

EX LIBRIS

The Newsletter of the American Library in Paris
March 2013

From card catalog to 'discovery tool'

Any library user knows that the advent of new information technology has transformed the way users interact with the library holdings and information in general. Much of that now happens on a screen. Here's evidence of the American Library's current strides toward providing the newest tools and technologies to its members.

In recent weeks the Library unveiled a plasma-screen display at the entrance as a new form of electronic bulletin board. The bright slides remind visitors of upcoming events, children's and teen programming, special information about Library use, our constant need for support from our members, and our illustrious institutional heritage.

As of this week, the Library's out-



standing website has been updated, streamlined, and redesigned to reflect the latest tools and requirements of a multi-use site such as ours. Commonly-searched information – our address and operating hours, for instance – is now on the home page, as is a new calendar format for easier access to upcoming events.

The biweekly *e-Libris* electronic newsletter will also reflect this design change, as other elements of the Library's signage and branding are evolving to reflect a new graphic look.

In the fall, most dramatically of all, the Library will be unveiling an entirely new way to navigate our collections, access information, and manage a member's personal account.

This is a new stage in the evolution of the card catalog of old, which gave way to the rudimentary late 20th-century search function the Library offers its users today.

The forthcoming system, now commonly described as a "discovery tool" rather than a card catalog, will

Continued on page 4

And the Book Award jury is...

Three distinguished authors, members of the Library's Writers Council, have agreed to serve as the jury for the first American Library in Paris Book Award in 2013. They are Julian Barnes, Adam Gopnik, and Diane Johnson. Each has written books with special insight about France, and all three are writers of both fiction and nonfiction (and the award is open to either).

Finalists for the award will be announced in June, and the award bestowed on the winning author at a ceremony in Paris on Wednesday 16 October. The \$5,000 annual prize is made possible by a gift from the Florence Gould Foundation. For more information about the Book Award, consult the Library website or write to bookaward@americanlibraryinparis.org



Daily Telegraph
Julian Barnes



Brigitte Lacombe
Adam Gopnik



Isabelle Boccon-Gibod
Diane Johnson

Reservations recommended

Wednesday 3 April

Thursday 4 April

Word for Word presents Siobhan Fallon's "You Know When the Men Are Gone" at the Salle Adyar. Reserve now. See page 3.

Thursday 6 June

Joyce Carol Oates speaks at the annual Library gala dinner at the Four Seasons Hotel George V.

Reservations open April 1.

LIBRARY NEWS

The Library is appealing. Give now.

Spring at the Library means another chance for its members and other friends and supporters to make their enthusiasm and appreciation tangible — with a gift to the spring appeal.

The excellence and excitement now regularly associated with the Library have a cost, notably in the personnel required to maintain our resources, services, and programs. Membership fees, which we strive to keep affordable, don't come close to covering the Library's operating expenses. That's why the Library counts on you, member or former member or friend, for regular giving, and generous giving.

If you did not receive this issue of *Ex Libris* by post, please look on our website under [Support the Library](#), where you'll find the appeal letter and the opportunity to donate on line.

Donors receive benefits beyond the satisfaction of helping a great institution: Those who made a donation in 2012, or bought places at the Gala Dinner, were treated to a special February evening reception and talk by Paul LeClerc, former president of the New York Public Library and new director of Columbia University's European Global Center in Montparnasse, better known as Reid Hall. LeClerc spoke on: "Hunting with Louis XV on Google."

The donor appreciation evening was held at the Mona Bismarck American Center for Art and Culture, our neighbors across the Seine. Past speakers at winter donor events have included authors Cullen Murphy, Robert Darnton, and Ted Widmer.

Helping hands

The Library is very proud of the volunteers who participate in the ongoing operations of this dynamic place. They're now wearing discreet badges to let you know they're volunteers — for two reasons. First, so that you'll ask if you need assistance. Second, so that you'll understand if they don't have all the answers to every question. They can find the right staff member to help you. If you'd like to join the ranks (approaching 100) of people who help the Library on a regular schedule, and meet new people while you're doing it, please visit the website or call Pauline Lemasson at the Library.



