

The **ABAA** NEWSLETTER



VOLUME EIGHT, NUMBER 1 ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

WINTER, 1996

Fun in the Sun: The LA ILAB Congress

by Tracy E. Smith

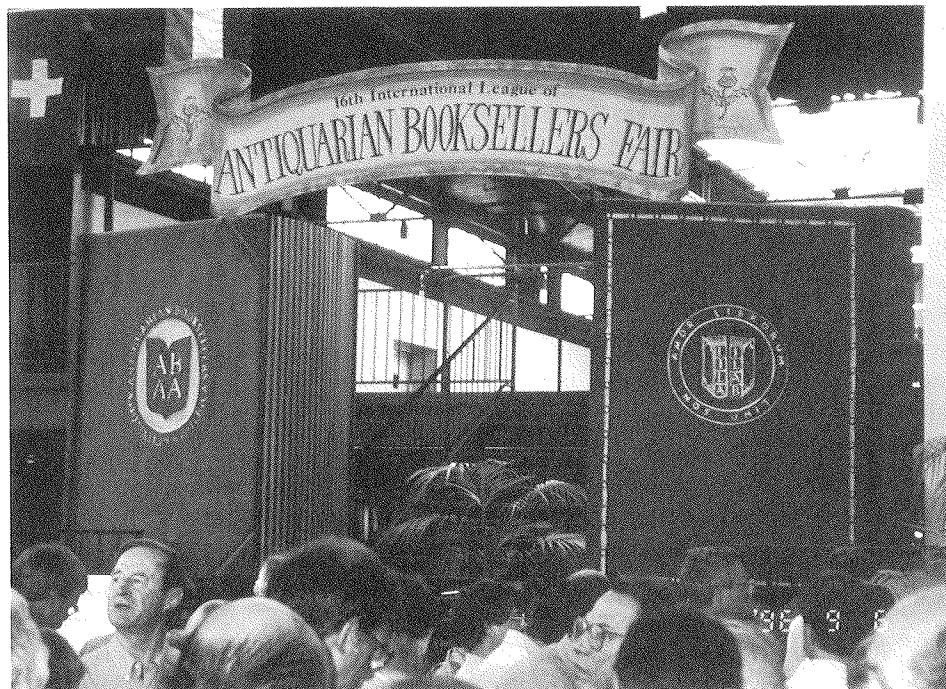
By most all accounts, the 33rd ILAB Congress held in Santa Monica from August 29 through September 4 was a resounding success. While offering everything that participants have come to expect—visits to cultural institutions, entertainment, and social gatherings—the 33rd Congress offered some innovations as well. Like typical Congress events, these new twists worked to further the goals of the ILAB: promoting friendship and understanding among culturally diverse booksellers, and creating an international marketplace for antiquarian books.

This particular Congress agenda included plenty of unscheduled free time—and unlimited sunshine—that proved wholly appropriate for its southern California setting. Participants were able to combine business with pleasure in virtually endless permutations that took advantage of the area's numerous book stores, a local book fair within walking distance of the Congress hotel, beach activities including biking and rollerblading, carnival attractions at the Santa Monica Pier, and the numerous amenities and spectacular ocean views at the Santa Monica Beach Hotel.

Among the scheduled activities of the 33rd ILAB Congress was a day-long symposium—the first-ever for such a gathering—examining issues of importance to booksellers on many fronts

Many participants have since expressed a desire to see similar forums on the agendas of future Congresses.

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The exhibit hall entrance at the ILAB Book Fair in San Francisco, September 6-8, 1996.

New Beginnings: How and Why I Became an Antiquarian Bookseller

by Fred Schreiber

Like many of my antiquarian colleagues, I began my life with books as a collector. Ever since I can remember, I have collected something—beginning with stamps and comic books. I never cease to be amused (and slightly exasperated) by the absurdity of the frequently heard claim of some non-collectors: "If I could afford it, I would also be a collector"—and this usually from people who clearly have more money than I. True, you *do* need money (and plenty of it) if your tastes run to Caxtons or Rembrandts; however, as members of the ABAA and their clients are only too well aware, the passion for collecting is not one you must be able to *afford* to satisfy, so much as one you *must* satisfy, whatever your financial status.

Erasmus expressed it best when he said: "When I get a little money, I buy books, and if any is left, I buy food and clothes."

In fact, natural born collectors do not need money at all to satisfy their passion. I recall that in my early teens I spent several months mentally "collecting" the titles of all the movies I had ever seen, entering them in a notebook as they returned to my memory. (In a similar vein is the odd British pastime of "trainspotting," introduced to the American public by a current motion picture. This consists in sitting by the tracks to record the numbers of passing trains, with the objective of completing such sets of numbers.)

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Letters to the Editor

*From: Paul Collinge
Charlottesville, VA*

It is disturbing and embarrassing to read the many letters in which our members insult each other rather than simply argue their points. This is especially true because most of the issues are so minor. What must outside readers think? Who would join such an organization? who would regard its members as professional?

*From: Priscilla Juvelis
Cambridge, MA*

I recently received a number of downloaded e-mail messages between ABAA members from a member who knows I'm not on the Net. He sent the correspondence to me with a note saying how distressing he found the tone in the exchanges. After reading the correspondence, I couldn't help but agree. These were not civil exchanges. [See editor's "Commentary," p.3.]

I can't help but think that the argument concerning "old" versus "modern" is very peculiar. I don't see anything of this sort happening in the art world where the Art Dealers Association of America, who sponsor The Art Show (probably the most prestigious art fair held in this country) shows Andy Warhol, Diebenkorn, Barbara Kruger, et al. right next to Watteau, Rubens, Copley, Homer, et al. I can't imagine a great master dealer like Wildenstein & Co. or Agnew criticizing a contemporary art dealer like, say, Mary Boone or Paula Cooper for selling Jeff Koons or Warhol. In fact, Wildenstein recently merged with Pace, who handle contemporary art exclusively.

Most of us did not inherit our inventory; we select it ourselves (for various reasons), but it is always a very personal selection. So, when one dealer criticizes another dealer's stock, it does appear to be a very personal criticism. To say that dealing in contemporary authors isn't rare book-dealing (I like the art world time distinction: modern meaning post-W.W.I and contemporary meaning within the past twenty years) is like criticizing an art dealer for selling Warhol's Campbell Soup can. Or, to criticize a dealer for stocking 17th and 18th century books is like criticizing a dealer for selling 17th

century Flemish religious paintings. Neither may suit your personal taste, but that doesn't mean they don't have relevance.

*From: F. J. Manasek
Norwich, VT*

The ABAA *Newsletter* is a splendid medium for discussing policy since it is available to all members. I had hoped to get a substantive discussion going over the ABAA plan to subsidize a small number of dealers at the New York Fair, but for some reason my letter in the Spring issue flopped.

Neither [Bennett] Gilbert's nor [Erik] Heldfond's response seems to be related to the substance of my original letter...

I ask that fair-minded individuals reread my original letter. The substance of that letter stands unanswered and undiscussed. Different businesses have different needs; not all venues serve equally all business needs. There is a place for large fairs; there is a place for small ones. Some venues cost more than others.

ABAA policies that affect us all and consume our money are legitimate topics of discussion. There are (probably) substantive points on both sides of the argument. I hope that rereading my original letter will clarify my points and I welcome discussion of my actual positions. Likewise, I hope that both Gilbert and Heldfond will correct me if I were ever to attribute to them sentiments which they never expressed.

*From: Thomas Suarez
Hawthorne, NY*

I was happy to see Bennett Gilbert's letter responding to my letter about the ABAA's involvement with the Internet; the *Newsletter* is a good forum for such debate. I certainly may be all wrong about the Net, though it will never be the method I choose for my own business unless the world forces me onto it. However, I would like to take issue just with the comment that I seem "to miss the difference between a discussion and a vote." Please be assured that the difference has not been lost on me. The whole point is that the Net was used as the *only* medium for discussing (and in effect for formulat-

ing) ideas regarding segregation at fairs by specialty. Indeed, those of us not "connected" doubtfully even knew that such a question was being considered. In my views such a situation far transcends mere "discussion," even if not a vote in the formal sense.

Both Bennett and Erik Heldfond seemed to take great offense at Frank Manasek's letter, so much so that I went back to the previous issue of the *Newsletter* to re-read Frank's letter. I feel that much of the disagreement here might just be just poor communication, for I couldn't figure out what in Frank's letter could possibly have been interpreted in the ways it was. Somehow I think Frank said something in the letter which "pushed a button" for some people. I think Frank was misquoted by both Bennett and Erik.

Finally, I would like to mention that I (contrary to assumptions) am in fact "connected." E-mail is indeed a wonderful medium in its place. But that is irrelevant. The issue, rather, is whether ABAA discourse should be commandeered by those of us who have access to it.

