A literary couple for the 2015 Gala

The Library will welcome two distinguished American novelists, Michael Chabon and Ayelet Waldman, as the guests of honor and speakers at the 2015 Gala Dinner.

Chabon is the bestselling and critically-esteemed author of The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay, which won the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction, and of such varied works of fiction as Wonder Boys, The Yiddish Policemen’s Union, The Mysteries of Pittsburgh, and most recently Telegraph Avenue.

Waldman is the author of Love and Treasure, Red Hook Road and a bestselling and controversial memoir, Bad Mother: A Chronicle of Maternal Crimes, Minor Calamities and Occasional Moments of Grace.

Chabon and Waldman and their four children live in Berkeley, California.

More than 200 people every year support the American Library by attending the Gala Dinner, our biggest fundraiser of the year. Members and non-members alike are invited to attend. Invitations will go out in mid-April, but mark your calendars now for the evening of Tuesday 26 May 2015. The dinner will take place, as last year, at the Automobile Club de France on Place de la Concorde.

Pour mémoire

If you are receiving this issue of Ex Libris by mail, it arrives with yet another chance to help the Library keep its doors open, its shelves stocked, its members served, its programs humming, its resources deep and wide.

Please remember that membership fees cover only a fraction — not quite one fourth — of what it costs to operate the Library. Please use the enclosed donation card and envelope, or go online to the Library website, and make a gift. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

THE LIBRARY BOOK AWARD

‘An Officer and a Spy’

The second annual American Library in Paris Book Award was presented on Monday 3 November 2014 to Robert Harris for his historical novel An Officer and a Spy.

Alice Kaplan, chairman of the 2014 jury, presented the award to Harris in the presence of 100 guests at a ceremony at the George C. Marshall Center in the Hôtel de Talleyrand. The other two jurors this year were Pierre Assouline and Sebastian Faulks.

The Book Award, made possible through the support of the Florence Gould Foundation, honors the most distinguished book of the year, in English, about France or the French-American encounter.

An Officer and a Spy, published by Random House in the United States and Hutchinson in the United Kingdom, recounts the conspiracy at the heart of the Dreyfus affair through the eyes of French army officer Georges Picquart, who relentlessly pursued his belief that Alfred Dreyfus was innocent.

"The dirty little secret of writing, as E.L. Doctorow once said, is that you have to find the voice," Harris said in his remarks. “The moment I realized that I should write this novel as Georges Picquart’s memoir, I had the voice. And thereafter, history gave me all the characters and all the stories.”

Harris said he was drawn to Picquart "because he seemed to me a truly interesting French hero. He could only be French. If the Dreyfus affair reflects discredit upon France, the fact and the behavior of Picquart reflects enormous credit."

More on the Book Award ceremony on page 4.
INSIDE THE LIBRARY

Authors at the Library: A special exhibit

More than seventy authors and other public figures make evening appearances at the Library every year, and we’ve been taking their pictures. In January, the Library presents a special exhibit of images of speakers captured in the stacks. Three examples, left to right above: religion scholar Reza Aslan (who spoke 23 March), memoirist Emily Lodge (19 February), and historian Simon Winchester (20 November 2013).

Ideal gift suggestion(s)

1. A membership to the American Library brings joy and enlightenment to a loved one throughout the year. Pick up a gift card at the front desk.
2. An all-cotton, American-made Library tote bag, is a useful gift that simultaneously declares your attachment to a beloved institution.
3. A stack of fine used books from our December book sale (Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 December).
4. Why not put the membership card and the books in the tote bag and tie a bow on the whole package?

Ever dreamed of speaking Mango?

As the Library expands its offerings of e-resources, members now have access to Mango Languages, a popular online teaching tool. You may choose from more than 60 conversation-based language courses, not to mention fun mini-courses (Pirate, Italian for Romance, Russian slang) or a chance to watch a specially-subtitled foreign-language film. Mango also offers English lessons in 17 languages, including French.

Mango’s easy-to-follow lessons emphasize cultural sensitivity and the audio clips feature native speakers. Vocabulary and grammar are presented in real-life situations, with plenty of repetition to ensure retention and proper pronunciation.

