From the Head Librarian: Growing in Good Ways

Despite working in this book-abundant Library, I still cannot resist buying and collecting books myself. I recently took home Richard M. Ketchum's 2002 book *Divided Loyalties: How the American Revolution Came to New York*. It's a great read. Many books on this turbulent period of New York history, including Ketchum's, refer to our great institution and its six public-spirited founders.

Our collection has grown since those early years—from 3,100 volumes in 1789 to 5,000 in 1793, 31,000 in 1850, and 100,000 in 1900. When we opened on 79th Street in 1937, our holdings stood at 150,000 volumes, and now the number is around 275,000. In a parallel trend, when we reopened in 1789 following the Revolutionary War, the Library had 239 subscribers. We start 2007 with roughly 3,000 member households.

Given all this healthy growth, we continue to experience increased circulation of books and consistently busy use of our reading, writing, and research rooms. Recent member feedback leads me to reflect on the various functions of our building and to offer a gentle reminder. We notice that members use the Large Study Room and the computer/microfilm room for diverse activities. Please be as respectful as possible of your neighbors in the "silent" rooms on the Fifth Floor. Also, please remember that cell phones and portable listening devices cannot be used in the building.

I finish my column with some exciting news. The February 8th issue of the *New York Law Journal* features a piece by our trustee William J. Dean. His article, "Book Selections of Founding Fathers," is a brief summary of the Society Library's early years, when George Washington, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton were borrowers. Their use of our collection is shown in our first existing charging ledger, for 1789 to 1792. Mr. Dean describes it as "a priceless but crumbling possession." The Library has just received an anonymous \$5,000 donation toward a fund to professionally conserve this golden gem of our archives and of the country's early national history. Our long-range plans also include digitization and online publication of the first ledger. I will keep you posted on this important opportunity.

I look forward to seeing you at the reference desk.

Mark Bartlett Head Librarian

The Library thrives and prospers through the generosity of our members and contributors. To join, renew, or make a contribution in support of our activities, send mail to the address below, visit our website, *www.nysoclib.org*, or call the Development Office at 212-288-6900 x214.

THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY
53 EAST 79TH STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10021



NOTES

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 2, MARCH/APRIL 2007

From the Chairman of the Board

Many of you may have read the sobering report in the February 7 *New York Times* about a diary published by Saad Eskander, director of the National Library and Archive in Baghdad. This brave librarian's online journal describes the harrowing conditions he and his colleagues endure to maintain this important repository of knowledge amidst the civil war that is devastating his ancient city. In slightly flawed English, he writes vividly and touchingly of the murder and kidnapping of his fellow librarians, the exhausting effort to

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Registration is required for all events. To reserve spaces, contact the Events Office at 212-288-6900 x230 or events@nysoclib. org. More information on all programs is listed inside.

Thursday, March 22, 6:00 P.M. Play Reading Group I

Rob Ackerman

Wednesday, March 28, 6:30 P.M. "Painter and Patrior of Japan, Watanabe Kazan" Donald Keene

Monday, April 9, 5:30 P.M. "Bringing Home the Exotic"

"Bringing Home the Exotic"
Exhibition Launch and Reception
with Laurence Bergreen

Tuesday, April 17, 6:30 P.M.
The Spoken Word
Marie Ponsot

Thursday, April 19, 6:00 P.M.
Play Reading Group II
Rob Ackerman

Wednesday, April 25, 6:30 P.M.

A Long Way Gone
Ishmael Beah

Tuesday, May 1, 4:30 P.M. History—It Can't Happen Without You Susan Buckley and Elspeth Leacock

Thursday, May 3, 5:30 p.m.
The New York City Book Awards
Ceremony and Reception

Thursday, May 10, 6:00 P.M. Young Writers Awards Ceremony and Reception

Thursday, May 17, 6:00 P.M.
Play Reading Group III
Rob Ackerman

restore and keep open a building ravaged by burning and looting, and the frustrations of imploring government officials to provide desperately needed



The Iraq National Library and Archive

funds, when they are streched thin with military and medical allocations.

