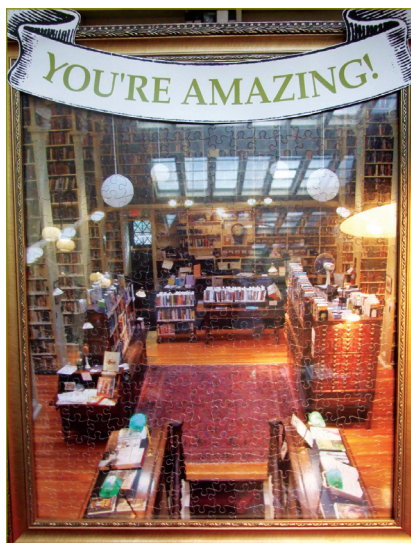


# Universal Penman

NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVIDENCE ATHENÆUM

## Message from Alison Maxell, Executive Director

*"Close friends contribute to our personal growth. They also contribute to our personal pleasure, making the music sound sweeter, the wine taste richer, the laughter ring louder because they are there."* Judith Viorst



Athenaeum friends: YOU completed the puzzle, making 2012-2013 the most successful fundraising year in Athenaeum history! Your unprecedented response propelled us past our dual goals of \$182,375 contributed and 450 donors participating by June 30. As a group, 473 of you gave a total of \$189,479, a 20% increase in the number of donors, and a 14% increase in the amount raised, compared to last year. And compared to two years ago, the number of supporters has increased by 128 (37%), and the total amount contributed

by \$47,797 (34%) - all thanks to you! We are grateful, too, to the RI Foundation's Archive, Document, Display, and Disseminate Fund, established by Herman Rose, for spurring us on with a challenge grant, and to our new Board President Candy Adriance and a loyal anonymous supporter for challenging more members to become donors.

More good news came in July! The RI Council for the Humanities (RICH) named Christina Bevilacqua as the recipient of the Tom Roberts Prize for Creative Achievement in the Humanities for her innovative Salon Series. In recognizing Christina's individual contributions, RICH also acknowledged the Athenaeum's expanded role in the community as a presenter, amplifier, and connector of local arts and culture. *Vision 2015*, our Strategic Plan, speaks clearly to the Athenaeum's belief that the active participation of a broad and diverse population is critical to fostering a democratic society. Christina lives by her words, "At the Athenaeum we strive every day to show that intellectual and cultural inquiry and debate, informed by history and open to all, are of personal and communal value." By embracing our founding mission and opening all programs to the public, the Athenaeum now enjoys increased public awareness and appreciation for who we are, what we do, and why it is important. Lynne McCormack, Director of the Department of Art, Culture and Tourism states. "The Providence Athenaeum has reinvented itself from an exclusive enclave of the East Side to a lively and diverse center for civic dialogue... now seen as the central hub for connecting ideas and action... [and] now reaches far beyond its Benefit Street footprint into the lives of all Rhode Islanders interested in continuing the state's legacy of intellectual pursuit and lively debate." Public perceptions are changing, and RICH's recognition is profoundly validating.

August ushered in new leadership. After nine years of board service, during which he oversaw the completion of our Strategic Plan, restoration of our financial health, major improvements to our building, and expansion of our community role, Deming Sherman relinquished the presidency to his successor, Candy Adriance, who inherits a strong institution poised to fulfill greater promise. Her imperative will be to empower the board, staff, members, and supporters to build on this momentum to secure the Athenaeum's future.

With our finances steadily improving, new leadership in place, and an enhanced public profile, we look to the new fiscal year with great anticipation. As you look to the fall for titles and topics to surprise and delight, conversations to compel and ignite, exhibits to inform and enlighten, your most precious gift to us is your participation. So, friends: be there! Make the music sweeter, the wine richer, and let the laughter ring louder.

And please... join me on **Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> for the 2013 Celebration of the Humanities** to celebrate Christina, the Athenaeum, and the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities.

*Alison Maxell*

## Preview of Fall Programs from Christina Bevilacqua, Director of Programs and Public Engagement

*"Conversation should be loved; it constitutes good society; friendships are formed and preserved through it. Conversation brings natural talents into play and polishes them. It purifies and sets the mind to rights and constitutes the great book of the world."* - from Pierre Richelet's *Dictionnaire de la Langue Francaise, Ancienne et Moderne*, 1728



Photo by Frank Mullin

Does that quote ring a bell? We featured it nearly eight years ago when announcing the creation of the Athenaeum Salons. I came across it again this summer while reading and re-reading some of the many books and articles that have been written on salon history and the art of conversation (and it is an art!) and was struck anew by both its astutely observed truths and the relevance of those truths to the Athenaeum's aims over its long life. Conversation, like reading, creates an opportunity for us to develop our own thoughts and become more known to ourselves by listening for, and cultivating our understanding of, the ideas of others.

