BOSTON ATHENÆUM

Reports for 2020
Boston Athenæum
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BOSTON ATHENÆUM

Reports for 2020

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I joined the Boston Athenæum on May 18, two-thirds of the way through this fiscal year. What a pleasure it has been to take on this role and to be welcomed into this remarkable community. It has been a strange moment to take the helm. The 1918 Annual Report refers to the Spanish flu as having “a slight and temporary effect on the administration of the Athenæum.” I am afraid that we cannot say the same thing about COVID-19, which forced us to close the building for nearly four months and is still placing limits on the activities of so many of our members.

Despite—or perhaps spurred by—the challenge, the Athenæum community has shown itself to be more than just welcoming in the last nine months. Proprietors have been true champions of the library, supporting the BA at even higher levels in this bewildering period undeterred by the closure. Members have shared kind messages of encouragement and appreciation, and rallied for the Annual Fund too. The BA staff has worked hard to be of service in every way possible, venturing into virtual offerings such as Zoom book discussion groups and Curator’s Choice presentations of the special collections.

The evolving needs of the BA have led to a rethinking of the expansion into 14 Beacon Street. In consultation with the Board of Trustees and the Facilities Committee, a new team of architects was identified. As we reassess, I have had the chance to hear from many of our members. Their invaluable perspectives combined with new financial realities are shaping the goals of the revised project to include more member space as well as opportunities to develop additional revenue streams.

We intend to improve the experience of interacting with the Athenæum by replacing aging technology systems in the next fis-
cal year. The most visible sign of this overhaul will be a new website that should debut in the fall of 2021. That website will look different, but the changes won’t be just superficial ones. We want it to function more smoothly, making everything from registering for events to membership renewal far simpler.

At the start of Fiscal Year 2020, we had just opened a major exhibition on the King’s Chapel Library. Showcasing a treasure of the Athenæum and of Boston’s early history, it incorporated the voices and viewpoints of ten different community partners. Each group brought a unique perspective to the question, “What is essential knowledge?” Their diversity of answers provided a fascinating counterpoint to the seventeenth-century conception of learning necessary to the educated individual. I consider this work an exemplar of the Athenæum at its thought-provoking best.

Our acquisitions included the gift of the Sadie Lewis Webb Collection. Donated by a generous Proprietor, this collection helps solidify the Boston Athenæum’s standing as a world-class institution for artists’ books and the art of the book. Included within the larger gift is a nearly complete collection of the output of the Janus Press, printed by MacArthur Award recipient Claire Van Vliet, as well as a beautiful example of a Paul Bonet binding. Read a much fuller description below and join me in commending the excellent work of our curatorial team.

Fiscal Year 2020 presented many challenges. Despite that, the Boston Athenæum is pleased to report an operating surplus of $145,967. Revenues were particularly hard hit over this period as active membership decreased from 3,594 on September 30, 2019 to 2,689 on September 30, 2020. The Athenæum diligently controlled costs, saving $946,806 in expenses. This careful management allowed us to end the year in a positive position.

It would be impossible to close this report without acknowledging Interim Director Amy Ryan. Amy joined the Athenæum in late summer of 2019, granting us the benefit of her years of experience as a senior leader of libraries. Much of our progress over the last year should be credited to Amy. Since stepping down, she
has proven to be an outstanding friend, mentor, and member of the Board of Trustees.

This year has seen two especially significant passings of Proprietors and members of the Board of Trustees. While fuller tributes follow, I want to note the deaths of Mitchell Lash Adams and Alexander Altschuller. Both were uncommonly thoughtful men and true friends of the Boston Athenæum.

Let me end with a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported the Athenæum in this year. Without you, we would not have been able to manage. With you, we have been inspired to meet the moment, to change, and to grow. I look forward to facing the future together.

TRUSTEE ACTIVITIES

The Proprietors elected Timothy W. Diggins, a Trustee since 2017, as President of the Board of Trustees at the annual meeting in March. The board welcomed three new members, Aïmée Vincent Jamison, Winston E. Langley, and Amy E. Ryan, while two Trustees, David P. Ingram and John G. Palfrey, Jr., attained Emeriti status. With this report the Board mourns the passing of devoted Trustees Emeriti Alexander Altschuller and Mitchell Adams.

Aïmée Vincent Jamison

A member of the Boston Athenæum since 2015 and a Proprietor since 2019, Aïmée Vincent Jamison is a lifelong bibliophile and avid reader. She first became a member while living in Woodside, California, and was delighted when her husband’s career choices resulted in a return to Boston in 2018, when she was able to engage more actively with the library and its collections.

Ms. Jamison holds a BA in English from Duke University and an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. She is an investor in early-stage technology companies, and has done extensive work with a variety of nonprofit, education
and community organizations in Seattle, Tokyo and California, among other locations. Ms. Jamison is a former President of the Las Lomitas Education Foundation, and served as a Trustee of the Eaglebrook School in Deerfield, MA. She and her husband are the parents of two teenage boys.

Winston E. Langley

A member of the Boston Athenæum since 2015 and a Proprietor since 2016, Winston E. Langley is an eminent scholar of international organization and global governance as well as a seasoned educational administrator. He has been involved with the University of Massachusetts Boston for 45 years, and is currently a professor emeritus of Political Science and International Relations and Senior Fellow at the McCormack Graduate School for Policy and Global Studies.

Dr. Langley’s scholarly interests include human rights, alternative models of world order, religion, and politics. His research has focused on the inadequacy of the nation-state system, the weakness of intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations’ expanding power and influence, and the paucity of alternative models for global ordering. Dr. Langley is the author of *Kazi Nazrul Islam: The Voice of Poetry and the Struggle for Human Wholeness* and the *Encyclopedia of Human Rights Issues Since 1945*, which won the Choice Outstanding Academic Book Award. He is a member of the American Society of International Law and a reviewer of nine publications.

Amy E. Ryan

A member of the Boston Athenæum since 2008 and a Proprietor since 2018, Amy E. Ryan has over thirty-five years of library management experience, most recently as the Boston Athenæum’s Interim Stanford Calderwood Director from September 2019 until May 2020. During this time she also served an important role on the Search Committee for the next Director. Prior to her time at the Athenæum, she was President of the Boston Public Library, Director of the Hennepin County (Minnesota) Public Library and she served in leadership positions for
28 years with the Minneapolis Public Library. During her tenure in these roles, she earned national awards for programming, strategic planning, public service, and excellence in architectural initiatives. She earned her Masters in Library Science from the University of Minnesota and a BA from Mankato State University; she also studied at the Institute for European Studies in Freiburg, Germany, and the Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education Program. Ms. Ryan serves as an Advisor in Residence at Simmons University Graduate School of Library and Information Science, a member of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Libraries Visiting Committee, and former Chair of the Board of Directors of the Digital Public Library of America. She is a member of the Nichols House Museum Governing Board, serves on the Beacon Hill Village Council, and continues to be actively involved with the Boston Athenæum.

In Memoriam

Mitchell Lash Adams
September 23, 1944 - July 18, 2020

Mitch Adams was a dedicated member of the Athenæum community for many years. He became a Trustee in July 1999, and continued as a Trustee Emeritus in 2012. He remained active on the Audit & Risk Committee and regularly attended Board meetings with bow tie and thoughtful advice.

The Boston Globe wrote that he will be remembered for his acute social conscience. His steady kindness will also be missed.

Alexander Altschuller
June 6, 1938 - September 20, 2020

Dr. Alexander Altschuller was also a devoted member of the Athenæum community for decades. He became a Proprietor in 2000 and served as a Trustee for 12 years before attaining Emeritus status. He was active on several Trustee committees, and was a val-
ued member of the internal Book Selection Committee for more than ten years. His love of travel and of books is memorialized in two significant collections he entrusted to the Athenæum, detailed in the Special Collections report that follows.

**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

The Athenæum maintains its special collections to preserve and document the past, to foster delight and wonder, and to cultivate an appreciation for excellence in the making of books and art. Our special collections cover most aspects of the humanities over the whole span of recorded history, from ancient Egyptian textual artifacts to the latest artists’ books and fine prints. We hold these rare and significant materials in trust for the understanding and enjoyment of patrons today and for those in generations to come. By providing access, we enable members and researchers to experience a tangible connection with history, whether for curiosity’s sake, as part of a systematic effort to produce new knowledge, or as inspiration for creativity or critical conversations. In pursuit of these aims, this was a banner year for Special Collections. We received the gift of an internationally important collection on the art and history of the book. Additionally, two talented curators joined the department as it shifts toward an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach to the curation and promotion of the Athenæum’s extraordinary collections.

*Acquisitions*

The Athenæum acquired approximately 2,292 objects for special collections, of which approximately 2,044 were generously donated. A complete list of items acquired is available as an online supplement.

This was a landmark year for gifts-in-kind. Significant collections entrusted to the Athenæum’s care reached a combined appraised value of over $900,000.

The Sadie Lewis Webb Collection, given in memory of Emily Webb Collier and Ann M. Anderson, consists of both rare books
Germaine de Coster and Hélène Dumas, bookbinders. Design binding on André Suarès, *Cite nef de Paris* ([Paris]: Les Bibliophiles du Palais, [1933]). Formerly owned by Jean Drapeau, Mayor of Montreal. Purchased in part on the Killam Canadian Fund.
Rider’s British Merlin for the Year of Our Lord 1806
(London: For the Company of Stationers by Nichols and Son, 1806).
Almanac with silver stylus.
Purchase, Kathleen L. & Peter A. Wick Fund.
and contemporary artists’ books assembled to call attention to the book as an object of fine craft and of evocative beauty. The collection reinforces several strands of the Athenæum’s current collecting emphases: excellent examples of the art and history of the book; important artists’ books, fine bindings, and illustrated books; and strong representation of the work of French and New England book artists. Historic highlights of the collection include an early incunable (1471), a superb copy of Geoffroy Tory’s *Champ fleury* (Paris 1529; a legendary rarity in the history of book illustration and typography), and an enormous manuscript antiphonal (Spain, eighteenth century; handwritten on vellum with musical notation and decorated initials). Among the bookbindings in the collection are examples of the work of several of the most celebrated French and American design binders, including spectacular pieces by Paul Bonet and Donald Glaister. Masterpieces of book illustration include original etchings by Henri Matisse and colorful abstract pochoirs by Man Ray. In addition to filling gaps in the Athenæum’s holdings with important works by such leading contemporary book artists as Leonard Baskin and Barry Moser, the gift establishes the Athenæum as the repository for a nearly complete archive of the printed output of MacArthur Fellow Claire Van Vliet and her Janus Press. This transformative gift strengthens the Boston Athenæum’s position as an internationally significant center not only for academic scholarly research, but also for fostering the experience of physical books as a source of enjoyment.

