



# LIBRARY NOTES

THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY NEWSLETTER  
VOLUME 8, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 2001

## WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

### MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS SURPRISE AND SUGGEST

In October the Library's Long-Range Planning Committee sent every Library family a three-page questionnaire. Members returned almost 1,500 questionnaires, bursting with comments and suggestions. While the staff and trustees review the results, here are a few responses that may surprise you.

We were pleased to learn that the open stacks and staff assistance top the list of members' **favorite Library qualities**. Seven out of ten respondents regularly take out books, and six out of ten read periodicals here. The staff are taking to heart numerous suggestions for improving the collection, and for all of you who said they love the books on tape, we'll happily acquire more. Requests for books in European languages came as a pleasant surprise; we thought they were gathering dust, but now we know better.

The questionnaire showed many members missing out on **Library privileges**. For instance, eight out of ten members have never requested a book purchase. Request forms are available at the front desk or by phone. If you are reading this, you must be part of the 39% who regularly peruse *Library Notes*. Far fewer check out the monthly New Books List and the website ([www.nysoclib.org](http://www.nysoclib.org)) to stay abreast of Library acquisitions and events. If you were not part of the 56% of respondents who stated they were comfortable with the computerized catalog, seek help from a staff member. The catalog is here to make your life easier, not to test your computer skills.

For the 66% of you with concerns about **space and lighting**, we have good news. The Long-Range Planning Committee is busy consulting lighting experts and architects. Plans include new workspace lights and expansion of the building for new stacks and reading rooms within the next five years. Elevator renovations will not compromise what members called the "quaint" and "amusing" qualities of the current elevators.

We are pleased and proud to find that 31% of respondents have been supportive Library members for more than twenty years. Your suggestions are a big part of our continuing efforts to provide the best facilities and materials for all our members.



*The Reference Room today: consultants are investigating efficient use of space.*

Library Archives

<b>SPECIAL EVENTS CALENDAR</b>	<b>January</b>		
	27 Saturday	<b>Library Tour with Christopher Gray</b>	Library lobby, 10:00 A.M.
	29 Monday	<b>Reading Group registration begins</b>	
	<b>February</b>		
	6 Tuesday	<b>Author Series: Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.</b>	Temple Israel, 6:30 P.M.
	10 Saturday	<b>Library Tour with Christopher Gray</b>	Library lobby, 10:00 A.M.
	20 Tuesday	<b>Constitution and Country session 1</b>	Whitridge Room, 11:00 A.M.
	21 Wednesday	<b>Contemporary Fiction session 1</b>	Whitridge Room, 11:00 A.M.
	<b>March</b>		
	6 Tuesday	<b>Cynthia Ozick on New York City</b>	Members' Room, 6:00 P.M., \$10
	14 Wednesday	<b>Contemporary Fiction session 2</b>	Whitridge Room, 11:00 A.M.--session 3 April 18
	20 Tuesday	<b>Constitution and Country session 2</b>	Whitridge Room, 11:00 A.M.--session 3 April 24
		<b>Brenda Wineapple on Hawthorne</b>	Whitridge Room, 6:00 P.M.
	Children's events include <b>Sensational Sharks</b> on January 27 (for kids aged 5+) in cooperation with the New York Aquarium. To receive a full calendar of children's events, ask at the Circulation Desk or call 212-717-0357.		



## CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

### NEW LIBRARIAN AND JUNIOR COUNCIL MOVING AND SHAKING

A lot has changed in the Children's Library since Carrie Silberman arrived as full-time Children's Librarian in July 2000. More than 75 children have registered for popular kids' programs, including story and craft hours, lunch story times, and visits from professional storytellers. Ms. Silberman has also added more than 1,000 books to the children's collection and created a children's stack to preserve older books with lower circulation.

The NYSL is forging an exciting alliance with the PEN American Center, an international association of authors. They plan to co-sponsor appearances by notable authors at disadvantaged schools such as Middle School 52 in the Bronx.

The Children's Library is currently forming a Junior Advisory Council to be chaired by Allison Koslow, 13, an honor student and writer, to coordinate Project Cicero and provide input for youth programming. If you are between the ages of 8-15 and would like more information on the Junior Advisory Council, call the Library Events office at 212-717-0357.



