

Books & People

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The Society Library Index: 2018

2018 was another busy and exciting year at the Society Library. This numbers-based snapshot reveals some recent goings-on.

Years that have passed since the Library's founding: **264**

Years we have been open: **250**

(The Library was closed for 14 years during the American Revolution, reopening in 1789)

Years in our current home: **81**

Signs throughout the Library to remind our members

No food or beverages—No cell phone calls: **16**

Number of libraries in the American Membership Libraries Group: **17**

Latest member of the MLG: Folio—The Seattle Athenaeum
(founded 2015, admitted in 2018)

New members who joined the Library in
2018: **540**

Most impressive use of mobile technology:
Woman heard about the Library while
hiking in Alaska and joined online.

Tours of the building: **737**

Busiest month for tours: August

Busiest hour for tours overall: 2-3 PM

Active memberships at year's end: **2,937**

Active members for over 25 years: **623**

Active members for over 40 years: **208**

Longest current membership: **69 years**

Books published by members in 2018
(that we are aware of): **26 (by 25 members)***

Books, audiobooks, and ebooks cataloged
for the collection in 2018: **4,235**

Book donations added to the Library's
collection: **344**

Number of books purchased with money
from book funds established by Library
members: **1,423**



Greetings from the Head Librarian

It may be obvious, but we loved capturing the statistics for the Society Library Index. A mix of the serious and silly, it truly encapsulates a year in the life at the Library.

One number stuck out to me, though, because it marks a disquieting trend. Total book checkouts in 2018 were 66,694, representing a decline of 36.7% over the past ten years. This drop in circulations is not unique to our Library, and I've read with concern the studies showing that Americans' time spent reading for pleasure has dropped precipitously in recent years. We are increasingly distracted, interrupted by emails, texts, and notifications on our devices, which impede our ability to pay attention to anything for very long. Reading books is an immersive experience that demands attention. It can be both transporting and enlightening, but apparently many of us are doing much less of it these days.

In 1754, our Library's founders lamented the lack of a spirit of inquiry in the city and wrote that "scarce one in a thousand is even disposed to talk serious." To them, opening this Library with a broad range of books was a necessary corrective, and as our indomitable Head of Acquisitions, Steve McGuirl, says, "We've been fighting the good fight for 265 years."

Our open book stacks are a treasure, so if you haven't done so lately, meander through and investigate. Check out a book, find a quiet, comfortable spot like the Members' Room, and dive in. Let's talk serious. We'll serve tea.

Carolyn

—Carolyn Waters, Head Librarian

Total checkouts in 2018
(books, audiobooks, and ebooks): **66,694**

Ebook checkouts: **4,941**

Average number of checkouts per day: **192**

The three most popular books of the year:

A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles;

Manhattan Beach by Jennifer Egan;

Asymmetry by Lisa Halliday

Most popular ebook: *Manhattan Beach*
by Jennifer Egan

Number of times a book (or ebook)
by Georges Simenon was checked out in 2018: **104**

...Anthony Trollope: **73**

...Donna Leon: **202**

...Henry James: **75**

...Barbara Pym: **86**

(number of ebook checkouts: **70**)

Number of times a nonfiction book about
World War II was checked out: **471**

Number of times a book about Donald Trump,
or his term as President, was checked out: **232**

Books loaned out via interlibrary loan: **345**

Books borrowed via interlibrary loan: **297**

Researcher visits to the rare book reading room: **33**
(**22** individual researchers)

Full-text article downloads from *JSTOR*: **8,608**

Members who signed on to begin using
Cloud Library, our circulating ebook platform: **181**

Digital magazines checked out from RBDigital: **994**

Abraham Lincoln biographies in stack 7: **180**

Napoleon I biographies...: **97**

Winston Churchill biographies...: **101**

Checkouts for *An Odyssey: a Father, a Son,
and an Epic*, by Daniel Mendelsohn: **48**

Checkouts for Homer's *The Odyssey*
(in the new translation by Emily Wilson): **40**

Events in the Members' Room: **40**

Number that were standing-room-only: **16**

Largest number of cast members squeezed onto
our 16'x6' performance platform: **10**

Event videos added to our streamable collection: **23**

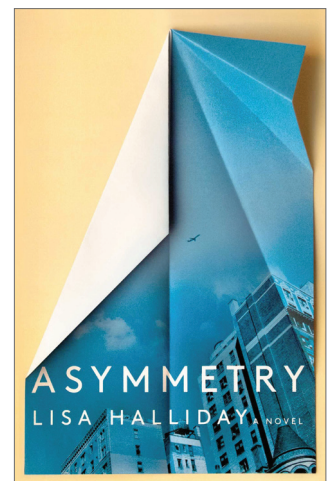
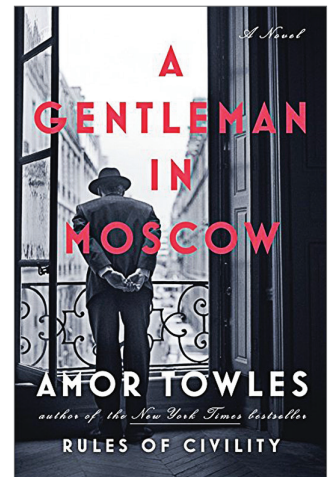
Panel-style events: **6**

