

# NOTES



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*Mr. Lord circa 1965.*

## IN MEMORY OF WALTER LORD (1917-2002)

HISTORIAN AND LIBRARY TRUSTEE

**Walter Lord retired from the Library Board in April 2002, having been first elected in 1963. The author of *A Night to Remember*, *A Time to Stand*, *Day of Infamy*, and many other notable popular histories, Mr. Lord was a wise and lively asset to the Library. Two of his fellow trustees recall his time on the Board.**

**Henry S.F. Cooper Jr.:** I joined the Library board in 1971 -- 31 years ago! -- when Walter was pushing 54. He was remarkably youthful, full of high spirits and mischief, with a voice even louder than my own. He was a luminary in a luminous trustee group that included Brendan Gill, Barbara Tuchman, Jacques Barzun, Arnold Whitridge, and Shirley Hazzard. He and I -- I as the youngest and least luminous -- for some reason were appointed to a committee for Library security. Books tend to age on our shelves like wine, acquiring value. What really grabbed Walter's attention was that *A Night To Remember* was listed in a rare-book catalogue at \$50, and there it was, on our open shelves, a sitting duck for any thief.

In our investigative role, Walter and I discovered several trunks full of marvelous china -- Oriental Export, Sèvres -- that had belonged to the Goodhue family, Library benefactors, languishing on the top floor of the Library. We thought it would be nice if these wonderful plates and dishes could be displayed in the cases in the Members' Room. With the help of another trustee, Andrew Oliver, we arranged for the secure cases we have now. It is due to Walter that the Members' Room looks as splendid as it does today.

**Shirley Hazzard Steegmuller:** Walter, a native of Baltimore, epitomized, I think, the easy civility and wide culture of an almost vanished version of intellectual New York. Amused, amusing, direct of thought and speech, possessed of a singular sardonic tenderness; and so clever. We met as trustees at the New York Society Library long ago, seeing the Library through some dramas and into years of precipitate change. Walter, Jacques Barzun, and I formed a congenial alliance in bookish matters, joined -- when he could attend -- by Brendan Gill. Walter and I, who were neighbors in the East Sixties, often walked home together from Library meetings, or rode a bus -- brief expeditions whose affinity and laughter I recall with unique pleasure. Even in those early years, Walter's health was intermittently frail; but he never spoke of it, or acknowledged suffering or apprehension.

An exceptional man, gentle and gentlemanly, swiftly responsive; brilliant; irreplaceable.

*The Library owns eleven titles by Walter Lord.*

## THE NEW YORK CITY BOOK AWARDS CEREMONY 2002

photographs by David Ortiz



Authors Cantwell and Wall, with presenter David Hurst Thomas

### AWARD FOR HISTORY

#### *UNEARTHING GOTHAM*

*Anne-Marie E. Cantwell and Diana diZerega Wall*  
(Yale University Press)

“...A unique view of the New York beneath our feet. Archaeologists Cantwell and Wall scan 11,000 years of human occupation in the five boroughs, from Native American rock shelters in Washington Heights to colonial taverns, African burial grounds and midtown skyscrapers. This absorbing survey contributes a valuable new perspective on the nature of cities and the use of space.”  
--Constance R. Roosevelt

### AWARD FOR HISTORY

#### *FIVE POINTS: THE 19TH-CENTURY NEW YORK CITY*

*NEIGHBORHOOD THAT INVENTED TAP DANCE, STOLE ELECTIONS, AND BECAME THE WORLD'S MOST NOTORIOUS SLUM*

*Tyler Anbinder*  
(The Free Press)

“*Five Points* is a deeply researched look at what was once New York’s most notorious neighborhood. Anbinder deftly punctures many myths about Five Points without shying away from grim realities. He makes a world seemingly long gone come alive.”