As a member you may access Mango anywhere. From the Library’s catalog portal, click on the E-Sources menu and log in with your Library card number and password. Create a profile to track your progress.

If you need help accessing Mango, ask a staff member. We already speak English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and Persian, but plan to learn a few more languages — with Mango.

Rose Finkenstaedt R.I.P.

The Library lost one of its beloved patrons last summer. Rose Lindsay Harvey Finkenstaedt died on 30 August in her 88th year. Educated at Vassar, the Sorbonne, and Columbia, a professor of comparative literature at Hofstra and an editor of The Liberator, Rose Finkenstaedt settled in Paris in 1967 and continued to write books of philosophy, novels, and translations of French cookbooks. She is already missed.

EX LIBRIS

The newsletter of the American Library in Paris is published four times a year, in March, June, September, and December.
Coming in January: Ta-Nehisi Coates

The Library welcomes Ta-Nehisi Coates at the beginning of January as the next Visiting Fellow.

The author of *The Beautiful Struggle: A Father, Two Sons, and an Unlikely Road to Manhood* and a national correspondent at *The Atlantic*, Coates has become one of the most influential writers and thinkers on race in America, and has commented recently on the Bill Cosby case and on the unrest in Ferguson, Missouri.

Coates will be speaking at the Library on **Tuesday 13 January** about Martin Luther King and the unfinished work of the civil rights movement. He will conduct a teen workshop on **Friday 16 January** about comic books, superheroes, and history, and on **Tuesday 3 February**, Coates will discuss his novel-in-progress about a black Chicagoan who moves to Paris.

As a Visiting Fellow, Coates will be active in the life of the Library and available for informal conversation as well.

A month of Alex Danchev

Biographer and scholar Alex Danchev spent November at the Library as a Visiting Fellow.

He led an evening program on the subject of his biography-in-progress, René Magritte, which follows works on Georges Braque and Paul Cézanne. Shifting from art to international affairs, his academic specialty, Danchev joined a panel discussion about global terrorism. He led an informal staff tutorial and gamely worked on his own research wherever he could find a spot at the Library. He and his wife, Dee, were present at many Library occasions and outings.

Alex returns to his faculty position at the University of St Andrews with the Library’s thanks for his presence and engagement. The de Groot Foundation makes the Visiting Fellowship possible.

‘Brothers in Exile’

To mark Black History Month, the Library explores an intriguing triptych of literary giants (and Paris exiles) of the mid-twentieth century—Richard Wright, James Baldwin, and Chester Himes.

The three are the subjects of a play by Paris author Jake Lamar, *Brothers in Exile*.

An exhibit about the three writers will be on display in the Library reading room from **3 February to 12 April 2015**.

Jake Lamar and exhibit curator Naida Culshaw will discuss these images at a vernissage on **Tuesday 17 February** at 19h30.

Malcolm X in the stacks

The lower level of the American Library was chosen as the setting for a scene in an upcoming documentary film entitled *Malcolm X, aux noms de l’identité noire*. A crew from France Ô shot a sequence depicting Malcolm X in a library during his years in prison in the late 1940s. The documentary will air on France Ô in February 2015. Watch e-Libris for the alert!
AT THE BOOK AWARD

Guests at the Book Award ceremony heard the chairman of the jury, Alice Kaplan (top), read the citation for An Officer and a Spy. At a reception following, Diane Johnson (above), chairman of the Library Writers Council, speaks with Simone Gallo, the Library collections manager, with author Laurel Zuckerman in the background. At a private dinner after the ceremony (below), film director Roman Polanski – who inspired Robert Harris to write the book and will make a feature film about it – talks to Ed Turner, who leads a Library book group on whistleblowers that read An Officer and a Spy this fall.

More photographs and the jury’s citations for the six shortlisted books may be found on the Library website. The advertisement at right was published in the 21 November issue of The New York Review of Books.