Jackhammers overhead

During the month of March, Library patrons in the reading room (and staff in the back office) will have their concentration tested by the sound of jackhammers overhead. This is the beginning of a long-overdue resurfacing and leak-proofing of the terrace roof on the courtyard side of the premises. Patrons may also see members of the work crew passing through the Library. The work is expected to last six to eight weeks.

During the summer, there'll be more temporary inconvenience for the sake of a better Library. Electricians and painters will be working on scaffolding during July and August replacing the antiquated wiring and installing new lighting in much of the Library, from the front of the building to the children's department. The other part of the summer work will be the installation of new restrooms, including a separate restroom that is both wheelchair-accessible and changing-table-equipped.

The June edition of *Ex Libris* will carry more information on the latter project. Thank you for your patience — and the generous giving to the Library that makes possible improvements such as these.

A new programs manager for the Library

Grant Rosenberg has joined the American Library in Paris as programs manager, the staff member responsible for planning and overseeing evening programs and book groups.



Rosenberg, a native of Chicago and a 1996 graduate of the University of Iowa, has lived in Paris since 2001. He has worked as an independent translator and as a journalist and videographer at *Time* magazine's Paris bureau, France 24, and nytimes.com.

Rosenberg succeeds Margot Boyer-Dry, who is returning to the United States to take a new job in New York.

Ex Libris

The newsletter of the American Library in Paris is published four times a year, in March, June, September and December.

To receive *Ex Libris* by post, or to receive *e-Libris* biweekly by email, please visit the website or contact the Library

The Library is closed
for holidays on
Sunday **31** March
Wednesday **1** May
Wednesday **8** May
Thursday **9** May

SPECIAL EVENTS



ART ON VIEW

Jan Olsson **Rencontres**

Words and Images in Mixed Media

Tuesday 26 March 2013 to Sunday 19 May 2013

Continuing through Sunday 24 March:

Blue, Gray and Black

African-Americans in the Civil War

A conversation with Siobhan Fallon



Reservations for Word for Word performances of Siobhan Fallon's "You Know When the Men Are Gone" on April 3 and 4 are now open. Please call the Library or visit the website.

Margot Boyer-Dry recently asked Fallon a few questions about her work, including her response to the unusual nature of a Word for Word performance, where every word of a short story is spoken on stage.

What is it like to see your work performed in the Word for Word format?

Incredible. I wasn't sure how the text could possibly be brought to the stage, *word for word*. But not only does it work, it works beautifully. It allowed me to see my own work in a fresh and exciting way, to see minor characters or scenes suddenly electric with power and life.

I was so impressed with the attention to detail, from the brilliant and empathetic directing, to the ethereal stage design and spot-on props with



Mark Leialoha

gauzy strips of fabric, solid soldier 'tuff' box storage chests, and perfect soldier uniforms, to the enormously talented, versatile cast, to the lighting design (light/fire plays a significant role in the first story and the staging catches every bit of it), from the glow of the hotel alarm clock to the searing feel of the rising sun in Iraq.

I am so honored that Word for Word chose my stories and watching them breathe on stage is an experience I will never forget.

For the rest of the interview, see the Word for Word listings page on the American Library website.

After the April 4 performance, please come to the Library for a reception and a chance to meet the cast and crew of Word for Word.

Performances take place at Salle Adyar, one block from the Library at 4, square Rapp, and begin at 20h00.

