

219

THE 209TH ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

ATHENÆUM
FOUNDED 1814

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WELCOME TO THE ATHENÆUM

As an historic and vibrant Philadelphia-centered and member-supported circulating library, research archive and cultural forum, The Athenæum of Philadelphia dedicates our expert staff, our collections of books, art and architecture treasures and our National Historic Landmark building to strengthen our growing community through ideas, cultural engagement and fellowship. Dive into our 209th Annual Report and see how we fulfilled our mission.



QUICK LINKS MENU



VISIT THE
PEOPLE PAGE



VISIT THE
COLLECTIONS PAGE



VISIT THE
READING ROOM



VISIT THE
COMMUNITY PAGE



VISIT THE
LEGACY PAGE



VISIT THE
FINANCIALS PAGE



VISITOR BOOK
FEEDBACK



VISIT THE
ONLINE VERSION

BOARD PRESIDENT'S AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Athenæum Shareholders, Subscribers and Friends:

We are pleased to report that there are more of you – Athenæum Shareholders, Subscribers, Young Friends, Students and visitors – than in many decades. The Athenæum has become an anchor in Philadelphia for those seeking an exciting and nurturing learning community. We are a home for talented artists and writers and an inspirational third place for remote workers and students. We have become a preferred meeting place for friends seeking our unique social and cultural blend. We remain a clean, well-lighted place with books and important collections for our many readers and researchers.

Both new and long-term members are actively enjoying the many benefits of belonging to The Athenæum. While our new sign-in protocol is helping staff to more accurately record building usage, it is clear from the flow of people through the building, the full houses at programs, RDIC and research appointments and library circulation data that our numbers are at historic highs. This past year, we averaged 1,000 visits per month, more than double our pre-pandemic numbers.

We welcomed 572 new members in FY2024. If people were divisible, that would be more than 1.5 new members per day. Many of our members report learning about The Athenæum through a friend, neighbor or colleague. Your enthusiasm for your library inspires others to become a part of our community. Thank you for sharing your joy!

Our Board of Directors and professional staff take seriously our directive to support the mission of The Athenæum by providing the highest quality of programs and services to our members and the interested public. Contained in this report are highlights

from this past year: the books you read, programs and events you enjoyed, special collection accessions we made and stewardship efforts toward our building and finances. Most importantly, this 209th Annual Report is our opportunity to thank you, from the deep wells of our hearts, for your continued contributions, support and encouragement of our efforts to nurture curiosity and strengthen community through learning and discourse.

At the Annual Shareholders Meeting last April, the Board recognized the contributions of four outgoing Directors: past Presidents Mr. Robert Linck (since 1982) and Mrs. Lea Sherk (since 1985), and Dr. Joan Countryman and the Hon. Gregory Montanaro, who both joined the Board in 2018. The Shareholders approved Ms. Nora Barry, Mr. P. Justin Detwiler, Dr. Mary Hawkesworth, Ms. Kelly Lee and Ms. Lucy Strackhouse as new Directors. We are grateful to all of them for agreeing to serve and are energized by the skills, focus and passion of our full Board. At the same time, we extend our sympathies to the families and friends of Robert Linck and Director Emeriti Francis R. Grebe, who passed away early in the start of the current fiscal year 2025.

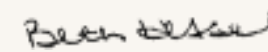
May you find in the following pages information to better illuminate this exciting chapter in The Athenæum's history. It is with pleasure that we present to you the 209th Annual Report illustrating the accomplishments of the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

With appreciation,

Jeffrey Cooper
Board President



Beth Shalom Hessel
Executive Director



ATHENÆUM'S PEOPLE

Guided by a dedicated board, passionate staff and talented interns, we nurture curiosity and strengthen community through shared learning and discovery.

