

# Universal Penman

NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVIDENCE ATHENÆUM

## MESSAGE FROM ALAYNE BARNICOAT, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Athenaeum has many advocates who continually promote and support the institution, and it is heartening to see the community, staff, and membership coalesce in times of evolution. The strengthening of our cultural partnerships resulting from Kate's and Christina's "Cultivating Collaboration" project, the launch of the Contemporaries, the collaborative participation of Kate and Lindsay in the city-wide *Unicorns in Residence: Providence* exhibits and events, and the addition of new staff members have all served to increase the library's present relevance and promote development and stability. Your financial generosity makes such advancements possible, and I thank you all for your continued support.

Over the past month we have received applications from many strong candidates in our search for an Executive Director. As the process draws to a close, I look forward to the inspiration and creativity to be derived from a new director who will lead us into the Athenaeum's next chapter. Meanwhile the summer approaches and the staff and Board are completing the Athenaeum's strategic plan through 2020. And on the more playful side, Lindsay has a library full of programs to delight the young and old.

I also look forward to the fall with anticipation. Kate has reported that the restoration of the 11 elephant folios and three Grand-Jésus volumes of our prized edition of the *Description de l'Egypte* will be complete by the end of year, a process begun in 2006 and made possible by the Mary Dexter Chafee Fund with contributions from the Athenaeum and a special donor. I am happy to announce that the T-Loop hearing-assist equipment in the Reading Room will be operational by the start of our fall program season! Funded by generous support from the Ida Ballou Littlefield Memorial Trust and the Champlin Foundation, the system will aid those event-goers who request assistance in hearing our presenters.

Enjoy the summer! I hope that the long days ahead will provide you with ample time to relax, travel, and catch up on your reading. If not before, I'll see you at the Athenaeum Salon in the fall.

## THE CONTEMPORARIES CHARGE AHEAD

Holly Gaboriault, Membership and Development Associate

The Contemporaries marched forth in 2015 with a full calendar of events, happenings, the Salon, and books which led us down new paths of discovery and conversations. The contemporary fiction selections for the Contemporaries Reading Group spanned the globe, including African, Indian, and Cuban literature: *Galveston: A Novel* by Nic Pizzolatto; *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri; *Boy, Bird, Snow* by Helen Oyeyemi; *Dreaming In Cuban* by Cristina García; and *The Obituary Writer* by Providence author, Ann Hood. We strayed from fiction in March to celebrate the release of *Whipping Boy* by another Providence author, Allen Kurzweil, who joined our group for a lively discussion on a snowy Thursday evening. Our book club will continue to meet in September. If you are interested in joining, please email me for more information (hgaboriault@provath.org).



Contemporaries raptly listen to Carrie Taylor's tales of the Lippitts

Tours, wine, history, and exhibitions continued at several social 'jaunts' throughout the year. A curatorial tour of *Jackets Required: 40 Years of Record Album Cover Design* at the Fleet Library at RISD featured album covers designed by a who's-who of famous artists, led by RISD Technical Services Librarian, Robert Garzillo. Down the street, The Providence Public Library hosted an evening of its exhibition on typography, *Inhabited Type*, with Special Collections Librarian and fellow Contemporary, Jordan Goffin. Just last month we enjoyed some wine, gorgeous surroundings, and a side of history as we proudly partnered with Preserve RI and Carrie Taylor, Director of The Governor Lippitt House Museum, for exclusive Director's tours of the museum and a wine garden party (pictured above). We close our spring season on June 18 with Barbara Barnes of the Rhode Island Historical Society leading us on a literary tour of Benefit Street after which we'll watch the sunset under the pergola of the John Brown House as we sip the summer brew of Narragansett Beer. The friendships formed within the Contemporaries group are as special as the Athenaeum itself, and we look forward to another eclectic and thought-provoking year.



## FROM THE REFERENCE DESK...

Carol Tatian, Reference Librarian

Our Rhode Island Collection in Reference continues to be a hit with our members and researchers. I love all our special books with RI information as well. Many gems of RI history can be gleaned from our collection.