Bibliophilic pleasure is similarly apparent in two collections donated by the Athenæum’s late Trustee emeritus Alexander Altschuller. One of his collecting interests, inspired in part by the delight he took in Athenæum trips abroad, focused on fine copies and first editions of great travel writing in English, including works by Eric Newby, Jan Morris, Richard Ford, Julian Barnes, Graham Greene, and Evelyn Waugh, with a special emphasis on Robert Byron. Dr. Altschuller’s other collection, inspired by his heritage, consists of English translations of Russian literature, including works by Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, and Chekhov (novelist Katherine Mansfield’s set of his works), among others, with a spe-
cial emphasis on Tolstoy. A set of Tolstoy’s Free Age Press pamphlets are joined by M. K. Gandhi’s *Satyagraha in South Africa* (with a discussion of his “Tolstoy Farm”), and a significant group of Virginia and Leonard Woolf’s Hogarth Press pamphlets with a focus on Russian issues. While the gift consists primarily of printed books, it also includes some archival material, such as Colin Thubron’s manuscript for his first book, *Mirror to Damascus*. The gift will stand as a testament to Dr. Altschuller’s convivial kindness, generosity, and love of books.

The passion for single-minded collecting likewise reveals itself in a gift of about 600 items from the late Robert C. Horlick in memory of his wife, Ruth C. Horlick. Their avid pursuit of all things relating to Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (1809–1894) resulted in a substantive collection comprising first editions, association copies, sheet music, ephemera, prints, photographs, and some 350 letters and manuscripts. Together, they document Holmes from several angles: man of letters, public persona, influential research physician. The collection finds a fitting home at the Athenæum, where Holmes, a nationally-recognized figure in the nineteenth century, was a Proprietor for half a century (1843–1893), a donor of rare books (including two incunables), and a heavy user of the library (the archives document his extensive reading).

The Athenæum’s history is intertwined with the archival materials in another gift, Perkins family papers donated by Edward N. Perkins. This important unpublished archive is rich in correspondence, account books, travel diaries, commonplace books, and other manuscripts stretching as far back as the 1780s. The oldest records document business dealings of the Athenæum’s early benefactors, James Perkins, Jr. and his brother Thomas Handsayd Perkins, including their role in the slave trade. A series of more than 40 letters by James’s wife Sarah and other female members of the family contains significant social commentary. The collection promises to shed new light on this complicated period in Boston history.

Among more than a dozen smaller gifts, standouts include a group of 150 handbills and programs produced mostly in Boston for musical performances held from the 1860s through the 1890s,
the gift of Harold Kanthor; and a group of three small abstract pencil drawings by the artist Charles Burchfield, the gift of Sheila Emerson and William Keach in honor of Harriet and Mortimer Spiller. The Athenæum organized a three-location exhibition of Burchfield’s work in 1986, but these are the first pieces by the artist to enter the permanent collection.

Endowment funds provided through the generosity of past donors allowed the Athenæum to continue to add meaningfully to the collections in many areas of special emphasis, from Boston history to the art and history of the book. Items selected build on strengths, fill in gaps, and preserve rare and beautiful cultural heritage materials for research and enjoyment.

This year’s most outstanding rare book acquisitions added significantly to the Athenæum’s impressive holdings in the art of bookbinding. The personal collection of the late nineteenth-century German-American bookbinder Otto Zahn’s own work became available en bloc directly from his heirs. The Athenæum now stewards a research-level collection of the finest examples of this meticulous but underappreciated craftsman’s output. In the wake of last year’s acquisition of the Toronto-based book artist Robert Wu’s exuberant binding on a copy of Raymond Cogniat’s Portrait de Germaine de Coster, Mr. Wu offered the Athenæum two design bindings by de Coster and Hélène Dumas from his personal collection: exquisite work by women artists as well as a wonderful source of insight into the mechanics of artistic inspiration.

A number of artists’ and fine press books, many with New England connections, entered the collection. Noteworthy pieces created by the late Northampton-based artist Leonard Baskin and his circle included deluxe copies of Baskin’s Disconnected Sodality (Gehenna Press, 2005), D. R. Wakefield’s Alphabet of Extinct Mammals and Hunting of the Snark (Chevington Press, 2009 and 2019), and Peter Bogardus’s Chronographia (Khelcom Press, 2019). These were joined by deluxe copies of recent books by Gaylord Schanilec, Judith Rothchild, and Anneli Skaar. Northfield poet and printer Ed Rayher’s Swamp Press, previously barely present in the collection, is now represented by a group of several dozen titles.
Four unusual books acquired this year help to elucidate various aspects of the history of the book. Two of them are eighteenth-century books-in-sheets. Warehoused after printing, neither was ever folded or sewn by a bookbinder. *Prima elementa historiae urbis Augustae Vindelicorum* (1763), a history of Augsburg in simple schoolboy Latin, demonstrates the imposition (page layout) used for the octavo format, while *Religio in Aula* (1724), a eulogy for the mother of Emperor Charles VI, is a quarto. An engraved frontispiece accompanies each, helping to make the point that letterpress and intaglio printing took place in separate workshops. This point is further reinforced by the copper plate used to print the frontispiece of *Memoires sur La Bastille* (1783). A scarce survival, it enables comparison of an engraving with the printing surface that produced it. Similarly uncommon is the silver writing stylus that served both as a note-taking device and as the pin to secure the clasps on a finely bound copy of the almanac *Rider’s British Merlin* (1806).

Most of the other rare books, printed ephemera, manuscripts, maps, prints, and photographs added to the collection this year fell into one of several collecting themes, often with a Boston or New England focus. One of the most important acquisitions was the only surviving copy of the first state of John Carwitham’s *South East View of the Great Town of Boston in New England in America* (London ca. 1737). This state of the engraving, one of the earliest visual records of Boston, was previously known only by speculation.

Various aspects of social and cultural history are represented by a group of pamphlets relating to spiritualism in Boston; by materials documenting women’s history, including suffrage-related pieces acquired to mark the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment; and by items reflecting the experiences of children during the First World War. Among the latter were two scarce miniature books created by a French girl, Nyse Devambez, the daughter of a prominent French publisher, and a bizarre book by Henri Gazan, *Marie-Anne et son Oncle Sam* (Paris, 1919). All three are pristine, and colorfully illustrated with vivid pochoir prints.

Boston’s rich African American history unfolded across a
**Left:** Nyse [Devambez], *Loute et Loulou pendant les Gothas*  
[Paris: Devambez, ca. 1915].  
Purchase, Kathleen L. & Peter A. Wick Fund.

**Right:** Nyse [Devambez], *Occupations d’une refugiee de Paris*  
[Paris: Devambez, ca. 1919].  
Purchase, Kathleen L. & Peter A. Wick Fund.
Henri Gazette, Marie-Anne et son Oncle Sam (Paris: G. Bouthier, 1919).
Purchase, Kathleen L. & Peter A. Wick Fund.
[Lewis Hayden and others, signers], Manuscript certificate for Celestial Masonic Lodge #4, testifying that “Brother John Parkis, a master mason . . . is a worthy brother and recommend him to favourable consideration of the Masonic Fraternity of Ancient York Masons,” Boston, 16 July 1851. Purchase, Proprietor Fund.
Cigarette card of pedestrian Frank Hart. Lithographed tinted card (New York: Between the Acts & Bravo Cigarettes, circa early 1880s?). Purchase, State Street Bank Print Fund.
Views of Boston. Chicago: Rand McNally, ca. 1890. A schraubthaler (coin-shaped case) housing a leporello of cameo illustrations including views of the Public Garden, the Old Elm on Boston Common, and the Athenæum building prior to the addition of the fourth and fifth floors. Purchase, Karin Arntz Dumbaugh and Charles T. Dumbaugh Fund for acquisitions on the Boston Common, Public Garden, and Commonwealth Avenue Mall.
range of items added this year. A handwritten Masonic document from 1851 bears the signature of Black abolitionist Lewis Hayden. Among other photographs and ephemera, the Boston photographer George Kendall Warren’s carte de visite portrait of Frederick Douglass (ca. 1879) was joined by a lithographed 1880s cigarette card depicting the “pedestrian” Frank Hart, an immigrant from Haiti who settled in Boston and who received national attention as an athlete by winning a speed-walking competition at Madison Square Garden in 1880. A program for the 1876-77 season of the Redpath Lyceum, a commercial lecture and entertainment bureau founded in Boston, highlights the “Great Musical Drama ‘Out Of Bondage’” with a lithograph of the actors and a synopsis of the play. Written by Joseph Bradford, who was white, *Out of Bondage* was the first play on the topic of slavery to feature an African American cast, notably the Hyers Sisters. The play was adapted by their father and manager, Samuel B. Hyers, and produced with the involvement of writer Pauline Hopkins. Also joining the collection, the first edition of the first novel by Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces* (1900), retains its attractive original publisher’s cloth binding as issued by The Colored Co-operative Publishing Co. of Boston. It was intended, as she writes in the preface, “to raise the stigma of degradation from my race.”