*From: Steven Bernard
Darnestown, MD*

Your latest response in the Summer 1996 ABAA *Newsletter* to my second letter regarding the perversion of the lottery system for ABAA book fair booths distorts and obfuscates my objections to setting aside "premium" booths. You state: "It [ABAA] sanctions a lottery system which provides for random selections on an equal chance basis within pre-determined price categories. It has always been this way, for full booths and half-booths have always been priced differently, and applied for and allocated separately."

You know very well that I am not talking about the price difference between half-booths and full booths. What is at issue is the pricing and setting aside of "premium" booths based on *location*. One need look no further than this fall's ABAA Boston Book Fair to see how the sponsoring chapter set aside all the better booth locations and designated them "premium." For an extra fee, exhibitors can enter a separate lottery for these well-located booths which means that every-

one else competes separately for the remaining, less desirably located booths. That is a two-tier lottery system based on preferential location not booth size, so please spare me the “it has always been this way” platitude.

The fact of the matter is that the basic idea of an equal chance lottery system is being circumvented in the interest of a select few. Your attempt to put another spin on it does not alter the truth. Defend if you wish the status quo, but do not pretend it is something it is not.

Priscilla Juvelis responds:

I was Chair of the National Book Fair Committee when the Board voted in 1992 to allow each chapter to price booths differently. The recommendation was put to the Board by a unanimous vote of the Book Fair Committee. It has always been the policy of the Book Fair Committee and the Board—within broad guidelines—to leave the running of the fairs to the local chapters. In this case, chapters are free to price booths differently or not. In New England, we have priced booths differently to ensure the lowest possible booth fee at one end at least. Those who pay the premium for the corner booth in the first aisle are, in fact, subsidizing the booth rates for those booths in side aisles. If all booth rates in Boston were the same, they would be much higher than the lowest rate. The Boston Book Fair Committee wants to keep the fair open to as many exhibitors as possible, and we felt this was the best way to do it.

*From: Anthony Rota
London, UK*

Congratulations on another enormously readable issue of the ABAA *Newsletter*. I enjoyed the article about the origins of book fairs, but disagree with Nicolas Barker’s view that Peter Murray Hill staged the first of modern times. What Peter and the rest of his ABA committee did was to stage the first ABA-sponsored fair of modern times—something rather different! In the previous year, 1957, a group of independent booksellers led by Normal Colbeck held a fair at Sotheby’s (see the article which I contributed to No. 47 New Series of the *Grolier Club Gazetteer*, page 50). I earlier made the same point in my Malkin Lecture at Rare Book School. ■

Commentary...

by Rob Rulon-Miller

In September, while hurricanes churned in the Caribbean and forest fires raged in the West, all hell broke loose on the ABAA list-server. This electric, electronic debate, insipid and trivial as it may now seem, was straightforward enough at the outset: are “modern” first editions worthy of sharing the spotlight with “antiquarian” books; and, are the dealers in modern firsts promoting their inventories in ways that would seem sensationalized when compared with the promotional tactics of antiquarians?

It was an extraordinary correspondence, and amusing—if not a little disheartening—to see how many of the membership enjoined the battle, first labeling it a stupid waste of time, then proceeding to dive headlong into the cesspool of vituperation. Attacks came from all sides, insults were exchanged with inexplicable pugnacity, and the unlikeliest of members emerged as peacemakers. Some of us, shocked by the shoot-out, ducked for cover in fear for our lives. Many members I have spoken to in the aftermath were downright dismayed.

I do not applaud the interchange any more than I condemn it. In the best of lights I see it as having a cathartic effect on certain segments of the membership. At its dimmest, people were hurt. Time has distanced us, and all, I think, have moved on. But as *Newsletter* editor, I wondered about this correspondence and what, if anything, it meant to the Association.

I do not blame or hold accountable the booksellers involved. We’re a most eccentric group composed largely of free-wheeling entrepreneurs who by the nature of our business and the product we sell are encouraged—indeed are obliged—to go public with both our books and our personalities. What I do blame, and hold accountable, is the medium itself, and how we used it. Sadly, the Internet was the message, and the texts of the letters are now but a pale and embarrassing memory. Tom Suarez was right when he warned us in the *Newsletter* (VII, 3) that “technology is a wonderful virtue of our times, provided it serves us, rather than vice-versa.” In this instance, I thought, we served the technology—served it a hanging curve—and it did not serve us well in return.

Wherein, I thought, lies the virtue of a personal letter that can be at once read—even responded to—by everyone else before its intended recipient? Where are the foundations of a text that exists, in its very essence, at a microscopic level, a communication that can be blasted off the screen and virtually out of existence with the click of a mouse? Of what fabric is this wild, wild west called cyberspace where six-shooter keyboards blaze and no one is held accountable? Is the Internet the last stop on the road to epistolary tyranny? Quick! Get up the posse!

Would that this correspondence had taken place in the *Newsletter*! Cooler heads might have prevailed if we had had time to see our words in print, and give scrutiny to the underpinnings of the debate. Hard copy does things to a text that e-mail can not. It gives it a permanence, a home. There is even something that seems more—dare I say it?—truthful, about words in print. The shoot ‘em up attitude with which we both transmit and delete in cyberspace makes it at once an ephemeral medium—a spurious imprimatur without the guts of ink and paper. How much more careful the editing of these invectives might have been, how much more thought-provoking might have been the polemic if the argument itself were played out in the pages of the *Newsletter*. The immediacy of the electronic medium does not allow for heads to cool; rather, it encourages instant retaliation and instant deletion. Bang! Bang! You’re dead. Could this correspondence have taken place in these pages, in a series of letters to the editor, for example? Almost certainly not. The participants would have seen the folly three letters into it.

For all the merits of the Internet, hard copy remains paramount. There is a sensibility to it that sways and conveys in a way cyberspace can not. That the players argued the debate in public for all ABAA members to watch made it seem more showmanship than substance—players on a virtual stage acting out not a morality play, but rather a farce for all of us on-line to witness.

ABAA Planning Committee Meets

by Priscilla Juvelis

In August, members of the ABAA Planning Committee gathered for their annual meeting at the home of Bob and Millie Fleck, New Castle, DE. In attendance were Natalie Bauman, Tom Boss, Tom Congalton, Robert Fleck, Donald Heald, Mark Hime, Priscilla Juvelis, Jordan Luttrell, Robert Rulon-Miller, and Allan Stypeck.

The Committee met to discuss proposals for long range projects. Faced with limited finances and many worthy ideas, the discussion was lively on matters concerning the ABAA-booknet website, public relations and education, publications, office organization, and book fairs. A number of proposals passing the Committee's muster were presented to the Board of Governors at its meeting in San Francisco in September. Still others will be presented to the Board at its meeting in Boston in November.

ABAA-booknet website

Michael Dawson and ABAA Internet consultant Mike Harris confirmed that ever-increasing numbers of ABAA members are going on-line. By the end of 1996, they expect that close to half of the membership will be using the Internet. In addition, the number of daily visitors to the ABAA-booknet website continues to grow at a dramatic rate. On a less optimistic note, it appears that the anticipated profit from ABAA participation in developing ILAB sites will not be forthcoming. Many ILAB national organizations, such as ABA and SLAM, are choosing to use website resources in their home nations. The ABAA-booknet web site, however, continues to include links to all on-line ILAB members, regardless of their web affiliation.

Planning Committee members discussed the ABAA-booknet site's present lack of capabilities to search for dealers, specialties, and inventories across country borders. In addition committee members expressed concern regarding the sophistication of the search mechanisms now in place which target titles, authors, and subjects of works listed on the site. Finally, the Committee observed that links to non-ILAB book sites do not clearly

state that users are entering areas no longer protected by the Guidelines and Rules of the ILAB. Dawson and Harris will present the Committee's concerns to the Board of Governors' meeting in Boston, asking that future development of the website remedy these matters.

Public relations

The Planning Committee considered a proposal from the Education and Public Relations Committee to add a part-time PR person to the ABAA staff. After meeting with Esther Fan, the Education Committee candidate for the position, the Planning Committee voted in favor of her employment with ABAA. It was decided that office expenses, including a separate phone line with answering machine, as well as a salary, should be included in the proposal. The Board of Governors voted to accept the Committee's proposal at its meeting in San Francisco. (See story on page 5).

The Committee also discussed continuing financial support for *Book Guys*, the national weekly radio show hosted by Allan Stypeck and Mike Cuthbert. The ABAA had been underwriting *Book Guys* for six months. The Planning Committee voted to ask the Board for funding for an additional six months. At its meeting in San Francisco, the Board of Governors voted to fund the show for an additional two months, and to reconsider the matter at the Boston meeting in November.

Publications

Priscilla Juvelis reported that the 1996 *Membership Directory* exceeded budgeted costs due to the increased size of the publication. For the first time, this year's *Directory* included e-mail addresses and web site locations of member dealers, requiring that it be perfect bound rather than saddle stitched. In response, the Planning Committee advised the Publications Committee to solicit three competing bids for the printing of the 1997 *Directory*. The Committee also discussed the timing of the publication of the *Directory*, noting that if it were produced every 18 months or every other year in-

stead of annually, substantial savings could be incurred. Board members voted to fund the additional expenses for the 1996 *Directory* at their meeting in San Francisco.