I am especially fond of a single volume printed in 1937, *Rhode Island, a Guide to the Smallest State*. It was "Written by Workers of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of Rhode Island," the WPA. There was a volume written for every state in the union, and called the "American Guide Series." I am sorry the individual authors are not listed, because the information is so well written and beautifully presented. The book includes pictures, maps, and an excellent index. About the Athenaeum, they write "The Providence Athenaeum was incorporated in 1831. Five years later it was joined with the older Providence Library Association, founded in 1753, by virtue of which the Athenaeum lays just claim to being one of the oldest libraries in the country... in July, 1838, they moved to the present quarters on College Hill. This building...upholds with taste and restraint the traditions of the Greek Revival...the façade, with its deep rectangular loggia supported by two fluted Doric columns, and its well-proportioned pedimented gable, presents a broad, solid, forthright appearance." Nicely put! (The call number is RI COLL R 917.45 F31R)



Dear Friends,

It is with a heavy heart that I announce my retirement from the Athenaeum this July.

I have been here for ten years (how quickly it has passed), and have enjoyed every minute of it! That, of course, is due to all of you, the best staff and membership there ever were.

However, it will be impossible to stay away, so I plan to continue to come in working as a volunteer on library projects and attending our fabulous programs.

I hope our paths will cross many times in the coming years.

With best wishes, Carol

**A IS FOR ATHENAEUM** Emily Rye, one half of Design Agency, the design team that is heading up the Athenaeum's visual identity redesign process (more on that in the fall!), recently taught a typography class at RISD that brought students into the library to pore over our collection, building, and all things typographic. Their multifaceted assignment was to find a letter (any letter - from books, magazines, fliers, signage, etc.) and create a 3D letter based on their selection. They then photographed their object in the library and used the images as well as a corresponding book title beginning with their letter to create striking posters (pictured right). Many of the students had never used a card catalog and were fascinated with the seemingly ancient technology and space. Hats off to Emily for conceiving of such a layered and Ath-centric project and to the students for their beautiful work!

## THE ATHENAEUM'S COLLECTION OF PERIODICALS

Kirsty Dain, Membership and Development Associate/Circulation Assistant



I would like to invite you to spend a few moments exploring a little-known section of the library, a section closely guarded by George Washington: the Athenaeum's collection of periodicals. To the left and right of the portrait of George Washington in the Reading Room you will find an array of periodicals to suit every taste. We have *Country Life* for Anglophiles, *Paris Match* for Francophiles, *Bon Appetit* and *Saveur* for the chefs among you, *Book Forum* and *The New York Review of Books* for literary aficionados, *Gardens Illustrated* and *Horticulture* for gardeners, and lots more besides. We carry a total of 57 titles ranging from *American Poet* to *Yankee*. What is more, excepting the most recent issue, they all circulate for two weeks with the opportunity to renew. Several Athenaeum members have discovered George Washington's secret and cancelled their personal periodical subscriptions as a result!



RISD student Young Chung shows off his 'E'



## MESSAGE FROM DANIELLE KEMSLEY, DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

### 2:1 Matching Gift Challenge will triple your donation!

We are thrilled to announce that a loyal Athenaeum supporter has stepped forward to issue a matching gift challenge for the final weeks of the fiscal year, to help propel us towards our Annual Fund goal of \$235,000 by June 30. Thanks to their generosity, all gifts received will be matched 2:1, or by 200%, to a maximum of \$15,000. So, your gift of \$25 will be boosted by a matching gift of \$50, becoming \$75; your gift of \$50 will become \$150; \$100 will become \$300, and so forth. We encourage your swift action to make your gift go further!



### Claim your rose!

If you've visited the library recently, you may have noticed a display of some very special roses above the circ desk, made from the pages of damaged/discarded books from the Athenaeum. If you've already made a donation this fiscal year – thank you so much! We have added a rose to represent your gift, whether the amount was \$5 or \$500. As we enter the final weeks of the fiscal year, with a goal of 520 participating donors by June 30 (and around a third of that number still to go,) it's in your power to complete the rose display by making your gift of any amount today!