Among many items relating to various aspects of New England printing history was a scarce literary curiosity, George W. Putnam’s *The Account of Mr. Jonathan Bubble’s First Attempt at Flying*, printed in Lynn in 1881. The intersection of printing history with other aspects of material culture was represented by manuals and handbooks as well as by a panoply of the printed artifacts of commerce, often making use of chromolithography, and primarily with a Boston focus: trade cards, promotional booklets, sale catalogs, sample books, and other ephemera. Among the manuals were several elucidating the material culture of various arts and crafts, from *The Practical Ostrich Feather Dyer* (1888; complete with sample feathers) to the *School of Painting for the Imitation of Woods and Marbles* (1903; a tall folio with impressive chromolithographs). Even more compelling is an extraordinary bound volume of colorful French block-printed wallpaper samples issued
mostly by the Zuber firm in the 1920s. Among many abstract patterns are some charming figurative examples: one features Charlie Chaplin in his role as the Little Tramp, and another portrays Bécassine, the first female protagonist in the history of comics.

Other works on paper added to the Prints and Photographs collection included Charles Herbert Woodbury’s poster for the Boston Park Guide (1895); a Will Bradley poster for the Chap-Book (1895); and a sketch book containing pencil drawings of southern Maine by Alice Frye Leach, ca. 1889. One of the curators’ favorite pieces was an 1890s Schraubthalier (coin-shaped case), about the size of a silver dollar, containing a leporello of circular views of Boston scenes published by Rand McNally in Chicago, in its original box. Not least among the views is the facade of the Boston Athenæum—prior, of course, to the addition of the fourth and fifth floors.

Three noteworthy portraits entered the Paintings and Sculpture collection. All are by women artists who exhibited in the Boston Athenæum’s gallery during the nineteenth century, but were not represented in the permanent collection until now. Anna Claypoole Peale (1791–1878) became one of the first women elected to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1824). Niece to Charles Willson Peale and cousin to Rembrandt Peale, she exhibited two portrait miniatures at the Athenæum in 1828, and a larger painting in 1831. She painted in 1820 the skillful portrait miniature of a woman in a lacy bonnet that has now joined the collection.

Peale’s contemporary Sarah Goodridge (1788–1853) was another of the earliest professional women artists in the United States. Based in Boston and a student of Gilbert Stuart, Goodridge exhibited miniatures at the Boston Athenæum five times between 1827 and 1835. Her sitters in the two watercolors on ivory now at the Athenæum were Augusta Porter Woodbury (1803–1883) and her husband, Massachusetts minister and abolitionist James Trask Woodbury (1803–1861). The portraits are richly detailed and highly naturalistic, representative of Goodridge’s skill at the peak of her artistic productivity. The miniatures are accompanied by
locks of the couple’s hair and a note in which James describes the commission of his wife’s portrait from Goodridge. It is rare to have such contextual material in conjunction with the artwork.

Loans

The Athenæum loaned works to exhibitions at four regional institutions as well as one major national exhibition.

The Smithsonian American Art Museum featured the bronze *The Freedman* (1863) by sculptor John Quincy Adams Ward (1830-1910) in its exhibition *Alexander von Humboldt and the United States: Art, Nature, and Culture*. The curator described “Ward’s sculpture of an enslaved man about to rise up, his shackles broken” as “the most powerful abolitionist sculpture made during the Civil War.”

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum borrowed four pieces of John Singer Sargent correspondence for *Boston’s Apollo: Thomas McKeller and John Singer Sargent*. In one of the letters, Sargent invites McKeller to come to his studio in Back Bay for a sitting. It is the only known surviving piece of correspondence between the white painter and the Black model. Theo Tyson, the Athenæum’s Polly Thayer Starr Fellow in American Art and Culture, participated in programming and label writing as one of several Community Collaborators for the exhibition.

In March, the St. Botolph Club opened *Allan Rohan Crite: Words & Images* with two Athenæum paintings featured prominently: Crite’s *Late Afternoon* and *The News*. A lively and well-attended opening included an inspiring retrospective of Crite’s career as Boston’s most influential African American artist.

The Davis Museum at Wellesley College borrowed a wood engraving by Nathaniel Orr depicting the “Interior of Meade Brothers’ Daguerreotype Gallery, Broadway, New York” (taken from *Gleason’s Pictorial*, 1853) for the exhibition *Making, Not Taking: Portrait Photography in the 19th Century*.

In the Fruitlands Museum exhibition *Polly Thayer Starr: Nearer the Essence*, the Trustees of Reservations exhibited the im-
pressive 1943 self-portrait Starr gave the Athenæum in 1995. The painting resonated powerfully with other portraits and self-portraits, as well as landscapes, drawings, sketches, and notebooks, with a special emphasis on the artist’s special interest in subjects drawn from nature.

Exhibitions

Opening just before the start of the fiscal year, Required Reading: Reimagining a Colonial Library attracted numerous visitors to the Calderwood Gallery until the show closed one week early in March on account of the pandemic. Organized by John Buchtel in collaboration with many colleagues, the exhibition celebrated the earliest surviving library in Boston, the King’s Chapel Library, as well as the magnificent colonial revival cabinet built in 1883 to house the collection. The exhibition told the story of the collection’s arrival from England in 1698 as one of the Reverend Dr. Thomas Bray’s “Provincial Libraries” intended for the use of Anglican ministers in the British colonies. The show’s centerpiece—a full-scale replica of the 1883 cabinet, split lengthwise to create open display spaces symbolizing the Athenæum’s increasing openness—proved to be highly engaging for visitors. Funded in part by a grant from the Chipstone Foundation and by other generous donors, the replica cabinet contained books selected by community partners in response to the same question Thomas Bray asked himself over 300 years ago: what constitutes essential knowledge for your community? The exhibition inspired a range of lively programming detailed later in this Report, including gallery talks and tours, lectures, visits by college classes, a panel discussion on the crafts of cabinet making and bookbinding, and a series of three roundtable discussions led by representatives of the exhibition’s community partners.

A smaller installation, (Anti)SUFFRAGE, opened in November in two alcoves in the Long Room. Curated by Polly Thayer Starr Fellow Theo Tyson, the installation featured thirteen rare books, broadsides, paintings, photographs, and other Special Collections items relating to the suffrage movement, women’s roles in society,
and the struggle to secure and protect voting rights for women and people of color.

Other Special Collections Activities

A national search culminated in the filling of the two assistant curator positions, with Virginia Reynolds Badgett joining the team in January, and Dr. Christina Michelon arriving in March. With their complementary strengths, interests, and experience in American art, decorative arts, visual culture, prints, and photographs, they bring the breadth of knowledge and the intellectual curiosity necessary to enact the integrated, interdisciplinary, and collaborative approaches to curation that the range of the Athenæum’s Special Collections requires.

Following the shift to remote work in March, the curatorial team pivoted to participation in online programming, including a new series of collections-based Curator’s Choice presentations and an online version of the (Anti)SUFFRAGE installation, as well as to long-range planning and infrastructure projects such as evaluating replacement options for an aging art database.

READER SERVICES

Like Dante mid-way along the journey of his life, mid-way through the Athenæum’s fiscal year we encountered a “dark wood.” However, we found ways to deliver services both familiar and novel to our readers.

Circulation

The Athenæum circulated 7,985 books through the year, except between March 12 and June 21. Members requested and received by mail 671 books. We retrieved 53 books for readers from off-site storage. Between October 1 and March 12, twice-weekly library orientation tours for 72 new, long-term, and occasionally
prospective members set off from the front desk. Long-time volunteer Margaret Bratschi moved away; we don’t know how we’ll know it’s the first Monday of the month without her reliable presence at the desk. She made a last donation of her African violets for the second floor.

Along with his duties as reader services assistant, Arnold Serapilio coordinates with the moderators of the 24 discussion groups. This year, two groups wrapped it up: Civil Rights in February and Tipped In come September. After March, all but four (Civil War, Mystery, World History, and World War I) transitioned to meeting via online video conference. There are two new groups: Social Justice and Short & Sweet. The latter, born out of the pandemic, met weekly from the beginning of April through June with short stories as a manageable assignment to discuss and feel connected. It continues as a monthly offering now. The Dante group discusses the great Florentine writer in the context of his world; upon finishing his works, it was natural to focus on Boccaccio. We were able to arrange a showcase of books for the Shakespeare discussion group in March. For those in need of asynchronous interactions who really enjoy connecting with fellow members, you can join our Goodreads group Athenæum Readers. This year 65 joined for a total of 329 whose bookshelves, ratings, and reviews are available to help you find your next favorite book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Name</th>
<th>Group Moderator(s)</th>
<th>Average Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on the Book</td>
<td>Grant Schaumburg</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>Deanne Sullivan and Linda Velgouse</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil War</td>
<td>Nancy J. Tarulli</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classics</td>
<td>Cashman Kerr Prince</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dante/Boccaccio</td>
<td>Todd Boli and Andrea Poklowski</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickens</td>
<td>Claire Laporte and Clive Martin</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>Grant Schaumburg</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary Conversations</td>
<td>Katherine Florio and Clive Martin</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics, Technology &amp; Society</td>
<td>Scott Guthery</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery</td>
<td>Toni Whitmore</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New England Seminar  Peg Wheeler  10
Philosophy  Randall Albright  7
Poetry  Creelea Pangaro  17
Proust Reading  Hollie Harder and Elizabeth Murray  27
Proust Selected Studies  Hollie Harder and Elizabeth Murray  19
Shakespeare  Michael Almond  14
Short and Sweet  Mary Warnement  16
Social Justice Initiative  Hannah Weisman  7
Tipped In  Eva Grizzard and Jennifer Pellecchia  3
Trollope  Bill Pope  11
World History  Susan Rosefsky  4
World War I  Dave Herder  6
World War II  Peter Mongeau  13
Writers’ Workshop  Sophia Garmey  15

Reference

Librarians Mary Warnement, Carolle Morini, and Elizabeth O’Meara answered more than 1,949 questions from members and researchers.

The Reader Services department recommends books every day in person and regularly on the website, where you can find staff recommendations every season, new book lists, and a variety of other introductions to reading material. We are especially pleased to feature our own members on the website every month as “Athenæum Authors.”

