



Salem Athenæum News

Incorporated in 1810

Spring 2012

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Welcome!



Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends,

Still enjoying the afterglow of our March 30 Clockwork and Cocktails and the pleasure of seeing so many of you there. What a terrific job was done by Donna Seger and Sarah Harrington and their incredibly creative crew. The best news there is that we did meet our fundraising goal, and our beautiful old grandfather clock in the foyer will be repaired. Bravo to all, and great thanks!

Now we're happily preparing the building and grounds for spring and summer --always a delight, as things begin to bloom. With summer will come our renowned Friday afternoon Summer Salons, and that's where YOU can help! Have you got a topic you'd like us to pursue? Or would you yourself like to present? [Let us know!](#)

At the top of our spring roster of programs is the annual **Adams Lecture** (named for our former librarian John Adams), held this year on April 24 at 7:30 p.m. in the library. We've held it elsewhere in the past, including the splendid Hamilton Hall. This seemed a good year to bring the lecture back to the Athenæum where it began, and to grace our own building with this most anticipated event. This year's presenter, **Professor John Stilgoe** of Harvard, is a most unusual and riveting speaker--someone I had the pleasure of hearing last year at Harvard, a gent who will make you look at your own

Clockwork and Cocktails: A Steampunk Affair

Visit our [photo album](#)
on Facebook to
see more!



physical world quite differently. Stilgoe has made an art out of wandering America and looking for the historical narratives in our environment. His unconventional take on things will inspire, delight, and instruct you on the fine art of observation amid the very hectic lives we lead.

In closing, I want to thank Mary Simpson for her service to the Board. With a growing set of demanding business responsibilities, Mary has had to resign her seat as a Trustee, but will continue her interests in the library. We are grateful indeed for her many contributions to our work.

Finally, I want to remind you of our upcoming Annual Meeting on May 2, my own last official meeting, as I step down from the Athenæum Board and make way for fresh new leadership. I do hope to see you all there!

Cheers,
Francie

Francie King
President, Board of Trustees
Salem Athenæum

P.S. Membership dues notices are coming in June. Please respond as quickly as you can and remember how very important they are to all that we do and all that you enjoy at the Athenæum. Thanks!

First Conservation Night

Tuesday, June 5, 7:00 p.m.

The Salem Athenæum is proud to announce its first annual Conservation Night on June 5, 7:00 p.m. Members and friends of the Athenæum are cordially invited to attend and take part in preserving and protecting some of the Athenæum's most valuable and historic volumes.

The Collections Committee has selected 18 volumes from the Athenæum's core collection in dire need of immediate conservation. This event is a genuine FIRST for the Salem Athenæum. The evening is a first effort to activate a major operational objective: to preserve and protect the book collection. (*The library is committed to three key objectives: maintaining its historical building, preserving and protecting its collection, and offering the community an annual set of educational and enlightening programs.*)

At the Conservation Night people who wish to sponsor a restoration will be matched with a book in need. Sponsors--and many books will need more than one--will "adopt a book" and underwrite the preservation effort. Interested patrons may "bid," alone or in groups, on a selected book project, committing to covering preservation costs ranging from \$200 up to \$1200 per volume. The names of those who underwrite the costs of preserving a book will appear on a bookplate inside the book in perpetuity.





Marie Oedel, a Proprietor of the Athenæum and a professional conservator, will host the Conservation Night program. As book conservator for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts library, and primary conservator for other collectors, museum departments and archivists in the region, Marie will explain the conservation work that is needed and how it will be done.

The library plans to maintain the conservation programs annually, offering different sets of books each year. The program itself is modeled on one already in progress at the Boston Athenæum.

At next year's Conservation Night, sponsors will have the pleasure of seeing the newly restored books on display, complete with a special commemorative bookplate in each volume naming the sponsor(s) who preserved the volume.

If you wish to take part in our Conservation Night, call the Athenæum, 978-744-2540 or email [Jean Marie Procious](mailto:Jean.Marie.Procious@athenaeum.org) to RSVP by May 15th. All are welcome. There is no charge for the evening. Refreshments will be served.

Visit Our New Scholar's Garden

The next time you visit the Athenæum, be sure to walk through the grounds in back and see our latest project in progress: a Scholar's Garden in the back left corner of the yard.

Over the years that corner became a mulch heap. Three years ago, Pam Jendrysik and Phil Dwight spearheaded the effort to clear the space. For two seasons, the mulch from that corner was used to fertilize the grounds. Knowing the space was almost cleared last season, Pam ruminated on how to best to use the space and prevent it from becoming filled again. She settled on a scholar's garden. Considering the Athenæum members and mission, it was the perfect choice.