From the comfort of our own civilized haven on 79th Street, it is sad to observe the struggle of this leading center of culture in what was once the cradle of civilization. It was in Nineveh (on the Tigris, north of modern Baghdad) that the Assyrian king and lover of literature, Ashurbanipal, created one of the great libraries of ancient times over his long reign, 668-627 B.C. It was there in the late nineteenth century that British archaeologists unearthed the most complete text of the Epic of Gilgamesh. Tyrant though he was—it is said that many of the thousands of cuneiform tablets he acquired for his impressive library were looted from other collections—Ashurbanipal surely would not have hesitated to devote his resources to protecting the collections, facilities and personnel of his great library's modern successor.

But there may be hope in the history of our own distinguished institution's perseverance. The New York Society Library is no stranger to the deprivations of warfare. First established in a room in what was then City Hall, it was looted by British soldiers during the Revolutionary War occupation of New York City. A trustee reported that the Redcoats bartered our stolen books for grog. For more than fourteen years (1774-1788), the Library was closed, "the accidents of the late war having nearly destroyed the former Library," as mournfully noted in our minutes. Yet the Society Library proudly rose from the ashes. After the war, we opened our doors in another room in the same building, now remodeled as Federal Hall to house the fledgling United States government. Readers such as George Washington, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton helped revive and enhance our status as a refuge for culture, and hundreds of volumes were recovered from storage in St. Paul's Church. We were able to rebuild our collections and embark on more than two centuries of uninterrupted service to readers and writers. May it be so for our colleagues at the National Library and Archive in Baghdad.

You can read Mr. Eskander's online diary through the British Library's website at http://www.bl.uk/iraqdiary02.html. The National Library's own site is www.iraqnla.org/wpeng/.

Charles G. Berry Chairman of the Board

THE 2006 NEW YORK CITY BOOK AWARDS

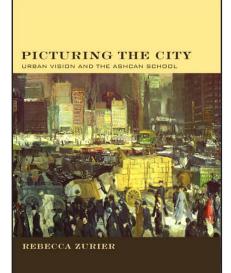
CEREMONY THURSDAY, MAY 3, 5:30 P.M., MEMBERS' ROOM

The New York City Book Awards are given to current authors who have captured the essence of New York City. This year's jury members are Constance Rogers Roosevelt, chair; Lucienne Bloch, Barbara Cohen, Jules Cohn, Joan K. Davidson, Ellen Feldman, Martin Filler, Roger Pasquier, Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, Daniel M. Rossner, and Meg Wolitzer.

This year's awards will be presented at a ceremony and reception honoring the winning authors and their publishers. Hosting will be Mike Wallace, a New York City Book Award and Pulitzer Prize winner for *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (1999). Mr. Wallace serves as director of the Gotham Center for New York City History.

Library members are cordially invited to hear the presentations and greet the authors. Please contact the Events Office at 212-288-6900 x230 or events@nysoclib.org to place a reservation.





AWARD FOR ART

PICTURING THE CITY: URBAN VISION AND THE ASHCAN SCHOOL by Rebecca Zurier

University of California Press

"If the Ashcan School brought a special and embracing eye to the city, Rebecca Zurier in her richly contextual and impressively interdisciplinary book explains and evokes that historically specific urban vision in all its richness. Finally, in *Picturing the City*, we have the

study these painters have long deserved. And we gain new and delightful access to New York City at the moment of its emergence as a compelling embodiment of metropolitan modernity."

—Thomas Bender, New York University

BIOGRAPHY OF A AN AMENITACTURAL RIZIGET TENEMENT HOUSE OF 57 ORCHARD ST IN NEW YORK CITY

AWARD FOR CULTURAL HISTORY BIOGRAPHY OF A TENEMENT HOUSE IN NEW YORK CITY

by Andrew Dolkart

University of Virginia Press

"...a fascinating history, very well written and researched, and lavishly illustrated. The contribution of the book as a biography enables Professor Dolkart to discuss the design of the building in relationship to

the changing social fabric of the Lower East Side."

—Marta Gutman, The City College of New York



ELY JACQUES KAHN, ARCHITECT

BEAUX-ARTS TO MODERNISM IN NEW YORK

AWARD FOR ARCHITECTURE

Ely Jacques Kahn, Architect: Beaux-Arts to Modernism in New York

by Jewel Stern and John A. Stuart

W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

"A model study of one of New York's most important commercial designers."