Reader Services sponsored the fourth annual Holiday Pop-Up Book Shop, where Harvard Book Store sold librarians’ recommendations. This open house-style event offered attendees a chance to chat about and buy books for gifts (or oneself) in a festive atmosphere with a soundtrack of holiday music and the rip of paper and ribbon being cut.

Members found opportunities to learn new skills with Elizabeth O’Meara in her monthly “Ask the Librarian” sessions. Help navigating online sources for digitized books, newspapers, and magazines was especially welcome this year. We remind our members that they can schedule one-on-one assistance.

Interlibrary loan requests for books had to halt during the
stay-at-home advisory, but we could request and receive articles delivered digitally. The Athenæum requested 320 items through interlibrary loan for members and filled 365 requests out of the 1046 active requests from other institutions. The main reasons we could not send items: the book does not circulate (152), the book is too new (133), and we do not have that specific item (192).

Reader Services said goodbye to interns Kurt Grewal (September) and Danny Norton (January). Danny’s enthusiasm continued to cheer the front desk once a week into March while he covered a short-staffed membership desk in the winter.

Vershbow Special Collections Reading Room

The Charlotte and Arthur Vershbow Special Collections Reading Room was used by 129 researchers—54 for the first time—to see 279 requests. On September 8, the room reopened with revised hours that, gratifyingly, included time for appointments one evening a week.

Fellowships 2020-2021

The Athenæum awarded seven different types of fellowships, three of them in conjunction with another institution and one as a member in the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium. The search committee, comprising Mary Warnement, Carolle Morini, and Hannah Weisman, considered 24 applicants, of which 14 were New England Regional Fellowship Consortium proposals. NERFC’s selection meeting was supposed to be held at the Mary Baker Eddy Library in March but instead met online. Peter Wirzbicki chose to defer his award; otherwise, all completed their residencies except Cynthia Smith who had planned to visit in June. Below are all the year’s fellows:

Mary Catherine Mooney Fellowship

Michael H. Feinberg, Ph.D. candidate, University of Wisconsin, Madison, “Caribbean Landscapes, Colonial Landscaping, and Agencies beyond the Human in British Print Culture surrounding the Haitian Revolution”
Caleb Loring, Jr., Fellowship

American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Fellowship
Carl Kubler, Ph.D. candidate, University of Chicago, “Barbarians on the Shore: Global Trade and Everyday Life between China and the West, 1770-1853”

The American Congregational Association-Boston Athenæum Fellowship

The Suzanne and Caleb Loring Research Fellowship (Jointly with Massachusetts Historical Society)
Andrew Donnelly, Ph.D. candidate, Harvard University, “Reconstructing Sexuality: The Politics of Sex and Manhood in the Civil War Era”

The New England Regional Fellowship
Kabria Baumgartner, Assistant Professor, University of New Hampshire, Durham, “The Life and Times of Robert Morris: America’s First Human Rights Lawyer”

This year the following fellows presented their work in a Field Report: Lance Boos and Eli Portman.

Children’s Library
Members checked out 720 children’s books through the spring. Many others were read in the building, judging by the stacks left on the table and the mis-shelved titles on the shelf. In-
tern Samantha Gill was instrumental in moving story time online to Facebook, and with the talent of Security Officer Sostheng Kituyi we were able to offer six live video sessions per week from April until July, after which Sam continued reading and singing alone three times a week. We appreciate the publishers who loosened their copyright restrictions to allow us to do this.

Volunteer Daniel Berk has helped shelve on Saturdays for several years as his high school schedule allows, and this year he arranged a display of books based on his interest in the classical world.

Reader Services bid farewell to Dani Crickman, who started her professional library career at the Athenæum in 2016. She sang her last song with Hedgie the hand puppet on December 21. In her tenure as Children’s and Young Adult Services Librarian, she prepared and performed well over 500 story time programs and led DEAI efforts as well.

Archive

The history of the Boston Athenæum and the history of the collections, as always, remained of interest to researchers. Specifically, we received ninety-five queries. Researchers had questions about the construction of the building at 10½ Beacon Street, the first five addresses, past family members who worked here, the influenza epidemic, nineteenth-century gallery exhibitions, and (one of the most popular): when did the library first have a particular book in the collection. These served as excellent reminders of how important our library records are to the public—even during a pandemic. Processing and re-housing collections into acid free folders and boxes continued. All in all, during an atypical time, the year was full of researchers (members, non-members, and staff) and the continuous growth of the Archive collections.
The Technical Services Department augments, preserves, and provides access to the institution’s Circulating and Special Collections. Under the direction of the National Endowment for the Humanities Chief Technical Services Librarian, Will Evans, the team endeavored to carry out its evergreen mission this challenging year by means of acquiring, cataloging, digitizing, and conserving new and long-held circulating and rare materials.

Acquisitions

In her role as Acquisitions Librarian, Anthea Harrison Reilly accessioned 2,236 books, manuscripts, prints, and photographs for the Athenæum’s Circulating and Special Collections, of which 102 were gifts. Anthea also oversaw the selection of books for the Athenæum’s Circulating Collection, leading a group of dedicated member volunteers which included Jacob Albert, Alexander Altschuller, Pam Ikauniks, Andrea Pokladowski, and Mary Otis Stevens. Additionally, in selecting new circulating materials, she worked with staff bibliographers Virginia Reynolds Badgett, Will Evans, Andy Hahn, Christina Michelon, Carolle Morini, Mary Warnement, and Hannah Weisman.

Cataloging

Cataloging Assistants Ryan Reed and Virginia Rundell skillfully cataloged the circulating books and other open-shelf materials. Together they processed 1,962 new books, standing order series, and reference works. They were assisted with the end-processing of these materials (applying bookplates and covers) by Catalog Intern KL Pereira, who also processed long-held open-shelf materials.

The Rare Materials Catalog Librarians, Kaelin Rasmussen, Graham Skinner, and Daniel Axmacher, cataloged 619 newly acquired and long-held Special Collections books, manuscripts, periodicals, prints, and photographs. Highlights of the new acquisi-
tions cataloged this year included a collection of drawings and archival materials by Boston artist Kahlil Gibran (1922-2008), a cache of World War I graphic materials, and the papers of George Miles Jr. (1785-1820), a merchant trader active in Boston, Massachusetts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A collection of World War I-era sheet music and a confusing mare’s nest of original and facsimile edition broadsides printed on wallpaper containing reports of the 1863 siege of Vicksburg are examples of the many long-held materials to receive enhanced cataloging. These now have greater chance of discoverability thanks to the efforts of the rare materials catalogers.

Rare Visual Materials Catalog Librarian Adriene Galindo continued her two-year appointment funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to catalog posters that form part of the Richard W. Cheek World War II Graphics Arts Collection. Adriene, with some help from her colleagues, has cataloged 1,185 of the 1,959 posters to date.

All the catalogers contributed to upgrading 380 brief bibliographic records in Athena, and the team made more than 2,298 edits in existing records in an effort to improve access to materials.

Conservation

The Conservation team, Chief Conservator Dawn Walus, Book Conservator Graham Patten, Paper Conservator Tatiana Cole, and the 2019/2020 von Clemm Fellow in Book Conservation and Driscoll Family Fellow in Book Conservation, Greta Llanes, along with volunteer Brian Bassett, conserved 71 circulating books and 85 special collections items. They also constructed 104 enclosures or encapsulations for collection items.

Among the more notable objects to be conserved were a cache of the Athenæum’s choice collection of daguerreotypes. These were treated by Tatiana, who was hired full-time at the end of September thanks to a National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant awarded to the Athenæum. Other items include a Revolutionary era political cartoon denouncing the Stamp Act of 1765, a profusely illustrated seventeenth-century manual on
Artist unknown. *Arms and the Man I Sing*, 1776. Engraving.
Gerard Thibault (-1627), Academie de l’espee de Girard Thibault d’Anvers, ou se demonstrent par regles mathematiques sur le fondement d’un cercle mysterieux la theorie et pratique des vrais et iusqu’a present incognus secrets du maniement des armes a pied et a cheval ([Leiden: Bonav. et Abraham Elzevier, 1628, or 1630?]).


The team kept busy with presentations. Graham presented a new book structure at the Guild of Bookworkers Standards of Excellence in Philadelphia. Tatiana and Dawn gave virtual presentations hosted by the Athenæum: the former offered programs on cyanotypes and the conservation of photographs and the latter presented on caring for the Athenæum’s collections.

**Digital Programs**

At the end of this fiscal year, Digital Programs Librarian Pat Boulos decided to retire, capping a seventeen-year career at the Boston Athenæum. When the Athenæum’s second most avid Red Sox fan arrived at 10½ in July 2003 as the Rights and Reproductions Manager, her job was an ancillary position in the Prints and Photographs Department, and her work was firmly rooted in the analog world of paper forms, film negatives, and 8 x 10 photo reproductions. Libraries were adapting to the seismic shifts wrought by computers, and Pat spearheaded the BA’s ventures into the realm of digital. During her tenure, she implemented CONTENTdm, the Library’s digital asset repository, set up an imaging studio in 14 Beacon and another in 10½, and marshalled a dozen or so interns. She made Digital Programs a department unto itself, the envy of our peers, and a model for them to follow. Her shoes are big, and they will be hard to fill.

During the past year, Pat fulfilled 86 rights and reproductions requests from members and researchers wanting images of Athenæum’s collections, as well as providing images for a myriad of staff needs. Additionally, Pat and Digital Intern Samantha Dodgen captured 11,478 images and added over a thousand items to CONTENTdm.

**Serials**

The Serials Department began an initiative this year to refine the collecting policies for print resources, especially the journals
devoted to history. We’ve maintained those publications that focus on New England history, while opting not to renew some of those that cover the history of other regions. This measure was necessitated by space considerations and the fact more content is now available online. Nevertheless, we continue to offer plenty of general history publications as well as those devoted to fine art, literature, music, and book arts in addition to newspapers, popular press titles, and a host of electronic resources all which were ably managed by Serials Librarian Tom Gearty. Tom and Serials Intern Ashley Runnals were responsible for checking in issues, contacting publishers for claims of non-receipt, and processing bindery shipments of periodicals. They responded to member requests for back issues, tracked down those that have gone missing, and fielded reference questions related to serials.