--Joshua B. Freeman

### AWARD FOR A CHILDREN’S BOOK

#### *LOOKIN’ FOR BIRD IN THE BIG CITY*

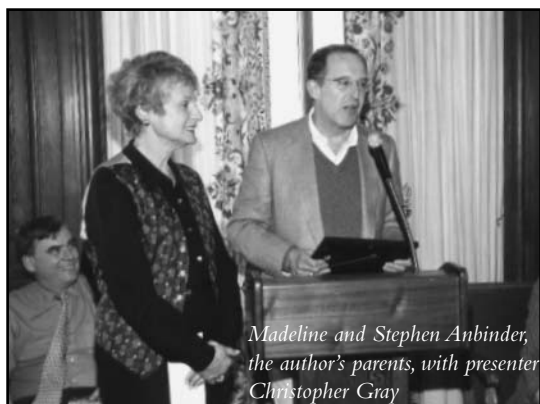
*Robert Burleigh; illustrated by Marek Los*  
(Harcourt Brace)

“Words and art harmonize in this creatively imagined account of the first meeting between a teenage Miles Davis and celebrated saxophonist Charlie “Bird” Parker. Los makes a sparkling children’s book debut here: his paintings create visual riffs that complement the jazz musicians and settings he salutes.”

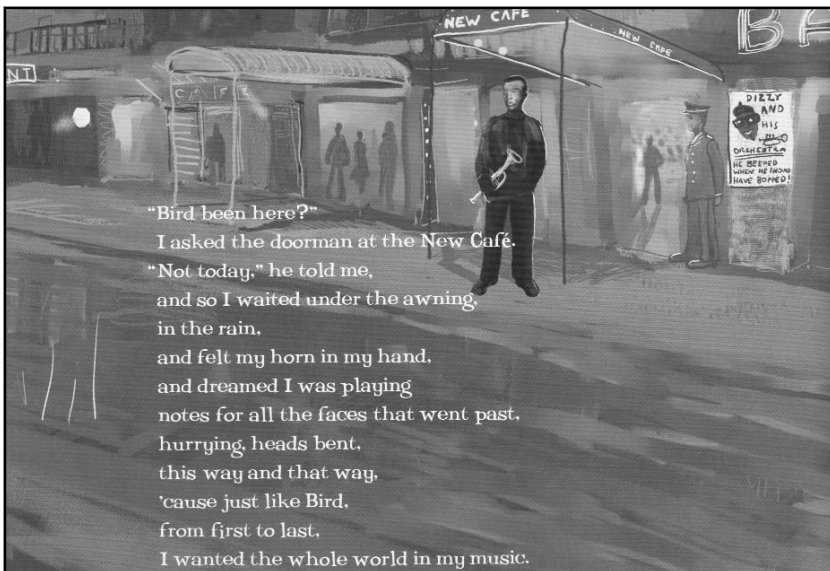
--Publishers Weekly



a tenement in Five Points



Madeline and Stephen Anbinder, the author’s parents, with presenter Christopher Gray



“Bird been here?”  
I asked the doorman at the New Cafe.  
“Not today,” he told me,  
and so I waited under the awning,  
in the rain,  
and felt my horn in my hand,  
and dreamed I was playing  
notes for all the faces that went past,  
hurrying, heads bent,  
this way and that way,  
’cause just like Bird,  
from first to last,  
I wanted the whole world in my music.



Marek Los, with Harcourt Brace publisher Paula Wiseman

## ON LIBRARIES OLD AND NEW BEWARE THE LIBRARY GODS!

*William J. Dean*  
*Chairman, Board of Trustees*

In 1754, the year of the Library's founding, the trustees drew up a set of rules to be "strictly observed by the Librarian."

"Reg. I" provided "That no Book whatsoever belonging to this Library, shall be detained in the hands of any Subscriber, longer than the space of One Month...."

Throughout the 1800s the following circulation admonishments were affixed to our books:

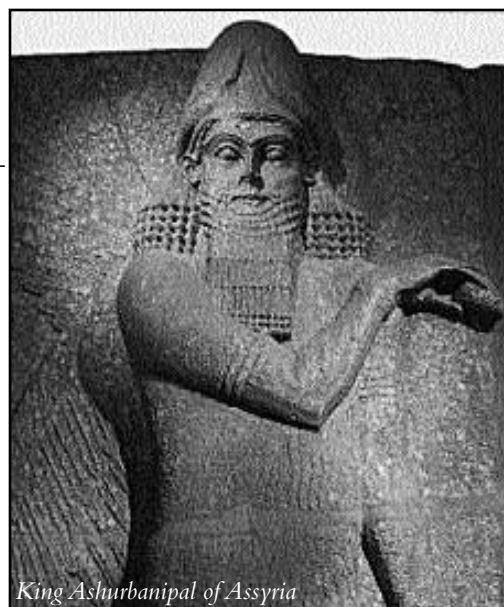
The Trustees of the New York Society Library deem it their duty to request all persons interested in the institution, to exercise a little care in preventing the Books from getting injured when taken out of the Library. They are frequently blotted, scribbled in, and torn by children, and often soiled by servants bringing them to the Library without an envelope. It should also be remembered, that no person has a right to insert any comments, however correct, in the margin, or other parts of a Book, either with a pen or pencil. This practice induces others to disfigure the page with idle and unnecessary remarks.

The Library's present "Terms and Rules" are not nearly as charming. Presumably written by a committee of lawyers, they read like tax regulations. But Rule C(8)(b) has character: "No one shall conduct himself in a manner that is disturbing, rude or unpleasant to another reader or to a member of the library staff."

As I learned from reading Lionel Casson's delightful and informative recent book, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (published by Yale University Press), our rules seem humane compared to those of King Ashurbanipal, who ruled Assyria from 668 to 627 B.C. His library, which he compiled by sending scribes on book searches throughout ancient Mesopotamia, is considered to be the earliest in Western history.

If you planned to steal a tablet (remember, we are in the pre-book era) from the king's library, you did so at peril to your life. "He who carries it off, may Adad and Shala carry him off!" Or, "May Nabu decree his destruction." Some rules reward good behavior. "The scholar who does not steal the document and replaces it in its holder, may Ishtar regard him with joy."

But for those maltreating a tablet, the consequences are terrible:



British Library

*King Ashurbanipal of Assyria*

He who breaks this tablet or puts it in water or rubs it until you cannot recognize it [and] cannot make it be understood, may Ashur, Sin, Shamash, Adad and Ishtar, Bel Nergal, Ishtar of Nineveh, Ishtar of Arbela, Ishtar of Bit Kidmurri, the gods of heaven and earth and the gods of Assyria, may all these curse him with a curse which cannot be relieved, terrible and merciless, as long as he lives, may they let his name, his seed, be carried off from the land, may they put his flesh in a dog's mouth!

As future generations of trustees review and revise the Library's rules, I hope they will not find it necessary to emulate the Assyrian model.

**THE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY IN 2001-2002**



*Kevin and Caitlin Flynn enjoy a story.*



*Library author Robert Quackenbush shows his illustration to Dan Rubins.*



*Julia Raysman meets Meg Cabot, author of The Princess Diaries.*

**PRESIDENT BUSH HONORS LIBRARY AUTHOR**

The Children's Library congratulates member-author and former speaker Richard Peck, who has been awarded the first National Humanities Medal ever given to a children's author. Mr. Peck credits First Lady Laura Bush for this honor, which goes annually to individuals or groups broadening, popularizing or preserving the humanities.

**PROJECT CICERO<sup>SM</sup> 2002: AN OVERWHELMING SUCCESS**



Project Cicero, now in its second year, is a book drive sponsored by the Library's Education and Community Outreach Committee in partnership with other private city organizations. This year over 100,000 children's books were collected from fifty public, private and parochial schools as well as public drop-off points and donations from publishers. More than 100 student and adult volunteers and fifty teachers sorted the books and distributed them to about 400 teachers from the least-served schools in the city. Stories about Project Cicero appeared in three major newspapers, but the best review came from a schoolchild who wrote, "Thank you for the good books you gave my teacher. They are so exciting." Special thanks go to all the Library members who donated to Project Cicero. Mark your calendar for next year's drive, March 3-6, 2003.

*Library members Jeryl and Marissa Rothschild sort donated books.*

Please write or telephone the Library with any comments or suggestions. Visit our website at [www.nysoclib.org](http://www.nysoclib.org).

**THE NEW YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY**

53 East 79th Street  
New York, NY 10021