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The American Library in Paris Hosts Evenings with an Author

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The American Library in Paris is the largest English language lending library on the European continent. Founded in 1920 by the American Library Association to house a massive collection of books sent to American soldiers fighting in World War I, its motto “After the darkness of war, the light of books” reflects the spirit of its creation.



The library was founded to house the books sent to US forces fighting in Europe during World War I © From the American Library in Paris archives.

A chance to see award-winning writers in Paris

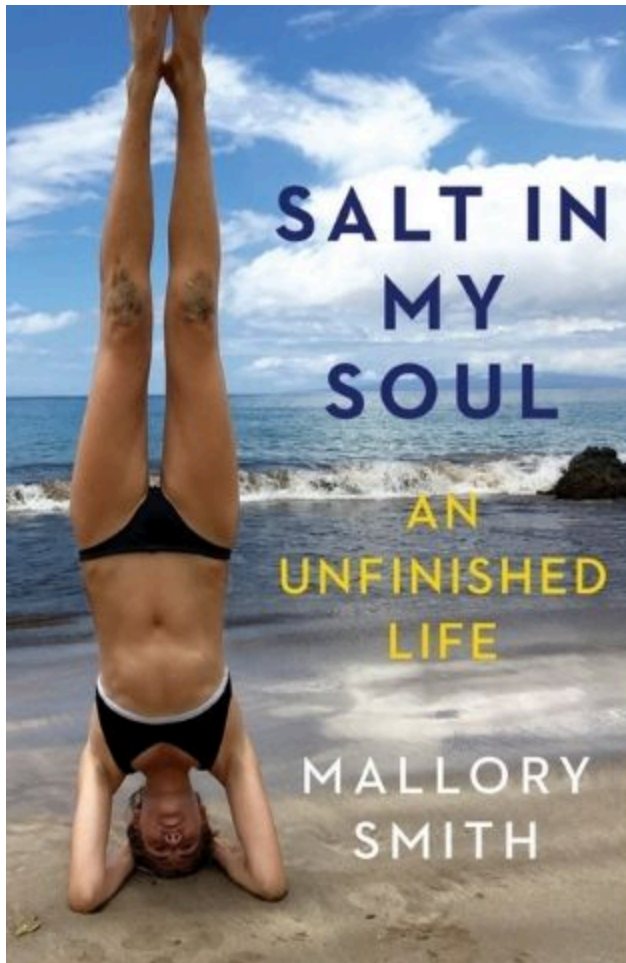
The library has a noteworthy literary pedigree as evidenced by its long history of author talks which began in the 1930's with Gertrude Stein and other luminaries. This strong literary tradition has served as a forerunner to the Evenings with an

Author series, which began in 1990 with speakers such as Patricia Wells, Adam Gopnik, and Alberto Manguel. In 2003, the program was funded by a grant from The Annenberg Foundation. It is currently sponsored by GRoW@Annenberg, with the generous support of Gregory Annenberg Weingarten.

Today, the library hosts more than 70 evening events throughout the year, welcoming award-winning authors, film-makers, musicians, journalists, scholars and other public figures including such notables as Kristin Scott Thomas, Colson Whitehead, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Jimmy Buffett, David Sedaris, and more. A vast majority of these evenings may be attended in person or virtually. All but a few of the programs are free (with a suggested donation of €10) and open to the public.

The Evenings with an Author platform allow authors an opportunity to engage with the Parisian community through readings and wide-ranging discussions surrounding their own journeys. Popular topics and formats include panels on politics and current events, intimate discussions with leaders on the climate crisis, feminism, Black history and culture, and visual art. Library Director Audrey Chapuis notes that the library's cultural programs are "just as important as the books themselves."

She adds that, "There are infinite ways into those topics, but intimate conversation is one of the best. There is something about our reading room where these conversations take place that creates a space for truly open dialogue, healthy debate, and profound revelation. Every week we are witness to unforgettable moments: moments of insight, of emotion, of inspiration. I am certain that these conversations seed not only contemplation but action."



Mallory Smith's 'Salt in My Soul' will be presented at the American Library in Paris on April 18th 2023 © Diane Shader Smith

Upcoming event: Salt in My Soul

One very special evening on the calendar for April 18th is the presentation of the best-selling memoir, *Salt in my Soul: An Unfinished Life*, written by Mallory Smith and published posthumously by Random House. In addition to receiving wonderful press coverage, *Salt in my Soul* was on the shortlist submitted by Random House for Pulitzer Prize consideration.

At the age of three, Mallory was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis, a progressive, incurable lung disease. Determined to follow her mantra to “live happy”, Mallory was a surfer, podcaster, talented athlete and even Prom Queen, along her way to graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Stanford University, becoming a Cystic Fibrosis advocate and professional writer.

Mallory wrote of her thoughts and struggles in an intimate journal she kept for 10 years until her death at the age of 25. Surviving a lung transplant, she succumbed to the antibiotic-resistant infection that invaded her new lungs. Before undergoing the transplant, Mallory gave her mother Diane the password to her journal, leaving instructions for Diane to publish her work posthumously, and hoping that her journals would offer insight for people living with, or loving someone with chronic illness. Diane unlocked a treasure trove of 2,500 pages of Mallory’s innermost thoughts and observations ranging from coming of age to the major difficulties in navigating our health care system. What emerges is a powerful portrait of an inspirational young woman who lived life to the fullest, even with the knowledge that her days might be numbered.

Following Mallory’s wishes, her mother Diane Shader Smith arranged and edited her daughter’s memoir, which has become a best-selling book and documentary which has aired in 50 countries.

The logo for The American Library in Paris, featuring the text "The American Library in Paris" in a white serif font centered on a dark red square background.

The
American
Library
in Paris

For more information regarding the American Library in Paris and the Evenings with an Author series please visit:

americanlibraryinparis.org

+33 (0)1 53 59 12 60

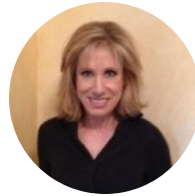
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Lead photo credit : *The façade of the American Library in Paris, in the 7th arrondissement © Krystal Kenney*

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A native of Los Angeles, Barbara is the France Today Ambassador for L.A. She graduated from UCLA with a BA degree in Political Science, and also received her JD degree from UCLA School of Law. While at UCLA, she spent her junior year in Grenoble, France. From that time on, she has been an avid and passionate Francophile. She has visited almost every region in France, and still pursues French language courses in Los Angeles. She has an apartment in Paris and continues to visit France every year.