THE BOARD

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Lea Carson Sherk*
Robert Morris Steiner
Lucy Strackhouse

KEY: *COMPLETED TERMS IN 2024 **DECEASED



OUR STAFF

Beth Shalom Hessel, Executive Director
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Jim Carroll, Imaging Specialist – RDIC
Fiona Dawson, Development Database Administrator
Christina Doe, Building Supervisor
Leigh Gallagher, Front Desk & Membership Assistant
Jill LeMin Lee, Librarian
Alexa Perillo, Development & Membership Associate
Brice Peterson, Associate Archivist Librarian
Lois Reibach, Resource Description & Access Librarian
Valerie Roche, Front Desk & Member Assistant (substitute)
Kristina Wilson, Gladys Brooks Curator of Architecture

OUR INTERNS

Anastasia Brana (Mount Holyoke, Summer 2023)
MeiXing Hunt-Babcock (Drexel, Fall 2023 & Spring/Summer 2024), Archival & Digital Imaging Intern
Liz Lyons (Drexel MLIS, Fall 2023/Winter 2024), Cataloging Intern
Lena Tran (Drexel, Spring/Summer 2024), Events & Membership Intern
Erin White (Drexel, Summer 2023, Spring/Summer 2024), Archival & Digital Imaging Intern

ATHENÆUM'S COLLECTIONS

Since 1814, the Athenæum has provided Philadelphians with the best in new and classic literature, books on art and architecture, magazines and journals. We also offer eBooks, DVDs and audiobooks.



SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The Athenæum's special collections include more than 360k architectural drawings, 300k photographic images and 60k volumes housed onsite and at two off-site storage facilities.

In November 2023, The Athenæum staff and community bid a fond farewell to Bruce Laverty who served for forty years on the Athenæum's staff and as the first Gladys Brooks curator of architecture. Bruce built up our renowned architectural collections from their infancy, and led the creation of the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings and the Geohistory Network websites. Over the years he assisted countless researchers and curated many exhibitions that shed light on Philadelphia's built environment.

We welcomed Kristina Wilson as the new Gladys Brooks Curator of Architecture in February 2024. Kristina has quickly made an impact. With the help of volunteers and interns, she has increased the number of in-

person research visits, provided many tours of the archives and dived into a survey of the architectural collections stored in our vault. This effort is crucial to gain intellectual and physical control of a collection in order to facilitate access. Drexel intern Erin White has been vital to this effort, surveying nearly 9,000 items, including 325 flat file drawers of architectural drawings and 167 boxes of photographs and manuscripts.

In June 2024, The Athenæum promoted Assistant Librarian Brice Peterson, who had been staffing the Reading Room during our extended hours, as Associate Archivist Librarian. While he shares his time between the Reading Room and the archives, Brice is focused on bringing materials from our Delaware storage location, processing them onsite and sending them to LIBRA, the University of Pennsylvania's storage facility in New Jersey.



360k
ARCHITECTURAL
DRAWINGS



300k
PHOTOGRAPHIC
IMAGES



60k
VOLUME
LIBRARY



COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

During the year, staff and the Collections Committee, ably led by Board Director Jeff Cohen, considered numerous potential acquisitions and ultimately approved 19 accessions.

The Athenæum actively collects drawings, photographs and other materials that document the built environment of the Philadelphia region from colonization to the middle of the twentieth century. In accessioning, the staff and committee prioritize materials that add to an established collection or fill a hole in a collection, have visual appeal and/or support new fields of research. Examples of items accessioned in FY2024 include:

Since The Athenæum's Accession Budget is limited, we are grateful that most of the items we consider for acquisition are donations. We especially appreciate donations of collections that include funds for the care of those items.

- Architectural drawings of various

Philadelphia buildings collected by real estate agent/landlord George Gay between the 1920s and the 1970s.

- Research notes compiled by Sandra Tatman and Jean Farnsworth for their unpublished work on Nicola D'Ascenzo (to complement the D'Ascenzo Collection).
- A gift from recently deceased Athenæum Shareholder George Pearson that includes an 18th c. bracket clock now on display on the mantle in the Member Lounge and the 18th c. diary of Revolutionary War hero George Pearson (to complete the extant Pearson collection).
- Rolls of 1936 blueprints for the Highland Homes, said to have been the first public housing project built by the Public Works Administration in the U.S. and drawn by Register & Krimmel, architects.
- Terra-Cotta Manufacturing Co. account book, 1867-76; business records of Union Clay Works of Phila. & NJ, mainly drain pipes and chimneys.

