

# LIBRARY GROUPS WINTER 2012

Registration for the Library's book and other discussion groups and workshops during the winter and spring is now open.

*Any member of The American Library in Paris may participate in these groups, and anyone who wishes to participate may join The American Library.*

There is no fee for the groups, which are led by volunteers with special skills and interests. A few tips to signing up and getting started:

■ Please write us at

**bookgroups@americanlibraryinparis.org** and indicate in the subject line which group you wish to join, as well as your current Library membership number. The group leader will confirm your participation if space is available (up to twelve members per group) and will send you further details.

■ Library membership is required to participate. If you are not yet or not currently a Library member, please join now or be prepared to register or renew at the first session (check/cash/ credit card, photo ID and proof of residence are required for new memberships).

■ Come to the first session prepared to discuss the first book or topic on the list.

■ The book groups are organized at the Library's initiative, but the group leaders – and members – will have broad discretion in how they unfold.

■ The book group meetings will take place in the Library unless otherwise advertised.

■ The Library will provide coffee, tea, and bottled water for the book groups, whose members may also wish to bring other refreshments or snacks. Book group members are responsible for cleanup in the reading room and the kitchen.

■ For more information, please contact Janet Skeslien Charles at 01 53 59 12 67 or [skesliencharles@americanlibraryinparis.org](mailto:skesliencharles@americanlibraryinparis.org)

## Looking Closer

Take a closer look at great works of art in this discussion group. Planned visits include the Opera (Palais Garnier), the Louvre, the Gobelins, and the Musée du Luxembourg.

**First meeting: 14h00 on Monday 13 February at the Opera Garnier. Each member can buy a ticket for nine euros at the entrance. Other monthly meetings to be announced.**

*Caroline de Navacelle is a Conférencière Nationale (lecturer) of the Ministère de la Culture and Ministère du Tourisme and formerly a docent at the Art Institute of Chicago and a guide at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago. A graduate of the Sorbonne, NYU, and the Ecole du Louvre, she currently lectures at the Grand Palais and the Gobelins and conducts architecture tours in Paris.*

## Bon courage!

In "serious" fiction nothing is more suspect than feel-good narratives, triumphant heroes and Hollywood endings. Fortunately, though, there have always been major authors who, without denying the tragic dimension of life, manage to show the way to hard-won hope.

In these difficult times, we could all stand to glimpse a little light at the end of the tunnel. Here are four deeply satisfying novels whose protagonists echo the immortal sentiment of Samuel Beckett's Molloy: "I can't go on. I'll go on."

*Brooklyn* by Colm Tóibín,

*A Word Child* by Iris Murdoch

*The Beginning of Spring* by Penelope Fitzgerald

*Henderson, the Rain King* by Saul Bellow

**Thursdays at 14h00: 9 February, 8 March, 12 April, 10 May.**

*Morgan Thomas holds degrees from the University of Minnesota and Princeton University. Since 2008, he has been making the first English translations of works by the French playwright Jean-Claude Brisville.*

## Strangers in a Strange Land

Fascinated by identity, belonging, and the quest for a true home? Read what others have to say about being a stranger in a strange land.

*Tinkers* by Paul Harding

*What is the What* by Dave Eggers

*The Cat's Table* by Michael Ondaatje

*Gallileo's Daughter* by Dava Sobel

*A Town Like Alice* by Nevil Shute

**Fridays at 12h30: 3 February, 9 March, 6 April, 4 May, 8 June**

*Kate Berenson has been reading avidly ever since she figured out what those little black marks meant, late in the first grade. Recently uprooted, Lisa Redburn loves books that take her into other people's worlds. Both are strangers delighted to be in a strange land.*

## Imagining the City: New York & Paris

How do we construct our visions of cities, before ever visiting them, while we are living in them, and once we leave them? Our discussions will focus on different perspectives from writers, scholars, artists, and filmmakers, keeping the comparison between New York and Paris as a *fil rouge*, or theme.

*A Moveable Feast* by Ernest Hemingway

*Celluloid Skyline: New York and the Movies*

by James Sanders

*Paris, Capital of Modernity* by David Harvey

*Here is New York* by E.B. White

*The Flaneur* by Edmund White

**Thursdays at 10h30: 16 February, 15 March, 12 April, 24 May**

*Sophie Body-Gendrot is an emeritus professor at the Sorbonne, a consultant and researcher at CNRS, and an urban affairs specialist at the London School of Economics specializing in comparisons of the challenges of cities around the world. She has written or co-edited more than twenty books in French and English.*

## Judging the Judges

What kind of novels are winning prizes in the first decade of the new millennium? We'll look at these prize-winners and judge ourselves whether they are set to become classics or merely passing fancies of our time.

