



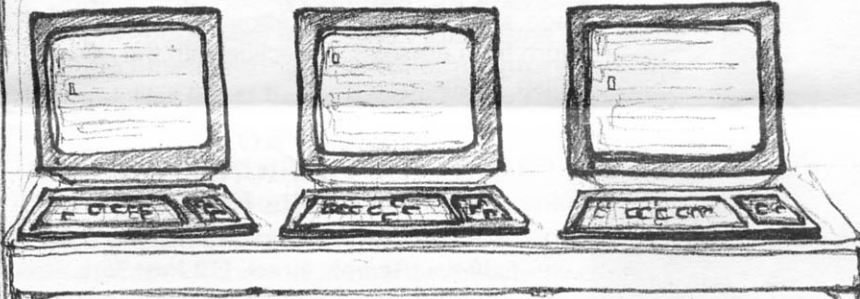
# LIBRARY NOTES

THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY NEWSLETTER  
VOLUME 6, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 1999

## ELECTRONIC DOINGS IN THE LIBRARY

Steven Baumholtz

Head Cataloger and Systems Administrator



Jennifer Cosgrove

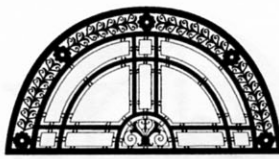
The Library quietly unveiled its online catalog this past June. Use has been steadily growing. Two more online catalog terminals have been added in the Reference Room for a grand total of six throughout the Library—three in the Reference Room and the others on the Fifth Floor (where *The New York Times Index* now resides), the Children's Room, and Stack One.

If you haven't done so, we invite you to try the online catalog the next time you need to locate something in the Library. Online cataloging really does have advantages, particularly when a searcher is unsure of what he or she wants. It is easy to input one or more subject keywords and have the online system provide a short list of works that match the specifications. It is also possible to search by more than one index simultaneously—an author's name and a subject term, for example. With the advent of the online circulation system, the online catalog also provides the availability status of each volume—whether it is on order, received, being processed, on the shelf, or circulating. Because it is so easy for the Library's staff to update information, the online catalog invariably provides more accurate information than the card catalog. The online system also improves our ability to provide catalog information via the telephone, and books can be renewed without requiring call numbers.

An additional new computer in the Children's Room is dedicated to the use of CD-ROMs. The CD-ROMs are kept at the circulation desk. We have interactive titles of interest to children and adults. Headphones are provided so that the enjoyment of a particular disk doesn't infringe upon the quiet of the Library. Ask at the Circulation Desk for a list of available titles, or search the card or online catalogs under the subject heading "CD-ROMs."

The Library is also preparing an Internet website in the very near future, which will include general information about the Library, notification about special programs and events, the monthly list of newly acquired titles, and *Library Notes*. Looking ahead, we envision providing members with Internet access in the Library, as well as making our online catalog accessible to anyone on the Internet. These electronic doings are just part of the Library's mission to bring together books and people.

<b>C A L E N D A R</b>	<b>Storytelling</b>	<b>Author Series</b>	<b>Conversations</b>	<b>Reading Groups</b>	<b>Author Series</b>
	Saturdays, 10:30 A.M.	Wednesday, February 10	Thursdays, February 18, 25, and March 4	Tuesdays, February 16, March 16, and April 20	Wednesday, April 14
	January 23 and 30	<b>Deborah Grace Winer</b>	<b>Ellen Chances</b>	<b>Fiction: Ellen Feldman</b>	<b>Benita Eisler</b>
	February 6, 20, and 27	<b>"Broadway's Broadway: The Comeback of the American Musical"</b>	<b>"Alexander Pushkin, Father of Russian Literature"</b>	Thursdays, February 18, April 15, and May 20	<b>"Byron: Child of Passion, Fool of Fame"</b>
	<b>Eleni Constantelos</b> Children's Room The Library	6:30 P.M. Temple Israel 112 East 75th Street	5:30 P.M. The Library	<b>Biography: Hope Cooke</b> 11:00 A.M. The Library	6:30 P.M. Temple Israel 112 East 75th Street



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**BROADWAY'S BROADWAY:  
THE COMEBACK OF THE AMERICAN MUSICAL**

**Deborah Grace Winer**  
Wednesday, February 10,  
6:30 P.M., Temple Israel, 112 East 75th Street

Deborah Grace Winer's books on musical theater and cabaret include the recently published *On the Sunny Side of the Street: The Life and Lyrics of Dorothy Fields*. Her articles have appeared in *The New York Times* and numerous other publications. Her play, *The Last Girl Singer*, was produced Off-Broadway several seasons ago. Ms. Winer will talk about the American musical theater's remarkable return from decades of decline with the advent of rock and roll and the British "invasion."