9K
ARCHITECTURAL
ITEMS SURVEYED

310
RESEARCH
REQUESTS

40
ONSITE RESEARCH
VISITS HOSTED

32
IMAGE USE OR
SCAN REQUESTS

Since The Athenæum's Accession Budget is limited, we are grateful that most of the items we consider for acquisition are donations. We especially appreciate donations of collections that include funds for the care of those items.



“Unlike most other institutions for research in Philadelphia, The Athenæum possesses primary source archival materials on almost every old Philadelphia architect and designer, and we are so fortunate to study these records in the organization's original, magnificent building.”

Oscar Beisert, Member since 2020



CHARLES E. PETERSON PRIZE

A student competition of measured drawings, the Charles E. Peterson Prize is presented jointly by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the National Park Service, The Athenæum of Philadelphia and the American Institute of Architects.

The annual competition honors Charles E. Peterson (1906-2004), founder of the HABS program, and is intended to heighten awareness about historic buildings in the United States and to augment the HABS/HAER/HALS collection of measured drawings at the Library of Congress. It represents a long-standing and meaningful partnership for The Athenæum.

FIRST PLACE AWARD: \$10,000

JEFFERSON HELM HOUSE

Survey Number:	HABS IN-75
Location:	Rushville vicinity, Indiana
Program:	Ball State University, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
Instructor:	Jonathan Spodek, FAIA
Student Team: Savannah Barnhart, Amy Davis, Zoe Lawton, Dakshata Shahi, Laurel Tobin	

SECOND PLACE AWARD: \$5,000

TALIESIN WEST, GARDEN ROOM

Survey Number:	HABS AZ-218-G
Location:	Scottsdale, Arizona
Program:	University of Texas at San Antonio, School of Architecture
Instructor:	Sue Ann Pemberton, FAIA
Student Team: Samuel Alvarez, Tae Joo Jeon, Isaac Knott, Jazmyne Knox, Benjamin Lee, Doug Long, Arthur Longoria, Francisco Loreda, Mark Morin, Adam Perez, Erin Ramirez, Karina Rosales, Ashley Vasquez, Crystal Wright, Xu Zhao	

THIRD PLACE AWARD (TIE): \$3,000 EACH

CORAL GABLES CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Survey Number:	HABS FL-376
Location:	Coral Gables, Florida
Program:	University of Miami, School of Architecture
Instructor:	Ricardo Lopez
Student Team: Naser Alkandari, Mohammad Alramadan, Fahad Alzaid, Gray Burke, Sacha Braggs, Andrea Camere, Zachary Cronin, Alexis Ebue, Mariana Fleites, Gianell Gonzalez, Tais Hamilton, Dominic Lanctot, Quan Le, Grace Levey, Erika Orellana, Kayla Rembold, Peiyang Sang, Yara Quteineh, Kiera Tucker, April Vasquez, Leanne Vera	

THIRD PLACE AWARD (TIE): \$3,000 EACH

ST. JAMES PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Survey Number:	HABS SC-79
Location:	Goose Creek, South Carolina
Program:	Clemson University, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
Instructor:	Amalia Leifeste, AIA
Student Team: Megan Adornetto, Caroline Byrne, Deryn Candelaria, Lyrik Castro-Bailey, Chris Cone, Claire Cox, Rachel Fore, Sarah Gaston, Winter Hein, Jacob Hockenberry, Chloe Martin, Paige Regna, Gabriella Rowsam, Brianna Schmidt, Hannah St. Onge, Jack Sutton	

“I've always loved libraries and there's no library in Philadelphia as beautiful or as warm as The Athenæum. When I walk through the doors, I'm awed by its history and grateful for the community.”

Eric Kaplan, Member since 2022



CHARLES E. PETERSON FELLOWSHIP

The Fellowship was endowed by Athenæum Shareholder Charles E. Peterson, FAIA (1906-2004), his colleagues and his friends.

The largest named fund administered by The Athenæum, it supports research and publications in areas which reflect Mr. Peterson's life-long dedication to the study, recording and preservation of early American architecture and building technology (pre-1860). It also supports an internship program at The Athenæum that provides students with hands-on experience with historic building documents.