Rob Rulon-Miller reported that the *Newsletter* now has 343 paid subscribers, and is on budget for this year. He also reported that he still has difficulties getting articles for the *Newsletter*, but that this situation may improve soon. Rob has agreed to produce a newsletter for the ILAB, and articles from that journal may be used in the ABAA *Newsletter*.

The future of the ABAA *Newsletter* is secure for at least two more years, as Rob has agreed to serve as Editor for that period. However, should he decide that he is unable to continue in the position, the ABAA will look for another volunteer, or will have to consider hiring someone from outside the organization.

Office organization

The Committee observed that, with the hiring of a part-time Public Relations coordinator, the ABAA would have four employees: one full-time Executive Director (Liane Wood-Thomas), a part-time office assistant (Laura Perez), a part-time *Newsletter* Associate Editor (Tracy E. Smith), and the PR person (Esther Fan). So that it might better consider the best uses of ABAA talents, the Committee requested the House Committee to obtain job descriptions for the paid ABAA positions.

Book fairs

Mark Hime suggested that the Planning Committee explore the possibility of a yearly *national* book fair, perhaps planned by the Board, or the National Book Fair Committee, or a newly appointed *roving* book fair committee. Hime's idea centers around bringing ABAA fairs to cities that have not had them in the past, and that do not have local members who could volunteer to organize them. It might also be possible to stage this new fair in cities currently associated with ABAA fairs, but at a time other than that of the regularly scheduled event.

From the President's Desk

by Bob Fleck

The ILAB Congress and Book Fair are over! Do you note a collective sigh of relief from many ABAA volunteers? Thank you one and all for your efforts to make the Congress and Fair such a success. As many of the events are covered elsewhere in this *Newsletter*, I will just concentrate on those that made personal impressions on me.

Before the Congress opened, the ILAB Committee and the Presidents of the different countries had meetings. Coupled with two lunches and a dinner held for both groups and hosted by the ABAA, we had an intense two days of interaction. I came away amazed at how many common problems we all had even though we came from all parts of the world. The question of free trade across country borders has become an important issue for many European countries and though the U.S. hasn't been affected yet, we must be sure to support our fellow ILAB members in their fight against government control of the flow of antiquarian books. I was also very pleased to see the ILAB Committee appoint Georg Schreyer, a member of the Committee, the consultant for Internet problems. He has already sent a letter to all Presidents pointing out some of the very serious problems that we all face if we don't act collectively to become a force in this electronic world.

I also learned of the Australians' all day conference held for booksellers in their organization. The printed summary of the conference was just sent to me. I have asked Ted Ripley-Duggan, head of our Education Committee, if such a conference is feasible for the ABAA. Jean-Etienne Huret, President of SLAM told me of his country's experiment at renting a stand at three major antique shows this year in which members may rent space at the stand for books and catalogues. They are trying to find new markets for antiquarian books. Can we apply this concept in the United States.?



AT THE CONGRESS: ABAA President Bob Fleck with Takehiko Sakai, President of the Japanese association (ABAJ), and Michiko Sakai.

The educational program at the Congress (chaired by Bennett Gilbert and Gordon Hollis) was an outstanding success and is sure to lead to educational programs at future Congresses. I especially enjoyed the free play of our discussion group in which Jackie Dooley, librarian, told her audience of booksellers how improvements had to be made in the way we sell books to libraries. The word "Internet" came up very frequently. We absolutely need a small conference between ABAA members and the librarian world.

To prove that there is life beyond the ILAB Congress, a number of other issues are being explored at present. Esther Fan has been hired under the auspices of the Planning Committee (Priscilla Juvelis) and with the blessing of the Education-PR Committee (Ted Ripley-Duggan) as a part time consultant to do PR work for the ABAA. We will hear much more about this shortly. Linda and Harvey Tucker (Black Sun Books) have volunteered to co-ordinate a better look into our book insurance needs. Allan Stypeck has volunteered to gather information on how the ABAA could become a book appraisal arm of one of the various appraisal organizations that already exist. And lastly Don Heald will be unveiling our new computer accounting program at the Boston ABAA Board meeting along with his work on our budget for 1997. ■

Publicity Coordinator Position Created

by Esther C. Fan

Acknowledging the need to coordinate publicity efforts across chapters and to promote greater visibility for the ABAA, the Education and Planning Committees have chosen me to work on a part-time basis. I have been handling publicity and marketing for Oak Knoll Books for almost three years and will use many of the skills I have learned here to work on getting the ABAA more recognition among the public.

I will begin by contacting PR persons of various chapters, by keeping track of effective PR strategies and efforts, and by building up a database of media contacts and members active in educating the public about rare books. I will also prepare press releases publicizing ABAA activities.

I look forward to seeing what better publicity coordination can do for the ABAA. I will be available during specific office hours at: phone: 302-326-1976; fax: 302-328-7274; e-mail: Esther.Fan@oakknoll.com. I will have an answering machine available to take all of your calls.

I will be sending a letter to each ABAA member with details about when you can get in touch with me, and with questions about your educational activities as booksellers. I invite those of you active in educating the public about the world of antiquarian books to share your ideas and experiences with me, so that everyone in the ABAA can learn and benefit from them as well. ■

An Open Letter from the ILAB President

It is with great pleasure that I send you this letter, written in the name of the new ILAB Committee, elected during the recent congress held in Los Angeles. This congress, so well organized by our friends the ABAA, gave us once again the opportunity to renew friendships in the most agreeable of settings.

Following the General Assembly in Los Angeles, the new Committee held two meetings; one to assign jobs to each member of the Committee, the other to discuss a new edition of the League's directory.

Walter Aliche, Vice President, will assist Georg Schreyer in producing the new *Directory*. We feel that the Index of Specialties should be re-introduced, albeit in a simplified form. Each firm would be able to choose three specialties (from an established list) with the possibility of adding three or four more precise descriptions which would not appear in the index. Mr. Aliche will also be working on a new edition of our *Rules: Code of Usages and Customs*.

Poul-Jan Poulsen has agreed to continue in the post of Treasurer—a difficult job, but one that he has carried out in an exemplary manner.

Rob Rulon-Miller, General Secretary, is also Editor of the *ILAB Newsletter*. It is

therefore to him that you should send, the moment it is available, all information concerning the book fairs that you organize under our aegis, new committee members as they are elected, new addresses, and any other information that you judge to be of interest to our profession (bibliographies, exhibitions, articles, etc.).

We plan to publish twice yearly, in January and June, in order that information does not appear too dated. The detailed minutes of Committee meetings will henceforth be abbreviated, in order to reduce production costs and also to be able to lay more emphasis on information of a more practical nature. National presidents will, of course, always be able to obtain copies of the complete minutes of these meetings on application to our secretary. Mr. Rulon-Miller will also produce a small leaflet explaining the workings of the League that will be useful for distribution at our fairs and other occasions.

Georg Schreyer, Committee-member, will be responsible for the *Directory* and the Internet. The Committee will next meet in Paris on 3rd February 1997, at which time we expect to be able to make some decisions concerning the form of the directory. We hope to make this a rather "special edition" in order to commemo-

rate the fiftieth anniversary of the League. We will inform you as soon as possible. As for the question of the internet (which we are following very closely), we will do everything to make sure that all various servers being used will be federated by the League.

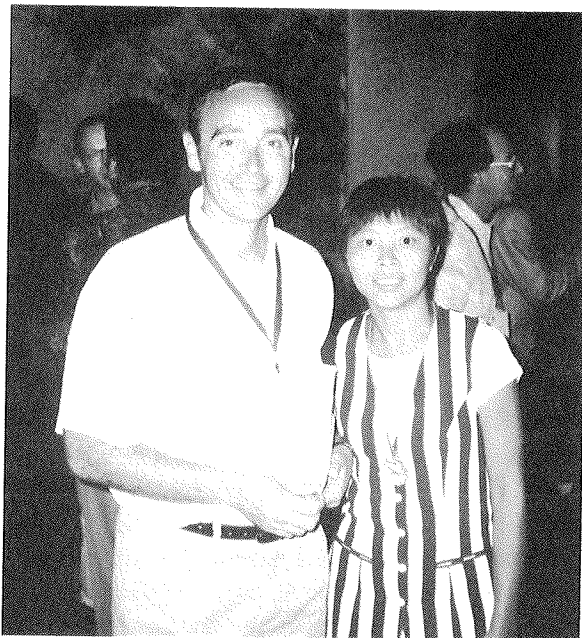
Kay Craddock, Keith Fletcher, and Claude Van Loock, Committee-members, will give help where needed in these various jobs. Mr. Fletcher, who has agreed to help me with the day-to-day translation of French into English, is also studying the possibility of providing an International register of missing Books on the Internet.

