L.A. artist Peter Shire's ode to a Greek vase illustrating Odysseus's adventures in Los Angeles.

For more information on the vase and The L.A. Odyssey Project, please turn to page 5 inside.
Letter from the President

“To transform Los Angeles and the World through the power of our libraries,” these extremely ambitious and inspiring words have been ringing in my ears since they were first spoken at the annual retreat of the Library Foundation’s Board of Directors. What began as an exercise to define and articulate both “the dream” and “the purpose” of the Library Foundation has very quickly garnered wide support among the Foundation directors and become a guiding principle for the staff. This principle came out of the knowledge that the free, public library informs and empowers individuals, educates their intuition, and inspires thoughtful contemplation as well as action. The Central Library and each of the Los Angeles Public Library’s branch libraries demonstrate the spirit of generosity that can be as transformative for the youngest readers as it is for scholar doctors in training.

These lofty ideals are at the very core of the shared goals of the Los Angeles Public Library and the Library Foundation. Working together, we will help patrons realize the potential for equal access to information and an environment that nurtures literacy and health/medicine. The California State Library has provided a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) federal grant for archiving and digitizing the photographs of the Los Angeles Public Library’s San Fernando Valley Times newspaper photograph collection. The Library’s Photo Collection emphasizes the history of Los Angeles, Southern California, and California. The Valley Times collection consists of 70,000 photographs from 1940 to 1970, and the Library owns the rights to 65,000 of them that can be digitized and made available for free. The Valley Times photograph collection is a snapshot of the opinion of post-World War II suburban growth that was felt by citizens throughout the country. This project was suggested in part or in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Directors under the provisions of the Library Directors and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian. The Library Foundation’s award-winning ALOUD speaker series is the recipient of a third generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. This grant will help keep the arts of readers, thinkers, and artists free and open to the public; engaging Angelenos in civic discourse and inspire life-long learning.

The Morales Amado Foundation is a new funder of three Los Angeles Public Library programs. We Read Together equips pre-school aged children with a head start on reading and writing by teaching their parents/caregivers techniques on how to read aloud and build core pre-literacy skills. Adult Literacy helps adults improve their English literacy skills through on one-on-one tutoring, self-directed, and online practices at library centers or in neighborhood libraries. Serving communities with diverse needs, the Cybernauts program employs young, tech-savvy Angelenes at neighborhoods of life aries to offer Library patrons personal computer assistance.

Welcome to the New Council of the Library Foundation President

The Library Foundation of Los Angeles is delighted to welcome Ellen Lipson to its new role as President of The Council,Ellen brings strong, collaborative leadership and a desire to continue the distinctive, instrumental support the organization provides to the Los Angeles Public Library. A New Yorker by birth, Ellen met her husband, Mark Lipson, at the University of Delaware where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English. She became an educator on both the Junior High and High School level and owned a stationery store in Beverly Hills for many years. Ellen and Mark raised their family on the east and west coast. Her non-profit leadership was honed with the Junior League. While living in Connecticut, some of Ellen’s philanthropic efforts extended but were not limited to the Boards of the Garden Education Center, the Bruce Museum of Greenwich, and being both President of the Parent Association and on the Board of the Brunner School. She was also on the Board of the Town of Greenwich, on the Board of the Gateway School, and chaired the Red Cross Gala. In Los Angeles, she served on the Board of the Virginia Robinson Gardens, mentored a student for the Fulfillment Fund, served on the Board of Sonata, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Gala Committee, the International Medical Corps Luncheon Committee, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Gala Committee, the International Medical Corps Luncheon Committee, is involved in Garden Conservancy Events, and is a member of The Blue Ribbon of the Music Center. She has been an active member of The Council since 2004 and has gracedfully hosted Library Events in her home.

With her two married children and three grandchildren, Ellen has thoughtful insights to contribute to the future of all families with the reach of Los Angeles Public Library. The Library Foundation is pleased to have her heart and expertise.

For more information on The Council, contact Elizabeth Toms, Director of Council Relations at elizabethtoms@lfla.org or 213.228.7506. Librarians in general are very tech savvy, love to teach, and can provide both students and teachers with instruction in the use of digital resources such as electronic journal databases and online catalogs,” says Toms. Beyond helping students with current assignments, the Los Angeles Public Library is also committed to panning the path for lifelong learning. Made possible by the Library Foundation’s generous donors, Student Smart offers full-length practice tests (SAT, PSAT, ACT), plus workshops and seminars to build study skills and prepare students for college. Recently, middle school students were invited to take part in a Student Smart College Motivational seminar at Central Library: “Only 1% of adults ages 16 to 24 in our community are college graduates,” says Toms. “Hearing presentations and discussions on overcoming challenges from a panel of successful college graduates on the importance of higher education can make a real impact on young people’s lives here.”