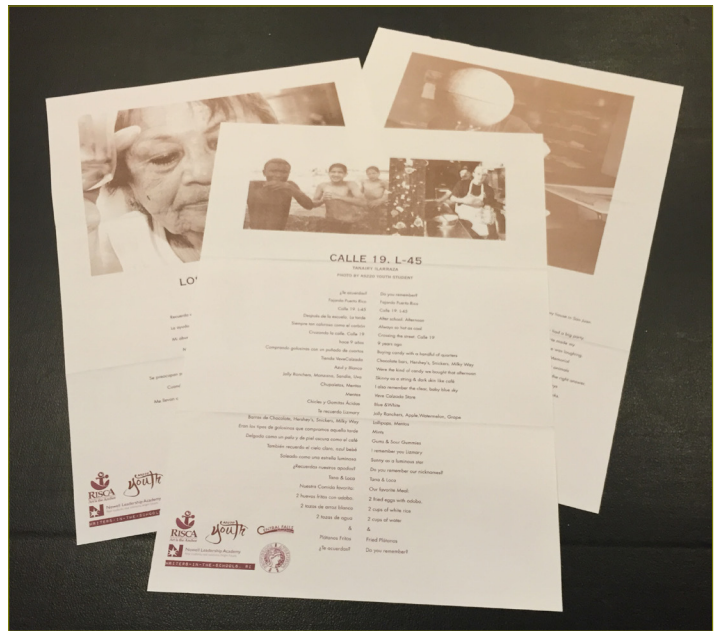
### What you are supporting:

With memberships covering only 16% of what it takes to keep the Athenaeum running, the loyal support of people like you is crucial in maintaining and enhancing the library's wide-ranging collections, historic building, dedicated staff, cherished Children's Library, dynamic programs, robust community partnerships, and its increasingly important role of cultural amplifier. The library couldn't continue to exist and thrive without your charitable contributions, and we are truly so grateful.

### Ways to give:

- Call Danielle Kemsley at 401-421-6970 x15 to make a gift by credit card, or to request information on making a gift of stock.
- Complete and return the enclosed gift envelope, or mail a check to: The Providence Athenaeum, attn. Danielle Kemsley, 251 Benefit Street, Providence, RI 02903.
- Drop off a check or fill in a donation envelope at the library's Circulation Desk.
- Make a secure donation via the Athenaeum's website ([providenceathenaeum.org/donate/donate.html](http://providenceathenaeum.org/donate/donate.html)).

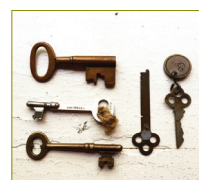
## BILINGUAL BROADSIDES, YEAR THREE!



In April, Writers-in-the-Schools, RI (WITS) participants from Nowell Leadership Academy (NLA) in Central Falls and Providence visited the Athenaeum to celebrate the publication of their original poems into bilingual broadsides. NLA students had worked throughout the year with WITS founder and Writer-in-Residence Tina Cane to develop their skills as readers and writers of poetry. In the spring, a selection of their original poetry was translated into Spanish by Cecilia Pirotto, and the English and Spanish versions were sent to the AS220 Youth printmaking workshop. There, with the assistance of Youth Instructor Atticus Allen, the AS220 printmaking students created artwork to complement the poems, and designed and printed broadsides combining the text and artwork. The broadsides will be distributed throughout the school and around Central Falls.

Our thanks to Tina Cane, Atticus Allen, and NLA Teaching Partner Reza Clifton and Guidance Counselor Rebeca Filomeno for their assistance. We are also grateful to the talented poets and artists from NLA and AS220, and we thank the RI State Council on the Arts for continued support of Athenaeum programming.

**FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM!** As just one component of the library's social media toolbox, the mobile photo-sharing app Instagram allows the Athenaeum to send out behind-the-scenes visuals and moments otherwise unseen.