Do not forget that the last date for submitting entries for our 12th Bibliographical Prize is the end of this year. The secretary of this quadrennial prize is still Konrad Meuschel (Hauptstrasse 19 A, D-53604 Bad Honnef, Germany).

Please do not hesitate to write, either to me, or to any of the Committee members according to their spheres of responsibility. We are already a solid team, anxious to be of use, open to all your ideas and suggestions.

Avec mes sentiments très confraternels, au nom de tout le Comité.

Alain NICOLAS, *President*



ILAB President Alain Nicolas (France) and Sophie Nicolas.



ILAB Treasurer Poul-Jan Poulsen (Denmark), General Secretary Rob Rulon-Miller (USA), and ILAB Committee Members Kay Craddock (Australia) and Keith Fletcher (seated; United Kingdom).

The R-Word and Other Ramblings on Cats.

by Rob Rulon-Miller

Today I received twelve—count ‘em, twelve—catalogues in the mail. On average, I receive four or five a day, perhaps a few more than most. I have subscriptions to eight auction catalogues, and because I am a member of the Manuscript Society, I receive plenty of catalogues from autograph dealers as well. Occasionally I receive a numismatist’s or philatelist’s or an antique dealer’s catalogue, too. There is no want for the reading of catalogues here, and I assume it’s the same with most of our membership.

As much of my business is generated from the catalogues I publish, I take a particular interest in the catalogues of others. I try to read as many as I can, not just to look for books to buy, but to see how other booksellers are cataloguing their books. I am interested in how their descriptions look on the printed page. I am interested in margins, type styles and size, and overall readability. I am interested in the sequence of information offered, where the price is located, and how citations for reference books are handled. Does the bookseller, for example, put titles of books all in caps, as Bill Reese and Mike Ginsberg do; or in bold, as Maggs and Ravenstree do; or in italics, as Jonathan Hill and I do? Are authors’ names printed all in caps or are they bolded, or both? How much abbreviation is used? Each of us has our own particular style. No doubt each of us receives comments from our customers on our catalogues, and we tailor them accordingly, or not, as we wish. The diversity is inevitable and good.

Inevitable, too, is the diversity in the descriptions of books—the words and phrases we use to merchandise our inventories. But where type styles, spacing, formatting, and even, I suppose, our prices are confined by what Joyce called the ineluctable modality of the visible, our prose, such as it is, or paucity of it, has the capacity to urge and sway those who are reading the descriptions in subtle ways. How many of us have had to return a book for it not being as we pictured it should appear from the booksellers’ description? Or for its not being described at all? I’m not talking now about mistakes in cataloguing. All of us have erred in counting plates or have confused a

pagination. Rather, I’m talking about the integrity of our descriptions.

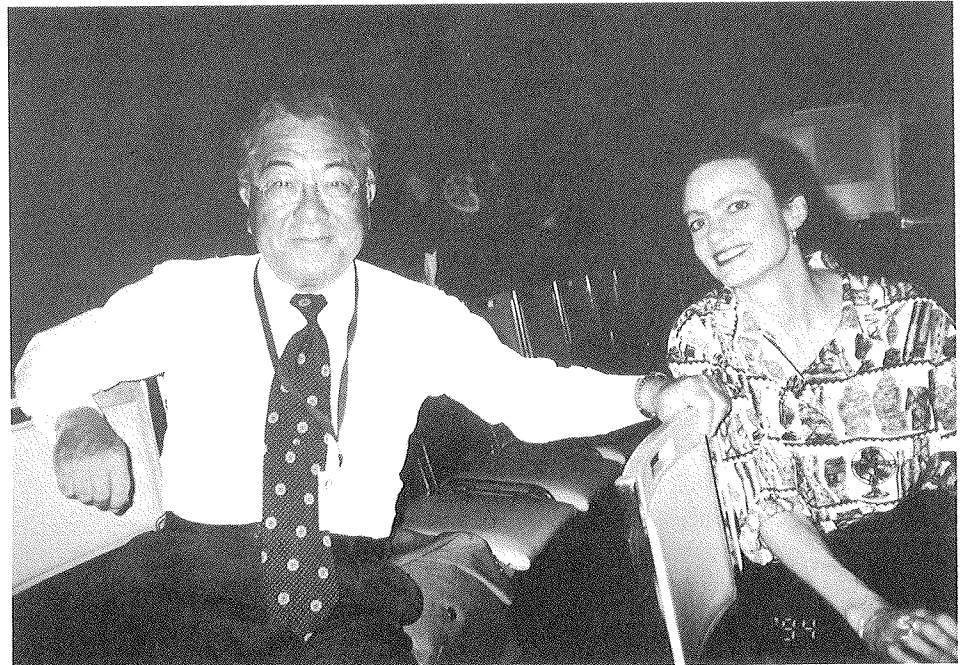
Sidney E. Berger’s article, “Else Fine and Other Features of the Dealer’s Catalog: Part One” in *Biblio* (Volume I, no. 2) addresses a number of concerns I have long harbored about booksellers’ catalogues. In short, Berger argues for forthrightness in booksellers’ descriptions, and offers general advice on how to read—or read into—them. As a reader of booksellers’ catalogues for more than thirty years he has a number of useful observations, and his article should be required reading for all booksellers who sell by catalogue.

Berger rightfully argues for clarity of description. Most of us have no trouble stating the facts: author, title, place of publication, and so forth. But, when it comes to the physical description of the book, or our statements of edition, or why the book is important (and hence worth the price we are asking), or—my personal pet peeve—rarity, a number of dealers’ forthrightness may easily be called into question. A local ABAA dealer once told me he would describe a book as “rare” if he could not get on the phone and find a copy in a week or so. Another dealer told me he wouldn’t

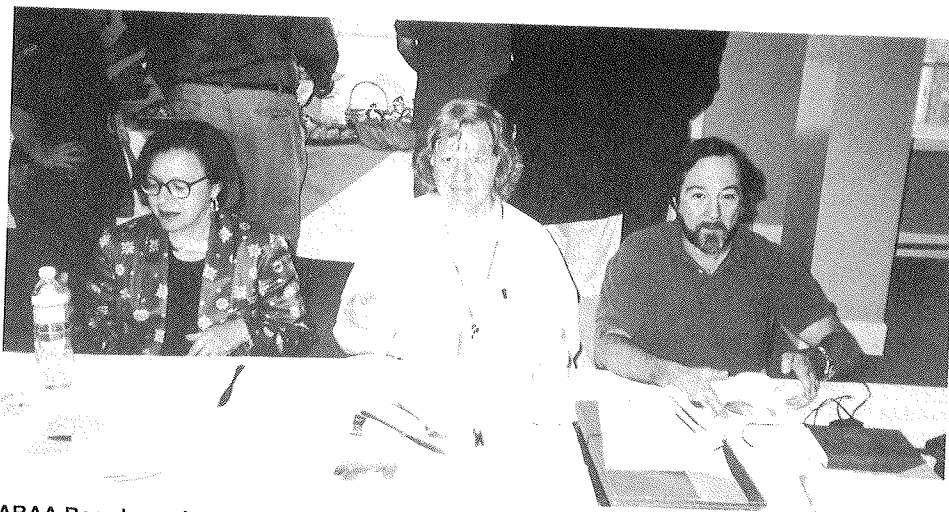
use the word rare unless there were five or fewer locations cited in NUC. I read not so long ago, much to my surprise, in an ABAA member’s catalogue, that the first edition of Kipling’s *Captain Courageous* was “rare in original cloth!” Countless are the times I’ve been offered “rare” or “uncommon” titles of which I have four copies in the warehouse. Myself, I’ve just about given up using the word altogether in order to distance myself from the misconceptions that the word “rare” has come convey. In my opinion, it is the most overstated, misused word in the booksellers’ canon. So, too, its adjuncts, though I suppose to a lesser degree: words such as “scarce” and “uncommon.”

Why do we use these words at all? The simple, basic explanation is that it helps us sell books. If touting a book as “rare” or “uncommon” did absolutely nothing to help us sell books we certainly would not venture to use the words as willy-nilly as we do, except in cases where we could demonstrably show that a book was truly rare, or in cases where we could point to hard evidence, such as a census. So the

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AT THE CONGRESS: ILAB Member of Honour Mitsuo Nitta (Japan) and Maria Fredericks, Head Rare Book Conservator at the Huntington Library, after viewing a video on the rebinding of the Ellesmere Chaucer. Mr. Nitta’s Tokyo firm, Yushodo Co., Ltd., worked with the Huntington to produce the recently published facsimile of the library’s Chaucer.



ABAA Board members Marilyn Braiterman, Jordan Luttrell, and ABAA Counsel Larry Fox ponder breakfast and business in San Francisco during the ILAB International Book Fair.

R-Word

continued from previous page

bottom line on the words “rare,” “scarce,” “uncommon,” and the like, is money, pure and simple. We all have bills to pay. You tell me why we use these words. And at whose expense do we use them?