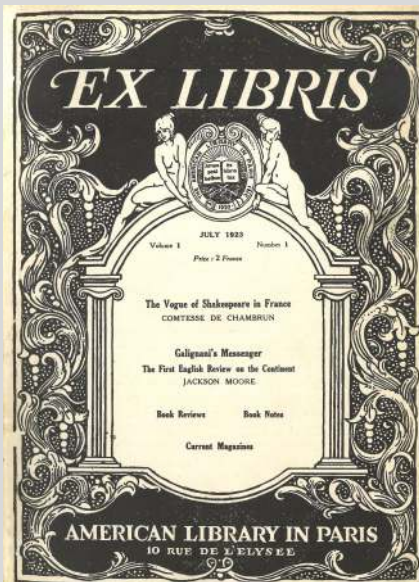
Admission is free with a highly recommended €20 donation to support the Library and Word for Word.

SCREENS AND PAGES

Ex Libris at 90

The advent of electronic newsletters and information-packed websites and elaborate interfaces has not eliminated the Library's use of paper to communicate with its friends and patrons: Letters on stationery mailed in envelopes for postal delivery, leaflets and brochures and invitations to special events, and finally the publication you hold in your hands, *Ex Libris*, the Library's quarterly newsletter.

In 2013 *Ex Libris* is celebrating its 90th year of continuous service to the Library and its community. We're very proud of this publication. The Library was three years old when it first appeared. In its earliest years it was a literary magazine in earnest: sixty or eighty pages thick, with advertising for a burgeoning expatriate community and listings of new books and book reviews and scholarly articles by, among others, fledgling members Ernest Hemingway and Gertrude Stein.



Comtesse Clara Longworth de Chambrun, an Ohio-born Library founder and trustee who later oversaw the Library during the Nazi Occupation of France, was also a self-taught Shakespeare scholar, and published articles often on the subject in the quarterly.

Ex Libris — taken from the Library's founding motto of 1920, *Atrum post bellum ex libris lux* ("From the darkness of war, the light of books") — evolved over the decades into a compendium of recent and future events, the principal way the Library communicated with its members.

Today, the currency and reach of the Library's electronic biweekly, *e-Libris*, has allowed the parent newsletter to use its statelier pace to tell the Library's ongoing story, not just for the benefit of members in Paris but also friends and supporters elsewhere in Europe and the United States.

Happy birthday, *Ex Libris*.



The new flatscreen display at the entrance to the Library: A dynamic bulletin board of upcoming events, Library information, and ideas for making the best of your membership.

The screens of the Library

Continued from page 1

allow a search of Library resources with an interface akin to those offered on commercial sites such as Amazon.

As you search the Library's collections, you'll be able to see book covers, tables of contents, first pages, *New York Times* book reviews, author biographies, and suggestions of related books of interest.

As part of the new system, we'll also be offering a self-checkout station for borrowing books, similar to what you might already be using at Ikea or Monoprix. You'll read more about this in the September newsletter.

The changes and improvements outlined above are the result of months of study and preparation by the Library team and outside consultants.

Our web designers, Stuart and Naida Culshaw, have been working closely with staff and analyzing data about our website usage as the new site evolved. They also worked closely with Anastasia Lafargue, a freelance graphic designer who has been advising us on design projects since last year. (*Ex Libris* is next.) The slide presentation on the new flat screen is the work of external relations manager Pauline Lemasson and volunteer Julie Fernandes.

The conversion to a new discovery tool is being overseen by assistant director Ed Aguila, who is the Library's information technology officer. Aguila examined the latest technologies at the American Library Association convention last year and solicited bids from several companies offering these new services. The Library has signed a contract with Polaris, an American company, to provide the new services. Two generous private donors have also made significant contributions toward the realization of this important project.

AT THE FRONT DESK

Life on the Library's front lines

The circulation team of the American Library is the front line for all of our members and visitors. It is led by the Library's assistant director, Ed Aguila, and includes Matthew Bennett, Amy Carlin, and Samy Langerhaert – reflecting the international nature of the Library staff: an American, a South African, an Australian, and a Frenchman, respectively.

These four trilingual people, assisted regularly by dozens of volunteers, manage the hundreds of daily transactions, telephone queries, newcomer welcomes, answers to questions, complaints, and other tasks of an all-purpose library.