The books to the left sit in the Philbrick Rare Book Room, their beautiful spines too eye-catching to escape a photo. The keys are from an ever-growing pile of Athenaeum artifacts collected over the years. The top left used to open the massive wooden front doors. Imagine carrying that on your keychain!

Whether you already have an account or are new to Instagram, be sure to follow @providenceathenaeum for more snapshots! To create an account, download the free Instagram app on your phone, click the logo when it appears, and follow the prompts.



## SUMMER DREAMS: A WISH LIST FROM THE PHILBRICK RARE BOOK ROOM

### Kate Wodehouse, Collections Librarian

The endowed book funds at the Athenaeum primarily support the circulating collections including the purchase of audio visual materials and periodicals, and some money is allocated towards conservation. With limited resources, the last book to be purchased for the Special Collections by the Athenaeum was in 2007. When a member recently asked me if I have a “wish list,” a few titles immediately sprung to mind:



An Athenaeum portrait of Robert Burns

***Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, by Robert Burns.**

**Kilmarnock: Printed by John Wilson, 1786.**

**1st edition**

In 1920, Mrs. Charles Bradley presented to the library her late husband's collection of 450 books by and about the Scottish poet Robert Burns. Charles Bradley was a lifelong member of the Athenaeum and a great enthusiast of Burns. His virtually comprehensive collection includes many rare early editions of Burns' work. However, the one book that eluded Mr. Bradley during his

lifetime was the scarce first edition of *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, published in Kilmarnock, 1786. The Burns Collection is located in one of the offices in the Philbrick Rare Book Room and is still cataloged utilizing the call number system developed by Mr. Bradley.



A plate from *History of the Indian Tribes of North America*, 1838-42

***History of the Indian Tribes of North America*, by Thomas McKenney & James Hall.**

**Philadelphia, 1838-42.**

**Volume 3**

**1st edition**

The Athenaeum acquired this spectacular folio set when it was published in 1838-42. The hand-colored lithographic plates of Native Americans were skillfully reproduced from portraits commissioned during land negotiations by the War Department, at the insistence of Thomas McKenney, Superintendent of Indian Trade.

Approximately two-thirds of the original oil paintings were produced by Newport artist Charles Bird King over a twenty year period. Unfortunately, most of the canvases were later destroyed by a fire at the Indian Gallery in Washington in 1865. According to archival records, the Athenaeum never acquired the third volume for unknown reasons, and it has been on the top of the list to acquire ever since.



*Raven bookplate*, Édouard Manet, ca. 1870s

***Le Corbeau [The Raven]*, by Edgar Allan Poe.**

**Translated by Stéphane Mallarmé**

**Paris: Richard Lesclide, 1875.**

**Illustrated with lithographs by Édouard Manet.**

**1st edition**

As many of you know, the Athenaeum has a special connection to Edgar Allan Poe through Providence poet Sarah Helen Whitman, whom he courted in 1848, a year before his death. Whitman corresponded with Stéphane Mallarmé while he was translating *The Raven* into French, and she received the Édouard Manet bookplate to “*Le Corbeau*” as a gift from the author. The Athenaeum owns the original publication of *The Raven and Other Poems* (New York, 1845), a large format copy illustrated by Gustave Doré in 1884, and a smaller facsimile of the Mallarmé/Manet publication from 1968, but has never owned the original 1875 French edition published by Lesclide in Paris. *Le Corbeau* is generally considered the first modern illustrated book and is one of the rarest and most sought-after Modern Illustrated Books.

While it is unlikely that any of the above books are sitting on your shelves at home, I will continue to dream that these titles as well as others on the wish list will one day join the Special Collections at the Providence Athenaeum. If you have any questions about these titles or other books in the Philbrick Rare Book Room, please contact me.

## NOTES FROM THE CIRCULATION DESK

We are very pleased to announce that Circulation Assistant Amanda Knox will take on the role of Weekend Supervisor following Tina Egnoski's departure at the end of May. Amanda will officially begin her new position after our August close.

In response to popular demand, we will be implementing a New Audio Book shelf for books on CD, in the same manner as new DVDs are displayed. Look for the purple and yellow “New” labels on the shelf immediately to your right as you enter the corner A/V alcove.