—Christopher Gray, The New York Times

CHILDREN'S LIBRARY EVENTS

- To reserve spaces, contact the Children's Library at 212-288-6900 x234 or children@nysoclib.org.
- & Listed fees may be paid at the door.
- A Children's Calendar listing events for younger children is sent monthly by mail and e-mail. To receive it, contact the Events Office at 212-288-6900 x230 or events@nysoclib.org.

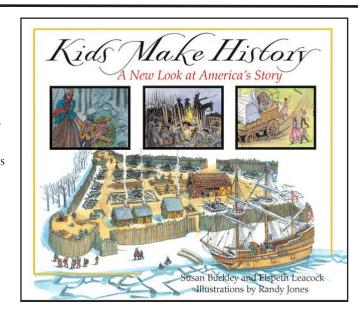
SUSAN BUCKLEY AND ELSPETH LEACOCK HISTORY—IT CAN'T HAPPEN WITHOUT YOU

FOR GRADES THREE THROUGH SIX TUESDAY, MAY 1, 4:30 p.m.,

Members' Room, \$5 per person

Elspeth Leacock and Susan Buckley are co-authors of *Kids Make History* and *Journeys for Freedom*, as well as the award-winning children's historical atlases *Journeys in Time* and *Places in Time*. In this program, they will talk about young people who have made history from Pocahontas to Lynda Lowery, the youngest marcher in the 1965 Selma march, and show audience members how they, too, are history makers. "Kids have been making history in the United States for centuries," says Buckley. "Our goal is for kids to see they are part of history."

Elspeth Leacock's interest in journeys and history began on a childhood trip to Naskapi Indian country in Canada. She holds a



degree in American history and has been praised by critics and teachers for her innovative textbooks and educational tools. Buckley, a Library member since 1978, has worked in educational publishing for almost four decades, directed programs for the National Endowment for the Humanities, and acted as general editor of the major textbook series *We the People*.

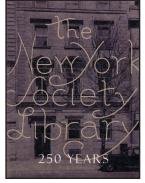
THE 2007 YOUNG WRITERS AWARDS CEREMONY

THURSDAY, MAY 10, 6:00 P.M., MEMBERS' ROOM

Entries for the 2007 Young Writers Awards competition for children in grades 3 through 12 will be accepted until Monday, April 9. Children and grandchildren of members are invited to submit a short story or essay, fiction or nonfiction, or a poem, on a New York City theme. All entries are subject to the competition rules, which are available at the circulation desk or on the web at www.nysoclib.org/kids/young_writers.html, or by mail by calling 212-288-6900 x230.

All members are cordially invited to the Young Writers Awards Ceremony and reception, which will honor the winners of our annual competition. Awards will be presented in the prose and poetry categories by judges Dave Johnson, Robert Quackenbush, Carol Weston, and Edra Ziesk, and attendees will be able to read the winning entries and greet their writers. Reservations are not required for this awards ceremony; questions may be directed to the Events Office at 212–288–6900 x230 or events@nysoclib.org.

Anniversary Commemorative Book Still Available



In honor of our 250th anniversary in 2004, the Library published a book, *The New York Society Library: 250 Years*, which includes essays on the history of the Library and the city, excerpts from a quarter millennium of publications and correspondence, and tributes from contemporary members. If you are new to the Library and have not yet received a copy of the book, or if you never picked one up, please ask for one at the front desk. The book is free to members.

Dear Mrs ting,

I'm (veribly forry about these books. I don't think that I have ever done such an awful thing before.

I estanly voil do it ogain.

I hope you'll forgive me.

Sixually yours

Penelope Droport

STAFF CHANGES

New Circulation Department Structure



Brandi Tambasco

We are happy to announce that since the promotion of Jane Goldstein to Assistant Head Librarian and Diane Srebnick to Development Assistant (reported in the January *Library Notes*), further changes have been made in the Circulation Department. Patrick Rayner, a circulation assistant since 2003, is the new Circulation Supervisor. He will handle scheduling and respond to questions at the front desk. Some of Patrick's former tasks, including our Interlibrary Loan service, are now taken over by circulation assistant Brandi Tambasco, who has been with us since October, and newcomer Carolyn Waters. Feel free to congratulate Patrick and greet Brandi and Carolyn when you see them at the desk.