*A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan

*Austerlitz* by W.G. Sebald

*The Known World* by Edward P. Jones

*The Road* by Cormac McCarthy

*The Tree of Smoke* by Denis Johnson

**Fridays at 14h00: 24 February, 16 March, 13 April, 11 May, 8 June**

*Mary Fleming has lived in Paris since 1981. She has worked as a freelance journalist and as a consultant. For the last twelve years she has been writing fiction.*

## The Marriage Plot

The mainspring of comedy, erotic aspiration is overtaken by moral complications in each of these four problematical comedies. We will examine how these complications lead on to deeper interpretations of the meaning of love, enriching the formulaic aspects of the plot structure and character in comedy.

*Measure for Measure* by William Shakespeare

*Persuasion* by Jane Austen

*The Wings of the Dove* by Henry James

*The Marriage Plot* by Jeffrey Eugenides

**Wednesdays at 10h00: 15 February, 14 March, 11 April, 9 May**

*A graduate of Colgate University, the Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Virginia, Peter Fellowes was formerly Dean of Faculty and Professor of English at North Park University. Today he is senior warden of the American Cathedral in Paris and a trustee of the American Library.*

## Sur la Table:

### A Book Group for Food Lovers

This group, which began in 2009, reads and discusses recent books on food and restaurants (not cookbooks). Their meetings are scheduled to end at 12:30 and are followed, for those who wish to participate, with Dutch-treat lunch at a restaurant in the Library neighborhood.

**Service Included: Four-Star Secrets of an**

**Eavesdropping Waiter** by Phoebe Damrosch

**The Man Who Ate Everything** by Jeffrey Steingarten

Two further books will be announced at the first meeting.

**Thursdays at 11h00: 23 February, 22 March, 5 April, 3 May**

*Nancy Janin came to France in 1981 as an expat with an American bank and stayed for the duration, not in a small measure because of the food. She is active at the American Cathedral, Paris Choral Society, and other local associations. Bill Cagle is the retired director of the Lilly Library at Indiana University and author of A Matter of Taste and American Books on Food and Drink. He and his wife, Terry, have lived in Paris since 2005.*

## Writing @ The Library

**Four two-hour writing workshops designed for writers at any level willing to commit to serious, supportive conversation will benefit from interaction with participants and get constructive feedback on their writing. The brainstorming in these classes is designed to get you writing.**

### Writing Short and Long Memoirs

The memoirist explores a life experience and tries to make meaning out of it. Each memoir is a window into the writer's life. What window into your life are you opening? What frame are you putting around the particular experience? There will be examples from contemporary memoirists (Annie Dillard, Orhan Pamuk, Joan Didion) and guided exercises.

**Sunday 19 February at 14h00**

*Susan Tiberghien is the author of the bestselling One Year to a Writing Life, Twelve Lessons to Deepen Every Writer's Art and Craft. She founded the Geneva Writers' Group and is the director of the Geneva Writers' Conference.*

### Writing with Your Brain

This is a writing workout aimed at flexing your main writing muscle. Brainstorm about writing goals and challenges, participate in fresh writing exercises and experiments, share your work and receive generous, clear-eyed feedback. We'll discuss ideas about writing from writers such as Barbara Kingsolver and George Saunders, and use a variety of tools as a springboard to experiment, play, and create.

**Thursday 8 March at 10h30**

*As a travel journalist, Lisa Pasold has been thrown off a train in Belarus, fed the world's best pigeon pie in Marrakech, and mushed huskies in the Yukon. She is the author of Rats of Las Vegas and any bright horse, forthcoming in April.*

### Left Bank Literature: Writing, Reading and Workshopping Paris

"America is my country and Paris is my hometown," wrote Gertrude Stein. She was certainly not the only expatriate to feel this way. Other celebrated Left Bank inhabitants include Hemingway, Fitzgerald, James Joyce, Djuna Barnes, George Orwell, Janet Flanner and Allen Ginsberg. Extracts from the work of some of these authors will serve as departure points for our own explorations on the page. Through brief exercises taking inspiration from the writings of Left Bank authors, we'll work on developing ideas in our own prose and poetry.

**Saturday 31 March at 14h00**

*Heather Hartley is Paris Editor for Tin House magazine and the author of Knock Knock. Her poems, essays and interviews have appeared in The Rumpus, PBS Newshour, The Guardian, and Food and Booze: A Tin House Literary Feast.*

**We will announce the details about the fourth workshop at a later date.**