Patty Tuck, a librarian at the Eagle Rock Branch, is excited about the upcoming free five-part SAT Preparation series as part of the Student Smart program, which expands from five branches to 10 for the 2014-15 school year. “I am always struck by the overwhelming positive reviews on surveys from teens,” says Tuck about Student Smart, which is the only program to offer free SAT prep in the entire city. Tuck believes the Library is a ladder, “We are vital to the educational health of our City. I can now see we touch the lives of our patrons in a positive way on a daily basis,” Tuck says. “Our services are free to everyone in the City, we do not discriminate and we embrace our City’s diversity.”

Beyond free computer use and Wi-Fi, books, movies, and magazines, the Los Angeles Public Library offers a range of resources students need to succeed in school:

Full STEAM Ahead

Workshops and resources that spark kids’ interest in science and technology;

Live Homework Help

A free, online tutoring service for grades K to 12;

Student Smart

Full-length practice tests (SAT, PSAT, ACT), plus workshops and seminars to build study skills and get ready for college;

Student Zones

A place for kids to study and learn in the Library.

Online homework resources and information like databases, word processing programs, and more.

Learn more about all of these programs at laprl.org/ya.

Fall 2014  213.228.7500   lfla.org   3

Library Foundation News

A Brief Thank You to Our Grantmakers

The Library Foundation raises funds to support critical educational and cultural programs in partnership with the Los Angeles Public Library. We recently spoke to the following donors who recently invested their dollars as a vote of confidence in what we are achieving together:

 lhs Foundation is the major supporter of the Los Angeles Public Library’s Cybernauts program. With their new two-year grant, we will be able to expand into 16 neighborhood branches and have two Cybernauts at the Central Library (51% of the system) to provide individual help to patrons of all ages who do not know how to use computers effectively or who have technical difficulties. RHSF Foundation’s investment in Cybernauts will transform it into a robust transnational employment program for young adults. Launching them on their career paths as they learn technical and customer service skills by helping Library users. RHSF Foundation is an independent national foundation based in Austin, Texas that focuses on education, community, and health/medicine. The California State Library has provided a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) federal grant for archiving and digitizing the photographs of the Los Angeles Public Library’s San Fernando Valley Times newspaper photograph collection. The Library’s Photo Collection emphasizes the history of Los Angeles, Southern California, and California. The Valley Times collection consists of 70,000 photographs from 1940 to 1970, and the Library owns the rights to 65,000 of them that can be digitized and made available for free. The Valley Times photograph collection is a snapshot of the opinions of post-World War II suburban growth that was felt by citizens throughout the country. This project was suggested in part or in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Directors under the provisions of the Library Directors and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian. The Library Foundation’s award-winning ALOUD speaker series is the recipient of a third generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. This grant will help keep the arts of readers, thinkers, and artists free and open to the public; engaging Angelenos in civic discourse and inspire life-long learning.

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School’s In Session at the Los Angeles Public Library

Full means back-to-school, but at the Los Angeles Public Library, learning never ceases. From assisting students enrolled in summer classes with research and resources to advising students on their school reading lists, librarians just wrapped up a busy season, including motivating over 10,000 kids to crack the books through the Summer Reading Club. As part of Mayor Eric Garcetti’s “Summer of Learning,” kids across the city were given hedges for taking part in educational programs like summer-long debate workshops live-streamed to several neighborhood libraries. Fitting the ground running, librarians are energized and ready with a full slate of programs and resources to help students have a successful new school year.

With the recent adoption of Common Core State Standards for schools in California, there’s a greater emphasis on digital learning than ever before, so many of the Library’s resources like Student Zones are evolving to address the changing needs of students. Offering computers, study tables and homework supplies, including access to free electronic resources, online tutoring, and free printouts, Student Zones provide a safe, focused place for kids to study after school. Supported by the Library Foundation, Student Zones at 10 neighborhood libraries will be newly renovated for the fall, and Student Zone Helpdesks will be added to 15 branchs to assist kids with their homework and computer questions.