Except in the most extreme instances, such as early Caxtons or Shakespeare quartos, where censuses have been carefully compiled, aren't we really only guessing for the most part (albeit educated guessing in some instances) as to the scarcity or commonness of a title? How often have we found just a copy or two listed in NUC only to find a dozen and a half in the RLIN or OCLC databases? How often has a copy of a particular book surfaced at auction, where it has brought an unexpectedly high price because “no copy has appeared at auction in twenty years;” and no sooner are there three or four other copies that have come out of the woodwork, drawn like magnets into the marketplace by the price realized. How many “unrecorded” copies lurk in small public libraries and historical societies? Why, then, do we continue to advertise so many books as “rare” to our customers? In a catalogue that arrived last week there were 236 items offered for sale. By my count 172 were either “rare,” “very rare,” “quite rare,” “exceedingly rare,” and even “becoming rare!” Even the most thick-skinned among us has to find this preposterous!

And what about the poor, unsuspecting customer who decided to purchase *Captains Courageous* based on its being “rare

in original cloth.” In a word, this customer was duped. Now I know the dealer who made this claim of rarity. I know he knows just as well as I that this popular Kipling title is no more rare in original cloth than Minnesota is temperate in January. This claim of rarity borders on fraud in my opinion, and I am troubled by this and similar instances of hucksterism in some of my colleagues' catalogues.

In his article, Mr. Berger also calls to question the numerous phrases booksellers use to describe condition—everything from “fair++” to “overall, less than very good,” to “a very near fine copy.” Berger argues for standardization—an unattainable ideal, in my opinion—but his point is well taken. The inventiveness of booksellers in describing the condition of books knows no bounds and can be infuriating (I too have been guilty of it). Berger suggests simplicity and straightforwardness, something approaching the guidelines for describing books published weekly in *AB Bookman*—a simple nine-step scale ranging from “poor” to “as new.” All books, of course, do not fit precisely into one of nine categories, and each description will have its modifiers. All Berger asks for, God bless him, is blatant, unabashed honesty in our descriptions—a service we should all strive to provide to our customers.

As a librarian (he is head of Special Collections at the University of California, Riverside), Berger's view is from the other side of the street. For his purposes, he wants as much information about a book as can be possibly crammed into our catalogues. He suggests the use of indexes of subjects, authors, and titles, detailed

collations, and illustrations. Even the most well heeled among us cannot justify the inclusion of everything that is to be said about a book, of every convenience a catalogue might potentially offer our customers. Somewhere there is a happy union of description and economics, which, depending on the size of our business, will naturally vary from bookseller to bookseller. But by and large, Berger finds booksellers' cataloguing efforts commendable. Among his suggestions for the overall improvement of the literature we publish is 1) the dating of catalogues; 2) doing away with the typographical enhancement in our catalogues—the bolding and italicizing of “amazing and important” things about our offerings which may seem to “enhance the worth” of an item; 3) doing away with the implications of rarity suggested by phrases such as “not in NUC,” or, “a color not noted by BAL ”; 4) doing away with the phrase “first and only edition”—it's a redundancy; 5) doing away with uncommon abbreviations—or, if such abbreviations are used, provide a key, then use these abbreviations with consistency.

The jargon of our trade can be abstruse, especially to to the novice, but even to the intermediate collector. The vagaries of the books we sell are themselves often arcane, thereby making it exponentially possible to couch or obfuscate facts that should be made obvious to the customer. In an appeal for more honesty in our cataloguing I remind all ABAA booksellers of the first two sections of our Code of Ethics:

1. *An Association member shall be responsible for the understanding and use of the specific terminology of the trade;*
2. *An Association member shall be responsible for the accurate description of all materials offered for sale. All significant defects, restorations, and sophistications should be clearly noted and made known to those to whom the material is offered or sold. Unless both parties agree otherwise, a full cash refund shall be made available to the purchaser of any misrepresented material.*

Part Two of Mr. Berger's article is forthcoming. In it he will describe the practicalities of buying books from dealers through the mail and provide further notes on reference sources—which should provide more interesting perspectives on our trade. ■

Housecalls

"The Library from Hell"

by Tom Congalton

Early in my career I ran Between the Covers from my home in Collingswood, a New Jersey suburb of Philadelphia. As I was *sans*-storefront, one of my first big investments was in a large yellow page ad. I made a point of stressing that I wanted to buy books. I felt that while there might be the odd customer for modern first editions in my area (and make no mistake about it, they are all odd in one way or another), it was more likely that I would find a greater number of people willing to sell off the family library than I would find clamoring to expand it. Despite my specialty in modern firsts, I had always bought eclectically, finding other types of books useful fodder for trade and sale, and was particularly open to buying outside my field. I sent in my first payment for the ad, and sat back and waited for the calls that would deliver fabulous undiscovered libraries into my only moderately scrupulous clutches.

This was a state of affairs about which I was quickly disabused. Don't get me wrong. If you're lonely and would like an endless stream of calls offering you obsolete encyclopedias, yellowing newspapers, tons of recent *National Geographics*, and all manner of dreck, I highly recommend a large yellow page ad offering to buy books. I doubt I'm telling my colleagues anything they don't already know.

Not being native to the Philadelphia area I was baffled by the language of the locals. The three words I was most likely to hear when I answered the phone were, "Do youse buy...?" After long experience of this type of call my answer has invariably become, "Nose we don't."

This is not to say that I didn't occasionally get the opportunity to buy a modest or interesting library. After all, the suburbs of Philadelphia, traditionally a major publishing center, are mostly affluent and quite densely populated. Camden, now best known for its prodigious crime rate, is former home to the Haddon Craftsmen, as well as to Walt Whitman, both of whose works turn up around here with some frequency. RCA, the electronics

giant with headquarters in Camden, employed generations of well-paid executives, some of whom compiled interesting libraries in a wide variety of subjects (and whose estates often afforded one the opportunity to buy all sorts of goofy old television sets, an opportunity I have so far resisted due to the stern admonitions of my wife, Heidi, whose willpower, however, has not extended to preventing her from accumulating all manner of rusted 1950s-vintage kitchen furniture). All of which is a long-winded way of saying that I actually have to listen to what these people have to say before deciding whether it is worth my effort to go out on the call. Most often I do not, preferring to refer the more annoying calls to whatever other local dealer has happened to have gained my enmity that week.

One day, I received a call that started with the classic opening: "Do youse buy rare books?"

Affirmative.

"I have a list of Grandma's books that we wanna sell."

Read it.

"Irwin Shaw. *Rich Man, Poor Man*, from duh Book Club."

Bad sign.

"A bible from the 14th-century."

What?! This was almost certainly wrong but clearly more intriguing than the 1957 *Philadelphia Daily Bulletin Almanac* that was inevitably the next item on a list of this sort. What else, I wondered?

"First edition of *Duh Fedlist Papuhs*."

Duh Fedlist Papuhs? First edition?

How did they know that?

"Grandpa usda buy all duh books at duh auctions around here."

I had heard enough. As unpromising as the call had started out, it was certainly worth pursuing. Further questioning revealed that the aforementioned Grandpa, of beloved memory, was a gunsmith whose trips to the surrounding country auctions to buy armaments and weaponry had resulted in a several-decades-long habit of buying box lots of books, which further led him to buy books at the Philadelphia auction houses. Grandma,

now forced to relocate, was ready to cash in. I asked for directions.

The description of the house, however, filled me with trepidation.

What color is the house?

"It usda to be white."

How would I recognize it?

"Duh trailers out front."

Well, okay. I steeled myself for the visit but I was unprepared for what awaited me that evening. The house was out in the hinterlands on an overgrown and preternaturally lush hill. It was still white, it turned out. You just couldn't tell because the weeds stretched well up into the second story. I was greeted at the door by a yell to "come in," and by a remarkably vicious and dingy little poodle, who also used to be white, and who would stop growling only long enough to lunge occasionally at my shins. I deftly kicked my way into the house where I encountered Grandma. I barely had time to notice that the house was jammed with books.

After introductions, Grandma broke into tears and related that she used to love to read but now she was blind. To compound her burden she was forced to leave because the house had been condemned, as it was situated on a declared toxic waste site, apparently a former landfill. To her plight I was naturally empathetic. My empathy was distracted somewhat by her two sweaty biker grandsons (one of whom must have called me), and who apparently had heard the story before. Mel and Stinky, as I found that they were named, weren't about to let Grandma's caterwauling interrupt their enjoyment of the *Miami Vice* rerun they were watching, and they would threaten her life in dire and particularly graphic terms during the commercial breaks and between gulps of beer (which they kept, much to my dismay, all to themselves). Grandma didn't seem to notice.

The house itself was a marvel of white trash engineering. Apparently starting out with a modest shack, Grandpa filled each

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Housecalls

continued from previous page

room with books and gun parts and then would construct successive rooms from materials at hand, tastefully wallpapering each with the daily newspaper. As I toured each of the dozen-plus rooms with a tearful Grandma and the vicious poodle in tow, certain obstacles to assessing the value of the books presented themselves.