*One of the members of the team, wishing anonymity, responded with the following account when **Ex Libris** asked for a description of what it's like behind the front desk during the Library's 51 weekly operating hours.*

Before the Library opens its doors to the public, the faithful few tap their feet at the entrance doors waiting for the hour to strike. Inside, the warm air and silent bookshelves behind the doors are still and calm – and ours. We start our morning ritual of quietly preparing the Library by turning on lights, computers, printers, cash registers and coffee machines, and by gathering and re-shelving the stray books and piles of newspapers left behind by yesterday's readers.

On a typical day, the first gust of fresh air the doors admit usually brings a familiar face to the front desk. The silence among the shelves is broken with a friendly greeting and a weather report. Borrowed books are welcomed back with a beep and sorted for shelving. The rest of the day's rhythm will be much harder to predict: We trust neither the weather nor the clock on the wall to consistently tell us when the next wave of bibliophiles will crowd around our desk, or what they will need.

Most of the day will be spent at the desk helping the new faces and the ones we know return their borrowed



books or locate more that they would like to read, creating accounts for new members and helping them orient themselves in the library and at times in the city at large.

Books being returned almost always come back with a tale of interest – some bring history lessons, others new recipes to try, and the ones with pictures of trains or animals in them often come with sound effects and embarrassed parents trying to hush them.

Finding a book for a patron can be as easy as pointing to a nearby shelf, or slightly more challenging (and so much more rewarding) when the best description of the book the patron has to offer is limited to the color of something on the cover and a vague, frequently inaccurate, geographic reference of where the story is set.

The questions that come across the telephone lines are mostly Library-related – opening hours, book renewals, membership fees - but occasionally we get requests of a different variety. And while we do pride ourselves on the wealth of knowledge available from the Library's collections, being expected to be able to provide street directions to a lost French expat in New York or the name of the song by that American singer being hummed at you over the phone seems a little unfair.

In quieter moments we devote ourselves to more remedial tasks such as neatening the shelves, hunting for misplaced or long-forgotten volumes in the basement and updating the inventory of the collections.

As the time to close the Library approaches the mathematicians in us take over our librarian selves as we count out the cash register and the seconds leading to the end of the day. The last of the storytellers trickle out into the night and once the doors are closed again, the lights turned off and the gentle hum of tired computers quieted, we leave the Library much as we found it: all accounts of the day's activity concealed between the covers of still air and silence.

The Library by the numbers

Annual transactions (books borrowed, returned, or renewed): **270, 524**

Daily transactions (average): **895**

Annual hold requests: **4,726**

Annual visitors to the Library: **86,422**

Average daily visitors: **286**

2012)

FOR TEENS

Is there a songwriter in the house?

A workshop with Roger Hoebrichts
Friday 22 March
19h00-21h00
Ages 12-18

Do you love music? Do you want to try your hand at writing a hit song? A jingle? Bring your imagination, your instrument or just your powers of rhyme and rhythm for a songwriting workshop with Roger Hoeberichts of The Communal Well. Your senses will drive us on a journey where we'll discover the tricks of what makes us move, shake and groove. Together we will explore what makes a great song, then we will try our hands at starting to write rhythms, rhymes, melodies, and harmonies.
Space is limited and sign-up is required.

TEEN WRITING GROUP

Saturday meetings on 23 March and 6 April
17h00-18h00
Ages 12-18

Join fellow aspiring writers in a relaxed and creative setting where you can share your ideas, get feedback and work on your technique. Experienced writers and amateurs are all welcome to join these meetings which will be held twice monthly on Saturday afternoons. The meeting on 23 March will be hosted by young adult author and fiction editor **Anne Heltzel**.

No sign-up is required for this event.