**BYRON:  
CHILD OF PASSION, FOOL OF FAME**

**Benita Eisler**  
Wednesday, April 14  
6:30 P.M., Temple Israel, 112 East 75th Street



*Byron and Lyon, the Newfoundland*

The career of Benita Eisler, a trustee of the New York Society Library, has included serving as art editor for the Public Education Association, teaching literature at Princeton University, and writing several works including *O'Keefe and Stieglitz: The American Romance*, along with articles for *The New Yorker* and *The Nation*. Her biography of Lord Byron uses newly available family archives to reveal a man, poet, and celebrity who is an astonishingly contemporary figure in many ways.



*Byron, 1819*

Newstead Abbey Collections

The Author Series, held annually since 1994, is sponsored in 1998/1999 by Thirteen/WNET and The New York Society Library, with the generous underwriting support of The Chase Manhattan Bank. The program is free for members and guests of the Library, Thirteen/WNET Patrons and Associates, and guests of The Chase Manhattan Bank. Tickets can be picked up at the Library's circulation desk or at the door. For the general public, tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at the door.

**MEMORIAL GIFT:**

Friends of Mark Hampton, the late interior designer and Library trustee, have purchased in his memory the twenty-four volume *American National Biography* (Oxford University Press). This is the successor to the *Dictionary of American Biography*, published between 1926 and 1937. The Library is proud to add this title to our reference sources.

**READING GROUPS IN FICTION & BIOGRAPHY:**

Novelist and reviewer Ellen Feldman, author of *God Bless the Child* and the forthcoming *Under the Influence*, to be published later this year, will lead a reading group in contemporary fiction. These discussions, focusing on a different novel each month, will be on Tuesdays at 11:00 A.M. at the Library on February 16, March 16, and April 20.

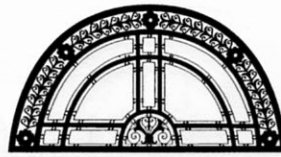
The reading group in biography will be led by urban historian and author Hope Cooke, whose 1981 autobiography, *Time Change*, is a coming-of-age story that includes the decade she lived in the Himalayas as the Queen of Sikkim. In the first session, the group will discuss *A Journey with Elsa Cloud*, Leila Hadley's account, set in India, of her relationship with her daughter. The group will meet on Thursdays at 11:00 A.M. at the Library on February 18, April 15, and May 20. Call Nancy McCartney at (212) 717-0357 for reservations. Space is limited to 20 people in each group.

**COMPUTER SPECIALIST:**

Ingrid Richter, the new computer specialist, grew up in Spokane and attended Cornell University as a math major. She has worked with computers at the University of Southern California Math Department and Foreign Relations, a web-based company in Seattle. Ingrid recently moved to New York and is delighted to be working at the Library.







Portrait by O. A. Kiprensky, 1827

CONVERSATIONS ON GREAT BOOKS  
**ALEXANDER PUSHKIN:  
 FATHER OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE**  
 Thursday, February 18 and 25, March 4  
 5:30 P.M., Members' Room, The Library  
 Ellen Chances

Poet, essayist, and fiction writer, Ellen Chances currently teaches Russian, Soviet, and post-Soviet literature and culture at Princeton University. Her book, *Conformity's Children: An Approach to the Superfluous Man in Russian Literature*, is a study of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian novel. Her latest book, *Andrei Bitov: The Ecology of Inspiration*, is the first in any language on this important contemporary Russian writer.

The year 1999 marks the 200th anniversary of Alexander Pushkin's birth. Pushkin is widely regarded as the "Father of Russian Literature" and, indeed, in his writings can be found the seeds of the magnificent nineteenth-century Russian works of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov. Pushkin continues to live in the books of the best twentieth-century Russian writers—in the poems of Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelstam, and Joseph Brodsky and in the novels of Vladimir Nabokov and Andrei Bitov.