THE FELLOWS

Chris MacNeal, for his research on early 19th century log bank barns in Penns Valley, located in Centre County, Pennsylvania. His goal is to document vernacular barns, to share appreciation of these structures and build advocacy for their preservation. He will create a project-specific website, which will also establish links to the digital resources of organizations with related interests.

He will focus on connecting to four different online communities: local history groups, such as township and county historical societies and libraries; barn preservation foundations like the National Barn Alliance and Historic Barn and Farm Foundation of PA; historic preservation organizations, such as the PA State Historic Preservation Office; and architectural history organizations, which could include The Athenæum of Philadelphia.



READING ROOM

In FY2024, our circulating library's value continued to grow, as readers checked out 36% more items than in FY2023, or more than 17,000 physical and downloadable items. A total of 5,655 physical items and 11,553 digital items circulated among Athenæum members and partners. The number of items checked out to Athenæum members doubled this year from 5,373 in FY2023 to nearly 11,000 this past year.

AVID READERS

Our Reading Room remained busy this year as members enjoyed our renovated space with ample light, seating and connectivity. Writers, students, remote workers and serious readers found their third place on the second floor. Daily serious usage of the Reading Room averaged 9.83 users, while our librarians helped an average of 12 people per day at the circulation desk.

The library staff did more than help individuals find books. Jill, Lois and Brice assisted members and visitors with in-house use of a variety of materials including designed bindings, city directories, photographic negatives, rare books and items from the Rupp transportation collection.

Our partnerships with the University of Pennsylvania and the cloudLibrary consortium provided further opportunities for both our members and the patrons of other libraries to access more books. While our shareholders checked 544 items from the University of Pennsylvania's circulating collection, University of Pennsylvania patrons borrowed 966 items from The Athenæum. Similarly, Athenæum eBooks and downloadable audiobooks circulated 5,297 times among cloudLibrary consortium members this past year.

This past year, our staff added 1,028 newly cataloged books to our shelves and 291 downloadable titles to cloudLibrary. Did you know that The Athenæum has more than 50 named book funds? These funds, gifted by members over the years in honor or memory of loved ones, allowed us to purchase 878 titles for our collection in FY2024.



6,309

READING ROOM TOTAL
USAGE FOR THE YEAR

1,028

NEW BOOKS CATALOGUED
ON OUR SHELVES

291

NEW DOWNLOADABLE
CLOUDLIBRARY TITLES

21

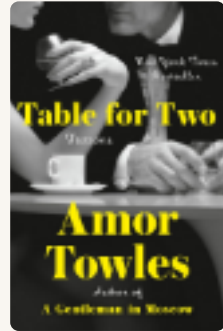
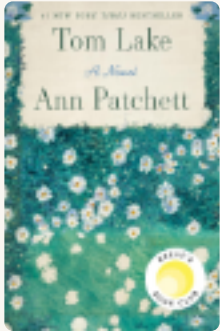
MAGAZINE TITLES IN THE
MEMBER'S LOUNGE

Note: The Athenæum Annals provides regular updates on the work being done in our archives and Reading Room. Found as a header link on our home page, The Annals is where our staff share new book releases and stories about interesting documents in our special collections.



MOST POPULAR PHYSICAL BOOKS

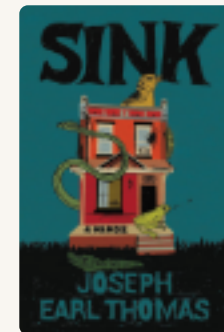
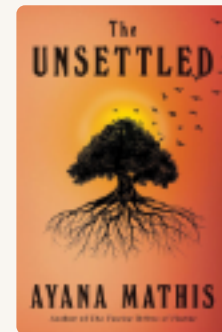
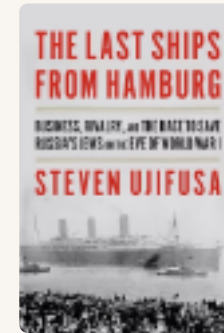
Our discerning readers gravitate toward literary and historical works that deepen their appreciation for the world around them. They read deeply and often. Besides the top books listed here, popular eBook and audiobook authors included Zadie Smith, Kai Bird, Abraham Verghese, Jhumpa Lahiri and Colson Whitehead. Also highly popular are the umbrellas and clear plastic totes from our Library of Things.



