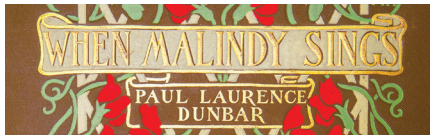


Books & People

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WELCOMING NEW TRUSTEES

We are delighted to welcome three new members to the Board of Trustees. Each brings not only abilities that will strengthen our Board but also experiences that will help us to better serve our members.



Dwayne Ashley

Dwayne Ashley is the chief executive of his own consulting firm, Bridge Philanthropic Consulting. He is a graduate of Wiley College in Texas and of the University of Pennsylvania's Fels School of Government. His fundraising experience is extensive. Among his more notable clients, he includes Madonna's foundation in Los Angeles early in his career, and more recently Jazz at Lincoln Center, where he worked before starting his own firm five years ago. Among other activities, he has served on the Board of the Newark Public Library and has created a significant place for his firm in fundraising for organizations of color. Trustee Adrienne Ingram was at one time Dwayne's editor and has remained a friend over the years. Dwayne has published four books about fundraising and career building. Dwayne serves on the Development Committee.

Greetings from the Head Librarian

I have grown weary of talking about and writing about the pandemic. But today, the day that I sit down to write this column, is a Thursday, and that means that later today I will meet on Zoom with my fellow directors of the American Membership Libraries Group (MLG) and talk about...well, the pandemic, but much more too.

Getting to know the directors of the MLG has been an enormous help to me since I became Head Librarian six years ago, but never more so than this past year. In a normal year, the fourteen of us would have gathered in person for three days of meetings at one of our libraries and perhaps emailed each other a dozen or so times over the year to throw out some “hey, have you ever...?” queries. In late March, though, as one by one we closed our buildings and began to consider the implications of the worsening pandemic, we set up weekly online meetings. We discussed everything from lost revenue streams and financial projections, navigating government relief plans and our local governments’ restrictions on our activities, and maintaining connection with our members, to when and how to reopen.

We’ve still got a standing meeting, and though we can’t all make every date, as we’re in various states of open (or closed), it’s a great comfort to me to know that these colleagues and friends are but a Zoom, email, or phone call away for solace and good advice.

All this reconnecting has directly benefited our respective memberships too. We’ve started sharing a number of terrific virtual events among the group, and I’ve heard from quite a few of you how much you have enjoyed the opportunity to hear, for instance, Eddie Glaude Jr. at the Philadelphia Athenaeum and Ann Patchett at the Providence Ath. And I had a wonderful time discussing what our members are reading with Hillary Copsey, the Cincinnati Mercantile Library’s Book Advisor, in a live Instagram chat. It was just like swapping book recommendations with you at the Circulation Desk, and I managed to sneak in some plugs for new books by member writers too. We’re looking forward to continuing to share events and collaborate on programs. If you have ideas, send them my way.



Just some of the books Hillary Copsey and I discussed in the Mercantile Library’s Instagram Live Book Chat on January 26 @themercantilelib

Speaking of events, I hope that you have been able to attend our own Black Literature Matters programs or watched the videos afterwards. In this extraordinary effort, we are exploring the voices of African American writers over the centuries, starting with the 1700s, and, in the process, delving into our own archive to unearth the Library’s role in disseminating this knowledge and discovering the stories and a history that has yet to be told. I’m proud to be able to play even a small part in it, and my immense thanks to the trustees, members, and staff making this ongoing programming—and the upcoming exhibition in the Peluso Family Exhibition Gallery—happen: Barbara Ascher, Barbara Bieck, Farah Griffin, Sara Holliday, Adrienne Ingram, Jenny Lawrence, Linn Cary Mehta, Marialuisa Monda, Doreen Pastore, and Harriet Shapiro.

Who knows what the next six months will bring. But the Library will be here—physically and virtually—and as always, I look forward to talking books, those you’re reading and those you’re writing.

On my current reading list: Aatish Taseer’s *The Twice-Born: Life and Death on the Ganges*, Steph Cha’s *Your House Will Pay*, Sadiya Hartman’s *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*, and, once Steve orders it, Bjorn Dihle’s *A Shape in the Dark: Living and Dying with Brown Bears*.

