraged to attend.

“We write to taste life twice” — Anais Nin

Janet Skeslien Charles has led a creative writing workshop at Shakespeare and Company for four years. Her novel ‘Moonlight in Odessa’ (Bloomsbury) will be published in 2009.

Friday 10 October 19h00–20h30, for young adults 12+

For all children’s and teen events (except story hours and lap-sits), sign-up is required and limited. Please call the Library at 01 53 59 12 60 or email the children’s librarian at hstab@gmail.com. Unless otherwise stated, all programs are free for library members and €9 for non-members.
Staff recommendations

Have a look at our new display of recommended reading just across from the Circulation Desk.

Theft: A Love Story by Peter Carey
A riveting thriller combining an art heist, forgery, and, yes, a love story.

One Minute to Midnight by Michael Dobbs
A gripping reconstruction of the two weeks in October, 1962, when American, Soviet and Cuban leaders actively contemplated the unthinkable.

The Plague of Doves by Louise Erdrich
Three generations of neighbors fatefully linked together by a murder.

Unaccustomed Earth by Jhumpa Lahiri
Eight stories about Bengali parents and their American-raised children.

Death at La Fenice by Donna Leon
If you’ve never read Donna Leon, start with this classic mystery.

Deaf Sentence by David Lodge
Another slightly antic novel from Lodge about a British professor losing his hearing and getting improbably caught up with a much younger American woman. The author will be discussing his tale at the Library in September.

Night Train to Lisbon by Pascal Mercier
A philosophical search for a missing person and a new life.

Netherland by Joseph O'Neill
An often lyrical, often hilarious ‘Field of Dreams’ about a young Dutchman’s bizarre encounters with a Trinidadian cricket guru in post 9/11 New York.

The Arrival by Shaun Tan
Tickle your imagination with this graphically clever, universal tale of the immigrant coming to a new world. ‘The Arrival’ won the Fauve d’Or in the last Angoulême festival.

Legacy of Ashes by Tim Weiner
A meticulous, engrossing, mind-boggling, and finally disillusioning history of postwar America’s own Keystone Kops, the CIA.

I Was Vermeer: The Rise and Fall of the Twentieth Century’s Greatest Forger by Frank Wynne
The agony and the ecstasy of the artist.
New to the board of trustees

Six new trustees were elected to the board of the American Library in Paris at its annual general meeting on Tuesday 17 June. Charles Fleming, Etienne Gorse, Patrick Hubert, Lynn Kelley, Shelley de Rouvray, and Walter Wells joined the board as four incumbent trustees were re-elected to three-year terms: David Chaffetz, Jonathan Schur, William Torchiana, and Gregory Weingarten. The new trustees are profiled below.

At the organizational meeting of the board the following day, the trustees chose a new treasurer, Sally Warren, a new assistant treasurer, Etienne Gorse, a new secretary, Catherine Lowney, and a new assistant secretary, Ishtar Méjanés. William Torchiana and Sarah de Lencquesaing continue as chairman and vice chairman, respectively, of the board.

CHARLES FLEMING is a partner at Euro RSCG C&O, where he heads the French office of the Havas group’s international financial communications network, AMO. From 1990 to 2006, he worked for The Wall Street Journal as a Paris-based correspondent, covering French and European business and financial services and French politics and diplomacy. Before joining the Journal, he worked for Reuters in Paris. Charles Fleming was born in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1956 and is a graduate of the University of Exeter in Devon, England. He is married with four children.

ETIENNE GORSE retired recently from a career in banking, mostly in the CIC Group. His assignments took him to New York, a Kuwaiti joint venture, and Morocco before his return to CIC headquarters in Paris, where he joined the investment banking department. Etienne Gorse received Sachs and Fulbright Scholarships for his studies at Harvard University, and holds advanced degrees from the Wharton School of Business, Sciences-Po, and the Sorbonne. Married with two adult children, he is currently studying for a degree in Mandarin.

PATRICK HUBERT is a partner in the Paris office of Clifford Chance, specializing in antitrust law, public law, and general compliance matters. He is a former judge with the Conseil d’Etat and a former official in the French ministries of the Environment, Justice, and Foreign Affairs, and served as legal adviser to the President of Senegal. Patrick Hubert holds advanced degrees in science from the Ecole Normale Superieure de St. Cloud and in law from the Ecole Nationale d’Administration. His wife, Marie-Claire Hubert, is a librarian at the Bibliothèque Nationale; they have three children.

LYNN R. KELLEY runs her own wholesale and retail clothing business, which deals primarily in Indian textiles. She worked as an attorney during the 1970s in Boston and during the 1980s in the London, Tokyo, and San Francisco offices of Coudert Brothers. Lynn Kelley is a graduate of Smith College and the Boston University School of Law. She is a former member of the boards of WICE and the American Library in Paris.

SHELLEY DE ROUVRAY taught history in secondary schools in Paris for nearly 25 years, first at Ecole St. Michel de Picpus, and then at Ecole Active Bilingue Jeannine Manuel, where she was also director of the Foreign Department from 1992 to 1998. She is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and holds advanced degrees from the University of Aix-Marseille and the Sorbonne. Married with three adult children, Shelley de Rouvray is a member of the board of the Pont Aven School of Contemporary Art and manages her family’s park and garden near St. Malo.

WALTER WELLS retired as chief editor of the International Herald Tribune in 2005 after spending most of the previous 25 years directing the IHT’s news operation as news editor, deputy editor, managing editor, and finally executive editor. Walter Wells was previously on the staff of The New York Times and the Richmond Times-Dispatch in Virginia. Born in South Carolina, he was educated at Presbyterian College, Virginia Commonwealth University, the New School for Social Research and New York University. He is married to Patricia Wells, the cookbook author and journalist; they recently published a memoir, "We’ve Always Had Paris ... and Provence." He is also the co-author, with Jean-Marie Colombani, of ‘Dangerous Deliaisons.’