(continued on page 5)

## MEMBER/DONOR NEWS

### By Danielle Kemsley, Director of Membership and Development

I have much to share in the way of news and features which I hope will enhance your experience as a member and/or donor here at the Athenaeum!

We are pleased to welcome **Stephanie Knott** as our **new Membership and Development Associate** (after our much-loved Robin Wetherill recently left us for an exciting position at Taylor Interior Design.) Learn more about Stephanie in the New Faces feature, page 4.

Stephanie's key responsibilities will include building a base of younger members, in part by promoting the **new Individual Under 35 membership** option (at a discounted rate of \$95 per year/\$7.92 per month). If you have suggestions of groups or individuals with whom she should consider connecting, please contact her at sknott@provath.org or 421-6970 x14.

Many of you have expressed interest in an **automatic membership renewal option** (saving you the bother of remembering to mail your renewal payment, and us the time, paper, and postage), as well as a **recurring/monthly gift option when you make donations via our website** (allowing you to give more/make giving more manageable). We happily report that we will be rolling out both over the next couple of months.

Congratulations to members/donors **Doug and Jenny Boone**, our lucky winners of the drawing for the Athenaeum puzzle displayed at the Circ Desk all year! If you were disappointed not to win, please contact me to learn how you can purchase one of your own.

Those of you whose giving this year or last placed you in the William Strickland giving circle or above (\$500+) should have recently received an invitation to our **Major Donors' Brunch at the Waterman Grille** later this month. If you are interested in becoming a major donor and receiving an invitation to this event as well as a series of intimate events at the Athenaeum and donors' homes later this year, please contact me.

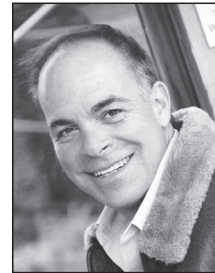
I hope that those of you who have mentioned your desire to attend more intimate, daytime events, and connect on a deeper level with the staff and your fellow members will be happy to hear about our new dedicated **member event series**, with three strands:

\* **Member excursions to watch National Theatre Live simulcasts at the Jane Pickens Theater in Newport.** Join us for *Othello* (Thursday 9/26, 2pm, starring Adrian Lester and Rory Kinnear), and *Macbeth* (Thursday 10/17, 2pm, starring Kenneth Branagh and Alex Kingston), broadcast live from the London stage.

\* **Poetry Aloud series:** We are reviving this favorite Athenaeum tradition where we read aloud poems that we love and would like to share with others, focusing on a different theme each time. Join us on **Thursday 11/7, 12-1:30pm** for **Love Poetry, Part 1: Celebrations of Love** (Part 2 will follow in the New Year).



\* **Spotlight on Members series:** We have become increasingly aware of the many Athenaeum members who are renowned in their fascinating fields of work, and would like to spotlight them and have them share their lives with you! Join us for a talk/photo presentation from **adventure travel journalist and author Peter Mandel on Tuesday 10/8, 12-1:30pm**, and a talk/reading/book signing from **veterinarian Dr. Vint Virga on his new book *The Soul of All Living Creatures* on Sunday 11/17, 3-5pm.**



**All events require a reservation; to RSVP to events, or to discuss anything mentioned here, please contact me at dkemsley@provath.org or 421-6970 x15.**

### CALLING ALL CAT LOVERS!

We are thrilled that the much-loved, well-respected **Dr. Cathy Lund, of City Kitty Veterinary Care for Cats**, will be giving two special **cat-related talks at the Athenaeum** this year. We will be holding some spots for the cat-loving members/donors amongst you, so please contact me at dkemsley@provath.org or 421-6970 x15 to be added to the invite list!



### FUNDING UPDATES!

**The Felicia Fund awards \$5,000 for the Athenaeum's expanded program initiatives.** In recognition of the Athenaeum's innovative, collaborative programming with a wide range of cultural, educational, and civic organizations, and its strategic initiatives to expand its audience, the Felicia Fund made its first award to the Athenaeum in fiscal year 2012-13. The Felicia Fund supports programs along the North East seaboard related to architecture, art, historic preservation, and related educational pursuits; we are thrilled to be among its beneficiaries!