Carolyn Waters

LOOKING FOR A MAGAZINE?

The Library's current periodical subscriptions and where to find them

In response to questions from members, below is a list of magazines and newspapers to which the Library currently subscribes, and where the current issue is located. Back issues for most of these magazines are stored on Stack 11; our collection of historic periodicals is also available to researchers. While the day's issue of the *New York Times* is kept in the Members' Room, approximately a month's worth of back issues can be found in the Reference Room on the first floor. Inquire at the desk for more information about access to any periodicals, or check our website at www.nysoclib.org/periodicals.html. If you have suggestions for new subscriptions, send them to acquisitions@nysoclib.org or fill out a call slip at the front desk.

CURRENT ISSUE IN THE MEMBERS' ROOM

American Heritage	Current History	The National Interest	Raritan
American Historical Review	Dance Now	National Review	Salmagundi
American Quarterly	The Financial Times	Natural History	Scientific American
The American Scholar	Foreign Affairs	The New Criterion	Smithsonian
Archaeology	Forward	The New Republic	Time
Architectural Digest	Georgia Review	New York	Time Out New York
Art in America	Granta	The New York Post	U.S. News & World Report
Atlantic Monthly	Harper's Bazaar	The New York Times	Vanity Fair
The Believer	Harvard Business Review	The New Yorker	The Virginia Quarterly Review
The Bulletin of the Metropolitan	Harvard Health Letter	Newsweek	Vogue
Museum of Art	History Today	Opera News	The Wall Street Journal
Business Week	The Hudson Review	The Paris Review	The Weekly Standard
The Christian Science Monitor	The Literary Review	Parnassus Poetry Review	The Wilson Quarterly
The City Journal	The Magazine Antiques	PC Magazine	The Yale Review
Commentary	The Nation	The Progressive	
Crain's New York Business	National Geographic	A Public Space	

CURRENT ISSUE AT CIRCULATION DESK

American Libraries	The Economist	The Library of Congress	The New York Review of Books
Bookforum	The Guardian Review	Information Bulletin	Publishers Weekly
Booklist	The Guardian Weekly	The Literary Review	The Spectator
Chronicle of Higher Education	Library Journal	The London Review of Books	The Threepenny Review
Consumer Reports		The New York Observer	The Times Literary Supplement

CURRENT ISSUE (and some back issues) IN THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

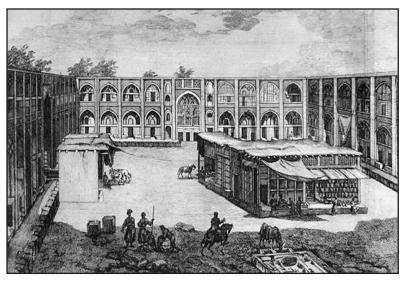
American Girl	FamilyFun	National Geographic Kids
Boys' Life	Highlights for Children	Ranger Rick
Cricket	MUSE	School Library Journal

EXHIBITION FROM THE RARE BOOK COLLECTIONS

Bringing Home the Exotic: Europeans as Foreigners 1670-1840 Exhibition Opening and Reception Monday, April 9, 5:30 p.m., Members' Room

The Library is proud once again to display a selection of treasures from our rare book collections. The new exhibition will profile travel and exploration books by men and women from Western Europe who visited India, the Middle East, Tibet and other distant places. Rare Book Librarian Arevig Caprielian and Events Coordinator Sara Elliott Holliday are compiling a brief catalog with bibliographic and historical information on the books and their authors.

Library members and their guests are cordially invited to an opening reception on Monday, April 9, where Library trustee and author Laurence Bergreen will share reflections on the history and attitude of European exploration. Mr. Bergreen is the author most recently of Over the Edge of the World: Magellan's Terrifying Circumnavigation of the Globe, a New York Times Notable Book of 2003. He has also written acclaimed biographies of Louis Armstrong, Al Capone, and Irving Berlin. He serves as a Featured Historian for



A caravanserai in Isfahan, Persia, drawn by Cornelis de Bruijn, one of the exhibition's featured travelers

the History Channel and is currently working on a book about the travels of Marco Polo. Please contact the Events Office at 212-288-6900 x230 or *events@nysoclib.org* to make a reservation for the opening.