—Carolyn Waters, Head Librarian



Meet James Addona, Head of Development

In January, we welcomed James Addona as our new Head of Development. James came to us from Sundance Institute, where he worked on the Institute's first major capital campaign. A graduate of Swarthmore College, James earned his M.A. and taught literature and writing at U.C. Davis before beginning his nonprofit career at Harlem Lacrosse, a school-based organization that provides academic support and mentoring to middle and high school students. While at Harlem Lacrosse, James served first as Director of Development and later as Executive Director, leading the program's expansion from Harlem to Baltimore, Boston, and Philadelphia. His work building resources for Harlem Lacrosse led him to pursue consulting at CCS Fundraising, where he led engagements with Operation Smile, the Committee to Protect Journalists, New York Theatre Workshop, and Sundance Institute. His work at CCS focused on major gifts and capital campaigns, and he is excited to bring his experiences to the Library community.

James serves on the New York Advisory Board of Harlem Lacrosse, and his passions lie in the arts and outdoors. He spends his free time running, hiking, skiing, or dreaming of skiing; he can't wait to spend some of his free time at a film, a play, or a concert again. He looks forward to meeting members and to exploring the stacks to find his next great read!



Akosua Asamoah

Akosua Asamoah is a graduate of Duke University and holds her MBA from The Kellogg School of Management. Subsequent to her graduation from Duke, she worked in investment banking at Goldman Sachs. Post-business school, Akosua moved into a general management career including four years in marketing at Kraft Foods, then seven years at Pfizer Consumer Healthcare working on major brands. She currently works at Facebook as an Industry Manager in the eCommerce vertical. Akosua's enthusiasm, as well as both financial and marketing skills, will be very helpful to the Board. Akosua enjoys travel, photography, interior design, and bicycling. She likes to read fiction books, although her favorite reads of the past year—*A Promised Land* and *Caste*—have been nonfiction. Akosua serves on the Lecture and Exhibition Committee.



John Schwolsky

John Schwolsky graduated from Yale with a degree in history. He is also a graduate of Cornell Law School, where he now serves on the Executive Committee of the Dean's Advisory Council. John is a partner in the law firm of Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP, where he co-chairs the firm's Insurance Transactional and Regulatory practice. His family have been Library members since 2006, and his wife is a primary school Teacher-Librarian with a focus on digital fluency and internet ethics. Diplomatic and maritime history are among John's interests, and he is currently enjoying developing a better understanding of 19th and early 20th century Asia. He and trustee Timothy N. Wallach enjoy a regular exchange of ideas about a wide range of historical subjects. John serves on the Finance Committee.

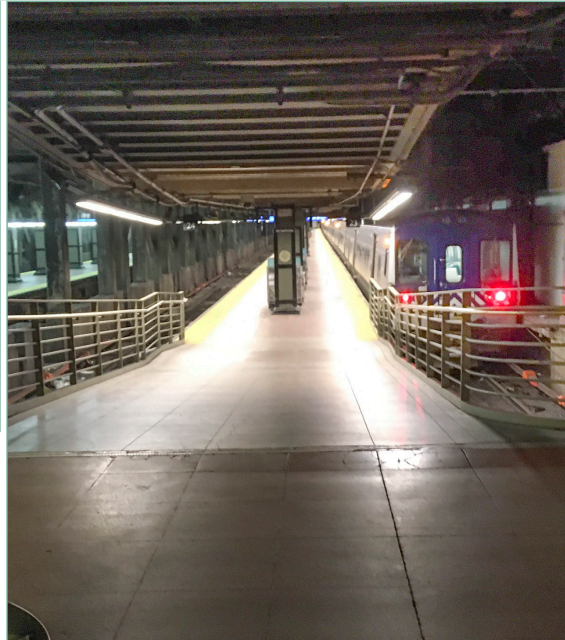
LOOKING



The Library's Head of Exhibitions, Harriet S...
from a year unlike any other in our history—e...
own building, the haunting emptiness—and c...
city, and the many who took to the streets in t...



