The marriage of two minds

Michael Chabon and Ayelet Waldman entertained more than 230 guests at the 2015 American Library in Paris Gala Dinner with a lively routine about the literary life of two accomplished writers and their four children under one roof in Berkeley, California.

Their duet, or duel, climaxed a two-day visit by the two novelists that included a sponsors’ reception at the Sonia Rykiel boutique in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, a Chabon-Waldman visit to the American Library to sign books for the Gala Dinner guests, greetings at the cocktail reception from the U. S. Ambassador to France, and a repast of caille, pavé de bar, and macaron glacé in the inspiring two-story library of the Automobile Club de France on place de la Concorde.

“This is just like the Grand Hotel Budapest,” remarked Waldman as she saw the dining room for the first time.

The Gala Dinner is the American Library’s biggest fundraiser of the year, and the 2015 edition was the best-attended in years, including a record number of table sponsors. (See page 5.)

Writers were, as always, numerous in attendance. They included, in addition to the guests of honor, Diane Johnson, chairman of the Library’s Writers Council, Alice Kaplan, chairman of the 2014 jury for the Library Book Award, as well as novelist and memoirist Michael Mewshaw, author Pamela Druckerman, novelist Mary Fleming, photojournalist John Godfrey Morris, biographer Sophie-Caroline de Margerie, teen author Amy Plum, filmmaker Whit Stillman, fashion journalist Dana Thomas, and Shakespeare and Co. proprietor Sylvia Whitman.

Continued on page 6
For your borrowing pleasure

We’re simplifying our lending rules to simplify your Library experience. New Fiction (including Mysteries) will now circulate for three weeks instead of two, so all the items you check out during your visit to the Library will be due back on the same day.

We are aware that the waiting list for New Fiction can become lengthy, especially for bestsellers. We will make an effort to purchase extra copies of popular books to reduce your wait.

You may reserve books that are checked out and monitor your list of requests by logging onto your Library account through our online catalogue. Ask a staff member to show you how during your next visit. As always, you may renew all Library materials once (for an additional three weeks) if no one is on the waiting list — online, by email, by phone, or in person.

New trustees

At the Annual General Meeting of the American Library in Paris, Inc., on June 9, three incumbent trustees, Peter Fellowes, Jo Foks, and Priscilla de Moustier, were re-elected to three year terms. Two new trustees, Forrest Alogna and Thomas Perrot, were elected to their first terms on the board. Shelley de Rouvray, a former vice-chairman of the board, has stepped down as a trustee.

Alogna is a partner at Darrois Villey Maillot Brochier, the Paris law firm, where he specializes in cross-border transactions. He publishes and speaks regularly regarding corporate law matters. He and his wife, Sandrine, have two school-aged children and have been members of the Library since 2012.

Perrot is a partner in Linklaters LLP’s Paris office who specializes in tax structuring of corporate transactions. He is married to Randi Goring, currently serving as president of Message Paris, and they have two children. They also have been members of the Library since 2012.

At the organizational meeting of the board the next day, all of the officers were re-elected: Mary Lee Turner as chairman, Luis Roth as vice-chairman and secretary, Rob Johnson as treasurer, and Joshua Kaplan as assistant secretary.

Continuing to serve on the executive committee of the board along with the chairman, vice-chairman, and treasurer, will be Jo Foks, Susan Kayat, and Nadine Voisin.

2015: Year 3 of the Library Book Award

In the third cycle of the American Library in Paris Book Award, more than 100 entries were received, exceeding 2014’s 94 submissions for the annual prize, which honors the most distinguished book of the year, written in English, about France or the French-American encounter. The 102 works, submitted by authors and publishers, have been under review by a Paris screening committee since January. Its selection of a shortlist of five titles in mid-July will be presented then to the award jury, this year consisting of Laura Furman, the chair, editor of the O. Henry Prize Stories since 2002; novelist and biographer Lily Tuck, recipient of the 2004 National Book Award for fiction; and Fredrik Logevall, professor of international relations at Cornell University and author of Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America’s Vietnam, the winner of the first American Library in Paris Book Award.

The jury’s choice of a winning book will be announced in November in the presence of the author at a ceremony in Paris. The $5,000 prize is underwritten by a generous gift from the Florence Gould Foundation.

All the books on the list of entries, which is available for downloading from the Library website, are in the circulating collection and on display at the Library this summer. In September, the books will constitute a special exhibit in the reading room coinciding with an event in October to celebrate Paris-based authors.

Ex Libris

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

An intern in the archives

*I have been doing an internship at the American Library since the beginning of May to complete my master’s degree in Library and Information Science at the Université de Montréal. My main duty has been to plunge into the archives of the American Library in connection with the 95th anniversary of the Library.*

— Jean-Michel Lapointe

To hold in my hands and browse through the correspondence, photographs, and endless piles of newspaper clippings and reports about the Library’s history is, I have to say, a thrill in itself. The majority of these artifacts have never been shown to the general public. Going through the Library’s archives got me thinking about a way to enable online access to some rare and unique items of the collection.