**RI State Council on the Arts (RISCA) awards \$2,800 in Investment in Arts & Culture (IAC) Operating Support funding to the Athenaeum.** RISCA's IAC Operating Support grants support organizations that produce or present annual programs in the arts and have developed a funding relationship with RISCA over time. We are grateful for RISCA's long history of supporting our arts-related activities, including the Philbrick Poetry Project.



Athenaeum programs are made possible through major funding support from the RI Council for the Humanities, an independent state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



Athenaeum activities are made possible in part by a grant from the RI State Council on the Arts, through an appropriation by the RI General Assembly and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.



Our thanks to program season sponsor  
**Campus Fine Wines**  
for their generous support.  
Campus Fine Wines,  
127 Brook Street Providence, RI 02906  
(401) 621-9650 campuswines.com



Left to right: Athenaeum Executive Director Alison Maxell, H.P. Lovecraft (in bronze), sculptor Bryan Moore, project supporter Jovanka Vuckovic

## H. P. LOVECRAFT, HOME AT LAST!

Providence was the center of countless Cthulhu-inspired celebrations in August, when H. P. Lovecraft scholars and devotees from around the world converged here for NecronomiCon Providence, over a week's worth of events and activities in honor of our revered native son. At the Athenaeum, a standing-room-only crowd witnessed the unveiling of sculptor Bryan Moore's life-size bronze bust of Lovecraft, which has received a steady stream of visitors ever since. Our sincere thanks to all the organizers of the conference, and especially to Brian for this inspired work of art, which has already introduced a new and international audience to the Athenaeum! (For more Lovecraft news, see information below about our current Lovecraft exhibit and an upcoming talk on Lovecraft as bibliophile.)

## EXHIBITS IN THE PHILBRICK RARE BOOK ROOM by Kate Wodehouse, Collections Librarian

- *THE SHADOW OVER COLLEGE STREET: H. P. Lovecraft in Providence*

Curated by Holly Snyder, Curator of American Historical Collections and North American History Librarian, John Hay Library

On view in the Athenaeum's Philbrick Rare Book Room August 19-September 22

This exhibition, a collaboration between the John Hay Library and the Providence Athenaeum, provides selections from the extensive H.P. Lovecraft holdings at the Hay Library with contributions from the Athenaeum's own collections.

On Thursday, September 19 at 6pm, the John Russell Bartlett Society will present "A Tremendous Affection for Old Books: H.P. Lovecraft and His Personal Library," a talk by Donovan Louckes, webmaster of The H.P. Lovecraft Archive (HPLovecraft.com). The talk takes place at the Providence Athenaeum.

- *The Fantastic Forest: An Excursion through the Old Juveniles Collection*

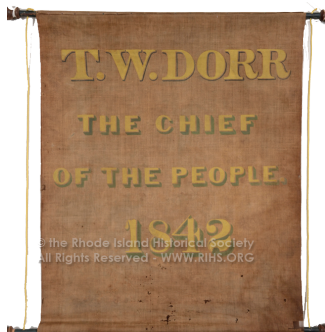
Exhibit is presented in conjunction with the RI Center for the Book's 2013 "Art of the Book Program," *Beware the Woods: Children's Books of the 18th & 19th Centuries*, celebrating the books intended for young minds and eyes.

Curated by Kate Wodehouse, Collections Librarian

On view in the Athenaeum's Philbrick Rare Book Room October 1-31

From cautionary tales to spelling books and fairy tales, RI Special Collections Libraries care for a treasury of children's books. The Athenaeum's exhibition is drawn from our Old Juveniles collection.

On Saturday, September 28, at 2pm, the RI Center for the Book will present "Vivid Imaginations: the History of the McLoughlin Bros.," a talk by Laura E. Wasowicz, Curator of Children's Literature at the American Antiquarian Society. The talk takes place at the John Carter Brown Library. For more information about the talk or other Art of the Book events, contact Kate Lentz at kate@ribook.org.



- *Thomas Wilson Dorr and the Rhode Island Rebellion of 1842*

Curated by Kate Wodehouse, Collections Librarian

On view in the Athenaeum's Philbrick Rare Book Room November 15 – December 31

On Friday, November 29, the Athenaeum and RI Historical Society will co-present Salon a with historian Erik J. Chaput on his book *The People's Martyr: Thomas Wilson Dorr and His 1842 Rhode Island Rebellion*.