In our Conversations, we shall explore some of Pushkin's major works of drama, prose, and poetry and the relationship of his life to his art. In the first session, we will discuss *Eugene Onegin*, the "novel in verse," acknowledged to be one of the first significant Russian novels of the nineteenth century, and consider the questions: What are a Russian hero and heroine? What is the relationship of Russia to Western Europe? What is the Petersburg tradition of Russian literature? In the next session, we will turn to Pushkin's lyrical poetry and the long narrative poem, "The Bronze Horseman," examining his attitude toward Peter the Great and the founding of Petersburg, and "The Gypsies," looking at his experience of exile. We will talk about the story, "Queen of Spades," and the dark, irrational forces of romantic mystery and the supernatural that permeate its every page. We will look at "Mozart and Salieri" and the creative process in artists, particularly Pushkin's ideas about his contemporary, Mozart. Finally, in addition to twentieth century Russian poetry, we will focus on the ways in which Pushkin is still a major presence in contemporary Russian literature, discussing Andrei Bitov's *Pushkin House* and Yri Mamin's "Window to Paris," a light film with a "message."

The series costs \$60. Each of the Conversations begins at 5:30 P.M. in the Members' Room. Early registration is recommended as enrollment is limited to 50 people. To reserve a seat, send a check made out to the Library to the attention of Nancy McCartney. For questions, call her at (212) 717-0357. No reservations will be taken by telephone or at the circulation desk. Recommended texts are Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (trans. Charles Johnston, Penguin paperback); *Selected Poems* (edited by A.D.P. Briggs, Everyman's Poetry series, 1997); *The Captain's Daughter and Other Stories* (Vintage paperback); and *Andrei Bitov's Pushkin House* (Illinois State University Press, 1998, paperback).



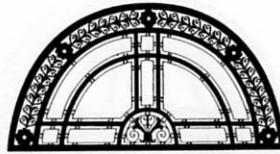
Pushkin, self portrait, 1829

**CHILDREN'S ROOM:**

Kathleen O'Donnell is joining the Library staff as the Children's Room Librarian. She has been with the New York Public Library at the Eastside 96th Street branch for the last three years. Before that, Ms. O'Donnell was a librarian in Stow, Massachusetts, and developed K-8 grade programs in storytelling, library and computer skills, and writing workshops. She received her M.L.S. from the University of Maryland and a B.A. in English and philosophy from Boston College. Beginning February 16, Ms. O'Donnell will be in the Children's Room on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 1-5 P.M. and on Saturdays, from 10 A.M.-4 P.M.

**STORYTELLING:**

We welcome the return of Eleni Constantelos, who will bring a new series of magical stories from around the world. She will tell tales of wonder and delight beginning on Saturday, January 23, at 10:30 A.M. in the Children's Room. There will be programs every Saturday through February 27 except February 13.



Architectural Review, 1919



*The John S. and Catherine Rogers house at 53 East 79th Street was designed in 1916 by the architectural firm of Trowbridge & Livingston and purchased and remodeled in 1936-1937 as the fifth home of The New York Society Library. The following description of what is now the Members' Room was found by Christopher Gray, trustee and director of the Office for Metropolitan History. It is an excerpt from an article by Augusta Owen Patterson in American Homes of To-Day, 1924.*

The town house of Mr. and Mrs. John S. Rogers at 53 East 79th Street has another very fine library. This, as has been observed, is in the period of the Regency. It is very large, very graceful, very comfortable, with a grate fire to give that fitful light on the color of the books on a winter afternoon. The house has, according to the architects' own statement, been built around the furniture and tapestries, which are confined mainly to the drawing room which is not illustrated. The library is on the second floor, facing on Seventy-ninth Street. The walls here are in walnut. A special feature is the rounded corner. The books are flush with the wall, the openings for them utilized for the introduction of delicate curves and light decoration. The dark wood of the walls is connected quite beautifully with the light cream of the ceiling by a cove, colored a deep ivory, with delicate beadings and corner ornamentation. The room is filled comfortably with furniture, all good, all suitable. Several of the chairs are of the Louis XV type in walnut, with needle point and tapestry seats and backs, the wood here and there revealing a glint of gold. The hangings are old blue and gold damask. The rugs are richly oriental, deepening in color and tone as they near the stone fireplace. Admirable as the details of the furnishings are, it is, however, the room itself which represents the real achievement. It is at once domestic, spacious, elegant, entirely right. It is a room well worth doing.

#### **REQUEST FOR A PODIUM:**

In the last year, the Library has regularly held programs in the Members' Room and will continue to do so in the future. For each—most recently, Abbe Blum on Milton, J. D. McClatchy on poetry, and Mike Wallace on literary New York—we have rented a podium with a microphone, which has proved to be expensive. Is there any kind member who would be able to donate—or help toward the purchase of—a lectern and sound system for the Library's permanent use? If so, please contact Head Librarian, Mark Piel.

Please write to Jenny Lawrence, editor of *Library Notes*, care of the Library, with any comments and suggestions.

**THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY**  
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