Photographs by Krystal Kenney.
The man who built the Library

The American Library is at a watershed in its institutional life. When Simone Gallo retires at the end of this year, he will have served the Library for nearly half of its existence. It is not an exaggeration to say that he almost single-handedly built the modern collection of the Library, now 120,000 volumes strong, the largest of its kind on the continent.

Gallo was 33 years old when he came to work at the Library 44 years ago. Initially he was put in charge of handling book and magazine orders and cataloguing for five branch libraries then attached to this one (in Montpellier, Nancy, Toulouse, Grenoble, and Nantes). Very soon he was given more responsibilities, and essentially has overseen the American Library collections department for the past forty years, surviving seven directors.

As the spelling of his first name might suggest, Simone Gallo was born near Turin, and sent to be a seminarian with the Order of the Salesians of Don Bosco when he was nine years old. As a teenager he was sent as a missionary to Brazil, where though his academic record was excellent, he ultimately chose not to pursue the priesthood.

Such were his abilities, however, that he had been put in charge of the seminary library. Remaining in Brazil and earning his library science degree, he went on to work at the library at the University of Brasilia, the new capital, and to teach there.

In 1968 he was awarded a Ford Foundation grant for a master's program at Catholic University in Washington, where he spent the year with his new wife, Fernanda, another Brazilian librarian. By now, he recalls, he felt himself Brazilian and spoke Portuguese more easily than Italian. (He speaks at least five languages now, and reads twice as many.)

In 1969, Fernanda was posted to UNESCO in Paris for what was supposed to be two or three years. Simone went back to school in Paris to work on a master's degree in linguistics, but, he says, “I lost faith in the theories.” It was about then that he saw a newspaper advertisement for a part-time job at The American Library in Paris.

To say that Simone Gallo is irreplaceable would be an understatement. A performance evaluation by director Clifford De Roode in 1980 describes his work habits thusly: “excellent, works with an almost frightening intensity, punctual, meticulous, exacting.” This has not changed.


In addition to cataloguing and purchasing and weeding and the million details of managing a vast collection, as well as advising Library users about their research needs, Simone also has overseen the retrieval (usually in a SUV piloted by his friend Arthur Marchet) and evaluation of donated books to the Library – more than 40,000 a year! Only a few are added to the collection, and most go up for sale, but every one of them has been eyeballed by Simone Gallo.

Simone Gallo will also be irreplaceable as the institutional memory of the Library; as the early-morning go-between with our cleaning team; as the one who knows every nook and cranny in our quirky property, not just all the books within it; and as someone versatile and agile enough to chase stray pigeons back out the Library windows. As he considers them a waste of time and declines to attend them, staff meetings are the only events in our future life as a Library team that will remain unchanged with his retirement.

In any event, we won’t have much chance to miss him, because Simone Gallo has expressed his wish to continue to volunteer his wisdom and service in the years to come. As we honor his extraordinary service, we are delighted he will remain in our midst.

Charles Trueheart, Director
Meet the intern

The Library’s current children’s and teen’s services intern, Matilda Rossetti, recently graduated from the University of St Andrews with a degree in literature. She has worked in two research libraries but wanted to explore a different setting before deciding on whether to study library science in graduate school. She was attracted to The American Library in Paris for its diverse cultural mix.

After two months at the Library, she now recognizes many faces and appreciates the sense of community here. Of course, putting books in the hands of children and teens is a favorite part of her job. She feels that her storytelling skills have grown during her time here and having to entertain a group of 3-5 year olds is always an exciting challenge. She’s also enjoyed learning more about kids’ literature and finds it fascinating to see which books circulate the most.

The internship position that brought Matilda to the Library is made possible by the generous support of an anonymous donor. Past visitors filling this position include Rebecca O’Neil and Brianna McClusky, and this January the Library will welcome Jay Kelley.

Halloween was a scream!

This year the Library welcomed more than 1,000 people throughout the day of our annual Halloween Extravaganza.

Performers the Improfessionals, Charlotte Chiew and Amanda Ford put together great shows for our two parties, one for younger and one for older kids.