**DEVELOPMENT**

We have an extraordinary community of donors. Members, Proprietors, and friends of the Athenæum supported the BA this year with $2.5M in restricted and unrestricted giving including gifts to the campaign. Nine hundred fourteen committed donors gave $1.41M in unrestricted funds through gifts to the Annual Fund. Of these donors, 553 increased their giving from the previous year and 174 donors gave for the first time. In this out-of-the-ordinary year, we were buoyed by four substantial anonymous gifts that arrived in the early days of the pandemic for the express purpose of providing operating funds to help the BA manage through a closure and inevitable revenue loss.

To be expected in a year of uncertain public health and economic circumstances, not everyone who has participated in the Annual Fund in the past could participate this year. It is a true testament to the Athenæum community that we registered only 36 fewer donors from last year but the average unrestricted gift increased by 18.3% and the total unrestricted giving increased by 20%. Two hundred forty-three donors gave at a leadership level of $1,000 and above.
Annual Fund gifts support our annual operating budget and are the backbone of our philanthropic endeavors. Operating funds allow us to carry out the day-to-day work of the Athenæum. This year, we stewarded our beautiful library and collections; pivoted to virtual programming within 13 days of closure in March; and welcomed members back safely in July. As our membership dues account for less than one-fifth of the operating budget, private donations play a critical role serving our members and community each year.

To recognize the indelible generosity of our donors, this report features two new giving categories. The Aegis Circle recognizes extraordinary donors who give $50,000 or more annually. Donors who have given annually for the last five consecutive years are listed in italics.

This year the Athenæum was honored to receive a five-year Capacity and Infrastructure Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in the amount of $182,500.00. The grant funds the BA’s first-ever full-time Paper Conservator with an expertise in photographic material. With the expansion of this role from part-time to full, the library now has capacity to treat the historical prints and photographs collections in-house through single-item treatments, collection surveys, and preventive recommendations for long-term preservation. The Paper Conservator has already helped the Laboratory plan its treatment workflow more effectively, and with a full-time schedule, she will be able to comprehensively assess and treat prints, photographs, and other paper-based items in the collection—especially the library’s impressive collection of nineteenth-century daguerreotypes, which are nearing an age when they will require treatment. The NEH’s grant to the Athenæum to help expand access to our collections is an investment for our entire city—and we are extremely grateful. As a matching grant, it has already helped us engage more than seventy donors and counting in supporting this critical work. We will share many opportunities to contribute toward the match for this multi-year grant in the next fiscal year.

Other notable gifts for the Conservation Laboratory include a renewed three-year commitment by long-time member and Pro-
The Athenæum is pleased to be the recipient of a three-year, $225,000 grant from the Polly Thayer Starr Charitable Trust, established to further Mrs. Starr’s artistic and charitable legacy permanently. With generous support from the Trust, we will be able to extend Polly Thayer Starr Fellow in American Art and Culture Theo Tyson’s fellowship an additional six months, affording her additional time for key projects that will support the Athenæum’s efforts to improve its reach within underserved communities; renew the Fellowship for an additional two years for a new candidate; and provide much-needed programmatic funding to realize new ideas and initiatives envisioned by both Fellows. Ultimately, the grant will advance research, expand access to collections, and promote civil discourse by fostering collections-centered dialogue with new curatorial programming.

The Highland Street Foundation renewed its commitment to funding Free Fun Friday, a single summer day when more than 500 visitors experience creative and engaging activities from our Children’s Library, special tours of the building, and gallery talks. Since the event could not occur this year—and to address challenges presented by the pandemic—the Foundation graciously issued the full amount of the grant to serve our current needs. When safe to do so, we will find an appropriate way to provide free access to the community.

Following a three-year commitment from Trustee emeritus William S. Strong, the Athenæum is launching a pilot of the William S. Strong Young Scholars Program. Through this program, the library will award one rising high school senior at 11 of the City of Boston’s public high schools a complimentary one-year membership, and host programming specifically designed for
the group. The program will forge new pathways for access for Boston’s young adults; create greater awareness of the Athenæum’s offerings, especially among underserved populations not yet familiar with the institution; and build critical, long-lasting new partnerships with the Boston Public Schools.

As the pandemic afforded us time to assess our needs in light of a changing landscape, several donors committed gifts to the campaign in support of the expansion. Currently, we have $5.8M committed in written and verbal gifts and pledges with another $2.1M in pending requests.

PATRON SERVICES

Membership

The Athenæum welcomed 251 new memberships in a year that challenged cultural institutions everywhere. Of those new additions to our community, 66 were individual memberships, 44 were family memberships, 69 were young patron individual memberships, and 18 were young patron family memberships. In total, 2,689 memberships were begun or renewed during the year for a revenue total of $1,225,704. We are thankful for our thousands of new and continuing members and, of course, sensitive to the tremendous losses many people experienced through 2020.

The BA completed a full year of assessing new membership fees instituted in July 2019. Put in place to reduce reliance on the endowment, the repricing allowed us to avoid a drastic drop in revenue even as membership numbers declined through a tough year. Prior to our mid-March closure, membership declined about 3.8%. Afterward, renewals and new member sign-ups slowed, leading to a final membership total 24.7% down from the start of the year. The membership team—Molly Jarvis, Arin Lustberg (who departed in January), Laura Acosta (who arrived in March), and Libby Miserendino—did their utmost to provide excellent service during the year.
The COVID-19 pandemic inspired us to launch a new weekly email for members, “Athenæum at Home.” Intended to raise awareness of services still available while the building was closed, the Wednesday missive quickly gained fans. It gave us an opportunity to tell stories about and share beautiful images of the special collections and the building. We used it to promote the book mailing service as well as lobby pick-up and drop-off once we re-opened, showcase the community’s discussion groups (most of which migrated quickly online), and highlight electronic resources and past program videos. By fiscal year-end we had sent 29 issues of the e-newsletter.

The bimonthly print newsletter and events listing featured community members, special collections items, and BA news from October until April. Regular Proprietor and member mailings kept the community informed about topics including COVID-19-related news, the “envelope” project to restore the facade and terraces, the director search, and the appointment of Leah Rosovsky as Stanford Calderwood Director.

Knowledgeable members of the staff contributed to the storytelling and marketing on our social media channels. Sam Gill and Sostheng Kituyi were breakout stars, reading stories, singing, and dancing for our children’s audience on Facebook Live beginning in March. We repeated our successful National Poetry Month Facebook videos in April, with 10 volunteer readers from our DEAI group. We shared members’ pictures of their dogs and cats on our feeds, and presented successful series on banned books, historic cookbooks, contemporary artists’ books, the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and stunning, rare astronomy books through the “dog days” of summer. By the end of the fiscal year, BA communities on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram had grown an average of 19.2% across the platforms, from 15,160 to 18,078 followers.

Media

The biggest news of the year, Leah Rosovsky’s arrival in early May, made headlines in the Boston Globe (“Veteran Harvard ad-
ministrator will lead the Boston Athenæum”), Fine Books & Collections, and the Beacon Hill Times.

In the months after its September 2019 opening, the Required Reading exhibition found additional notice in Fine Books & Collections Magazine, The Book Collector, and in a posting by the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers.

In October, WCVB/Channel 5 re-aired its “Haunted History of Boston” segment about the 1837 Narrative of the Life of James Allen, also known as the “skin book.” The Boston Globe mentioned the same volume in a ghost tours piece. Boston.com promoted our Music Showcase & Wine Night as one of “The 31 Best Things to Do Around Boston This October.” We made the Globe’s “Names” column when Ben Platt and Julia Schlaepfer, stars of Netflix’s “The Politician,” stopped by for photos during their press tour.

Boston.com announced, “The Athenæum is Boston’s best-kept secret. Here’s what to see in November,” showcasing several of our events. Art critic Sebastian Smee singled out one of the best-known Allan Rohan Crite paintings at the BA, Harriet and Leon, as one of his “Great Works, In Focus” in the Washington Post in December. Our National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant award was listed in the Boston Globe in January.

In February, Polly Thayer Starr Fellow Theo Tyson presented the Harriet Hayden Albums to the viewers of WCVB/Channel 5’s “Chronicle” and to readers of the Bay State Banner in a major feature article. Smithsonian Magazine online featured our #ColorOurCollections illustration in an article about museums sharing their holdings as free coloring pages. Our Women’s History Month events made the Boston Globe’s New England Literary News column, and Globe and Bay State Banner reviews of the Gardner Museum’s Boston’s Black Apollo exhibition mentioned the Athenæum’s involvement.

Just a few weeks after our programming went entirely online, our Facebook Live Story Times won praise as a “Daily Distraction” in the Globe. One commenter wrote, “I’m an adult but I watch these storytelling events because they are so well done!” Another said, “Wonderful to see an institution with the long heritage of the Boston Athenæum adapt so graciously and creatively to these un-
precedented times.” WBUR’s The ARTery also complimented Sam Gill and Sostheng Kituyi’s offerings for children.

The Boston Business Journal promoted our virtual tour of the BA; the Beacon Hill Times tracked our progress in gaining approvals for a facade and terrace renovation project, and Fine Books & Collections celebrated our Curator’s Choice series of virtual talks featuring John Buchtel, Virginia Reynolds Badgett, Christina Michelon, and Theo Tyson.

In August, nearly a year after a three-day shoot at 10½ Beacon, Netflix’s The Sleepover introduced young audiences to the BA as a dark library full of secrets. Our facade, card catalog, and fifth floor played minor supporting roles.

**Programming**

In a year of disruptions, the Events team, led by Victoria O’Malley with the help of Elsa Vernon (through mid-February) and Emmy Snyder, charted an innovative course that unified our community and expanded our reach. Plans for in-person talks, concerts, and even a members’ day trip were suspended in mid-March. However, the team quickly established virtual offerings on ClickMeeting and Zoom, repopulating the calendar and attracting a wide audience of members and nonmembers.