2023 LITERARY AWARD WINNERS

Established in 1950, The Athenæum Literary Award recognizes books of literary excellence by local authors and/or works that examine and reflect life in the greater Philadelphia area.

The award is given annually and includes a cash prize and an invitation to give a public lecture at The Athenæum that is supported by the Charles Wharton Stork endowment fund. The books under consideration must have been published during the calendar year. In FY2024, the Literary Awards Committee considered fifty books for the award. In February 2024, the committee announced their shortlist. Ultimately, the committee awarded the prize to David S. Barnes' Lazaretto for non-fiction and David Amadio's Rug Man for fiction. The awards were announced and given in person at the 2024 Annual Shareholders' Meeting in April. Both Barnes and Amadio will present their public lectures in the fall.



“The place buzzes with almost unbelievable vitality and range of pursuit. Literature, film, architecture, art, language, ideas all sewn in this particular place, rooted in history and, thrillingly, wide open to the future.”

Nathaniel Popkin, Member since 2015

ATHENÆUM'S COMMUNITY

Through our dynamic programs, valued partnerships and an engaged membership, The Athenæum continues to foster connections and learning within our community.

PROGRAMS

Besides offering more programs in 2023-2024, The Athenæum staff responded to a deepening desire among our members for opportunities to engage in learning while building relationships by increasing quality small group events. Approximately 4,800 people attended our programs in FY2024.

The 161 programs offered during the fiscal year included 25 lectures or book talks; 8 concerts and 2 monthly book clubs; a monthly knitting and conversation group, Member Mondays and First Fridays; 18 movie screenings & discussions and Le Cercle Francophone. We brought back the Socrates Cafe for philosophical discussions and started a Spanish conversation group and a Salon series.

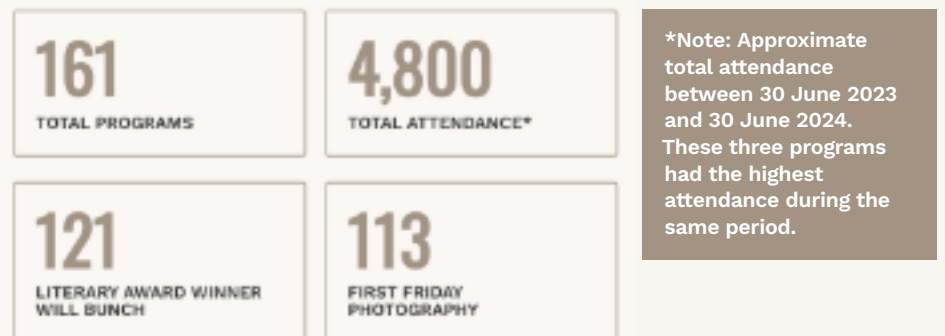
Popular classes included an Odyssey reading group, teen and adult writing courses with Cordelia Biddle, an introduction to comic books and graphic novels with Matt Madden and a Suburban Philadelphia architectural history course taught by Kevin Block and Greg Prichard.

We restarted The Roger W. Moss Symposium series, created in 2005 in honor of The Athenæum's long-time Executive Director Roger Moss and on hiatus since the pandemic. According to the symposia endowment, the focus is on the history of art, architecture, design and cultural history with related exhibitions. In Fall 2023, The Athenæum hosted a sold out symposium, "Documentation by Design: A Celebration of the Historic American Buildings Survey 90th Anniversary and the Charles E. Peterson Prize 40th Anniversary," with complementary exhibitions highlighting both the HABS Survey and the Charles E. Peterson Prize.



Among our most popular programs by attendance were the Classical Guitar Soiree featuring classical guitarist John Marcel Williams and violinist Maya Anjali the screening of Peter Bogdanovich's unreleased *Squirrels to Nuts* a talk by Athenæum Literary Award Winner Will Bunch and the launch of Pemi Aguda's novel *Ghostroots*.