After April 9, be sure to stop by the second-floor landing and see the ongoing exhibition. Non-members are also welcome to visit the exhibition, but please check with the front desk before taking a guest upstairs.

THE SPOKEN WORD

To reserve spaces, contact the Events Office at 212-288-6900 x230 or events@nysoclib.org.

Listed fees may be paid at the door.

MARIE PONSOT

Tuesday, April 17, 6:30 p.m., Members' Room, \$10 per person



Marie Ponsot is the author of numerous poetry collections including *True Minds* (1957), *Admit Impediment* (1981), *The Green Dark* (1988), *The Bird Catcher* (1998), winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award, and *Springing* (2002). In the time between her first and second collections, she taught composition and raised seven children, both major sources for her poetry. Poet and critic William Logan observed that she "finds more drama in spending a day at the beach, or telling a story to some sleepy youngsters, than most poets could in the fall of Troy."

Ms. Ponsot has also taught at New York University and

Columbia University and given master classes at the 92nd Street Y. Other honors include a creative writing grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Delmore Schwartz Memorial Prize, and the Shaughnessy Medal of the Modern Language Association.

Asked why poetry matters, Ponsot replies, "There's a primitive need for language that works as an instrument of discovery and relief, that can make rich the cold places of our inner worlds with the memorable tunes and dreams poems hold for us."

Antepenultimate

His work describes for us eons of cycles of sun, drought, earthquake, ice, calm, & what they have done for us. He earns his living learning history & likelihood by reading trees, sliced dead ones. Me too but

with live ones, some of them aged & hollowing, for instance this pear tree

its elbow extending one tall young branch good for a decade or so leafed out & flexibly offering for ripening its always antepenultimate pear.

LIBRARY LECTURES

To reserve spaces, contact the Events Office at 212-288-6900 x230 or events@nysoclib.org.

& Listed fees may be paid at the door.

DONALD KEENE

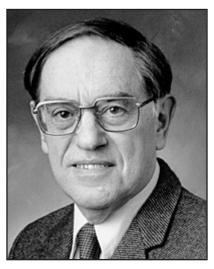
WATANABE KAZAN: PAINTER AND PATRIOT OF JAPAN WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 6:30 P.M., MEMBERS' ROOM, \$10 PER PERSON

Donald Keene is considered one of the leading scholars of Japanese literature both in the United States and in Japan. He is the author of twenty-five books in English and thirty in Japanese, including many now-standard studies of Japanese literature and culture and translations of classical and modern Japanese works. These include a four-volume history of Japanese literature; a book of personal essays, *The Blue-Eyed Tarokaja*; and most recently *Frog in the Well*, a biography of Watanabe Kazan.

The first major Japanese intellectual to learn from the West as well as from his own tradition, Kazan was a famous artist, a Confucian scholar, a samurai, and a critic of the shogun government. Since his death in 1841, Kazan has continued to be widely esteemed as an artistic and ethical example in Japan. In this event, Dr. Keene will discuss Kazan's life and influence using slides and talk briefly about his own experience as a scholar in two different cultures.

In addition to his writing, **Donald Keene** served as Professor of Japanese at Columbia University from 1955 to 1992 and has been a visiting professor at six Japanese colleges and

universities. He has also received numerous literary awards and honorary degrees from institutions in both countries. In 2002, the Japanese government named him a "Person of Cultural Merit," making him only the second non-Japanese citizen to receive this high distinction.



ISHMAEL BEAH

A LONG WAY GONE: MEMOIRS OF A BOY SOLDIER WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 6:30 p.m., MEMBERS' ROOM, \$10 PER PERSON

At age twelve, Ishmael Beah lived with his family in a small town in Sierra Leone and dreamed of American hip-hop and dance. Then town and family were destroyed in the country's bloody civil war, and he was picked up by a government militia. By age thirteen, Beah had become one of the world's 300,000 child soldiers, forced through drug addiction and threats to commit atrocities. Three years later, Beah was released to a UNICEF rehabilitation center, where he struggled to regain his humanity and reenter the civilian world.