Martha Ackmann pioneered our first virtual talk in March, as COVID-19 and uncertainty rapidly spread. Her lecture on Emily Dickinson proved that poetry should be prescribed more often. Member and Massachusetts General Hospital obstetrician William H. Barth thought it would provide an hour of respite for his colleague, Dr. Jeff Ecker. Both were in the thick of the hospital’s pandemic response. Yet Dickinson’s poems were part of their culture: Dr. Ecker had “tortured” his residents for years by reading her verse “at the start of morning rounds for the department... Every. Single. Day.” We heard afterward that Dr. Ecker thoroughly enjoyed the session.

Regular feedback forms and surveys helped us understand the growing virtual audience. Some said they preferred intellectual engagement without the hassles of coming to the city; others joined us from around the country and the globe, demonstrating
the broad appeal of our offerings to people everywhere who enjoy books, art, and discourse. Although we look forward to the day we can gather in person again, the team is highly motivated to maintain and expand the virtual community. We anticipate that hybrid in-person/online and fully online events will continue to be part of our plans in the future.

In developing the year’s calendar, we focused on the special collections, Boston histories, and timely topics of general interest, including the 100th anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment and the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. The team scheduled slightly fewer events than last year (94, down from 100), but attracted more than 9,300 attendees during the fiscal year by offering programming online. Attendance hit a record of 585 attendees (and 982 registrants) on July 9 when Richard Bell presented *Hamilton: How the Musical Remixes History*.

In connection with the *Required Reading* exhibition, John Buchtel delivered the William Orville Thomson Lecture on the King’s Chapel Collection of rare books. In October we marked UNESCO’s International Year of Indigenous Languages and highlighted the seventeenth-century Algonquian-language Bible on view in the exhibition, welcoming Jennifer Weston to speak about the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project on Cape Cod and screen the film *As Nutayuneân (We Still Live Here)*. In December, we hosted a panel discussion with some of the “makers” whose work was highlighted in the exhibition: Brent Budberg of Current Projects, and Jeff Altepeter and Ellen Kaspern of North Bennet Street School, moderated by Miguel Gómez-Ibáñez.

The *(Anti)SUFFRAGE* installation curated by Theo Tyson opened in November, kicking off a series of presentations commemorating the 100th anniversary of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and explorations of voting rights for women and people of color in the past and today.

Prior to the closure we hosted two showcases of particular holdings: a Halloween pop-up on the *Narrative of the Life of James Allen* and its anthropodermic binding, and an event in honor of the 250th anniversary of the Boston Massacre and Paul Revere’s celebrated engraving. Notably, with the curatorial team fully
staffed by March, audiences enjoyed virtual Curator’s Choice talks, and formal lectures on the collections in five subsequent months of the fiscal year. Staff from the conservation lab participated, presenting on collections care and demonstrating how to make cyanotype prints. Eye of the Expert programs brought in librarians and other staff as well, extending the (Anti)SUFFRAGE installation in the autumn and exploring labor history (Crossing the Line) in spring.

The Torrence C. Harder Lecture took place virtually, bringing in Deborah Cramer and her award-winning work of environmental science, The Narrow Edge: A Tiny Bird, An Ancient Crab and An Epic Journey.


Online from March through September, we welcomed Andrew Whitby, Dory Klein, Eli Portman, Carol Ann Lloyd (in partnership with the Royal Oak Foundation), Megan Marshall, Megan Kate Nelson, Stephanie Frampton, Joan Ilaqua, James Carroll with Adam Reilly, Arthur Magida, Nathaniel Philbrick with Christopher Lydon, Muhammad Zaman, Hank Phillippi Ryan, Allison Lange, Alan Mikhail with Annette Gordon-Reed, Judith Sumner, Colin Woodard, and Jamie Holmes.

Presenters at our monthly Member’s Choice sessions included Jim O’Connell, John Lauritsen, Edythe Haber, Lia Xiu, Bob Gelinas, Debbie Wiess, Alison Barnet, and Scott Bates Guthery, who pioneered the first-ever Virtual Member’s Choice talk.

We designed special events for younger audiences: Spooky Stories for Kids, Up Close with the Orchestra, a Winter Craft Party, and a series of three Virtual Story Times with Christopher Bing.

The annual Veterans Day celebration brought a color guard,
speeches, refreshments, and an opportunity to examine collections materials—including photographs, artists’ books, paintings, and posters—up close in the Gordon Newspaper Reading Room. The second annual Boston Music Showcase and Wine Night, in partnership with Urban Grape and Boston performers, sold out. We collaborated in February with the Network for Arts Administrators of Color to present a panel, *EmpowerHER: Black Women in the Arts*.

Community events filled the year, in person until March and online thereafter: director’s and president’s coffee hours; a holiday pop-up book shop with librarians’ recommendations; a Martini Movie Night with the classic film, *Singin’ in the Rain*; two Member Meet and Greets in the Long Room in October and February; and gatherings for Proprietors, donors, and volunteers. Due to the pandemic, we were unable to welcome visitors to an Open House or to Free Fun Friday.

The team managed rentals from October until the closure in March, generating $29,794 in revenue from six events, while striving to minimize disruptions to members.

*Education*

The Athenæum’s Education work, directed by Hannah Weisman, provides regular opportunities for people to engage with the Athenæum’s historic building and special collections, and explore the stories our collections have to tell.

Between October 2019 and March 2020, docents and staff engaged more than 400 visitors and members through public Art and Architecture tours, Up Close tours, and gallery talks. In the same time period, docents and staff served more than 520 people during 40 private tours for classes from six local universities and Eliot School (Boston Public Schools), as well as visitors from community groups, book clubs, and retirement communities.

The education team’s work on the *Required Reading* exhibition came to fruition in fiscal year 2020. Daniel Axmacher, John Buchtel, and our docents led public and private gallery talks. Nine of the BA’s ten community partners for the exhibition—Chinese His-
torical Society of New England, Hebrew College, Institute for Human Centered Design, King’s Chapel, Museum of African American History, North Bennet Street School, Twelfth Baptist Church, University of Massachusetts Boston, and Women’s Foundation of Boston—participated in a series of three Community Conversations related to themes of the exhibition. Visitors to the exhibition shared titles they considered “required reading”—such as Eduardo Galeano’s *Open Veins of Latin America* and Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*—and recorded their reflections in the visitor book:

“Our essential knowledge increased quite a bit today because we had a guided tour at this amazing Athenæum . . . You have to ask people with real interest about their life and their opinion to widen your own horizon, this creates knowledge and friendship. This is what my husband and [I] experienced while we travelled in Boston...We met...friendly and openhearted people. This writing here shall be a ‘thank you’ to all of them, and especially to Clive Martin who was our guide today.”

—Anne and Raimund from Germany, October 2, 2019

Boston University doctoral candidate Arthur Kamya returned to the Athenæum in August as the Mudge Education Fellow to co-lead, with Mary Warnement and Hannah Weisman, a virtual three-day workshop for educators on teaching with primary sources. Thirteen regional educators representing primary and secondary schools, higher education, and museum education participated in “Primary Sources in the Classroom: Changing Status and Role of Women in American History, 1776-1920:”

Shannon Bewley, Boston University
James Cleere, Boston Public Schools
Victor Curran, Concord Museum and Concord Visitor Center
Mary Fischer, Museum of Fine Arts Boston
Teresa Knoess, Boston Public Schools
Cynthia Lang, Braintree Public Schools
Alex Lehning, Saint Albans Museum and Community College of Vermont
Jennifer McDonald, Upper Cape Regional Vocational Technical High School
Elizabeth Sanders, Museum of Fine Arts Boston
Melanie Smith, Boston Public Schools
Barbara “BJ” Selenkow-Rippberger, Museum of Fine Arts Boston
Miriam Villanueva, Phillips Academy
Brittanie Weatherbie Greco, University of Massachusetts Boston

Doctoral student Katherine Mitchell served as the Academic Programs Intern thanks to a renewed partnership with Boston University Center for the Humanities. During her internship, Mitchell prepared the syllabus for our 2021 workshop on abolition and the Underground Railroad.

As the fiscal year came to a close and the fall began, the education team welcomed 55 first-year students from the University of Massachusetts Boston’s “Experiencing Boston” course as the BA launched virtual group visits to special collections.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

One of the key initiatives for the fiscal year was to find and hire a new Systems Librarian. After a lengthy search, Derek Murphy was hired into the role and started in early 2020. One of the projects awaiting the new Systems Librarian was the implementation of a new authority record processor. This has been accomplished, with over 400,000 bibliographic records processed during the initial load.

With support for Windows 7 set to expire in January 2020, the Boston Athenæum was able to complete its migration to Windows 10 in time to ensure the security and safety of its computers.

Shortly after the start of the fiscal year, the wireless network
was upgraded and all of the access points were switched out with new ones. In addition, the new network should be more resilient as it uses a decentralized management model whereas the previous one relied on a single control unit. In August, the Internet bandwidth for the building was increased.

Various behind the scenes configuration changes occurred as more consolidation took place amongst the electronic resource providers. This included Early English Books Online moving on to the Proquest platform. A large-scale update to the Gale resources necessitated an overhaul of the electronic resources webpage.

The biggest project for the IT department this year was helping the Boston Athenæum transition to a remote workforce during the spring shutdown. This included developing focused documentation to help staff access resources remotely. The work came on top of an ongoing initiative to provide more computer help documentation to staff. Various cloud resources that were already in use took on more pivotal roles. In addition, a new virtual event platform was implemented. Like the rest of the world, we adopted various virtual meeting platforms including Zoom. With the rise in cybercrime due to so many people working remotely and relying on cloud resources, increased authentication protocols were also instituted.