Guests flocked to The Athenæum for the exhibition openings of Elayne Bryn's show, *Orbis: The Natural World*, an exhibition of Boston artist Peter Tatum's work and the exhibition opening for *Constructing Knowledge: 300 Years of The Carpenters' Company of the City and County of Philadelphia*. March's First Friday, *A Visual History of Photography in Philadelphia*, featuring items from The Athenæum's 19th century photographic collection and curated by our intern MeiXing Hunt-Babcock, proved very popular as well.



PARTNERS

The Athenæum strengthens our community and Philadelphia through strategic partnerships with other cultural organizations. This past fiscal year’s programming represented collaborations with more than 15 other organizations.

In 2023-2024, The Athenæum collaborated on speaker series events with (re)FOCUS 2024, the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, Professional Italians of Philadelphia, Society Hill Civic Association and the African American Children’s Book Project. The Library of Congress, the national park service and the American Institute of Architects partnered with us for our fall 2023 Roger W. Moss Symposium.

We celebrated 5 years of quality music with Allegro Music Consultants and Opera Philadelphia, our third annual Sunday in the Square concert with Independence National Park and our first full season with the Philadelphia Classical Guitar Society.

In April, we joined the Global Philadelphia Association in celebrating the International Day of Monuments and Sites, while in May, we opened an exhibition with the Carpenters’ Company exploring 300 years of that august institution. Through the Spring, we planned with Historic District Philadelphia Partners for the first annual July 3rd Red, White & Blue To-Do. During the year, our Young Friends participated in events jointly hosted by The Athenæum and the Bok Building and Fleisher Art Memorial.

As members of the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries, Historic District Philadelphia, and the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, we champion the value of special collections libraries for our region. We support our local architectural and preservation communities by offering our space for programs and events with the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects among other organizations.

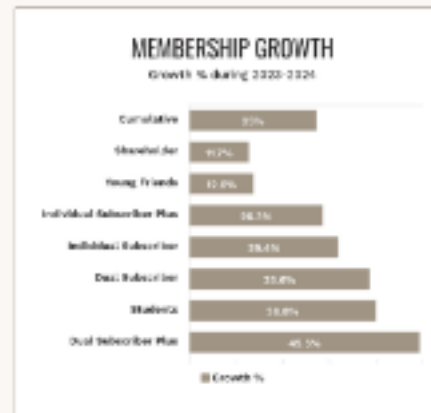
The Athenæum library services continue to partner with [cloudLibrary](#) and [Penn Libraries](#).

MEMBERSHIP

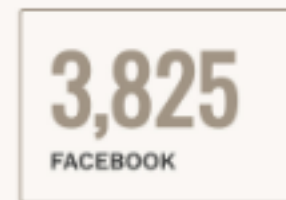
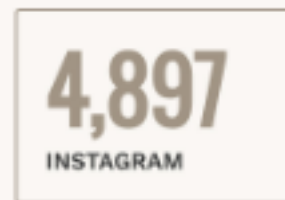
The Athenæum’s membership has been on an upward trajectory since 2019, after years of slow decline. Cumulatively, membership grew by 25% in FY2024, reaching nearly 2000 members.

The membership categories with the biggest increases were those that we created in response to demand back in 2021: Students and the two Dual Subscriber options. As we develop our services and heighten awareness of our beautiful, inspiring space, more young adults and households with more than one adult are interested in joining our community.

Members and the public love all that The Athenæum has to offer. During the 2023-2024 season, approximately 13,298 people visited The Athenæum to attend events, view exhibits, use our Regional Digital Imaging Center (RDIC), undertake research, check out books, enjoy the Member Lounge or use our Reading Room. That averages 1,160 unique visits per month.



SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS



ATHENÆUM'S LEGACY

The Board of Directors and staff of The Athenæum of Philadelphia are grateful to the many individuals, businesses and foundations whose generosity supports our operations, programs and National Historic Landmark library.

This list reflects cumulative pledges and gifts above membership dues to the annual fund, special sponsorships and the 21st Century Athenæum Campaign received between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024. Every effort has been made to produce an accurate and complete list of contributors. If an error or omission has been made, please call the development team at: 215-925-2688.