G AT 2020



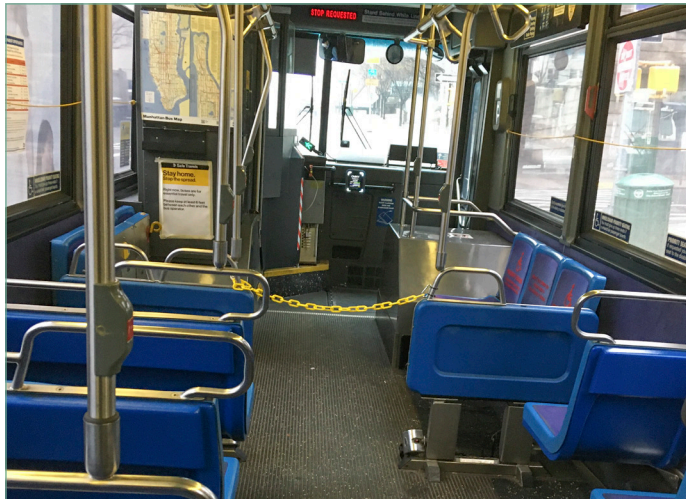
Shapiro, captured a variety of images encompassing changing policies in our defiant cheer—of the usually bustling the name of justice and Black lives.



MASKS ARE MANDATORY
 and must be worn completely
 covering nose and mouth

COVID-19 CASES ARE RISING
WEARING A MASK SAVES LIVES

Anyone found not wearing a mask or not wearing it properly may be asked to leave the building.
 Repeat offenders may lose Library privileges.
 Questions? Please email help@nysoclib.org





Are You an Expert?

Do you have expertise in a particular subject? Do you use the Library's collection frequently?

The Library is looking for volunteers with advanced degrees or a record of independent scholarship to help critically review our adult nonfiction collection. You will help us by recommending improvements to our collection to guarantee its relevance to readers for decades to come.

Volunteers should have well-rounded knowledge of publishing trends and standard works in their subject area—recent and historical, scholarly and popular. Familiarity with the Library's collection is a bonus.

We are seeking experts in various disciplines in the social sciences, the history of fine and decorative arts, U.S. and world history (all eras), and comparative religion. But no specialty is too small.

If you have a passion for a subject and for the gems to be found in the Library's stacks, this is a rewarding opportunity to spend time immersed in our collection and the literature of a subject you know well. Projects will be designed to accommodate volunteers' schedules and preferred modes of working.

If you are interested, please contact Steven McGuirl at smcguirl@nysoclib.org.

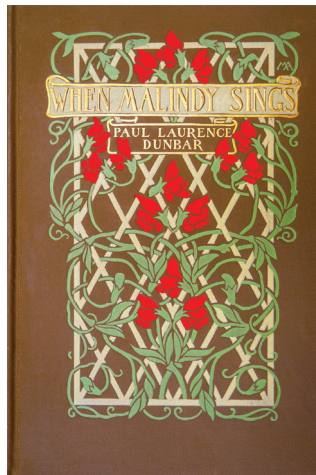
News You Can Use

The Library is currently open:
Monday and Friday 10:00 AM-4:00 PM,
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
10:00 AM-7:00 PM, and Saturday and
Sunday 11:00 AM-5:00 PM.

The stacks are open, and nearly all services are available; reservations are required for most seating areas. Events and gatherings continue online.

With any reference questions, you're welcome to reach out to us at reference@nysoclib.org. For assistance with our website or digital services and offerings, contact help@nysoclib.org.

The Children's and Young Adult librarians are happy to handpick a bundle of books for young readers or anyone who enjoys children's literature! Email children@nysoclib.org with your Library membership name and your readers' ages and interests, and we'll select a variety of titles for pickup outside the Lobby.



Our exhibition *The Book Beautiful: Margaret Armstrong & Her Bindings* is open to the public in the Peluso Family Exhibition Gallery through April 3.

And for kids in grades 3-12: The 2021 Young Writers Awards are accepting submissions through April 6. Visit tinyurl.com/YWANYSL for details.

Events continue online; see what's coming up at nysoclib.org/events. Our fall events are available to stream on our YouTube channel—including Lyndall Gordon on *Outsiders: Five Women Writers Who Changed the World*, Meredith Talusan on *Fairest*, Darryl Pinckney with Caryl

Phillips on *Blackballed: The Black Vote and U.S. Democracy*, and much, much more—see nysoclib.org/events/event-recordings for the full list.

Remember to check our book recommendations for good book suggestions and our blog for bookish news and comment—both found under **Marginalia** at nysoclib.org.

Black Literature Matters: A New Resource

The Library's Black Literature Matters project includes four original events bringing to life the voices of Black writers through history, re-examined to inspire understanding of race in our country today. The first two events took place on November 19, 2020 and January 28, 2021; their videos are now available to stream.