So what are we going to feature in this coming timeline? A letter from Henry Miller requesting books on Zen Buddhism from the Library, bookplates of the Library War Service dating from the First World War, poet/soldier Alan Seeger’s famous poem “I Have a Rendezvous With Death” digitized from the first edition of his work, Alan’s nephew Pete Seeger singing this same poem during a celebration held at the Library in 1995, issues of the original *Ex Libris* publication dating back from 1923 — and much more.

The American minds behind this institution were visionary ones. They wanted the Library to be haven not only for American expats, residents and tourists, but also to people of all cultures and nations of the globe. Promoting a cosmopolitan and internationalist conception of what a library can and should be, they instituted in the late 1920s free book loans to every reader willing to read in English across Europe, and beyond.

The American Library’s books have circulated widely. I even found one striking letter from a Swiss literary scholar thanking the Library from the remote island of Madagascar, where finding recent American novels was probably as unusual as coming face to face with a grizzly bear.

The Library turns 95

On 20 May 2015, the American Library in Paris tweeted the news of its 95th birthday to another generation of readers and supporters. Visitors to the Library that day enjoyed a slice of birthday cake and visitors to the Library’s social media learned 95 fun facts about the Library.

The 95th anniversary is really the kickoff to five years of celebration and stock-taking leading to the centennial and the beginning of the Library’s second century of service. This summer the Library will offer visitors a special anniversary exhibit and digital timeline featuring scenes from our remarkable history.

The Library is grateful to the H. W. Wilson Foundation for a special grant to support celebrations of this Library milestone.

Help us find the Library

As noted in the previous issue of *Ex Libris*, the Library is seeking images of the exterior or interior of our premises at 129, avenue des Champs Elysées between 1953 and 1964. Although our archives are replete with images of the two prior locations and the current one, we have no visual record of the Champs-Elysées location. Library apprentice Lucy Lavabre was able to locate an architectural rendering of the building in question. The building stands today, with a Lancel nameplate, just east of the Publicis Drugstore. Images of the Library’s occupancy are still sought and appreciated.
SCENES FROM THE 2015 GALA:
Counterclockwise from top left: Catherine Coste and U.S. Ambassador Jane Hartley; Lee Huebner, Emily Lodge, and Berna Huebner; Stephanie Andrieux and Barbara Diggs; the cocktail dinatoire at Sonia Rykiel; Charles Trueheart and Ayelet Waldman; Mary Lee Turner and Cissie Barnett; Alexandra Hughes and John Murray.
Photographs by Krystal Kenney
The gala guests heard also during the evening from board of trustees chairman Mary Lee Turner and Library director Charles Trueheart, both of whom noted the Library’s 95th birthday on May 20, 2015, and the centennial on its horizon, as did Ambassador Jane D. Hartley in her brief remarks at the cocktail reception. The U.S. Ambassador to the OECD, Daniel Yohannes, was also in attendance, as was retired ambassador James Lowenstein, chairman of the Library’s Advisory Council.

On the eve of the Gala Dinner, Sonia Rykiel invited the Library to hold a cocktail in honor of Chabon and Waldman at the flagship boutique on boulevard Saint Germain. The unusual partnership, facilitated by Library trustee René de Monseignat, was inspired by the boutique’s current theme and decoration – lined floor to ceiling in bookcases fully “curated” with 48,000 books.

The sponsors of the dinatoire were Charles and Clydette de Groot, and the guests at Sonia Rykiel were the next evening’s table sponsors and other leaders whose annual support is the backbone of the gala evening. They were joined by Sonia Rykiel CEO Éric Langon and his colleagues, Charlotte Castelli and Julie de Libran.

“My first ever library-related fashion show,” commented Winston Tabb, the director of the library system at the Johns Hopkins University and a member of the Library’s Advisory Council.

A full picture gallery from the Gala Dinner and the Monday reception, featuring the work of photographer Krystal Kenney, is available on the Library’s Flicker page.

The Library is grateful to the following staff and volunteers for their participation in the 2015 Gala Dinner: Krista Fairie, Jean-Michel Lapointe, Pauline, Lemaession, Laetitia Nail, Kirsty McCulloch Reid, Celeste Rhoads, Grant Rosenberg, Jan Smith, and Caterina Stamou.
TEEN AUTHOR SMASH

We think it’s safe to say that the Library’s first-ever Teen Author Smash was a great success! Our staff, volunteers and the 24 authors who participated certainly had a great time, and the guests in attendance all went home with signed books and gifts from the authors. About 100 people were packed into our Reading Room for the event on 24 April. A great big thanks goes out to Amy Plum, who helped coordinate this event.

YAFF: The winners

The 2015 Young Authors Fiction Festival culminated with a celebration on Friday 5 June with over 220 people in attendance, in two shifts, including the young author finalists, parents, and teachers.

Each finalist was awarded a certificate and many also received a bookmark with comments from the judges about their stories. YAFF celebration booklets included the stories of all the 1st to 5th place winners.

This year the Library received 400 entries, our biggest intake in many years, from more than 25 schools, homeschooling programs and writing classes located in and around Paris.