Although contemplative gardens often are associated with Japan, the scholar's garden is of Chinese origin. This space, a sanctuary to escape daily cares, has specific qualities. A scholar's garden is an enclosed area entered through a passage and contains certain elements: wood (internal organs of the earth); rocks (bones of the earth), and water (arteries of the world). These elements may take a variety of forms, such as benches or fences, pebble paths, and water features. Elements may also be borrowed from the surrounding environment as well to extend the garden space. In our case, the bamboo and witch hazel tree of the neighboring yards contribute to our scholar's garden view.

People have been generous with contributions of their time and supplies. Fifty-five bags of pea stone have been poured into the garden, and 20 more bags remain to be added. In addition, a portion of the snow removal budget that was unused this past winter went toward a stone bench now installed in the garden. More plantings and stone installations are planned, but the space is ready to be enjoyed now!



Adams Lecture: John Stilgoe

Tuesday, April 24, 7:00 p.m.

John R. Stilgoe, Robert and Lois Orchard Professor of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University, has made an art of wandering the back roads of America to excavate the historical narratives embedded in our built environment. Come let this unconventional historian show you how to practice the art of observation amidst the rapid pace of modern life.



An historian of the American landscape John R. Stilgoe is author of nine books, including *Train Time*, *Lifeboat*, *Outside Lies Magic*, and *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb, 1820-1939*. He has taught in Harvard University's Department of Visual and Environmental Studies since 1977. He is a fellow of the Society of American Historians and a winner of the Francis Parkman, George Hilton, and Bradford Williams medals, the AIA's award for collaborative research, and the Charles C. Eldredge Prize for art history research.

Members \$25; non-members \$30; students with ID \$5.
A dessert and wine reception will follow the lecture.

[Register here](#)

To learn more about Professor Stilgoe and his work, visit his [home page](#).



Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 2, 7:00 p.m.

Please join us for the annual business meeting of the Salem Athenæum. All current members are welcome and encouraged to attend. The meeting will include officer and committee reports, election of new trustees and officers, and setting of the annual assessment for proprietors.

Reception to follow.



Book Group

Choice of meetings:
Wednesday, May 9 at 12:30 or 7 p.m.
Saturday, May 12 at 10 a.m.

For May we are reading *Imagine: How Creativity Works* by Jonah Lehrer.

This book discussion group offers Athenæum members a chance to discuss, debate, and grow together as book lovers. The reading list will include both fiction and non-fiction and each month's title will be selected by popular vote.

The June book will be a children's or young adult classic.





Come and Grow!

Saturday, May 12, 10:00 a.m.

Children are invited to come and enjoy some stories and an activity based around the theme of springtime and growth.

Reservations are required. For more details and reservations, please [contact Jean Marie](#).



Annual Members Garden Party

Sunday, June 3, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Join us for an Athenæum tradition!

Members and their guests are invited to enjoy the lovely garden at the Athenæum in its full bloom. This annual event features live music and a reception in the garden.

Sponsored by The Salem Athenæum.



Fall Course Preview

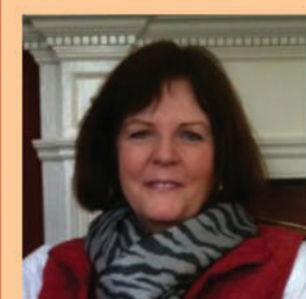
A Different Dickens

Dorothy Dudley, instructor
Saturdays from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Sept. 22, 29; Oct 6, 13, 20, 27; Nov. 3, 10



Dorothy Dudley, who taught the very popular course on Edith Wharton last year, is returning to give a Charles Dickens course at the Athenæum this coming fall. Dickens is her specialty, so this should prove to be even more engaging!

Two of Dickens' works that are less familiar to readers but demonstrate aspects of his talent will be covered: *Hard Times* and *Tale of Two Cities*. Not to shun the Dickens traditionalists, *David Copperfield*, his most autobiographical novel, is also on the reading list. More details to come.



Dorothy Dudley has taught English and American literature at Tufts University for the past ten years. In addition to teaching, she has also led her students on five "literary pilgrimages" to the UK and Spain, following in the footsteps of authors including: the Brontës, Jane Austen, Thomas Hardy, Hemingway, Orwell, and Shakespeare. Dorothy is an avid Dickens scholar and a member of the International Dickens Fellowship.