## NEW FACES...

...at the Circ Desk, new assistants:

**Amanda Knox** received her BA in history from Salem State this spring. With six years of museum/archive experience from the Carpenter Museum in Rehoboth, MA, Amanda hopes to pursue a dual master's degree in Library and Information Services and History in order to continue working in the library and/or archive fields. She says, "I look forward to developing my library skills with the Athenaeum. It's simply wonderful to be able to interact with such kind and interesting people while being surrounded by the books that I love so much. I look forward to coming to work each day."



**Kathleen Bower** with over 17 years of service, is not new to the Athenaeum but returns anew to Circulation. Having worked most recently in the Membership/Development office, Kathleen says "While I enjoyed my research duties immensely, I look forward to working again at the Circ Desk where society reigns and all activities emanate..."

**Morgan Ross**, music technician, musician, and former MA resident, now lives on the East Side in Providence. He has a guitar-building business, among other enterprises. While building his business, he wanted to find a medium-to long-term day job that contributes something of lasting value to the community, and says "The Athenaeum fits the bill perfectly."



**And in the Membership and Development Office, a new associate:**

**Stephanie Knott**, a RI native with a BA in Psychology from Providence College, is currently enrolled in URI's Master of Library and Information Services program, with an anticipated graduation date of Spring 2014! She likes exploring new places, visiting museums, reading, painting, and spending as much time as possible with her kitten, Oona. "I tend to imagine the Athenaeum as a sort of book museum; an institution not only dedicated

to maintaining the integrity of the written word, but also dedicated to enriching the local culture through its collection and membership. The Athenaeum is that rare type of place that provides inspiration through its very existence, and that is why I treasure it."



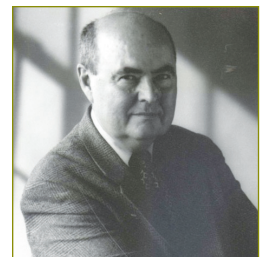
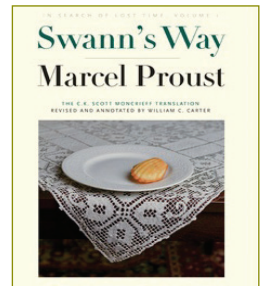
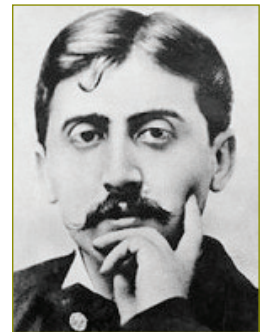
**SAVE THE DATE: ANNUAL FINANCIAL MEETING**

**Wednesday, October 16, 6-7pm**

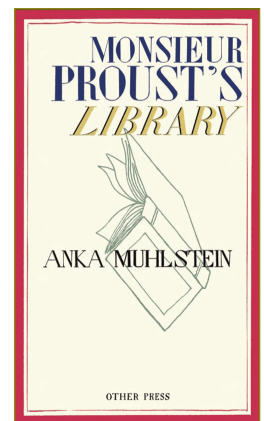
A review of fiscal year 2012-2013 activities and audited financials; all are welcome!

## PROUSTFEST 2013 – CELEBRATING THE SWANN'S WAY CENTENARY!

Marcel Proust published *Swann's Way*, the first volume of what was to become his seven-volume masterpiece, *In Search of Lost Time*, on November 14, 1913. Anniversary events have been taking place all over the world in this centenary year, including conferences, exhibits, and public readings. In recognition of this special moment, the Athenaeum's 2013 Proustfest activities include Salons with two leading Proust scholars, William C. Carter and Anka Muhlstein; an intimate, celebratory dinner at Pot au Feu featuring Proust-inspired food, wines, music, and readings; and special screenings at the Cable Car Cinema of *Time Regained*, director Raúl Ruiz's critically acclaimed film adaptation of the final volume of *In Search of Lost Time*. Carter, Proust's award-winning biographer, will discuss his new, annotated centenary edition of *Swann's Way*, which corrects previous translating missteps and includes enlightening notes on biographical, historical, and social contexts for Proust's work. Muhlstein will present her newest book, *Monsieur Proust's Library*, in which she traces the evidence of Proust the voracious reader in the work of Proust the writer, and offers not only a friendly introduction to the momentous *In Search of Lost Time*, but also an enticing survey of some of the finest work in French literature. Books by both authors will be available for sale and signing thanks to our friends at the Brown Bookstore. The Proustfest Salons are sponsored by vintagepens.com. For details on all Proustfest activities, check our website, or contact Christina Bevilacqua at [cbevilacqua@provath.org](mailto:cbevilacqua@provath.org) or 401-421-6970 x28.