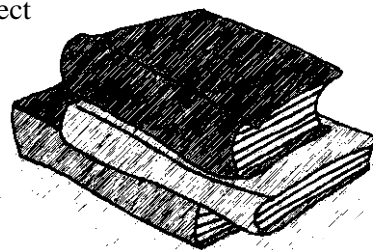
Allison Koslow, chair of the new Junior Advisory Council.

Photo by Jonathan Koslow

## PROJECT CICERO BRINGS BOOKS TO KIDS

### CHILDREN'S BOOK DRIVE AT THE LIBRARY MARCH 5-9

The ancient Roman politician Marcus Tullius Cicero was known for his comprehensive library. Now the NYSL carries on his tradition of literacy with Project Cicero, a book drive for the benefit of children in New York City public schools, hospitals, homeless shelters, and other places of need. The Project Cicero team includes the Library's Education and Community Outreach Committee and Junior Advisory Council, as well as Teach For America and New York's Children For Children Foundation. They will gather children's and young adult books at the NYSL and area schools March 5-9, 2001. The New York Fire Department will be collecting the books and the Books for Kids Foundation will aid in distribution. To participate, bring new or gently used children's and young adult books to the Library between March 5 and noon on March 9 and look for the Project Cicero posters. Call 212-717-0357 for more information.



## QUESTION FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

### PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

When the John Shillito Rogers family moved into their new townhouse at 53 East 79th Street in 1918, they enjoyed a magnificent stained-glass skylight above the main stairhall. The photograph at left shows the skylight in 1919. The trustees reported "trouble" with the skylight in 1942, and it was apparently covered in 1947. Informal canvassing has turned up no member who can describe the original skylight or its elimination. Christopher Gray, chairman of the Building Committee, would like to hear from anyone who remembers it. He also is looking for a photograph of the hanging half-globes in the Reference Room, which were removed in 1982. If you can help with either request, please contact Mr. Gray at (212) 799-0520 or [MetHistory@aol.com](mailto:MetHistory@aol.com).



Avery Architectural Library

## AROUND THE LIBRARY

### NEW CARD CATALOG RELOCATES

After January the post-1989 card catalog on the east wall of the Reference Room will be relocated to the closed stack level. No cards have been filed in this catalog since July 2000. The computer records that have taken their place allow for quick alterations and hold more bibliographic data for each item than the cards do. The pre-1989 card catalog along the west wall will remain in place.



## ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER JR. ON *A LIFE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY*

**AUTHOR SERIES 2000-2001**

**Tuesday, February 6, 2001; 6:30 P.M.; Temple Israel, 112 E. 75th St.**



Photo by Inger McCabe-Elliott

Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. turns his sharp eye on his own past in *A Life in the Twentieth Century: Innocent Beginnings 1917-1950*. Interweaving personal and national stories, Schlesinger conjures up the colorful details of events between 1917-1950, offering readers a rare and revealing window on both the private world of a notable American writer and the innocent beginnings of the American century. Henry Kissinger called it “an insightful and absorbing account. . .one of the definitive histories of the period.” Mr. Schlesinger is renowned as a historian, a public intellectual, and a political activist. He has won two Pulitzers and the 1998 National Humanities Medal.

## CYNTHIA OZICK ON “THE SYNTHETIC SUBLIME”

**Tuesday, March 6, 2001, 6:30 P.M., Members’ Room**

Critics have called her “the most accomplished literary stylist of our time” and “as authentic a voice of New York as Edith Wharton before her.” On March 6, Cynthia Ozick brings her views on New York City to the Library with a lecture based on her essay “The Synthetic Sublime.” Ms. Ozick’s strong sense of history engages the masks and idolatries of modern life, here celebrated in New York’s seething cultural mix. Author of the acclaimed novels *The Shawl* and *The Puttermessa Papers*, she won the 1973 American Academy of Arts Award for literature. The *New York Times* says, “Even when you disagree with her, she electrifies your mind.” The lecture is \$10 for Library members and guests. Space is limited, so call the Events Office at 212-717-0357 to register.