**Online Video and Audio Recordings**

Forty-eight more virtual event recordings were added to our library of online event recordings during the year. Captions were added to some of the most popular event recordings. To help make it easier to find these captioned videos, a new captioned video grouping was added to the Boston Athenæum’s Vimeo page. The most popular videos were of Laura Cavendish, Sally Bedell Smith, Susan Orlean, David J. Silverman, and John Buchtel.

We shared audio recordings of BA events through SoundCloud, iTunes, and Spotify, ensuring that they were available on a wide variety of podcasting apps. Twenty-five new audio recordings were added over the course of the year. The most popular were of
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Grace Talusan and Elif Armbruster, James B. Conroy, Giles Milton, Mary Beard, and David J. Silverman.

Website

In August, a new, more robust style of online exhibition was piloted on our website with (Anti)SUFFRAGE (bostonathe naeum.org/exhibitions/antisuffrage). Website visitors can now learn about the history of the struggle for women’s suffrage as it connects to a selection of objects from our collections. Unlike our previous online exhibitions, this one provides a full narrative experience, presenting educational text paired with high-resolution images of objects. Each image links to the object’s record in CONTENTdm, where visitors can access more detailed images and metadata.

Over the past year, various improvements to the website were developed to support the site’s usability, accessibility, and visual appeal. Standouts include complete redesigns of most Support pages (including a new Giving Form), more accessible site navigation options, and a new Children’s story time page.

The most popular pages on the website this past year were “The Bloody Massacre” (from Selections from Acquired Tastes), Hours & Admission, Join or Renew, the Events Calendar, Mission & History, and Electronic Resources.

SECURITY

We strive to expect the unexpected. But denial is a powerful thing, and even the best of us can be convinced that our plans are comprehensive and our preparedness complete. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread and impact nations and communities, we are working to collect resources, disperse information, and share stories from security professionals. COVID-19 forced BA Security to operate in a unique fashion with a different set of duties and responsibilities.

We revised and developed new emergency and contingency
plans specific to the pandemic. We took the necessary steps to enhance the protection of the institution, without the presence of around-the-clock security. BA Security has played an integral role in the phased re-opening and internal staff training as we have adapted to the “new normal.”

Through the right combination of security personnel, risk consultation, and state-of-the-art technology and systems, we achieved custom security solutions beginning with customer services at the ground level, and extending as far as needed.

We enhanced our ability to protect physical assets within the Boston Athenæum space with a system conversion to AMAG Technology and a security platform as robust, flexible, affordable, and complete as any in the field.

The new system encompasses intrusion management, access control, video management, identity management, visitor management, and incident and case management. The user-friendly, flexible system allows us to secure the Boston Athenæum’s facilities, protect our collections, and improve our security operations.

We conducted risk analysis and identified current and future security needs to support expansion and growth. More than simply protection, our goal is to help reduce overall security expenditures, identify and minimize risk, and improve the overall security operations.

We conducted internal audits, assessments, site visits at like institutions and provided recommendations to address our needs for the future to better safeguard our collections. We reviewed vendor management practices and developed procedures for proper vetting and accountability, thus limiting risk and exposure. We conducted quarterly after-hours testing of our security systems including alarm monitoring. Security responded to all building incidents before, during, and after hours, reporting them to senior management and recording them. We worked closely with other departments to streamline operations and functions including revised member and staff building access processes once we re-opened in July.

We maintain relationships with the Boston Regional Intelligence Center, Boston Police Department, and Crime Prevention/
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Neighborhood Watch, and affiliations with the American Society for Industrial Security and International Foundation for Cultural Property Protection for security training, workshops, and professional development.

FACILITIES

Director of Facilities Chris Silva and team worked proactively to take good care of the building. We embarked on deferred maintenance projects and continued to seek savings in water, sewer, electrical, steam, and other utilities.

Many months were spent planning a significant project to restore the “envelope” structures—the building’s north-side facade plus south-side terraces on floors two and five. The project kicked off in August and continued through the end of the fiscal year with anticipated completion in early 2021. The façade, scaffolded and wrapped like a Christo and Jeanne-Claude artwork, hosted workers who made repairs to stone and mortar, cleaned surfaces, improved drainage, installed new copper and more, making our front more waterproof as well as safer.

Before fixing drainage, repaving, and replacing railings on the two terraces, our contractors prepped the reading rooms. They moved small busts, laid down floor coverings, enclosed and covered Little Nell and Nathaniel Bowditch, and draped bookshelves with protective plastic. The “PZ3.S” shelves next to the second-floor spiral staircase became inaccessible for a time, thwarting anyone hoping to brush up on their Dorothy Sayers, John Steinbeck, or near neighbors. We look forward to the terraces’ reopening in spring, and the restoration of artworks and books to their normal arrangements much sooner than that.

This year we began replacing exterior lights, gaining better control of the lighting system as well as savings. Inside the library, new indirect lighting was installed in each alcove of the fifth floor reading rooms as part of a gift from Proprietor Jim Buttrick. The vintage design matches fixtures used in the room in the early twentieth century, but the LED technology is more energy efficient...
and will likely produce savings. The new lights provide readers with individual on/off controls and a larger work area now that the table lamps have been removed. Adjustable floor lamps on several of the lower floors, likewise part of the gift, are vintage designs retrofitted with LED lamps.

The Facilities team installed highly-rated HEPA-13 air filtration after the pandemic caused the library to close in March. We also installed new, higher-efficiency bathroom fixtures—toilets and faucets—that waste less water.

In August, we replaced Variable Frequency Drives that regulate energy usage in our climate control systems. All of our Facilities projects are designed to save expenses over time while preserving and protecting the building.

### PERSONNEL AND VOLUNTEERS

#### Transitions and Milestones

The year opened with Amy Ryan in the role of interim Stanford Calderwood Director. She brought more than thirty years of library leadership experience and helped steady our course as we developed plans to expand into 14 Beacon Street and conducted a nationwide search for a new director. On May 1, Timothy W. Diggins, president of the Board of Trustees, announced the appointment of Leah Rosovsky as Stanford Calderwood Director, making her the seventeenth leader in the Athenæum’s 213-year history.

Since 2019, Rosovsky had served as the Dean’s Administrative Fellow at Harvard Business School, driving complex projects requiring relationship building, creativity, and execution. As Harvard University’s Vice President for Strategies and Programs from 2013-2019, she led numerous successful initiatives including partnering with senior faculty to raise $20 million and establish the Harvard Global Institute (HGI), enhancing global influence and scholarship; advancing the work of a task force on the prevention of sexual assault; collaborating in the development of a strategy
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for increasing visibility of the arts; and building consensus and implementation plans to integrate faith traditions into student educational development.

As the Executive Administrative Dean of Tufts University’s School of Arts and Sciences (2006-2013), Rosovsky oversaw a broad range of initiatives in planning, strategy, and resource allocation. Her accomplishments included increasing financial aid funding, leading library renovation planning to meet faculty’s emerging interests in technology-based teaching and learning, and enhancing laboratory space. She also led financial and budget planning that allowed for the creation of 15 tenure-track positions. Prior to that, she held a range of positions with ever-increasing responsibility within Harvard University’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences between 1995 and 2005.

Before joining the Harvard administration, Rosovsky held senior positions in private organizations. She has also served in leadership positions and advisory roles over many years at Temple Israel, Boston, Massachusetts, as well as the Jewish Women’s Archive in Brookline, Massachusetts, the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Russia, and the Lahore University of Management Sciences in Lahore, Pakistan. She received her A.B. from Harvard College in 1978 and her M.B.A. from Harvard Business School in 1984.

At the time of her hire, Rosovsky said, “I’m honored to have been selected to serve as the next director of the Boston Athenæum. The BA has a long, distinguished legacy of leadership and has been a launching pad for so many of Boston’s literary, cultural, artistic, and scientific achievements. Especially in this moment, the chance to serve the greater Boston and New England community by creating a place for learning, discussion, and the study of the arts and humanities feels more important than ever. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to build its future, and I look forward to working with a highly talented group of colleagues.”

One month into the fiscal year, the Development department said farewell to two staffers, Development Coordinator Madison “Maddie” Mott and Advancement Systems Manager Francis
Wyman. We welcomed Ben Federlin to the team as the new Development Coordinator. Near the end of the year, Grants and Annual Fund Associate Rachel Wentworth departed for a grant-writing role at the Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts.

The Events department wished nearly six-year veteran Deborah “Elsa” Vernon all the best when she departed in February for a position with The Nature Conservancy in Maine. Events Assistant Emmalie Snyder remained with us for a little over a year, from July 2019 until August 2020, before heading back to school for an MBA.

Ismar Hochen left the Facilities staff in October.

Hannah Ovaska, our Human Resources Manager, left us in October for an HR role at MIT.

Children’s and Young Adult Services Librarian Dani Crickman, who worked at the Athenæum from 2016 until December 2019, departed for the South Boston Branch of the Boston Public Library.

The Finance department hired a Gift and Membership Revenue Processor, Kathryn Hillman, to assist in the critical job of receiving, properly crediting, and processing payments from our members and donors.

Derek Murphy came to the IT team as Systems Librarian, arriving from Harvard University’s Institute for Quantitative Social Science.

Arin Lustberg ended her time with the Member and Visitor Services team in January and headed to the Office of the President and the Provost at Harvard. Replacing her in March was Laura Acosta, a recent graduate of Northeastern University with relevant experience including a co-op stint as a tour guide at the Massachusetts State House.

The Security Department parted ways with Officers Cedric Miles, Wilvens Rosirus, Prince Smith, and Durrell Thomas. The department welcomed new Security Officer Richard Bynum.

The Special Collections department successfully completed a national search by hiring two new assistant curators. Virginia Reynolds Badgett arrived in January. An interdisciplinary scholar of American art, history, and material culture of the nineteenth
and twentieth centuries, she will receive her PhD in the History of Art and Architecture from the University of California, Santa Barbara, where her research has been supported by the University of California’s Graduate Division. Prior to joining the BA, she was the Provenance Research Fellow at the Birmingham Museum of Art in Alabama and previously held curatorial positions at Winterthur’s Boston Furniture Archive, the Detroit Institute of Arts, James Madison’s Montpelier, and the British Museum.

