

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

The last year has been an especially heartening one at the Library. The response of our members to the Annual Fund has been most gratifying, helping us meet our budgetary demands through their generous giving. This issue of the newsletter recognizes our donors, and it is my pleasure to thank all of you for playing your part in making our beloved Library the vibrant organization it is.

We are proud of our heritage and status as New York's oldest cultural institution. The dedication of our staff, board and committee members helps ensure that we grow and evolve with developments in the 21st century that challenge the notion of what a library is and should be. As reported in our last newsletter, we completed the work that enhanced our beautiful building and our members' enjoyment of it. The Marshall Hornblower Trust funded the renovation of the fifth floor study rooms, Ada Peluso and Romano I. Peluso supported the restoration of the skylight above our main staircase, and the Estate of Marian O. Naumburg underwrote the handicapped access in the front entrance stairway.

The articles in this issue underscore our members' commitment to the printed book, as shown in the remarkable circulation statistics presented in the article on the following page, and the creation of several new book funds in the past two years, mentioned below. Thank you for helping us maintain our rich heritage as we increase our collection and improve our services and programs to meet the needs of all our members.



Charles G. Berry
Chairman

BOOK FUNDS ENHANCE THE COLLECTION

In 2009, Frederick Iseman established The Claude Labouret Book Collection for French Literature and Nonfiction in Translation in memory of his longtime friend. In December the Library had a special visit from Madame Marguerite Labouret and her daughter Celiane (*right*). We were delighted to have the opportunity to show them a number of books purchased for the Labouret Collection.

In the past two years, several new book funds have been established by members who wished to celebrate a relative or friend, or honor their memory. Leslie Stern created the Barbara Stern Book Fund for Contemporary & Mystery Fiction in memory of her mother in 2009. A member of the Library for 16 years, Dr. Stern was an avid reader of mysteries, typically borrowing five a week. Last spring, on behalf of the Dorothy Strelsin Foundation, its president and Library member Enid Nemy established The Dorothy Strelsin Book Fund for Performing Arts & Contemporary Fiction. Most recently, Pam and Scott Schaffler celebrated the birthday of Rhoda Bressler with the surprise gift of The Rhoda Bressler Fund for Biography.

For each fund, a personalized bookplate is placed in every book purchased. If you would like information about establishing a book fund, please contact Joan Zimmett at 212-288-6900 x207 or jzimmnett@nysoclib.org.



Family members Celiane and Marguerite Labouret with books from the Claude Labouret Collection

THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY—BY THE NUMBERS

compiled by Patrick Rayner, Circulation Supervisor

Number of years the Library has existed: 257

Number of other membership libraries still in existence: 17

Number of years in our current building: 74

Number of Library homes: 5

Number of current memberships (household, single, and educational): 3,080

Number of members who joined in 2010 and 2011: 468

Number of current memberships lasting since the 1940s: 5

Number of current memberships lasting since the 1950s: 20

Number of current memberships lasting since the 1960s: 102

Number of years of our longest current membership: 71

Number of members who have made a reservation for an individual study room: 115

Number of books in the collection: 279,494

Number of books checked out in 2010: 86,210

Number of books checked out on an average day: 320

Number of books added to the collection in 2010 (including replacements and duplicates): 4,944

Number of books currently checked out: 4,405

Number of memberships with at least one book checked out: 1,217

Number of children's books added in 2010: 492

Number of children's books checked out in 2010: 14,300

Percentage of all checkouts that are children's books: 16.5

Number of submissions to the Young Writers Awards in 2010: 155

Number of books currently held at the Circulation Desk: 308

Number of times Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* was checked out in 2010, making it the year's most popular book: 239

Number of reserves on Stacy Schiff's *Cleopatra*, making it the current most requested book: 60



Number of books borrowed via interlibrary loan in 2010: 309

Number of members who requested a book via interlibrary loan last year: 100

Number of patrons who received books by mail last year: 38

Number of New York City Book Award winners, 1996-2011: 55

Number of authors who have won two New York City Book Awards: 2

Approximate number of books reviewed by the New York City Book Awards Jury every year: 160

Date of the Library's first purchase of a personal computer: October 14, 1991

Cost of that first computer: \$2,928

Number of unique pageviews on the first charging ledger since its internet debut: 4,470

Number of books taken out by Richard Harison, the first charging ledger's most avid reader: 309

Percent increase of web traffic when the George Washington overdue-book story broke: 750

THE RATZER MAP: A TREASURE ON DISPLAY

On January 17, the *New York Times* included an article about the discovery and painstaking restoration of an original Ratzler map at the Brooklyn Historical Society. This was only the fourth copy of the map known to exist; the other three are in the British Library and the New-York Historical Society. The fascinating article can be found at www.nytimes.com/2011/01/17/nyregion/17map.html?emc=eta1.

While not competing with this particular treasure, the Society Library proudly displays a still rare 1776 edition of the map on the second floor, directly opposite the main elevator. The 4 ½ x 3 ½ framed work is well worth a look the next time you're headed to the Members' Room to read or attend a lecture.

The Ratzler map, also known as the Ratzler or "Ratzen" Plan, was based on a survey performed in 1766-67 by Lieutenant Bernard Ratzler, a skilled military engineer in the British army sent to America during the French and Indian War. The map was engraved by Thomas Kitchin and printed by Jeffereys & Faden—or Faden & Jeffereys, since both credits appear on the map—in Charing Cross Road. It shows Manhattan up to what is now 50th Street and includes Blackwell's Island, a section of "Nassau or Long Island" and a portion of New Jersey across the "North or Hudson's River." The horizontal image at the bottom is a view of Manhattan from Governor's Island, with recognizably detailed buildings and an image of a ship being repaired. A cartouche dedicates the map to Sir Henry Moore, Captain General and Governor in Chief of the colony of New York, probably in gratitude for Ratzler's commission to survey the the border between New York and New Jersey.