Members \$185, non-members \$205

[Register here](#)



Summer Exhibition

Peace & Unnecessary War: Transatlantic Friendships, Essex County, and the War of 1812

Opens June 18

In honor of the War of 1812 bicentennial, Charles Newhall is curating an exhibit that explores the effects of this "Unnecessary War" on Essex County and the growing American nation. This exhibit will open on June 18, 2012, exactly 200 years after the official start of the war.



Medal Commemorative of the Treaty of Peace

Government documents and naval records of the period will be on display. The exhibit will also include a look at the Pickering family. Timothy Pickering of Salem was a key member of the Essex Junto--a group staunchly opposed to the war that proposed the secession of New England. Essex County had a unique relationship with England, which deeply affected the attitudes of its citizens toward the American government.

The exhibit will also explore the legacy of this war--including the formation of the Massachusetts Peace Society, one of the nation's first anti-war societies, founded as a result of the War of 1812. Also, the harbinger of westward expansion when the U.S. gained control from England of the lands from Ohio to Mississippi (and the grave ramifications for Native Americans), and the growing rift between the Northern and Southern states propagated by the war will be explored.

The exhibit, still in development, proves to be a thought-provoking look at our region's history. Please stay tuned for more details as the exhibit develops!

Call for photos

Elaine Von Bruns is preparing a lighthearted exhibit on fatherhood. She is requesting all members who are willing to share, to submit a photograph of themselves as a child in the company of their father.

Photos may be left with Jean Marie and will be returned promptly. They may also be emailed to rvonbr@gmail.com. Please include your name with the photograph.



Contest Results for *Cast Party*! Dickens' Characters Celebrate His 200th Birthday.

The people have spoken!

As part of the recent Dickens' *Cast Party* exhibit, visitors were asked to cast ballots for their favorite Dickens' characters. A broad range of heroes and villains were represented; and there were a surprising number of ties. Here are the top 3:





- 1st Place:** Ebenezer Scrooge of *A Christmas Carol*
- 2nd Place:** Miss Havisham of *Great Expectations* (a close runner-up)
- 3rd Place Tie:** Miss Betsey Trotwood of *David Copperfield*
The Artful Dodger (a. k. a. Jack Dawkins) of *Oliver Twist*

Recent Events

The following highlights recent noteworthy events at the Athenæum.

Clockwork and Cocktails: A Steampunk Affair

On March 31, Athenæum members and friends turned out in style for our annual fundraising soiree. Thank you all for dressing so creatively and showing your support!

Best of all: we met our fundraising goal for the grandfather clock in the foyer!

See the sidebar for some photographic highlights, and visit Facebook for [more photos](#).

MassPoetry Fest Returns

On April 20-22, the Massachusetts Poetry Festival returned to Salem and was better than ever! This year the Athenæum hosted two writing workshops in our back garden—truly an inspirational space. Over 100 events were hosted citywide—poetry readings, lectures, writing workshops, and even a typewriter orchestra.



This year we also were honored to have United States Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky read at the headline event on Friday night at PEM.

Also at the Athenæum

The following events are not sponsored by the Salem Athenæum. Due to their cultural focus, they are occurring at the Athenæum and may be of interest to members.

Salem Poetry Seminar

Thursday, June 3, 7:30 p.m.

Salem State College Center for the Arts sponsors the 4th Salem Poetry Seminar, a week-long event for select poets from public colleges and universities in Massachusetts. Twelve students are given the opportunity to study poetry intensively with noted writers and educators.

In addition to day-long poetry study, the seminar includes public readings by seminar participants and its faculty. This evening's reading features Salem Poetry Seminar alumni and is also an open mic.

Free and open to the public.

Dickens Fellowship

Literary discussion meetings of *The Pickwick Papers* will be held this Winter on the following Thursdays: May 3, and June 14 (final chapters).

Reaching Across the Pond series

Tea with Mom & Me & Teddy

June 23, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Join us for tea, music, garden and board games, dancing, and a Paddington story! (Recommended ages 5 - 99)

\$10

For details on all events, visit [Dickens North of Boston](#).

Welcome!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

Mr. & Mrs. W. Lewis Barlow IV
Jon and Jennifer Firth
Robert and Margaret Fitzula
Christine and Robert Guerriero
Lis and Len Horowitz
Michele Knox
Joann C. Kowalski and Theodore O. Stolz
Hugh Pyle
Salem State University Art History Department

New Shareholders:
Peter A. Copelas
Nora and Alexander Falk



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Salem Athenæum

337 Essex Street
Salem, Massachusetts 01970

Contact Info

For general information about the Athenæum or its events, please contact the Director:

Jean Marie Procius

978-744-2540

info@salemathenaeum.net

For comments or suggestions about the newsletter, please contact the editor:

Carolyn McGuire

[Contact me!](#)