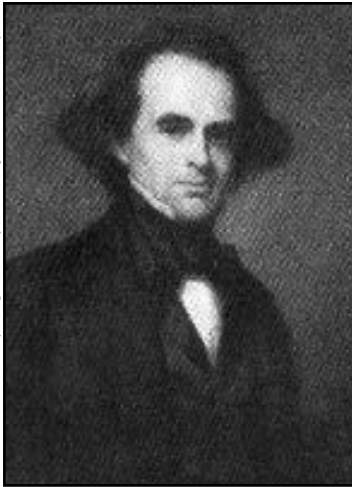
Photo by Julius Ozick

## BRENDA WINEAPPLE ON NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

**“SCARLET LETTERS AND WHITE LIES”**

**Tuesday, March 20, 6:00 P.M.; Members’ Room**

Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote in an America that measured productivity in monetary rather than literary terms, yet he achieved a celebrity as far-reaching as that of his heroine Hester Prynne. In spite of his fame, however, he maintained a secretive private life. Hawthorne’s biographer Brenda Wineapple discusses how she unravels the history of this elusive man and his busy Yankee world. Ms. Wineapple authored the biography *Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein*. She is the Washington Irving Professor of Modern Literary and Historical Studies at Union College and co-director of the New York University Biography Seminar. The lecture is free for Library members and guests; call the Events Office at 212-717-0357 to register.



Nathaniel Hawthorne by George P.A. Healy, New Hampshire Historical Society

*Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1852*

## THE NYSL TOP TO BOTTOM

**A TOUR WITH CHRISTOPHER GRAY**

**Saturdays, January 27 and February 10, 2001, 10:00 a.m.**

Take a historical tour of the Library with trustee and architectural historian Christopher Gray. The tours will meet in the Library lobby. Participants will look at the architecture of the original 1918 mansion, alterations imposed when the Library took over in 1937, and the continuing important changes to the structure. There is no charge for the tour, but contributions to the Helen Ruskell Flower Fund will be welcome. Space is limited, so call 212-717-0357 to register.



## LIBRARY READING GROUPS

### THE CONSTITUTION AND THE COUNTRY WITH ANTHONY GRONOWICZ

**Tuesdays, February 20, March 20, April 24, 11:00 A.M. in the Whitridge Room;**

**Free for members; Call 212-717-0357 beginning January 29 to register.**

Prof. Anthony Gronowicz, founder of the 1985 Hamilton Institute at Passaic County Community College, is the author of *Race and Class Politics in New York City Before the Civil War* and other books. In three sessions, this reading group will explore the relationship between the U.S. Constitution and various phases of U.S. history. The group begins by examining the Constitution's adaptation of the Declaration of Independence and will move on to why the Constitution could not prevent the Civil War and how Reconstruction-era amendments failed to integrate African-Americans into the mainstream. The third session will concern the 2000 election's constitutional crisis. Class readings include portions of the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers, and the Constitution itself.

### CONTEMPORARY FICTION WITH MEG WOLITZER

**Wednesdays, February 21, March 14, April 18, 11:00 A.M., Whitridge Room;**

**Free for members; Call 212-717-0357 beginning January 29 to register.**

Meg Wolitzer, acclaimed novelist, popular lecturer, and winner of the 1999 Pushcart Prize, leads this season's Contemporary Fiction group. She is the author of five novels, including *Surrender Dorothy* and *This Is Your Life*, which was made into the movie *This Is My Life*. The group will start with Evan S. Connell's *Mrs. Bridge*, with the second and third books to be chosen by participants.

## TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOPS

The members have demanded it. In March and April 2001, staff members Steve Baumholtz, Ingrid Richter, and Arevig Caprelian will present Technology Workshops on old and new topics. This season's workshops include a seminar on reference sources (printed and digital) and one on rare books from the NYSL collection, along with the regular introductions to computers, the online catalog and the Internet. Call 212-717-0357 beginning March 5 to register. All workshops meet in the Whitridge Room.

WORKSHOP CALENDAR	Tuesday, Mar. 27	Introduction to Computers, 10:30 A.M.	Searching the Online Catalog I, 1:30 P.M.
	Wednesday, Mar. 28	Searching the Internet I, 10:30 A.M.	Introduction to Reference Sources, 1:30 P.M.
	Thursday, Mar. 29	Searching the Internet I, 10:30 A.M.	Introduction to Windows 95/98™, 1:30 P.M.
	Tuesday, Apr. 3	Online Catalog II, 10:30 A.M.	Searching the Internet II, 1:30 P.M.
	Wednesday, Apr. 4	Searching the Internet II, 10:30 A.M.	Introduction to MS Word™ and Excel™, 1:30 P.M.
	Thursday, Apr. 5	The NYSL Collection's Hidden Treasures, 1:30 P.M.	
	Please write or phone the Library with any comments or suggestions.		

### THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY

53 East 79th Street  
New York, NY 10021