The reprinting of the map suggests that it was valued at the time, and experts have consistently praised it ever since, calling it "careful and exact professional work" and "one of the most beautiful, important, and accurate early plans of New York." Paul Cohen and Robert Augustyn's *Manhattan in Maps* says it is "perhaps the finest map of an American city and its environs produced in the eighteenth century. In its final form, its geographic precision combined with highly artistic engraving was unsurpassed in the urban cartography of its day. It affords a rare and vivid picture of New York as a small, charming city set in a richly variegated landscape."

The Library owns several historic New York maps and has notable holdings on maps and iconography. Some further reading: *Manhattan in Maps, 1527-1996* by Paul E. Cohen and Robert T. Augustyn (winner of a 1997 New York City Book Award) "Maps in the Making of Manhattan" by Robert T. Augustyn, *Antiques* magazine, September 1995

THE LOBBY CLOCK RETURNS

Staff and frequent patrons heaved a sigh of relief when the antique clock was returned to its place in the lobby at the end of February. This was the last visible task remaining from the renovation, and marking shifts on the desk is made much more pleasant by its ringing chime.

The clock was made in Amsterdam between 1720 and 1740 by a craftsman named Gerret Drappee. The top features a gilt wood figure of Atlas supporting the globe, flanked by warriors. Within the face is a lunar-phase dial surrounded by Dutch domestic scenes.

The pendulum clock was also invented by a Dutchman, astronomer Christiaan Huygens, in 1656.



REMEMBERING HAZEL ROWLEY

Library staff and members were saddened by the untimely death of distinguished biographer and speaker Hazel Rowley on March 1. Ms. Rowley's last lecture was in our Members' Room on February 15, on her recent book *Franklin and Eleanor*. Streaming video and audio of the event are available at www.nysoclib.org/notes/2011/franklin_eleanor.html. Ms. Rowley had previously lectured in the Author Series in January 2006 on her book *Tête-a-Tête: Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre*.

In addition to those two books, the Library's collection includes *Christina Stead: A Biography* (1994) and *Richard Wright: The Life and Times* (2001).

In her obituary in *The Australian*, literary critic Peter Craven said: "Hazel Rowley was a woman of tremendous intellectual courage. The range of her biographies is a testament to her energy, virtuosity and intellectual distinction."

Right: Rowley in Hyde Park near the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum



Registration is required for all events. See registration instructions at www.nysoclib.org/events_registration.html or call the Events Office at 212-288-6900 x230.

March

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 6:00 PM
Open Mic Night IV

TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 5:00 PM
Seminar: Primary Previews
First of four sessions

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 6:30 PM
Performance: Joseph Smith
The Well-Read Piano
Ukrainian Institute

April

THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 11:00 AM
Seminar: B.J. Rahn
Mystery fiction
First of three sessions

FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 3:30 PM
Children's: Video Book Talks

MONDAY, APRIL 11, 3:00 PM
Writing Life: Nonfiction Group

TUESDAY, APRIL 12, 10:00 AM
Writing Life: Journaling

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 6:30 PM
Lecture: Jonathan Galassi
Canti (Poems)

THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 4:00 PM
Children's: Chris Raschka
Cover to Cover: The Book is the Art

MONDAY, APRIL 18, 3:00 PM
Writing Life: Memoir Writers

TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 5:00 PM
Writing Life: Fiction Group I

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 10:00 AM
Workshop: Etsy

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2:00 PM
Workshop: JSTOR/Project Muse

TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 4:30 PM
Writing Life: Poets Group

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 11:00 AM
Writing Life: Fiction Group II

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 6:30 PM
Lecture: Meg Wolitzer
and Elizabeth Strout
A Conversation About Character

THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 10:00 AM
Workshop: Delicious

THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 2:00 PM
Workshop: Tumblr

THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 6:30 PM
Literary Magazine Salon

May

SUNDAY, MAY 1, 3:00 PM
Performance: Phoenix Quartet
Songs of War and Peace

TUESDAY, MAY 3, 4:00 PM
Children's: Video Book Talk

WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 6:00 PM
The New York City Book Awards

FRIDAY, MAY 6, 10:00 AM
Workshop: Gmail

FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2:00 PM
Workshop: Software for Writers

MONDAY, MAY 9, 3:00 PM
Writing Life: Nonfiction Group

TUESDAY, MAY 10, 4:00 PM
Children's: Family Book Discussion

THURSDAY, MAY 12, 10:00 AM
Workshop: Google Books

THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2:00 PM
Workshop: E-Books

MONDAY, MAY 16, 3:00 PM
Writing Life: Memoir Writers

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 5:00 PM
Writing Life: Fiction Group I

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 6:00 PM
The Young Writers Awards

MONDAY, MAY 23, 10:00 AM
Workshop: Upgrade Your PC

MONDAY, MAY 23, 2:00 PM
Workshop: Apple's Technologies

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 4:30 PM
Writing Life: Poets Group

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 11:00 AM
Writing Life: Fiction Group II

THURSDAY, MAY 26, 6:30 PM
Lecture: Lynden Miller
Parks, Plants, and People

June

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 6:30 PM
Lecture: Andrea Wulf
Founding Gardeners



Poet Giacomo Leopardi. See the listing for our event on April 13.