William C. Carter, editor of *Swann's Way*



Anka Muhlstein, author of *Monsieur Proust's Library*



## FROM THE REFERENCE DESK

### By Carol Tatian, Reference Librarian

In the section of the reference area where Mr. Dewey organizes library material on sociology and anthropology, the 300's, are some of my favorite General Reference books. I thought they may be of interest to you as well.

*The Statesman's Yearbook 2013: the Politics, Cultures and Economics of the World* (R QUARTO 305 S29). Every country has its own entry, giving us an overview of historical events, statistics, climate, government, leaders, natural resources, religion, and culture. One review said "The fact that so much information can be crammed into one volume is a testament to the care and research involved."

*Peoples, Nations and Cultures: an A-Z of the Peoples of the World, Past and Present* (R 305.8 P39). "A fascinating exploration of the cultural and ethnic diversity of our planet."

*Atlas of Human Migration - from the Dawn of Humankind through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (R QUARTO 304 A84). "The compelling stories of the world's peoples and their migrations through time are enhanced by annotated maps and informative timelines. Photographs, paintings, and artifacts bring to life the history of human migration. A team of academic experts examines mass migrations - the motivations behind them, and their impact on the world."

*Encyclopedia of Race and Racism* (R QUARTO 305.8 M66, 3 vols.). The introduction states that race and racism are two different terms with different histories. This set explores the historical origin of these concepts and their social and scientific impact throughout history with well-researched articles showing how and why people came to believe racist theories and refuting those beliefs. Although the U.S. receives the most attention, the encyclopedia also provides a worldwide perspective.

## WITH A LOT OF HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS!

Please let these generous businesses, organizations, and individuals know how much you appreciate their investment in the Athenaeum's fall 2013 program and exhibit season! Vincent J. Buonanno; Dr. Joseph A. Chazan; City Kitty Veterinary Care for Cats; the Gertrude N. Goldowsky and Seebert J. Goldowsky Foundation; James Brayton Hall; Hope Club; Allen Kurzweil and Françoise Dussart; M&S Rare Books, Inc; nickynichtern.com; The Peck Building; RI Council for the Humanities; RI State Council on the Arts; Variable Data Printing; vintagepens.com; Yankee Travel; and several friends of the Athenaeum who wishes to remain anonymous.

Thanks also to our presenting partners: AS220; The Big Read, National Endowment for the Arts; Brown Bookstore; Cable Car Cinema; John Hay Library; John Russell Bartlett Society; Pot au Feu; Providence Preservation Society; Providence Public Library Special Collections; RI Center for the Book; RI Historical Society; Tomaquag Museum; Yellow Peril Gallery.

## TASTEFUL ATHENAEUM PUBLICATIONS NOW FOR SALE!

In 1980-81 the Athenaeum published a trio of cookbooks, written by Frank Fury and illustrated by Thomas Sgouros, *The Wild Olive*, *Sesame and Lilies*, and *Cakes and Ale*. They are now available at the Circulation Desk for \$3.75 apiece or \$10 for the set of three.

(Preview of Fall Programs continued from front page)

Over the course of this past year, a variety of separate occurrences have coincided to make me suddenly aware of the evolutionary and exponential accretion of meaning that the Salons have achieved since that first tentative Friday evening gathering in February 2006. From Salon conversations where someone would make reference to a previous year's Salon in order to connect to a point just made by a presenter, to Molly Lederer's perceptive observations in her piece on the Salons in last April's issue of *East Side Monthly*, to the RI Council for the Humanities' recent exciting public recognition of the Salons' community role of providing connection and context across disciplines and organizations, it is clear that the Salons are no longer merely a mad whim – they now have a life and history of their own. And because so many of you have made it a priority to be here Friday after Friday with your curiosity, your openness, your voices, your support, and your enthusiasm for learning about new people, new endeavors, and new ways of engaging in issues and ideas, that long-ago vision of an ongoing conversation that would thread itself through our lives and the life of our community is no longer a dream - it's a dream come true.