The Library thanks the 44 judges who participated this year, as well as the small but active YAFF 2015 committee who took care of all of the details along the way.

HOW TO BEE!

Twenty-one finalists from fourth to sixth grades (CM1-6ème) competed in the seventh annual Paris Spelling Bee at the American Library in Paris on Sunday 15 March 2015.

In the 24th round, fourth-grader Riti Adrja Nalukurti took the top prize by spelling composition correctly, after successfully spelling ruckus and triathlon.

The second prize went to 10-year-old Alec Le Helloco, who spelled words such as unduly and referee before missing on the word cyst.

Before judges moved off-list, Riti spelled words like voortrekker, subterfuge, insidious, illusion, altruism and didactic, while Alec successfully fielded such words as perestroika, ridiculous, alderman, laboratory and patriarch.

Riti and Alec are both from EIB Victor Hugo School.

YAFF: The winners

Riti Adrja Nalukurti and Alec Le Helloco

Tying in third place were fifth graders Emma Mieszala from Lycée International Saint-Germain-en-Laye,
How to support programs for children and teens

Every year, parents stop into the Children’s Library to ask if there is anything we need from the U.S.

Sometimes these parents are taking their families stateside on an annual trip to visit family and friends back home, and sometimes they’re simply heading over for vacation, but their offers of supplies are all very generous — especially considering the amount of programming the Library does for children and teens.

If you would like to support our programming in a small but meaningful way, there are a few items we are always grateful to receive:

- Washable non-toxic markers
- Glue sticks, craft glue, and glitter glue
- Stickers (especially those related to book characters!)
- Children’s scissors (right or left-handed)
- Felt
- Googly eyes

Summer programs for the very young

Ages 1-3: Mother Goose Lap-Sit

The children’s librarian and team of volunteers are trying out a new time in order to accommodate a larger group of young readers and eliminate the waiting list for the Library’s popular Mother Goose Lap-Sit program on Thursdays. The program continues in June with sessions from 9h15-9h45 and from 17h00-17h30 on 18 June. There will be no Mother Goose Lap-Sit sessions in July and August, but sessions will resume again on 3 September!  

**Sign-up is required for this activity. Each child must be accompanied by an adult lap!**

Ages 3-5: Wednesday Story Hour

Our weekly interactive Story Hours will continue in July and August with one session each Wednesday from 14h30-15h30. Like all of our children’s programs, Story Hours are entirely in English. They feature reading, singing and hand rhymes and we always wrap up with a simple craft project. On 8, 15, 22, and 29 July children’s and young adults’ services intern Kirsty McCulloch Reid (pictured above) will be leading our Story Hours for children ages 3-5. Come in and enjoy her charming Scottish accent during our fun summer Story Hours!

**No reservation required!**

More online resources!

Members of The American Library in Paris are excited about our new online research tool for kids and teens: World Book Online.

The Library subscribed to the online encyclopedia last November and hosted a popular workshop on research basics to launch the resource.

World Book Online is a general reference website developed especially for younger library patrons. The site offers simple navigation, thousands of easy-to-read articles, multimedia, a biography center, and lots of games, interactive tools, and activities to help young library users discover accurate information quickly and develop online skills. We are now trying out the e-books available through World Book Online, so check them out and let us know what you think!

To try out any of our e-resources, Library members can log in through the online catalog (click on E-Sources from the menu on the left or under the drop-down search menu). You should have your Library card ready to log on.
Tuesday 16 June 19h30 ★
Hats and hatboxes à la mode
Library Visiting Fellow Susan Hiner of Vassar College discusses her research into French fashion accessories in the 19th century—specifically hats and the tools both of their production—headforms—and their dissemination—hatboxes—in nineteenth-century France. Her exploration considers these objects’ powers of animation and verisimilitude and the mythology surrounding the modiste. This talk is part of a wider book project entitled Behind the Seams: Women, Work and Fashion in Nineteenth-Century France.

Tuesday 23 June 19h30 ★
Authors in conversation: Turning life into fiction
Jessica Levine, author of The Geometry of Love, who has been leading a monthly writing workshop at the Library, and Sonya Chung, author of Long for This World, will talk about the relationship of life and fiction.

How does it happen that, using autobiographical material as a starting point, a novelist can end up by creating characters and stories opposite to her lived experience?

Wednesday 1 July 19h30
World War II’s ghost army
Author and filmmaker Rick Beyer speaks about his book and documentary Ghost Army, recounting the fascinating true story of how the Allies in World War II created a phony military division, replete with inflatable tanks, as a counter-intelligence maneuver to deceive German forces.

Wednesday 8 July 19h30
The Civil War’s global impact
The Cause of All Nations looks at how the American conflict evolved from regional interests into a worldwide struggle for the democratic gains born in the French and American revolutions—notably the abolition of slavery. Don Doyle of the University of South Carolina tells the story of the Civil War as it was viewed in Paris, London, Rome, and elsewhere abroad, and how American politicians maneuvered for international support as they conducted the war.

Coming in autumn 2015 …