In one room, a large mahogany breakfast room with floor-to-ceiling glass doors, filled with interesting-looking books, couldn't be opened because the engine block of a car was situated directly in front of the doors. While standing at the entryway to another room, I saw that the far wall, about twenty feet away, was floor-to-ceiling books. Granny asked how much I would pay for the books in this room. One little impediment, however, stood in the way of an accurate assessment. Well, rather about a dozen impediments: refrigerators. Granny had collected refrigerators as retaliation for her husband's book collecting, and her collection now separated me from the books. Another trifling matter was that there was no electricity in the room. (It wasn't necessary—after all, none of the refrigerators worked.) I admit my offer was one of the most ill-informed I had devised in several days.

Moving along, I discovered that the room closest to the road had been fitted out as a gun shop/ work room, and it was here that Grandpa kept his most precious tomes. This was also where the building's heating system was situated: an iron barrel in which raw coal was burned. Thus each of the innumerable cobwebs that spanned the books had been turned into eighth-inch thick sooty strings. If one could contrive to get near enough to the books to handle them, one was rewarded with blackened hands. Apparently here amongst this sooty jumble resided *The Federalist Papers* and ancient bibles, although in the dim light these gems were nowhere readily in evidence.

I asked after the better books. The man from The Historical Society, a Distinguished Professor, had apparently been through and identified the books, and had made an aggressive pitch for her to donate the books to The Society. However, Grandma was having none of that.

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I devised a strategy. Based on my insufficient knowledge of the books, I would pay a certain amount, and if the gems that I had been told about turned up in the mix, I would pay an additional amount depending on condition and all of the other relevant variables. After a further bout of wailing, we agreed.

At this juncture I should mention that my wife Heidi, also new to the area, and with a natural curiosity about how others in the area lived, had occasionally attempted to cajole me into letting her accompany me on housecalls. I had been called to many of the older colonial-era mansions in the area, including one appraisal call at the estate of a former Governor of New Jersey. It is my firmly held conviction that she was mostly just curious to see if they were discarding any kitchen furniture, and, with all the pretensions of someone relatively new to my trade, I had determined that this would be unprofessional behavior. To that date I had discouraged Heidi from accompanying me on such forays.

Here, however, I was presented with an opportunity that I felt would not encroach upon the sensibilities of the inhabitants, and she was easily enlisted into the project of moving the books. On Moving Day, a bright and sunny autumn day, Heidi and I, along with Joe, my first (and soon to be discouraged and former) employee, set out to pack up the Library from Hell.

Apparently Grandma's estranged (as she told me) son, the father of Mel and Stinky, had reconciled with her just long enough to be there, cursing and stacking refrigerators at the curb. We started in packing the books. We had come equipped with empty boxes, rubber gloves and surgical masks to keep as much soot as possible out of our lungs, but it was a futile effort. Ten minutes of handling the books and we looked like lifelong colliers. We moved several van loads of books with no end in sight.

Every once in a while our labors would be interrupted by exclamations caused by a particularly interesting find in the other parts of the house. For instance, Mel, Stinky and their father had found a dead raccoon in the dining room, which apparently hadn't in the past months distracted from the am-

biance of the healthy breakfast they were wont to enjoy, but when prodded with a shovel had set up an odor that still triggers harrowing olfactory flashbacks.

Just try to get Heidi to go on a housecall anymore.

Finally, we were done. We headed back to disgorge the last van load into my garage, and to start the search for *The Federalist Papers* and whatever other treasures might await us. The search took days, and even with the strenuous application of a stiff brush and rags, one still couldn't handle the books without getting dirty hands in pretty short order. While the search wasn't entirely fruitless, it was still disappointing. The most obviously valuable book, to my unpracticed eye, was a William Dean Howells book illustrated by Howard Pyle, one of 50 copies limited and signed by both, its white binding only mildly tinged with soot. There were a fair number of attractive antiquarian books: some travels; a few interesting early American bindings; some bibles from the 16th-century, but none earlier; a disbound volume two of a later edition of *The Federalist Papers* lacking the title-page and several dozen other pages. An antiquarian dealer with a better imagination than I, and a barn full of spare parts, might have seen some possibilities in this, but from my viewpoint it was a total loss.

I determined an additional amount to pay for the few pleasant surprises and called Grandma. I was rewarded with a high pitched wail of despair, but finally she was cajoled into agreeing. Would I bring the money right away?

I would, and did.

Some weeks later I received a call from a local attorney representing Grandma.

"You are unlawfully holding her first edition of *The Federalist Papers* and her ancient bibles and are required to return them or face the legal consequences," he said.

"She's nuts," I said.

"I know," he said. "But she's my client."

"The books might exist but I don't have them, or more likely, they don't exist," I said.

"I know," he said. "But you have to return them. She says a Distinguished Professor identified them for The Historical Society."



Jim Cummins (seated, center) celebrates his 50th birthday at the ILAB Book Fair in San Francisco with Lou Weinstein (on Cummins's lap) and other colleagues and friends (l to r): Rob Rulon-Miller (back to camera), Amy Crichton, John Crichton, Keith Fletcher, Martin Weinkle, Max Reed, David Waxman, Steven Massey, Richard Manney, and David Lilburne (back to camera).

"What's the Distinguished Professor's name?" I asked, determined to beard the Professor in his den.

He had to check. When he got back to me he revealed the name of the Distinguished Professor. The name was curiously identical to that of another local bookseller, one I was absolutely certain had no connection to any historical society and, far from being a Professor of anything, hadn't allowed his limited intelligence and education from hatching a clever scheme to have a library "donated" to him.

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I tried to call the Distinguished Professor on the phone every ten minutes, leaving various surly, hostile and/or threatening messages. He was going to clear this up for I was going to know the reason why.

When he finally called back around two a.m., having just returned from a book fair, I confronted him. During the course of our conversation he set a new

land speed record for backpedaling. Yes, he had looked at the library. No, he hadn't seen the books that were mentioned. Yes, he would call the attorney and tell him as much. No, he hadn't represented himself as being either a professor or as being from a historical society. Take your pick of what to believe.

The next day the attorney called after having talked to the other bookseller. He now understood that I hadn't defrauded Grandma. "Could you make some additional payment, though?" he asked.

"No, tell Granny, Stinky and Mel they can pick up the books and bring me back my money," I offered.

"She won't do that, she's nuts," he pleaded.

"I know," I said. "But she's your client."

We finally hit upon a scheme that would recast us both in a more acceptable light to the demented but persistent Granny. I would return the disbound later

printing of *The Federalist Papers*, as well as one of the old but valueless bibles, and she would be happy, or at least wouldn't cry so much.

I drove over the next day. Granny was thrilled to get back her precious, precious tomes. Additionally she had a big surprise for me! She had discovered more books! Would I please take them away with me? Maybe the really valuable books would be in this lot.

Where were they? The basement. I had her take me to it. In one of the rooms near the back of the house was an old wooden trapdoor that had been propped open, and a long ladder extending quite a distance into the opening of the dank dirt cellar.

A hollowed out cavern beneath a rickety old house built on top of a toxic waste site?

No, I had read far too many H.P. Lovecraft stories to fall for that old trick. ■

Congress

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Museums and libraries

Every Congress includes visits to institutions dedicated to scholarship, education, and the conservation of cultural artifacts. These trips offer opportunities to establish or enrich important business contacts, but they also offer insights into the sponsoring nation's history and ideals. The institutions on the 33rd Congress slate, in many respects, provide glimpses of the mythic American experience; they illustrate culminations of the "American dream," and help to delineate the United States as the "land of opportunity." The Clark Library, the Getty Museum, the Autry Museum, and the Huntington Library bear the names of individuals—wealthy collectors all—who institutionalized their acquisitions, thus memorializing their lives, but also bringing a democratic accessibility to the artifacts made possible by their passion, vision, and riches.

The William Andrews Clark Library, bequeathed to UCLA in 1934 by its book collector and philanthropist namesake, was the first stop for Congress participants. Situated on five acres that were once the site of the Clark estate, the library now houses nearly 90,000 volumes, just a portion of which were visible to those touring its specially constructed



Renowned bibliophile and sleight-of-hand artist Ricky Jay entertains ILAB Congress participants on the grounds of the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library.

bronze cabinets and *trompe l'oeil* murals. The current collection's subject matter continues to reflect the passions of the original 18,000 volumes left by Clark: English literature and history of the 17th and 18th centuries, Oscar Wilde, fine printing and graphics (especially Eric Gill), and Western Americana. Staff members, including head librarian, Bruce Whiteman, were on hand to answer Congress-goers' questions.

At the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, visitors reveled in the lushly landscaped grounds and top-notch art collections made possible by Getty's richly rewarded career in oil. Getty's sprawling villa, built to the specifications of first century Roman example, holds one of the finest collections of European art in the United States, and is especially rich in antiquities. Those who chose to join this optional outing found their choice well-timed, for the museum will shortly be closing for renovation.