Christina Michelon started in March. She specializes in nineteenth-century American visual and material culture and received her PhD in Art History from the University of Minnesota. Before coming to the Athenæum, she completed a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship at the American Antiquarian Society and a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library. Her research has been supported by the Smithsonian Institution; Henry Luce Foundation and American Council of Learned Societies; the Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design; the Chipstone Foundation; and the Library Company of Philadelphia.

Athenæum employees have been fortunate to work alongside the following individuals over the past year:

**Interns**
Jacqueline Bateman
Samantha Dodgen
Samantha Gill
Kurt Grewal
Daniel Norton
Katherine Mitchell
KL Pereira
Ashley Runnals
Carly Stevens

**Driscoll Family Fellow and Von Clemm Fellow**
Greta Llanes Serrano

**Mudge Education Fellow**
Arthur Kamya
Book Selection Committee
Jacob Albert
Alexander Altschuller
Pamela Ikauniks
Andrea Pokladowski
Mary Otis Stevens

Susan Rosefsky
Grant Schaumburg
Deanne Sullivan
Nancy Tarulli
Linda Velgouse
Margaret Wheeler
Antoinette Whitmore

Children’s Library
Daniel Berk

Docents
Nicole Baas
Diane Britton
Marian Ferguson
Gerald Fleming
Sherley Gardner-Smith
Karen Garrison
Judy Gates
Scott Guthery
Carolyn Hilles-Pilant
Fritz Holznagel
George Humphrey
Pamela Ikauniks
Darlene Jarrell
Dale Linder
Maureen Marcucci
Clive Martin
Phoebe Morse
Susan Ostberg
Karla Rojas
Martha Ruest
Doriane Ruml
Annie Silverman
Lynn Smiledge
Roger Stacey
Rosemary Walker

Circulation
Margaret Bratschi

Discussion Group Moderators
Randall Albright
Michael Almond
Todd Boli
Katherine Florio
Sophia Garmey
Eva Grizzard
Scott Guthery
Hollie Harder
David Herder
Claire Laporte
Clive Martin
Peter Mongeau
Elizabeth Murray
Creelea Pangaro
Jennifer Pellecchia
Andrea Pokladowski
Willard Pope
Cashman Kerr Prince

Conservation
Brian Bassett

Conservation
Brian Bassett
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GIFTS

Campaign for 14 Beacon Street

At the time of printing, the following donors have committed or pledged early funds expressly for the expansion of the Boston Athenæum into the spaces at Beacon Street.

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Creelea and Anthony Pangaro
John S. & Cynthia L. Reed

† Deceased as of September 30, 2019.
Patience F. Sandrof
Austin V. Shapard
Mary Alice and Vincent Stanton
William S. Strong
Susan A. and Matthew B. Weatherbie Foundation
Christie E. and Francis S. Wyman

Giving Societies

The Aegis Circle is the Boston Athenæum’s leadership-level donor group, recognizing individuals who give $50,000 or more in the fiscal year.

Aegis Circle Members as of September 30, 2020:

Anonymous (2)
Carroll and John G.L. Cabot
Deborah C. and Timothy W. Diggins
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John S. and Cynthia L. Reed
Trish and Alex† Altschuller

The Hannah Adams Society is the Boston Athenæum’s leadership-level donor group, recognizing individuals who give $25,000 or more in the fiscal year. The Society is named to honor the legacy of Hannah Adams, whose scholarship earned her access to the Library’s collection and an annual stipend to fund her research.
Hannah Adams Society Members as of September 30, 2020:

Anonymous (2)
Lee Campbell
John A. Carey
Elizabeth and Richard Cheek
Cynthia and John W. Everets
Jody and Tom Gill
Barbara and Amos Hostetter
Bonny and Caleb Loring III
Connie and Arthur Page
John P. Ryan and Claire P. Mansur, M.D.
William S. Strong
Susan and Matthew Weatherbie

The 10½ Circle is a distinguished group of contributors who give $10,500 or more in a given year. The Circle is named to honor the unique and historic location of the Athenæum’s fifth and current home at 10½ Beacon Street.

10½ Giving Circle Members as of September 30, 2020:

Anonymous (6)
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Deborah Hill Bornheimer
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Chipstone Foundation
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Mrs. I.W. Colburn
Estate of Zane A. Thompson
Murray Dewart
William Keach and Sheila Emerson

The Armstrong Society is a group of living individuals who make cumulative gifts of $100,000 during their lifetime.

Armstrong Society Members as of September 30, 2020:

Anonymous (9)
Trish and Alex† Altschuller
Mr. and Mrs.† Sherwood E. Bain
Edward and Elizabeth Baldini
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Isabelle and Scott M. Black
Joan Toland Bok
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Anne and David Bromer
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Susan E. Schur
William S. Strong
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Jane and James Wilson
The John Bromfield Society is comprised of living donors who include the Boston Athenæum in their estate plans, either through a planned gift or a stated intention to leave a bequest.

Bromfield Society Members as of September 30, 2020:

Anonymous (14)  David H. Evans
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ANNUAL FUND

Individual, unrestricted charitable gifts to the Annual Fund
underwrite nearly one quarter of the Athenæum’s activities and
are crucial in supporting and sustaining the health of the
institution. Because the revenue generated by membership dues
accounts for less than 20% of the Athenæum’s annual operating
budget, the Annual Fund is a critical source of support for key
operational areas, including collections and conservation, reference and reader services, education and events, and maintenance and infrastructure. The Athenæum relies upon the generous philanthropy of its devoted members and donors. Donors whose names appear in italics have been faithful Annual Fund supporters for at least the past five consecutive years.

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James P. Feeney, Jr.
John and Barbara Hanify
Terence Janericco
Matching Gift Programs

Many companies and foundations provide a program that encourages their employees or trustees to make philanthropic gifts to charities of their choice. As they made gifts to various initiatives this year, our members and friends participated in matching gift programs provided by the following:

Anonymous  
Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation  
Fiduciary Trust Company  
Google, Inc.  
Hollingsworth & Vose Company

Gifts in Kind

Anonymous  
Trish and Alex† Altschuller  
Murray Dewart  
Daphne Dor-Ner  
Justyne Fischer  
William Keach and Sheila Emerson  
Michael Laird  
Chris Loker  
Ronald Monteverde  
Edward N. Perkins  
Anthony M. Sammarco  
Leo Sullivan
FINANCE

We are presenting here a summarized financial report. This format enables us to save the considerable costs required to reproduce the statements, notes and supplemental schedules in a print-friendly format. The complete financial statement package, exactly as received from our auditors, is available on the Publications page of our website.

The endowment ended the year valued at $92,040,764—an increase of $2,119,914 from the prior-year value of $89,920,850. The increase is the result of a total investment return, net of fees, of $6,998,012, and contributions to the endowment of $14,374, offset by appropriations for current operations of $4,223,093; budgeted but unspent appropriations of $349,240; and appropriations of $320,139 for necessary repair work to the north facade and two south terraces of the building.

Despite a challenging environment during the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, we managed to achieve an operating surplus of $145,967. This followed an operating deficit of $325,441 in the prior year.

The Athenæum lost significant revenue due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The building was closed to members from mid-March to early July; even though we moved many events and services online, active memberships decreased from 3,594 on September 30, 2019 to 2,689 active memberships on September 30, 2020. Despite this contraction, membership revenue increased slightly by $84,910 compared to the prior year because of a rate increase implemented in July of 2019. However, dues amounted to $354,000 less than projected.

Rental and other non-program revenue declined by $156,609 in comparison with the prior year due to restrictions on gathering. Events and other program-related revenue dropped by $42,603.

Releases from board and temporary gift restriction were down $86,804 from the prior year, due in part to interruptions in grant-funded activities.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, operating contribu-
tions, gifts and grants were $234,297 greater than in the prior year.

In response to challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, we made careful investments in online offerings, long-term project planning, improvements in technical infrastructure, and measures for safe use of the building.

Operating expenses decreased $946,806 compared to the prior year and we achieved a modest surplus, due to careful expense management plus savings from cancelled activities, unfilled positions, and limited building occupancy.
Schedule of operating revenue without donor restriction and operating expenses  
September 30, 2020, with comparative totals for 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions, gifts and grants</td>
<td>$1,405,766</td>
<td>$1,171,469</td>
<td>Salaries, payroll taxes and fringe benefits</td>
<td>$4,874,728</td>
<td>$4,904,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership dues revenue</td>
<td>1,225,704</td>
<td>1,140,794</td>
<td>Collections acquisitions</td>
<td>440,312</td>
<td>709,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events and other program revenue</td>
<td>50,530</td>
<td>93,133</td>
<td>Building and occupancy (excluding depreciation)</td>
<td>1,095,489</td>
<td>1,167,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental and other non-program revenue</td>
<td>29,794</td>
<td>186,403</td>
<td>Contracted services, legal, audit and professional fees</td>
<td>295,219</td>
<td>658,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriations from board-designated funds</td>
<td>21,470</td>
<td>77,375</td>
<td>Receptions, travel and entertainment expense</td>
<td>59,761</td>
<td>158,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets released from restrictions</td>
<td>219,060</td>
<td>249,959</td>
<td>Printing, office and postage expenses</td>
<td>257,441</td>
<td>364,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td>$2,952,324</td>
<td>$2,919,133</td>
<td>Grants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$7,029,450</td>
<td>$7,976,256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2020       | 2019       |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decrease from operating activities before appropriations from the endowment</td>
<td>-4,077,126</td>
<td>-5,057,123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriations from the endowment</td>
<td>4,223,093</td>
<td>4,731,682</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Decrease in Net Assets

| 2020       | 2019       |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Decrease in Net Assets                            | 145,967    | -325,441   |

Notes:  
This statement includes operating revenue without donor restriction and operating expenses only.  
All other funds are accounted for separately.  
Full audited financial statements are available on our website: www.bostonathenaeum.org.  
The market value of the endowment on September 30, 2020 was $92,040,764.