**EVER GRATEFUL** We warmly thank the June Rockwell Levy Foundation for their increasing support. The Athenaeum recently received a \$20,000 grant for general operating expenses, the most significant grant awarded to the library by the Levy Foundation to date.

**MAKING PROGRAMS POSSIBLE** In order to be able to offer our Salon and programs free of charge, and thus cultivate a conversation that includes all who are interested, we depend on the support of generous donors who believe in our public mission. We are very grateful to our season sponsors Campus Fine Wines, The Felicia Fund, John Nicholas Brown Center for the Public Humanities, The Susan Jaffe Tane Foundation, RI State Council on the Arts, and Taco/The White Family Foundation, and to the Brown Department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies and the Office of Brown's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for their contributions to the season.

**A ROUND OF APPLAUSE** We depend mightily on our Program Support Committee volunteers, who work tirelessly week after week to set up, serve, and clean up at the Salon and other events. Our hearty thanks to committee chair Grace Farmer and her incredible team of Regina and Ron Bartolini, David Berman, Adele Bourne, Dolores Connelly, Barbara Dunney, Peggy Edwards, Melissa Eliot, Elizabeth Farjardo, Carl Farmer, Faith Fogle, Ellen Goodlin, Don Harper, Lucia Huntley, Emily Kugler, Jane Lancaster, Lucy Ann Lepreau, Elsie Morse, Jack Nolan, Ray Olson, Lisa Popitz, Lynn Sanchez, Roger Seitz, and Cynthia Shattuck. We wish you a summer of relaxation after all your hard work!

**LOOKING GOOD** As part of the Providence Earth Day Spring Cleaning, volunteers gathered in April to ready our grounds for coming of spring and summer. Our heartfelt thanks to the green thumbs of Kristi Agniel, Anna Browder, Deidre, Tripp Evans, Grace Farmer, Sally Godfrey, Carrollyn Grace, Wendy Ingram, Douglas Kolacki, Wendy MacGaw, Bill Newkirk, Terry Selle, David Shapiro, and Janet Zwolinski.

### SUMMER HOURS

**June 1 through June 20:**

Mon-Thurs: 9am to 7pm

Fri: 9am to 5pm

Sat: 10am to 2pm

Sun: Closed

**June 21 through Labor Day (September 7):**

Mon-Thurs: 10am to 6pm

Fri: 9am to 5pm

Sat: 10am to 2pm

Sun: Closed

#### Closings

July 4<sup>th</sup>- Friday, July 3 and Saturday, July 4

Labor Day- Monday, September 7

The library will be closed for the annual August break from Sunday, August 2 through Sunday, August 16, reopening at 10am on Monday, August 17.

**Fall hours resume Tuesday, September 8**



(R to L) Tina Cane, Sarah Tourjee, and Kate Schiapira (obscured) write poems on demand

### NATIONAL POETRY MONTH CELEBRATION!

On April 24 the Reading Room was filled with poets reading and even writing poetry, right before our eyes! An opening reception gave everyone a chance to toast to the muse and to the much-anticipated arrival of spring, and then an eager audience settled back to listen as poets Tina Cane, Colin Channer, Michael Crowley, and Sarah Tourjee each read from their work. Following these readings, Tina Cane and Sarah Tourjee, along with poet Kate Schiapira, took their places at a bank of manual typewriters and audience members lined up for Poems-on-Demand. Amid the sound of clacking keys, the poets took requests and composed poems on the spot for a group of dazzled fans, and everyone enjoyed more refreshments. Rounding out the evening were readings by Mary-Kim Arnold and Kate Schiapira. The poets and their poems were ample proof that the art of poetry is alive and thriving, and that there is nothing like a variety of poetic voices to reacquaint us with the world around us, and to reanimate that world. We thank all the participating poets, with special thanks to Tina Cane and Kate Schiapira for their invaluable assistance in organizing the event.