“Our Student Zone has proven to be invaluable resource to students,” explains Justin Suygum, a Young Adult Librarian at Benjamin Franklin Branch. “In our community many families cannot afford computers or Internet access so there is a real need. With students being tasked to use online resources, as well as becoming proficient with digital media, the need for technological support is ever-expanding.”

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Student Zones

A place for kids to study and learn in the Library.

Online homework resources and information like databases, word processing programs, and more.

Learn more about all of these programs at laprl.org/ya.
Since the 8th century BC, Homer’s haunting epic poem, The Odyssey, has sparked audiences about what it means to struggle and endure as a human being. The Greek poet followed the hero Odysseus on an action-packed journey home after fighting in the ten-year Trojan War. As he encounters numerous obstacles along the way—warding off pressure from suitors eager from one-eyed giants to fantastical enchantresses—Odysseus’ wife Penelope assumes the leadership of his kingdom in his absence, and the novel of Odysseus returning to L.A. ‘s nave will “pop” across the city during the month of October.

The Los Angeles Public Library will feature over 150 events narrated by the creative and innovative public librarians spreading stories of the Los Angeles Public Library.

The Epic Continues Across Los Angeles

Here’s a sample of the many ways you can chart your own voyage into Homer’s The Odyssey across Los Angeles this October. For a full calendar of upcoming events, visit lfla.org/odyssey.

Follow that Vase!

Los Angeles artist Peter Shire has re-imagined an ancient Greek vase from a modern and distinctly Southern California perspective. View the collection at The Getty Villa, and then make your way to The Odyssey at The Hammer Museum. Libros Schmirros Book Club at the Hammer Museum, October 26 from 3-5:30pm. Calling all book lovers, we invite you to experience Homer’s Odyssey in a L.A. setting.

A Strange Thing Happened on the Way to Khacks:
Lost & Found at the Movies
Friday, October 10
From the Ivan Reitman’s Ghostbusters, to the 2005 TV series The Unit, the icons of the modern man’s life have been covered. Join Madeline Miller, author of The Song of Achilles, winner of the Orange Prize in 2015, and new award-winning author Alice Oswald, as they read from their respective works.

Libros Schmirros Book Club at the Hammer Museum, October 26 from 3-5:30pm. Calling all book lovers, we invite you to experience Homer’s Odyssey in a L.A. setting.

A Conversation between Pulitzer Prize-winning writer David Pinsky (Thank You, Dear Service) and Skip Rizzo, director for Medical Virtual Reality at USC Institute for Creative Technologies, about the challenges of coming home from war for soldiers, families, and their communities.

Honor the One-eyed Giant!

An Odyssey of The Odyssey Project at The Hammer Museum Thursday, October 9
Partake in a narrative journey through time and space that illustrates the creative influence of The Odyssey over time and across cultures. Written and directed by Lara Ann, narrated by actor Roger Finley, M.F.A., and featuring MAPFRE software created by TED, follow Eric Bito and a data storyteller David Germain, the unique one-eyed man who will bridge the worlds of theater, network science, and data visualization.

In honor of the oral tradition that allowed Homer to capture the story in writing, the project will culminate on Saturday, October 25 with a seven-hour marathon reading of the poem by the public at the Central Library. Learn more about this reading, and all the other events upon which you can embark during October at lfla.org/odyssey.
22nd Anniversary Celebration

Judith Krantz and a Life’s Work of Books

“If I didn’t stop reading, it would be like stopping breathing,” says bestselling author Judith Krantz. “From the minute I got up in the morning and started reading The New York Times, which is always a must—my first stop every day—read and read and read. I’m reading all day long. Even when I brush my teeth, I’m reading.” Krantz remembers the exact moment for her lifelong obsession with reading began—when as a five-year-old she recognized the long, odd word “gingerbread” in a book. She brings the same inexhaustible zeal for reading to the place where reading is fostered—the library. A Member of The Council of the Library Foundation since 1999, this year Krantz will be honored for her passionate support of the Los Angeles Public Library with the Light of Learning Award.

From Galway to Presst, from George Elliott to Ann Smiley, Krantz has been influenced by some of the most profound authors of all time and has applied her own knack for storytelling to her writing career. She first began writing for groundbreaking women’s magazines Good Housekeeping and Ladies Home Journal, and when she moved to California over 40 years ago, she became the west coast editor of Cosmopolitan. Her coming-of-age as a writer coincided with the women’s movement, but it wasn’t until she was living in California away from the pressures of the New York literary scene that she thought about experimenting with fiction.