Really, Really Bad Art Night

Friday 12 April
19h00-21h00
Ages 12-18

Talented artists, amateurs and anyone who just wants to come make a big mess with paint, clay, glitter, decoupage and pastels . . . you're all invited to a night of really, really bad art at the Library. Free your imagination and forget the rules as we compete to make the worst art possible.
Space is limited and sign-up is required.



Finding your voice

Writing a college application essay

Saturday 4 May
17h00-18h30
Ages 12-18

Join **Cathy Altman Nocquet** at the Library for a writing workshop exploring personal anecdotes, moral dilemmas, world issues, self-branding and surviving the interview.

Space is limited and sign-up is required.

Master Shot Film Club

Saturdays 30 March, 20 April, 25 May, and 22 June
17h00 to 18h30
Ages 12-18

For anyone interested in the film making process, come join the **Master Shot Film Club** at the American Library in Paris.

Led by filmmaker and writer Clarence Tokley, the purpose of this club is to allow budding filmmakers the opportunity to produce high quality short films. The club will create a space for



young filmmakers to explore all aspects of film making including the development and production process, script-writing, camerawork, directing and editing and much more!

For more information, email Celeste Rhoads.

Please note!

For children's and teen events requiring sign-up, please email Celeste Rhoads, manager of children's and young adult services, to reserve a spot: rhoads@americanlibraryinparis.org

Unless otherwise stated, all programs are free for Library members and €10 for non-members, payable on entry at the circulation desk.

THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY



Spring Egg-Stravaganza!

Saturday 30 March
15h00-16h30
All ages

Learn about traditions and symbols from Easter and spring celebrations around the world during a colorful story time full of fact, fiction and fun. Then go on an egg hunt throughout the Library with chocolate and prizes! We'll wrap up the afternoon by making cool seasonal crafts that you can take home and keep. Children are encouraged to bring in a basket to collect your egg-tastic spring eggs!

No sign-up required. Parents welcome. Parents welcome!

Reading aloud for the very young

Ages 1-3: Mother Goose Lap-Sit, featuring songs, rhymes and stories for the very young.

Lap-sits will be held on **7 March, 21 March, 4 April, 18 April, 2 May, and 16 May**. By popular request, we have added an afternoon session to accommodate more of our youngest book lovers. We offer two sessions on each of the above dates: from **10h30 to 11h00** or from **17h00 to 17h30**. *Sign-up is required, and each child must be accompanied by an adult lap!*

Ages 3-5: Wednesday Story Hour

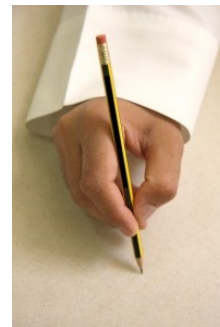
Stop by for our weekly interactive Story Hour each Wednesday from 10h30-11h30 and 14h30-15h30.

Advice for zombies (and others)

An Exercise in Point of View with Michelle Markel
Saturday 6 April
12h00-13h30
Ages 9-12

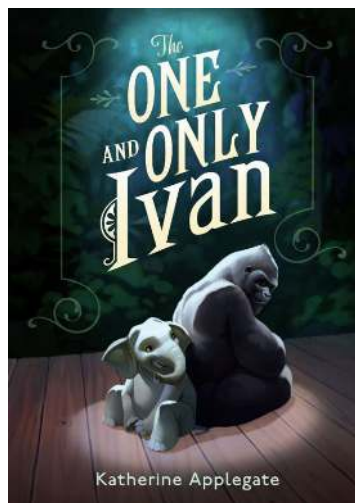
Everyone has problems, and gets in uncomfortable situations. Why would a dog be troubled - or a zombie or a superhero? What kind of advice might you give them? After discussing the format of Dear Abby-type letters and replies, students will brainstorm problems for animal and fantasy characters, then come up with possible advice. They will then write letters from the point of view of both advice seeker and the columnist.

Space is limited and sign-up is required.