Congress participants were treated to somewhat more homegrown passions and artifacts at the Gene Autry Museum of Western Heritage. Founded by the musician and actor who first brought the popular figure of the singing cowboy to the movie screen, this museum explores and contrasts the myths and the realities of the American western frontier. Since the visit was scheduled after regular museum hours, ILAB members were able to stroll unimpeded through the well-appointed galleries, where they found trained docents ready to answer questions or impart some bit of especially intriguing knowledge not found on an artifact's label. The exhibits themselves were especially compelling—as was the story they told—presenting themes, events, and objects through a variety of means ranging from a speaking diorama of the shootout at the OK Corral to recreations of cabin and saloon interiors to cases filled with ornate firearms to interactive videos (ask Millie Fleck about her attempts to outride a posse).

For the final Congress visit, participants boarded buses for San Marino and the Huntington Library and Gardens, also the venue for the traditional farewell dinner. Henry E. Huntington, a consummate businessman whose railway enterprises, and water, power, and land development account for much of California's population growth in the early 20th century, trans-

ferred his estate and extensive library and art collections to trustees to be maintained for public benefit in 1919, eight years before his death. Huntington built one of the finest libraries in the world, specializing in British and American history and literature. Now numbering four million volumes, the library includes such treasures as the Ellesmere manuscript of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and a Gutenberg Bible printed on vellum—both of which were available for viewing by Congress-goers.

Two presentations especially for ILAB members supplemented the printed and manuscript materials on view. Thomas Lange, Curator of Early Printed Books and Bindings, spoke enthusiastically about the Library's collecting activities. Lange emphasized to the booksellers in attendance that the Huntington serves as a research center, not just a treasure house; he then continued by enumerating the many areas in which the library actively purchases. Next on the agenda was an informative video documenting the re-binding of the Ellesmere Chaucer after the making of a facsimile edition by Yushodo Co., of Tokyo.

There was plenty of time before dinner to tour the Huntington's 130 acres of spectacular botanical gardens, which include gardens devoted to roses, to camellias, and to palms, a Japanese garden, and a desert garden.

A symposium

Congress committee members Bennett Gilbert, Gordon S. Hollis, and Nancy Ruppert organized a precedent-setting Symposium for the 33rd Congress of the ILAB. Entitled "Issues and Topics of Interest to the Antiquarian Book Trade," this gathering kept many a conversation lively for the remainder of the Congress.

Referring to books as "the most interesting, the most complex, and virtually the most abundant antique objects in the world," Gilbert opened the Symposium with an overview of problems facing antiquarian book dealers today.

Keynote speaker T. Peter Kraus then presented a stimulating, though sometimes bleak, assessment of "The State of the Antiquarian Book Trade." Kraus pointed to several trends that, over the past thirty years, have threatened the well-being of booksellers in the United States. Most of these have worked to dilute or

dissolve close, personal connections between booksellers and their customers, among them, the decline of the open shop, the rise of auction houses as retailers rather than wholesalers, the proliferation of book fairs, and the incursion of the Internet. In order to generate and sustain an interest in collecting books, Kraus maintains, booksellers must become tireless advocates of books—not just those overated “high spots”—through direct contact with customers. Kraus also sees hope in the efforts of organizations such as the ABAA and ILAB in promoting books and educating prospective collectors.

The sessions that followed focused on bookselling in an increasingly electronic world (“Demonstration of Internet Resources,” “The Future of Library / Dealer Relations in an Electronic World,” and “The Effect of New Computer Technology on the Antiquarian Book Trade”); objective aspects of books and manuscripts (“Fakes Forgeries, and Fascimiles: How to Know Them,” “Illuminated Books of Hours,” and “Modern American Illustrated Books”); and issues involved in the business of the trade (“International Legal Trends in the Import and Export of Cultural Artifacts,” “Emerging Markets around the World,” and “Transitions: Antiquarian Book Businesses Making Generational and Other Changes”).

Echoing the comments of others who attended, Andrew Hunter, writing in the October ABA *Newsletter*, suggested, “The Symposium was altogether a useful adjunct to the Congress, so much so that one can see such colloquies becoming the main focus of future congresses.”

ILAB business

Three meetings complemented the social and educational programs at the Santa Monica Congress. The first two, open only to committee members and national presidents, set the agenda for the General Assembly on Sunday, September 1.

The first proposal considered and approved at this Assembly alters the structure for assessing annual League dues. As proposed by the ABAA, each national association will henceforth pay to the ILAB the sum of \$10 per member. While the reform provides ILAB with a higher income, it also simplifies and democratizes the fee structure, previously organized upon complex “ability to pay” guidelines.



Keith Fletcher (United Kingdom), Thomas Lange, Curator of Early Printed Books and Bindings at the Huntington Library, and Bennett Gilbert (USA).

Next, the assembly voted to approve a motion regarding 1993 regulations on the export of cultural goods to non-European Community countries. The ILAB supports the spirit of the Unidroit Treaty in stopping trade in stolen goods and illegally exported artifacts but finds problems with some of its terminology. The League’s motion seeks revisions to portions of the regulation concerning value limits and definitions of printed and manuscript materials. As it now stands, a book of little value might often require export licensing, while modern autographs might be confused with medieval illuminated manuscripts. The ILAB Committee plans to present the motion to the European Commission in Brussels, and asked that member nations bring it to the attention of their governments, houses of representation, and political leaders.

Discussion turned to the ILAB presence on the Internet. Member nations are opting to base their websites with a variety of providers rather than joining the ABAA under that provided by Mike Harris. The debate still continues regarding the establishment of a single ILAB entity on the Net, and on the linking of widely-scattered member sites. The Assembly, however, supported establishing a globally pertinent stolen books page on the web.

The Assembly was then asked the following: “In the case of late cancellation by an individual due to serious personal circumstances, is there a moral or ethical obligation on the part of the respective national association to reimburse that in-

dividual?” The response: “Yes.” Accordingly, the Book Fair Guidelines will be amended so that each national Book Fair Committee is responsible for determining whether a cancellation merits a refund. The ILAB Committee suggested that sympathy and understanding play important roles in these decisions.

The Assembly also heard appeals for the Bibliographical Prize. To insure a wide field of qualified candidates, the Committee asked that each member actively solicit entries from publishers and bibliographical societies in their respective countries.

The meeting concluded with the election of a largely new Committee: President Alain Nicolas (France), Vice-President Walter Aliche (Liechtenstein), General Secretary Rob Rulon-Miller (USA), and committee members Kay Craddock (Australia), Keith Fletcher (UK), and Claude Van Loock (Belgium). Poul Jan Poulsen (Denmark) returns as ILAB Treasurer, as does Georg Schreyer (Germany) as committee member. (See “An Open Letter,” page 6.)

Vienna in 1998

The 34th ILAB Congress and 17th International Book Fair will be held in Vienna, Austria from October 4–11, 1998. For more information contact Brigitta Habinger or Herma Papp at Verband der Antiquare Österreichs, Grünangergasse 4, A-1010 Vienna, Austria; phone: 0043-1-512-15-35; fax: 0043-1-512-84-82; e-mail: HVB-Wien@austrobook.co.at

See you there!

Schreiber

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I truly believe that, just as I could not help being a collector, my becoming an antiquarian bookseller specializing in early books was also inevitable, and was merely the fulfillment of my personal manifest destiny.

I grew up in France but was born in Germany, which my parents left when I was not yet three (the day after *Kristallnacht*). My father was an unskilled laborer whom I don't recall ever seeing with a book, magazine, or newspaper in his hands, though I know he could read. As for my mother, I am quite sure she never attended school. I myself left school at the age of fourteen, after the eighth grade.

When I finished elementary school I was forced to work in the French equivalent of a sweatshop, where I served as an apprentice tailor in ladies' garments. Neither my heart nor my natural aptitude lay in tailoring, and, consequently, I never quite learned this trade. Deep down I knew I wasn't cut out to be a tailor (no pun intended). Nevertheless, that is what I did from the ages of fourteen to seventeen in Paris.

My parents and I left France to come to America when I was seventeen. In New York, where we landed—and where I still live—I went to work at a minimum-wage, unskilled job for the next seven years. I spoke not a word of English, and was employed in the shipping department of a watch-importing firm in New York's "Diamond District," on 47th Street (around the corner from the old Brentano's Book Store). During the first five of these seven years, I lived a quasi-isolated existence, without friends, and virtually without anyone to talk to. How could I possibly have come in contact with people my own age who were in school? Even if I chanced to meet a contemporary—invariably a high school or college student—I was so excruciatingly aware of my own lack of education—to say nothing of my broken English—that I felt too embarrassed and inadequate to initiate or sustain any sort of conversation, however passionately I was burning to do so.