“One could argue that one of the most significant things about my writing career, aside from my love for books and lifelong learning in kids, is that my first novel, Scruples, was published before some of the greatest events in the world—when I was young enough to care about those long hikes through neighborhoods and forests, down long winding roads. I think about my adolescence and about how I can remember the weight of those books.

The Los Angeles Public Library strives to foster a love for books and lifelong learning in kids. How do you think reading enhances our society?

Krantz: The free public library—both the institution itself and the ideals, which are so essential to our granite plinth upon which our democratic society rests. All libraries go so good our democracy. A Historic Overview

Past Honorees


At the beginning of your writing you’re terrified by the blank page. Do you ever read what you’ve written and think maybe it’s not so good? A Historic Overview

Díaz: I didn’t know I could write a novel until I tried, and I sat down, and at the end of the afternoon I had the first half of the first chapter of Scandal. And I showed it to my husband and I said ‘I did it! I’m a fiction writer!’ ‘Yes, it’s really good,’ he said. I Go back in and I re-work that piece for the next few decades she published a new novel every two years and went on to become an international bestseller, selling over 80 million copies of her books worldwide. Although she never set out to “free anybody” and got tickled by the thought of young women ignoring the “scandalous” stories from their mother’s nightstand, her work has inspired a generation of women, and paved the path for such revolutionary female-centric series like “Gossip Girl.”

After the great success of her books, her love for reading came full circle. “I had finally made enough money to start thinking about giving it away. The first place I wanted to give it was the library.” Díaz says, “I was particularly interested in adult literacy because so many people don’t know how to read.” For over 15 years, Krantz has been a dedicated supporter of the Los Angeles Public Library’s many educational and cultural programs and she believes having access to books and learning elevates a person’s self-worth. “The Library is so beautiful,” she says, “To go in there and be treated with respect makes you think maybe you would become a writer.”

Can you talk about your connection to public libraries?

Díaz: I used to walk to my public library, which is exactly four miles from where I lived. I would walk there, read, get books and walk back. From London Terrace to Old Bridge Public Library. On the way there I would dream about the books I was reading. On the way back I would dream about the books I was going to read. I would do this at least once a week. And when I think about what made me a reader (which always come before writer, at least for me), I think about those long hikes through neighborhoods and farms, down long winding roads. I think about my adolescence and about how I can remember the weight of those books.

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Junot Díaz on the Blessings and Curses of Language

“An articulate champion of the immigrant experience, unparalleled in sheer originality of language, with a keen sense of history, culture, and the way forward, Junot Díaz is a writer relevant to the people of Los Angeles at this very moment,” says City Librarian John F. Snavely. The author of the critically acclaimed Drown, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, which won the 2008 Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award, and This Is How You Lose Her, a New York Times bestseller and National Book Award finalist, Díaz will receive the Los Angeles Public Library’s Literary Award this fall. Born in the Dominican Republic and raised in New Jersey, Díaz’s work has been hailed for its colloquial spin on a modern American voice—a blend of English and Spanish, slang, hip-hop, and poetry to create fiercely exquisite human portraits. The recipient of a MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship, PEN/Malamud Award, Dayton Literary Peace Prize, Guggenheim Fellowship, and PEN/O. Henry Award, we asked Díaz what fuels his electrifying writing before he arrives in L.A. to receive his newest honor.

You immigrated to the United States from the Dominican Republic as a child—what was the role of literature in your life during that transformative time?

Díaz: I doubt I could have survived that process, that madison, without books, without reading. My public library need my life. My letter to Hogwarts was my first library card. You can’t imagine the confusion of immigration. We all deal with it differently. I coped by trying to understand where I was and how I got there and in order to understand I read—everything.

Very few people are actually writing today in multiple languages, yet this is how a majority of the world communicates. What do you think publishing will catch up to this reality?

Díaz: Soon. I hope. But literature, like film, seems to be very slow to change. It is the first challenge of immigration is to master the new tongue. It turned out to be quite a challenge indeed. I learned English because I had to and I guess I never stopped learning on that. Though I still remember the exact moment my lifelong obsession with language was born. Writing was a way of working through my complicated relationship with something I never had an easy relationship to. Some people love writing, throw themselves into it with eagerness. But I’ve always approached my art reluctantly. It took me a long time before I finally realized that this was something I would not be able to avoid—that this was something that maddened me—called "writing." For over 15 years, Krantz has been a dedicated supporter of the Los Angeles Public Library’s many educational and cultural programs and she believes having access to books and learning elevates a person’s self-worth. “The Library is so beautiful,” she says, “To go in there and be treated with respect makes you think maybe you would become a writer.”