A Long Way Gone is the first comprehensive first-person account of this widespread phenomenon by a child soldier rather than a journalist or novelist. Author Sebastian Junger says it is "one of the most important war stories of our generation. The arming of children is among the greatest evils of the modern world, and yet we know so little about it because the children themselves are swallowed up by the very wars they are forced to wage. Ishmael Beah has not only emerged intact from this chaos, he has become one of its most eloquent chroniclers. We ignore his message at our peril."

Ishmael Beah, now resident in the United States, graduated from Oberlin College in 2004. He is a member of Human Rights Watch Children's Rights Division Advisory Committee and has spoken before the United Nations on several occasions. *A Long Way Gone* is his first book.





READING GROUPS

To reserve spaces, contact the Events Office at 212-288-6900 x230 or events@nysoclib.org.

Reading Groups and Workshops are free of charge.

READING PLAYS FOR FUN AND UNDERSTANDING:

AMERICAN FAMILY DRAMA WITH ROB ACKERMAN

THURSDAYS, MARCH 22, APRIL 19, AND MAY 17, 6:00 P.M., MEMBERS' ROOM

Rob Ackerman is a widely produced playwright whose works include *Origin of the Species*, made into an award-winning independent film, and *Tabletop*, which received a 2001 Drama Desk Award.

In this group, participants will read the play aloud under Mr. Ackerman's guidance. Parts will be assigned by lottery, and everyone who wishes to read will have an opportunity. The idea is to bring the story to life in real time; no theatrical experience is required and there is no need to perform.

Plays for discussion: March 22: Ancestral Voices by A.R. Gurney

April 19: Loons by Rob Ackerman

May 17: The Trip to Bountiful by Horton Foote

Copies of the Gurney and Foote plays will be made available for purchase from the Events Office. Mr. Ackerman's own play *Loons* has not yet been published; copies will be distributed at the April 19 meeting.



Due to the overwhelming response to this group in the fall 2006 season, Professor McDonough will be offering it again on March 14, April 4 and May 2 at 11:00 A.M. Members waitlisted for the fall group have first priority; however, a handful of spaces are still available. Inquire with the Events Office if you would like to participate.

TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOPS

- To reserve spaces, contact the Events Office at 212-288-6900 x230 or events@nysoclib.org.
- These free workshops take place in the Whitridge Room and last about 90 minutes.
- More information on all classes being offered is available at www.nysoclib.org/tech/.

THURSDAY, MAY 3: EXPLORING AND TRAVELING

- **10:00** A.M. Google Advanced Features Taught by Ingrid Richter For Internet users Explore basic and advanced features of the Google search engine.
- **2:00** P.M. Booking Travel Online New Class Taught by Keren Fleshler For Internet users

 This class will focus on the variety of websites that allow you to purchase tickets, reserve accommodations, and read personal traveler reviews of the places you want to go.

Tuesday, May 8: Writing and Reading

- **10:00 A.M.** Microsoft Word and Excel Taught by Ingrid Richter For PC users A brief overview of these popular programs.
- **2:00 P.M.** Purchasing Books Online New Class Taught by Marie Honan For Internet users Learn how to find the best deals for just the title and edition you want.

Wednesday, May 16: Storing and Sending

- **10:00 A.M.** Digital Images Taught by Ingrid Richter For advanced computer users Learn how to create, store, edit, and send photos online.
- **2:00** P.M. Copying Files and Burning CDs New Class Taught by Keren Fleshler For PC users Learn how to burn CDs and transfer your files (music, Microsoft Office documents, images, etc.) to and from removable storage devices, also including mp3 players and USB memory sticks.

Wednesday, May 23: Creating and Discovering

- **10:00** A.M. Creating a Web Page New Class Taught by Brandi Tambasco For advanced Internet users Learn to create your own quick, easy, and free web pages, with a taste of more advanced techniques for establishing your presence on the Internet.
- **2:00** P.M. Navigating New York Online Taught by Patrick Rayner For Internet users Members-about-town will learn about searching for restaurants and menus, maps, movie tickets, and more.