BOOKWORMS

The One and Only Ivan



Saturdays 13 April
and 20 April
12h00-13h00
Ages 9-12

Beginning Saturday 13 April, we will be reading and discussing *The One and Only Ivan* written by Katherine Applegate. Discover the 2013 Newbery Award-winning book about a silverback gorilla housed in a small cage in a shopping mall and his journey to create a new life for himself and his friends over two consecutive Saturday afternoons.

Space is limited. Sign-up required

Live in the children's department!

Barbara Wright, author of **Crow**

18 May from 15h00-16h00
Ages 6+

Join author Barbara Wright for a reading from her new book, *Crow*. Barbara will share some of her stories from researching this book as well as tips for aspiring authors.

"The expert blending of vivid historical details with the voice of a courageous, relatable hero makes this book shine." - *School Library Journal*

"This thought-provoking novel and its memorable cast offer an unflinching and fresh take on race relations, injustice, and a fascinating, little-known chapter of history." - *Publishers Weekly*

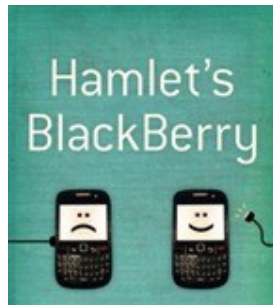
No sign-up is required. Parents welcome.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wednesday 13 March 19h30

Evenings with Authors.

William Powers looks to history's great thinkers—Plato, Thoreau, and Shakespeare—to solve the conundrum of connectedness in the bestselling *Hamlet's BlackBerry*. Bob Woodward calls it “a brilliant and thoughtful handbook for the internet age.”



Wednesday 20 March 19h30

Evenings with Authors. **John Baxter** traverses France in search of the lost culinary tastes of France. *The Perfect Meal* is the latest book by the author of *We'll Always Have Paris: Sex and Love in the City of Light*, *Immoveable Feast: A Paris Christmas*, and *The Most Beautiful Walk in the World: A Pedestrian in Paris*.

Tuesday 26 March 19h30

In cooperation with OECD. **Tracey Burns** explores the findings of the organization's new report *Trends Shaping Education 2013*.

Tuesday 2 April 19h30

Evenings with Authors. **Annik La Farge** describes life *On The Highline*, and how Manhattan's most celebrated new park drew inspiration from Paris's Promenade Plantée.



Wednesday 3 April 20h00

Thursday 4 April 20h00

As part of our annual partnership with **Word for Word** Performing Arts Company of San Francisco, the group performs “The Last Stand” and “Gold Star” from *You Know When the Men Are Gone*, a book of short stories by **Siobhan Fallon**. See page 3 for details.

Tuesday 16 April 19h30

In cooperation with AAWE and Message. **Jude Smith** will share insights on the process of moving up to *collège* (middle school) in France.

Wednesday 17 April 19h30

Leslie Taubman leads an intro course on film appreciation and the history of movies, from the Lumière Brothers and George Méliès to the present.

Wednesday 24 April 19h30

Evenings with Authors. **Charles Glass**, author of *Americans in Paris:*

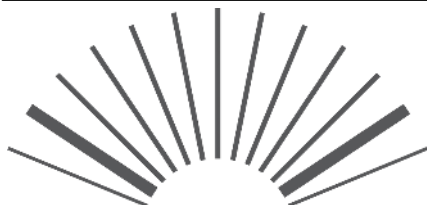
Life and Death in Occupied France and former Middle East correspondent of ABC News, returns to the Library with his new book on “the last untold story of the Second World War” — *Deserter*.



Tuesday 21 May 19h30

Evenings with Authors.

Jerome Charyn, the author of nearly 50 works of fiction and non-fiction, unveils a new novel that speaks in the voice of a reinvented Emily Dickinson to imagine the reclusive poet's private life. Michael Chabon calls Charyn, who lives in Paris and New York, “one of the most important writers in American literature.”



The American Library in Paris

10, rue du Général Camou 75007 Paris France
+(33)1 53 59 12 60 americanlibraryinparis.org