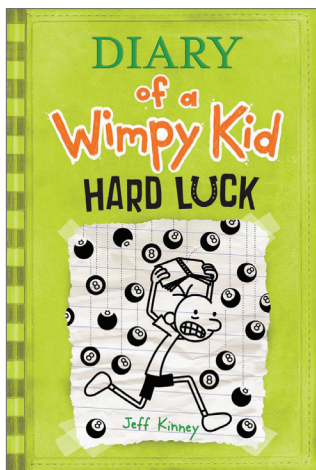
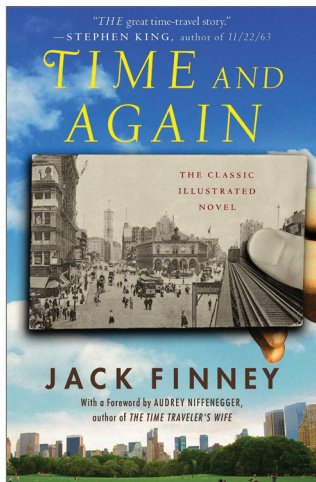
Total number of panelists involved: **21**

Reference Room Teatimes: **248**

Whitridge Room Happy Hours: **12**

New York City-related books recommended by Library members for our
On the Town exhibition: **42**





Number of readers who recommended Jack Finney's *Time and Again*: **11**
Rex Stout books recommended: **2**
Giant black & white cookies consumed at the exhibition opening: **4**

Number of books reviewed by the jury for the New York City Book Awards: **139**
Books selected as winners: **6**

Followers of our Instagram account as of mid-December: **1,340**
Percent increase in Instagram followers during the year: **143**

Book recommendations articles published on our website: **11**

Blog posts published on our website: **54**

People who liked our Instagram post displaying books about Beantown after losing bet with Boston Athenaeum (damn Yankees): **117**

Boston Athenaeum members who visited the NYSL this year: **20**

Live from the Library evenings since we started inviting members to read from their own work: **19**

Total number of readings: **304**
Percentage of member readings considered memoir: **15.7**

Number of those described as "memwah": **1**

Prompt workshops in 2018: **11**
Average prompts per session: **2.09**

Books consulted for *Women Get the Vote* exhibition: **70 +**

Visitors, not including Library members, who saw *The New York World of Willa Cather* exhibition (October 2017-August 2018): **1,000 +**

Checkouts for Dav Pilkey's books (author of *Captain Underpants* and *Dog Man* series): **61**

Checkouts for the 13 volumes in Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series: **64**

Checkouts for the *Guinness Book of World Records*: **22**

Entries submitted to the 16th annual Young Writers Awards: **268**

Young artists using the Children's Library weekend Creation Station on its busiest day in 2018, an unseasonably warm Sunday in January (1/28/18; high temperature of 55): **28**

Story and craft programs presented by the children's librarians: **104**

Pounds of candy distributed to trick-or-treaters: **8**

*if you are a member and have published in 2018 or are publishing in 2019, let us know!



New Electronic Resources

The Library is pleased to announce some exciting new electronic resources.

New titles have been added to RB Digital, our "digital newsstand" allowing members to download magazines. Offerings now include the *New Yorker*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *National Geographic*, and *Vogue*, in addition to the magazines previously available such as the *New York Review of Books*, the *Economist*, *Harper's*, *Utne Reader*, and more. New issues are added to RB Digital as they are published.

We also recently added *The Grove Dictionary of Art* to our Oxford Art Online resources. In addition to *The Benezit Dictionary of Artists* and other Oxford University Press art-reference sources, Library members now have access to Grove's 40,000 authoritative articles on artists, architects, and more. Content is revised and updated and new articles are added regularly.

Our circulating ebook platform Cloud Library now includes downloadable audiobooks. The growing collection of unabridged audiobooks features classics, recent acclaimed fiction, mysteries, young adult and children's titles, and more.

And, in case you missed it, as of summer 2018 we also offer the Loeb Classical Library Digital Edition—more than 500 volumes of ancient Latin, Greek, and English texts from Harvard University Press' acclaimed Loeb Classical Library.

For more information, click the Electronic Resources tab on our homepage or ask at the Reference Desk.

men

e

January 21, 1911



Women
side

WOMEN'S POLITICAL UNION
AND
February 18, 1911



VOTE TO WOMEN
"My sisters would shut the portals of our home against me."

There can be no severer, sadder argument in favor of votes for women than the history of the growth of the movement among our own people here in America. In New York State we are to-day making our legislature by the vote of women and the democratic demand for every device. The Women's Union in this city has made a woman suffrage amendment. The overwhelming majority of the State Convention in the Assembly endorsed it. It is not only the great majority of the State but the people of every county in the State. The star of democracy rises in the West. A better time in our state to be desired than that.