For those who may have wondered about the Philbrick Poetry Project Celebration, please be assured that it will be back next spring, after we have a chance to rethink the format. Founded in 1991 in honor of Charles Philbrick, a noted poet who taught at Brown University, and his wife Deborah, who served as a mentor to many young poets throughout her life, the Project was created to showcase the work of emerging poets and promote the art of poetry in New England. In the years since the Project was founded, the world of writing and publishing has evolved dramatically. In order to be true to the memory of Charles and Deborah Philbrick's mentoring work with poets, we want to be sure that the benefits of the Project align with the needs and wishes of poets today. We are working with the Philbrick family to rethink the way we administer the Project, and we look forward to sharing news with you later in the year.



Our thanks to program season sponsor  
**Campus Fine Wines**  
for their generous support.

127 Brook Street, Providence, RI  
(401) 621-9650  
campusfinewines.com



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.





## THE OWLET

### NEWS FROM THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

Lindsay Shaw, Children's Librarian

Summer in the Children's Library is: unicorns in our garden, play exploration, songs and stories in the park, cool films for hot afternoons, and old books looking for new friends!

\* By the time you read this, we hope you have had a chance to admire the unicorn creations that adorned our gardens. As partners with *Unicorns in Residence: Providence* (a citywide interactive art experience including a public art piece by visual artist Camomile Hixon, curated by Helene Miller and hosted by the Partnership for Providence Parks and Department of Parks and Recreation), we were delighted to have children come to the Athenaeum to add their creative touch to this amazing public art series. We thank them for their inspired contribution to our artistic landscape!

\* Play exploration for infants and toddlers is something that has become an integral part of our songs and stories time for our youngest visitors. At the conclusion of our little program, the "baskets of fun" come down from their shelf to be emptied and examined. Each basket contains a seemingly random assortment of everyday items of different sizes and textures. From playing cards to cardboard tubes, silky scarves to felt balls and fancy coffee cans (these make a great noise when filled with mini Whiffle™ balls), all of these humble artifacts provide exciting exploration opportunities to little pre-readers.

\* On May 16th the Children's Library hosted our annual children's opera performance featuring the students of Brown Opera. Peter Traver, Alejandro Garcia Morales, Mariami Bekauri, and Paul Martino presented a pitch-perfect operatic version of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* directed by fellow student Emily Schwartz. Their lively and updated interpretation of this classic tale kept our young audience spellbound. Bravo and a standing ovation for Brown Opera!

\* It has so been many summers that we have been sharing songs and stories in the park that I can't quite remember when it all began. Athenaeum member Wendy Nilsson, who, along with her College Hill neighbors, was the driving force behind "Friends of the Brown St. Park" invited me to bring our Athenaeum story hours outdoors. Over the years this initiative has successfully expanded outdoor story hours to parks all over the city of Providence. Wendy is now the new Superintendent of the Providence Parks and Recreation Department. Her inspiring energy keeps children's librarians like me coming back to our city parks summer after summer.

\* Cool films for hot afternoons, need I say more? On the Thursday afternoons of July 9, 16, and 23, I will be showing short films based on picture books. Come in and wind down after a day of play in the hot sunshine.

\* Last summer our reading challenge was "Around the World with Folk and Fairytales." We placed marks on a big world map to correspond with a folk or fairytale's country of origin. This summer our challenge is to see who can read the oldest book. Our collection is bursting with long forgotten titles that brought joy to parents, grandparents, and even great-grandparents. With the exception of well-known classics, these old treasures rarely pull attention away from the popular titles of the last 15 years. Give an old book a chance and make a new friend! *We double dog dare you!*

As always, thank you to our enthusiastic community partners and all of the many families who lovingly support our library. Happy Summer!



(L) Unicorns in our garden, (R) Brown Opera performs *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*



(L) Baskets of fun!, (R) Read an old book...make a new friend!

**End Papers:** At this time we bid a fond adieu to Nicky Nichtern who has worked as the Athenaeum's graphic designer since 2006. Nicky will continue her consulting business while she also focuses her energies into transforming many of the creative projects that reside in her "do these someday" drawer - from dreams into realities.