I was recently mulling the question of what the humanities bring to our lives, and realized that one of the things I value most is the way they teach us to ask questions, and then find in the answers even more questions - which perhaps explains why my no longer questioning the healthy present life of the Salons has made me suddenly very curious about their past and future. To answer these new questions and inspire many more, we will feature a Salon series this year called *The Cosmology of Conversation*, where we look at times and places in history (including 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century France, 18<sup>th</sup> century Rome, 19<sup>th</sup> century New York City, early 20<sup>th</sup> century United States, and a bit about Providence in another era as well) in which the conversational format flourished, satisfying both personal and communal goals. "Cosmology" includes the study of origins, structures, laws, and evolution, and evokes the idea of constellations, a metaphor found not infrequently in the study of salon culture. (A favorite example comes from one of our series speakers, salon historian Daniel Harkett, who relates that to convey the 19<sup>th</sup> century poet Delphine Gay's charismatic centrality within the social sphere, a contemporary critic referred to her as the "planet Gay.") As always at the Athenaeum, we seek to shape the future by means of what we can learn from the past – so I hope you will all become cosmonauts this year!

"Planet Athenaeum's" place in the cultural cosmos remains secure; fall programs will feature collaborations with Yellow Peril Gallery, the Partnership for Providence Parks, Community MusicWorks, FirstWorks, the John Russell Bartlett Society; Tomaquag Museum, and the RI Historical Society. Join us for a special Athenaeum-based edition of *Action Speaks* in October and an expanded centenary edition of *Proustfest* in November. And don't miss the November 8 Salon by Brown University's Laurel Bestock on *Egyptomania*, which will serve as a primer and prequel to a very exciting Spring 2014 Salon series and exhibit on travel, exploration, and natural history that will take as its muse the first giraffe to go to Paris.

Finally, in order to make best use of staff time and resources, our calendar cards are now edited to emphasize the essential information about our events, with fully detailed descriptions listed on the Programs page of our website. If you are not a computer user, or would prefer to have the full descriptions in printed form, just contact me at 401-421-6970 x28 or cbevilacqua@provath.org and I will print and mail the full descriptions to you. See you in the Salon!



# THE OWLET

News from The Children's Library FALL 2013

by Lindsay Shaw, Children's Librarian

I'm looking over my shoulder --- was that summer that just flew by? I guess it must be, because the energy in the Children's Library is ramping up, children returning from their vacations with tales to tell of their adventures and looking (at the last minute) for summer reading list books that they promised to read in July!

It was indeed a lovely summer with many visitors and breezy story hours at the Brown Street Park.

The Summer Book Worm Club's theme was "Hop, Skip and Jump to the Library" - and so many eager readers did just that, filling their reading journals with stickers and decorating the walls with their favorite titles.



Now the Children's Library calendar is cluttered with notes and plans, waiting for the season to begin! We have so much to look forward to: music, art, movies, clubs, and more. Be sure to read your Owlet e-mail messages so you don't miss any of the lively programming in store!



Top: Sing Along Story hour at the Brown Street Park; bottom left: Sea Shanty performance with the Whompers; bottom right: the cast of Trinity Repertory's children's performance of Romeo and Juliet

## ENVISIONING THE FUTURE THROUGH A NEW COLLABORATION

The Roger Williams University Community Partnership Center (RWU-CPC), which provides project-based assistance to nonprofit organizations, municipalities, government agencies, and low and moderate income communities in RI and Southeastern MA, will work with the Athenaeum's Building and Grounds Committee to undertake preliminary steps in revising our Facilities Master Plan. Using Building Information Modeling, the CPC will work with the Athenaeum to create digital representations of the building for use in future planning processes. The CPC's mission is to undertake and complete projects that will benefit the local community, while providing RWU students with experience in real-world projects that deepen their academic experiences. We welcome this expert assistance as we plan for the building's future uses and needs!

**FALL HOURS:** Mon – Thurs 9am to 7pm; Fri – Sat 9am to 5pm; Sun 1 to 5pm

**HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:** Columbus Day Mon 10/14; Veterans Day Mon 11/11; Thanksgiving Thurs 11/28; Christmas Eve/Day Tues-Wed 12/24-25; New Year's Eve Tues 12/31 (open 9-1); New Years Day Wed 1/1/14