We're now pleased to make available a central online destination for these recordings alongside a growing collection of resources—additional images, history of the publication of Black writers, recommended reading, and much more to come.

As New York City's oldest cultural institution, we are honored to do our part to highlight the thousands of stories by African American writers contained within our building and acquired since the 1700s.

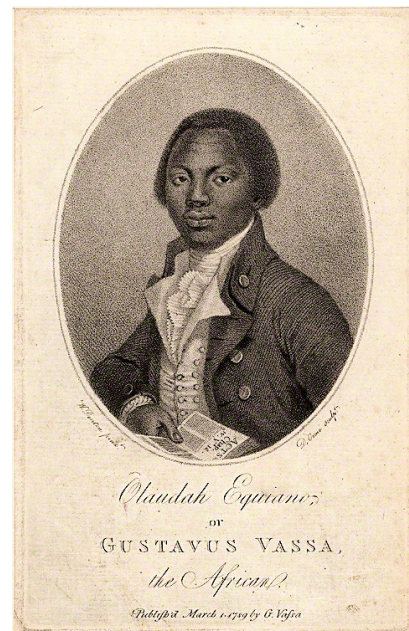
In the November 2020 event, participants discussed the reasons for the series' creation:

"We're thrilled to be able to tell these types of stories by delving into our archives and seeing what early Americans were reading here in New York City....It's important for us as an institution to continually revisit our history and to look with fresh eyes as the times change. We've done all this great work over the years of transcribing and digitizing our charging ledgers...we have mined that for a lot of stories. What other stories are there? We're continuing to discover that, and it's really exciting."

—Carolyn Waters,
Head Librarian and series narrator

"We have moments of social upheaval that call attention to what's happening in our own time, like we're dealing with right now, a kind of reckoning, and then people start to reach for new writers, but also old writers, to better understand what brings us to where we are today. So there's a resurrection of interest."

—Dr. Farah Jasmine Griffin,
Chair of African-American & African Diaspora Studies,
Columbia University, and series narrator



"After the brutalities including the murder of George Floyd, and with COVID striking the country,...we as the Library, and as book lovers and library lovers, felt a call to act. [Writing] our Commitment to the Black Community, we staked our identity on the idea that libraries are for everyone and all are welcome, but that wasn't enough, and thus these programs were born. It was the most emotional and cathartic experience. There are so many voices out there. I'm looking forward to what we have in store." —Marialuisa Monda,
Events Assistant and creative team member

Visit the Black Literature Matters resource page at nysoclib.org/events/black-literature-matters.

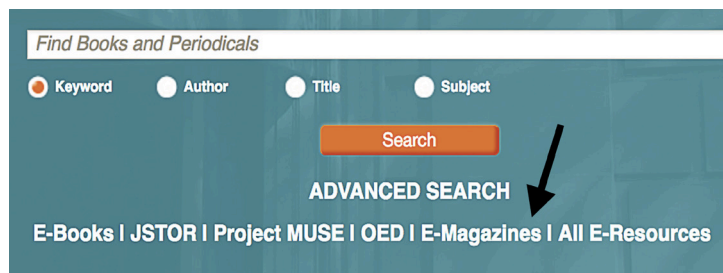
Meet OverDrive, Our New Digital Magazine Platform

You may have noticed some recent changes to our digital magazine collection. OverDrive, one of the leaders in electronic content for libraries, recently acquired RBdigital, the platform for the Library's digital magazine collection for the last several years. Our collection of titles has been fully transferred to OverDrive, and it is now available for members to borrow and read.

Hundreds of exciting new magazines have been added to what we previously offered, covering arts and literature, history, current events, cooking, travel, architecture and design, fashion, magazines for kids, and much more.

Libby, the OverDrive reader app, is compatible with most Android and Apple devices and is easily installed. Or, if you prefer, you can borrow and read magazines using your web

browser. To get started, click the **E-Magazines** link on the Library's homepage to find instructions for downloading the Libby app and additional information about borrowing digital magazines.



If you have any questions, contact help@nysoclib.org.



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This newsletter is available
in electronic form at
[nysoclib.org
/about/newsletters](http://nysoclib.org/about/newsletters)

One More Picture



A behind-the-scenes view of the Storytime Online home recording studio of Randi Levy, Head of the Children's Library.