Library staff members and volunteers plan the Extravaganza beginning during the summer months. It takes a big team to make such an event happen. Thanks to everyone who helped make this year’s Halloween events such an extravagant success!

TEEN EVENTS AT A GLANCE

This is just a small selection of our events for young adults. Check the Library’s website and monthly flyers for complete and up-to-date information.

**Bad Art Night**
Friday 12 December  19h00-21h00

**Master Shot Film Club (meeting)**
Saturday 13 December  17h00-18h30

**Teen Writing Group (meeting)**
Saturday 20 December  17h00-18h30

**A History of Comics with Ta-Nehisi Coates**
Friday 16 January  19h00-21h00

**Master Shot Film Club (meeting)**
Saturday 17 January  17h00-18h30

**Teen Writing Group (meeting)**
Saturday 24 January  17h00-18h30

**Master Shot Film Club (meeting)**
Saturday 14 February  17h00-18h30

**Teen Author Smash**
Saturday 25 April  17h00-18h30

Save the date for our biggest teen event of the year, where you’ll be able to meet and chat with lots of young adult authors, including Amy Plum, Morgan Matson, Tom Pollock, Amy Tintera, Bree Despain, and many, many more!

A friendly reminder from Celeste Rhoads, head of children’s and teen services: Sign-up is required for all Teen Nights and clubs. Please send an email to Celeste to reserve a spot: rhoads@americanlibraryinparis.org
Unless otherwise stated, all programs are free for library members and €10 for non-members. Children attending Library programs must have their own membership card or be covered by a family membership. Please contact Celeste Rhoads for more information about our children’s programs: rhoads@americanlibraryinparis.org.
Wednesday 10 December  19h30
Sheila Kohler’s ‘Dreaming for Freud’
The author of Cracks and Becoming Jane Eyre presents her latest novel, Dreaming for Freud, a fictionalized account inspired by Sigmund Freud’s Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria. The Library’s 2013 Gala speaker, Joyce Carol Oates, praised it as a “slyly subversive, subtle and sensuous revisionist interpretation of Sigmund Freud and his iconic Dora.”

Tuesday 6 January  19h30
Mr. Twain goes to Washington
The career of Samuel Clemens as a newspaper correspondent in the U.S. capital is much less well known than his work as a novelist. Author John Muller reveals how this period formed the iconic writer’s later work.

Wednesday 7 January  19h30
Ethnicity and urban policing
In his book Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing, French anthropologist Didier Fassin examines how law enforcement in France and elsewhere interacts with populations facing discrimination. Analyzing the 2005 riots in the Paris suburbs, he explores the daily aspects of policing, public security, and injustice. A French expert working in the U.S., Fassin has perspectives on these issues and the respective policies in both nations.

Tuesday 13 January 19h30
Ta-Nehisi Coates: The question of race and reparations
Visiting Fellow Ta-Nehisi Coates (see page 3), in the first of several Library events, expands on his June 2014 Atlantic magazine article The Case for Reparations, exploring not just slavery, but the injustices against black people in housing and employment that followed, and the still-unfinished work of the civil rights movement.

Wednesday 14 January  19h30
‘When Paris Went Dark’
Ronald Rosbottom, a French and European studies professor at Amherst College, discusses his latest book, a dense recounting of life in Paris under German Occupation. Rosbottom explores the quotidian and what that meant for Parisians and Germans alike.

Long-listed for the National Book Award for non-fiction, When Paris Went Dark was praised by 2011 Library Gala speaker Scott Turow as “a rich work of history, a brilliant recounting of how hope can still flourish in the rituals of daily life.”

Coming in winter
A panel of authors who write about Paris, a Nicolas Nabokov biography, ‘How to Ruin a Queen’, an agent and author in conversation, Teri Agins and Dana Thomas on fashion, desserts galore, and much more.

SAVE THE DATE: Word for Word performances of two Alice Munro stories, “The Office” and “Dolly,” will take place on 5 and 6 May.

Evenings with Authors and other weeknight programs at the American Library are open to the public. No reservations are necessary. A donation of €10 (students €5) is requested at events marked with a ★

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