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The 1814 Society represents those who support The Athenæum of Philadelphia with gifts of \$1,000 or more each year.

\$5,000-\$25,000+

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KEY: *DECEASED **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

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\$500-\$999

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“The Athenæum weaves together many threads: an unparalleled architectural history collection, an inspiring space for focused work and programs that have drawn me and my family in evenings and Saturdays. My only regret is not joining sooner!”

Justin Spivey, Member since 2023

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THE BUILDING

In 2022, The Athenæum celebrated the 175th anniversary of our building. Because we were closed for renovations during part of that year, we continued the celebration into 2023. Designed by architect John Notman (1810-1865) and opened in 1847, 219 South 6th Street is a National Historic Landmark recognized as the seminal American structure in the Italianate Revival Style and one of the first Philadelphia buildings built of brownstone.

In June 2023, we were awarded the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia's Grand Jury Award for our \$1.6M restoration of our exterior led by Kreilick Conservation LLC. In October 2023, Preservation PA honored The Athenæum of Philadelphia and Kreilick Conservation LLC were honored by Preservation Philadelphia with a Leadership Award for Stewardship for exceptional stewardship efforts by an individual group on behalf of a significant historic resource at its 2023 Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Awards in Harrisburg. Eleven members joined Executive Director Beth Hessel, Building Supervisor Christina Doe and Board Director Scott Donahue at the awards ceremony.

Besides ongoing upkeep of our building, in the past year, Christina Doe and the Building Committee have:

- Worked closely with the developers of the Dilworth House project next door to minimize adverse impacts on our property
- Replaced the backflow preventer device in our basement to meet new requirements of the Philadelphia's Water Department
- Installed a sump pump to protect the collections in the vault in case of water flooding
- Replaced several pieces of our surveillance system to comply with federal guidelines and improve security
- Begun plans for a new emergency generator
- Begun emergency response and disaster planning after working with the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) on a risk assessment report

KEY: *DECEASED **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

FINANCIALS 2023-2024

The Athenæum of Philadelphia again maintained a balanced budget in fiscal year 2024. The generous support of members and friends, as well as our growing membership rolls, strong program audience and local and state grants supported general operating costs not covered by the endowment. As a result, The Athenæum was able to strengthen programming, address building maintenance needs and add two much needed full-time staff positions near the end of the fiscal year. Our library experienced a strong year with below budget total expenses of \$1,541,612 and total revenues of \$1,799,972 exceeding expectations.

“The Athenæum is many things. It’s a source of knowledge and discovery, especially about Philadelphia’s built environment but about many other areas of interest as well. It’s a place to meet and get to know interesting people. And its building is unusually beautiful and important, which I find thrilling and inspiring.”