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The Library Foundation Calendar Fall 2014

September

Tuesday, September 2, 7:15 PM
Perfidia: A Novel
James Ellroy
In conversation with author Walter Kirn Ellroy, one of America’s greatest living crime writers, draws on the history of Los Angeles in his newest novel, Perfidia. Together with Kirn, author of a recent riveting take on Los Angeles cold cases, attendees will enter Ellroy’s shadow of Pearl Harbor, where the challenges of a half century of the Japanese-American culture bumps together and rises against four driven souls.

Monday, September 7, 11:30 AM
The Human Age
Diane Ackerman
In conversation with primatologist Amy Parish

October

Thursday, September 25, 7:15 PM
Through Trying Times: Stories of Loss and Redemption in the American South
Charles M. How and Joynel Ward
In conversation with Blacksmoke Jones, poet and former President of the Cherokees of Western and English, US

Tuesday, October 7, 7:15 PM
Fiercely Independent Publisher
Documenting Indigenous Stories Through Film:
An Alternative Lens

Wednesday, October 15, 7:15 PM
The Heyday of Malcolm X: A Fiercely Independent Publisher
Sarah Thornton. Credit: Beowulf Sheehan

November

Tuesday, October 28, 7:35 PM
The Warrior’s Return: From Surge to Suburbia
Julianna Brannum
In conversation with author Jesse Katz

Wednesday, November 4, 6:00 PM
Winnie the Pooh: The Many Faces of A.A. Milne
An Evening with Colin Thubron and Rachel Kushner

Thursday, November 13, 7:15 PM
The Secret History of Wonder Woman
Lara Jensen
In conversation with Alice Collins, host of “Skin Deep” and Rachel Kushner

A celebrated literary series of conversations, readings, and performances at the downtown Central Library, ALOUD brings together today’s brightest cultural, scientific, and political luminaries to the City of Los Angeles.
ALoud at Central Library programs are FREE, unless otherwise indicated. Programs are subject to change.
Salvaging Humanity Through Storytelling: Jesmyn Ward at ALOUD

The immensely talented writer Jesmyn Ward can elevate the most dire circumstances into beautiful elegies. She won a National Book Award in 2011 for her second novel, *Salvage the Bones*, which follows a pregnant teenager’s courage to survive in a post-Katrina Mississippi. Last September, Ward published her first nonfiction book—*Men We Reaped*, a finalist for the Indiana Book Prize, the New York Times Book Review Best Book of the Year, and the National Book Critics Circle Award—for which she was presented with the National Book Award in 2011. "I believed in the story I was writing—I believed that it was important and that it needed to be told," she said. "I was foolishly and bravely at once, and that helped me to stumble my way through the first draft of the memoir." In her talk, Ward will discuss her second novel, *Salvage the Bones*, her new memoir, *Men We Reaped*, and her work on the National Book Critics Circle Award panel. She will also take questions from the audience.}

How do you think the boundaries she pushed in her writing about such subjects altered the course of her readers’ lives?

She showed readers and writers alike that it’s possible for us to have a conversation that leads to solutions. Others have asked me this question, and I don’t have a good answer for it. I think that talking about these tragedies, acknowledging them, recognizing the breadth and horror of children of young Black kids dying because their lives are worth less is important. That sharing our stories that allow Black people to transcend statistics is important. I hope we can have a conversation that leads to solution.

What role might places like the public library play to offer support to our youth in need of safe havens?

Reading saved my life. It meant to me when I was a child, it meant to me in my teen years, and it continually reassures me as an adult. The library has always been a place of refuge for me because it’s my gateway to different people and places and realities. It found my humanity—my dignity, in books. I imagine books can help other young people to do the same. I know that most public libraries allow young people access to computers and the Internet as well, and I’ve seen that the Internet can foster new communities and knowledge. I also think public libraries are important places for reading groups to form and meet, reading groups where conversations about race and poverty and what it means to be young in America can definitely take place.
“The free public library—both the institution itself and the ideals, which made it possible—is the granite plinth upon which our democratic society rests. As libraries go so goes our democracy.”

—Junot Díaz,
2014 Los Angeles Public Library Literary Award Winner
(for more information, see page 6 inside)

Support free access to information and the civic, cultural, and educational core of our community.

Become a Member of the Library Foundation of Los Angeles to strengthen the Los Angeles Public Library!
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