VOTES FOR WORKING WOMEN

Our call of "Votes for Women Broadside, Two Cents," does not always strike a sympathetic chord in the fur-wrapped ladies, but among the tired-looking women and girls hurrying home from work we find many buyers. Some of them stop to say, "I've always believed it would help," but others just take the paper and drag on.

In almost every line women are paid less than men for the same work, and it is much harder to secure decent regulations about seats, crowding, light, sanitation or guarding of machinery where the employees are women. There is a law requiring seats for shop-girls, but do you ever find them sitting down? There are machines at which girls stand all day, pushing down a lever with the right foot over and over again. Six months of this work is likely to result in a permanent physical injury. The machines could be made for alternate feet—but they are not.

The girl who to relieve an overburdened father seeks work in a factory, or the widow who goes into a shop is likely to work nine or ten hours a day for \$6 a week—or less, under conditions that impair her health. These women, who see nothing ahead but the struggle for existence under employers who repeatedly humiliate them by giving promotions and higher wages to men, whose only superior qualification is that of sex, reach out toward political recognition as to "a light amid the darkness." Perhaps they have heard tales of Australia, that great, free land, as large as the United States, where women vote, and where the working people have discovered how much can be done with votes; where working hours are fixed by law, and overtime is always paid for.

Working women must realize that as long as the state brands them as insignificant, employers will follow its example and discriminate against them in favor of those who can, at any time, make their troubles a political issue.

Our streets are strewn with pitiful wrecks of women who have tried to earn an honest living and failed. And over the head of every underpaid and overworked girl hangs the dread that a broken-down constitution may leave her no alternative but starvation or "women's oldest profession" (God save the mark). It is not right that economic conditions should force any woman to depart from her moral standard.

Now how about you? Are you going to settle back and do nothing because you are comfortable, or will you help us win full citizenship for New York State's 600,000 working women?



Membership Coupon WOMEN'S POLITICAL UNION

46 East 29th Street

I desire to become a member of the Women's Political Union. Enclosed find 25c for which please enter my name as a life member.

Name

Address

An Appeal To Suffragists is the cover story of the February 4, 1911 issue, referencing the ever-present conflict among various branches of the movement. It concludes: "let all who place the winning of votes for women above pride of organization unite in a demand that the committees shall report only such a bill as can stand the test of justice and democracy."

Lists of donors and dates for suffrage events were regularly a part of the paper. A reception for Sylvia Pankhurst was announced in the January 21 issue, and a Suffrage Matinee featuring Ruth Draper (a Library member) in that of March 4. News related to the cause was also standard. Madame Curie's rejection by the Academy of Science in January of 1911 was noted, and the February 18 cover story featured the adoption of women's suffrage by Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, and Washington.

Leading up to the May 6 Suffrage Parade in New York City, the April issue asks women to "MARCH ON, OH WOMEN OF TODAY, AND WIN THE RIGHT TO SERVE THE HOME AND THE STATE TO THE FULLEST. Shoulder to shoulder let us march, the women of the trades, the women of the professions, the women of business, the women of the home. MARCH ON, AND KNOW THE NEW SELF-SACRIFICE, THE NEW SOLIDARITY: MARCH ON!"

WHY WOMEN WANT THE VOTE.

HOUSEKEEPERS need the ballot to regulate the sanitary conditions under which they and their families must live.

MOTHERS need the ballot to regulate the moral conditions under which their children must be brought up.

TEACHERS need the ballot to secure just wages and to influence the management of the public schools.

BUSINESS WOMEN need the ballot to secure for themselves a fair opportunity in their business.

TAX PAYING WOMEN need the ballot to protect their property.

New Members Party

On December 3, the Library hosted a gathering for members who joined since last June.



Above: Gardner and Joan Haskell, Roger Pasquier, Annie Thomas, and Agatha and Michael Bordonaro; Upper right: Marla Behrman, Cynthia Hanson, and Lisbeth McCoy; Lower right: Tony White, Timothy N. Wallach, and Thomas Tallerico.

Photos by Karen Smul

Exhibition Opening

Women Get the Vote: a Historic Look at the Nineteenth Amendment opened on January 29 in the Peluso Family Exhibition Gallery. Author and Library member Brooke Kroeger shared her perspective on the women's suffrage movement.



The exhibition is generously supported by Ada Peluso and Romano I. Peluso.

Top left: Harry and Genie Havemeyer, and Carol Collins Malone; Lower left: Elizabeth Cannon, Jeannette Watson Sanger, and Rick Malone Lower right: Brooke Kroeger with Alex Goren and Natalie Naylor.

Photo by Simen Kot

Photos by Karen Smul

Family Fun Day

On February 2 the Library welcomed almost 300 members and visitors to an open house for families. Storyteller Bill Gordh told tales from around the globe in the Members' Room. Crafting in the Whitridge Room was a popular activity.



Photos by Simen Kot



This event was generously supported by the Richard Peck Fund.



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One More Picture



Ms B reads to a captivated audience during Drag Queen Story Hour, November 2018.
This event was generously supported by the Richard Peck Fund.