Paul Steinke, Member since 2003



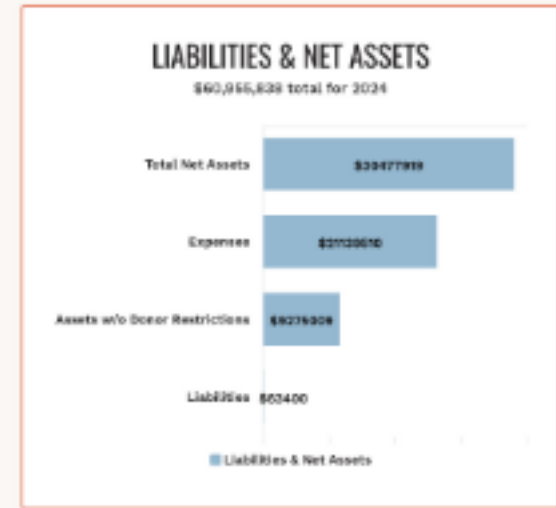
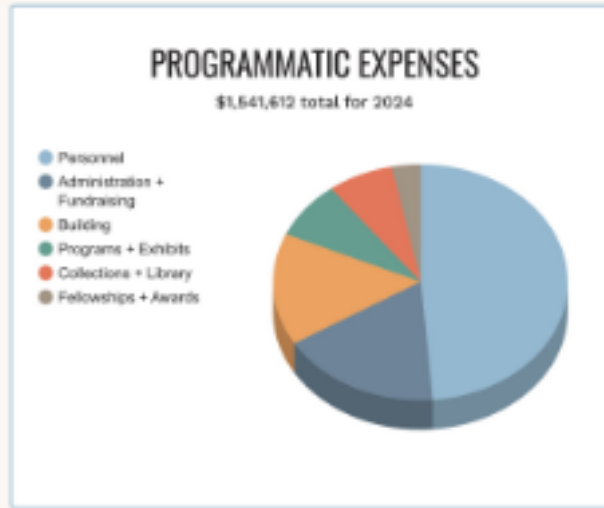
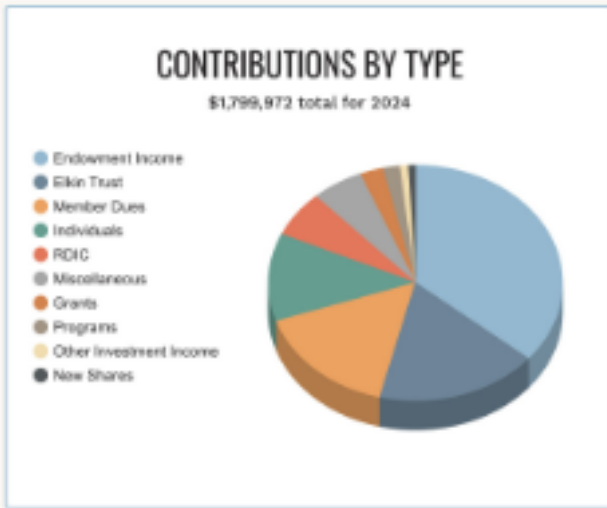
FINANCIAL POSITION

The Athenæum Board and staff practice conservative annual budget planning. While taking current and projected economic trends into account, we also align our annual budgeting process with strategic goals and priorities in order to maximize the impact of our resources.

In FY2024, higher expenditures resulted from the increased use of our building and our services that outpaced funds development. The financials reflect the need for more staffing for library, archives and programming support; on-going building maintenance; and higher accounting costs due to the switch to a new provider in FY2023. Personnel remain the biggest budget item. Our professional staff enable access to our building, collections, books and programs. Through collections care and member and guest support, they foster our unique learning community. Maintaining competitive salaries and benefits is a key to retaining excellent staff.

New memberships exceeded expectations, with an average of one new member per day. Annual Fund contributions were lower than expected early in the year. As a result, the staff reigned in expenditures most of FY2024. The success of the Spring Appeal, combined with lowered expenses, allowed The Athenæum to finish the year with a slight surplus. The surplus allowed us to hire two sorely needed, new full-time positions: a Director of Programs and Engagement and an Associate Archivist Librarian. In light of end of year financial projections, the Board also decided not to draw any unneeded portion of the annual allotted unrestricted endowment draw.

The Athenæum also received support in the form of grants from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission and the Philadelphia Cultural Fund. A growing number of Athenæum members are supporting the Athenæum through gifts made from their private family foundations.



ENDOWMENTS

The Athenæum of Philadelphia’s endowment enables our library to carry out our 210-year old mission to provide access to knowledge and community through collections, preservation, research and programs in our National Historic Landmark home.

Philadelphia merchant John Livezey (1798-1878) left The Athenæum a \$10,000 bequest that became our earliest endowed book fund. Since then, our endowment has grown to 96 endowed funds totalling \$17,848,845 at the close of FY2024. The majority of these funds are either donor or board restricted funds for specific purposes: book purchases, collections care, lecture funds or symposia. The Charles Peterson Fellowship and Prize funds support research work undertaken by students and researchers outside The Athenæum.

For more than a century, The Athenæum has also benefited as one of five beneficiaries of the Lewis Elkin Trust. The annual income from this trust accounted for 17% of our income this past year. As the 5% budgeted draw from The Athenæum’s endowment this past year represented 36% of our total income, total endowment funding supported just over half of our expenses in FY2024.

The Athenæum Investment Committee works closely with PNC to oversee prudent investment of our endowments. Our investments recorded unrealized gains of \$2,368,534 as of June 30, 2024.



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