I had accepted my lot as an uneducated common laborer. How I envied those high

school students whom I saw on the subway in the morning on my way to work. They carried books on such esoteric subjects as "Algebra" and "Trigonometry." Some even studied Latin, to me a mystical language. I looked upon these young people as privileged geniuses living in another world, a world from which I had convinced myself that I was and always would be excluded. This sounds melodramatic, but it is exactly how I felt.

During these lonely years my constant companions were books. Even though I lacked the benefits of a formal education, I had always been, from earliest youth, an avid reader and book collector (as I mentioned before, you don't need much money to be a collector). My passion for reading and books had been instilled when, at the age of nine, during the War, I was hospitalized for over a year. Like so many other Jewish children in this time of turmoil, I had been separated from my parents, and in order to escape the attention of the Nazis, I had been given a new identity: my name was changed to a French-sounding one—I spent most of the War as "Alfred Chabert"—my birthplace had become France, and my religion Catholic. As to my parents, if ever I should be questioned about them, I was conditioned to say that they were dead (something that I actually came to believe—let me quickly add that after the War my mother was able to trace my whereabouts with the help of an organization set up especially for the purpose of locating what is now referred to as "The Hidden Children").

Being the only child in a ward occupied primarily by wounded French *maquisards* and Allied soldiers, I turned to the books that my ward fellows—who had adopted me as their mascot—lent or gave me. They would ask their wives, girlfriends, or parents to bring me such reading material as was appropriate to my age. This consisted of everything from comic books and thrilling boys' stories, to French translations of the adventure tales by such once popular American authors as Mayne Reid and James Oliver Curwood. My reading also included Alexandre Dumas and Victor Hugo, whose *Les Misérables* was the first "real" book that I read—although, as I look back, it must have been an adaptation for younger readers: an illustrated folio bound in glossy boards, its

front cover adorned with a heroic picture of gun-brandishing Gavroche on the barricades.

I should mention one other book from that early period: a French edition of Aesop's Fables with illustrations by the English artist Arthur Rackham. I became totally captivated by Rackham's imagination and whimsy, especially by his anthropomorphic trees. I had of course never seen anything like it. Much later in life I became a very enthusiastic collector of Arthur Rackham and formed an important collection of his limited and signed editions, as well as his original drawings and watercolors.

During my first five years in America, I taught myself English by going to the movies often and also by reading. Among other things, I read the novels of Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, and all the Sherlock Holmes novels and stories, in the one-volume Doubleday edition with a preface by Christopher Morley. For practice in English, I even tried my hand at producing my own French translation of a *Study in Scarlet*. I was naturally ill-equipped for the task, translating literally, word-for-word, and missing all metaphorical subtleties. I remember giving up my project early in the game when I was totally baffled by a passage which, due to my linguistic and literary unsophistication, I took literally. It is when Watson tells of his arriving in London, which he describes as "that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of the Empire are irresistibly drained."

I also memorized such poems as Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Oscar Wilde's "Ballad of Reading Gaol," and the first hundred verses or so of Milton's "Paradise Lost," looking up and jotting down every word that was new to me. The choice of these particular authors and texts was inspired by the monthly selections of the Heritage Club, a sort of poor man's version of the Limited Editions Club. My salary was \$35 a week (\$28 after taxes), and out of this amount I would save \$5 a month to pay for my selection of the Heritage Club.

I eventually did make a friend. His name was Nathan, a student at City College, and in fact, the first college student with whom I had ever exchanged more than two words. I began asking Nathan to describe what went on in his classes, and

the sorts of things he studied, listening rapturously to his accounts as one listens to the tales of a traveler relating his adventures in distant and exotic lands. At the end of the semester, I even offered to buy from Nathan some of the textbooks he had used in his classes. One of these made a particularly powerful impression on me: a textbook on abnormal psychology replete with case histories. The name "Freud" appeared prominently throughout the volume, arousing my curiosity, and prompting me to buy *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud* in the Modern Library series.

I read this volume from cover to cover and was particularly impressed by Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*. The title page carried a Latin quotation, which, at that time, I could not understand, but whose very impenetrability imbued it, in my mind, with a mystical and hoary wisdom: *Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo*. (Years later I was to learn the meaning of this verse as well as its source: it comes from Book VII of Virgil's *Aeneid*: "If Heaven I cannot sway, then I will rouse the powers of Hell.")

One day, in the heat of my Freud passion, I expressed this wish to my only friend: "Nathan, if I could be reborn, you know what I would do? I would become a psychoanalyst!" Nathan replied casually: "You don't have to be reborn, you can still become a psychoanalyst." Angered by what I took to be sarcasm, I exclaimed in frustration: "How could I possibly become a psychoanalyst? I am twenty-two years old and I don't even know what the inside of a high school looks like!"

I doubt that Nathan realized the impact which his next words, uttered in an off-hand manner, were to have on the rest of my life. "You could go to school at night." I was staggered! "You mean, they have high schools at night, and I could go there at my age?" "Yes," he replied, "and you might not even be the oldest student there."

This was a revelation to me since I had always associated school with daylight and youth. That very evening, after work, I decided to inquire at the nearest high school in my neighborhood, Washington Irving High School, near Union Square.

As I entered the building I was nervous and apprehensive, feeling that I was tres-

passing on Sacred Ground. I began to wonder whether Nathan knew what he had been talking about. I was ushered into a room where several teachers sat at desks. One of them motioned to me to come sit by him. "I am interested in attending high school in the evening," I stammered, expecting him to laugh at me. He did not, and, without even looking up from a notebook into which he was entering figures, he puffed on his cigarette and said, as if addressing the smoke that he exhaled, "It's too late in the semester; come back at the end of January to register." I became alarmed at the indifference with which the teacher dismissed me. Did this man realize that my entire future was at stake? Suppose they found out I never studied algebra (whatever that was).

I decided to lay my cards on the table, and said hesitatingly, "But I never studied algebra." The teacher, perhaps on account of my obvious nervousness as well as my thick accent and frequent mispronunciations, finally looked up at me and asked, "Do you read English?" What a question, I thought, if I didn't read English perfectly, would I have the audacity to apply to high school? "Yes, of course," I answered. "What books have you read?" The moment of truth had arrived. Now I was surely going to be laughed out of the office. "I read Charles Dickens," I answered timidly. "What do you mean, 'Charles Dickens'?" For a moment I thought I had mispronounced the name and I looked at him in panic. "You mean, *A Tale of Two Cities*?" he asked. "Yes, and the other novels." He looked at me incredulously, as though challenging me to elaborate. Visualizing the row of Heritage Club editions of Dickens on my shelf at home, I began to recite: "I've read *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Barnaby Rudge*, *Martin Chuzzlewit* (I still shudder to think how I must have mangled the pronunciation of this title), *Dombey and Son*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Great Expectations*, *Our Mutual Fr...*"

I would have gone on to *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* hadn't the teacher raised his hand motioning me to stop my bibliographic recitation. "What else have you read, besides Dickens?" "I've read Mark Twain." Again he looked at me in silence, waiting for me to elaborate. "I've read

Tom Sawyer, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Innocents Abroad*, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, *Connecticut Yankee*, *Life on the Miss...*" At that point I heard what I took for snickering from the other side of the office, where three or four other teachers had gathered round a water cooler. They had apparently been listening to this interview. I was convinced that they were laughing at my naiveté and arrogance to presume that I could aspire to high school with such elementary reading. "Real" high school students, I imagined, must read not only so much more, but also far more sophisticated books that I had never even heard of.

"Read Shakespeare?" my interviewer went on to ask with a wink at his colleagues. Shakespeare was the kiss of death. I had recently bought a remaindered one-volume edition of Shakespeare with illustrations by Rockwell Kent, and had begun making my way through it, but was far from finished. "Yes," I answered apologetically, "but I've only read fourteen of his plays." I expected the teacher to dismiss me in disgust for having wasted his time, but all he said was, "Registration is in the last week of January, come back then—and don't worry." "But what about algebra?" I asked anxiously. "If you should find high school courses too challenging," he replied, "you can attend our elementary classes for adults."

When I heard that it was possible for someone my age to attend elementary school, I suddenly knew that I could begin my life over again.

That evening is etched in my memory as sharply as if it had happened only yesterday. I remember it with the vividness of my first kiss, my wedding day, the day my daughter Rachel was born. I had made a turn in the road away from the past and toward a new future. I was being given a second chance. In short, I felt that I had been reborn.

I couldn't wait to go home and call my friend. "Nathan," I asked, "how many years does it take to finish high school?" "Four years," he replied. I suspected that in my case it might take longer since I could only go at night after work. "How long does college take?" "Another four years." Now the collector in me began to

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Schreiber

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express himself, compelling me to complete the set: "Suppose someone wished to be educated beyond college. Is this possible?" "One could go on to get a master's degree in a specialized subject. It could take another couple of years." "Is there any more advanced degree one can obtain after such a master's degree?" "Some people go on to study for a Ph.D., which stands for 'Doctor of Philosophy.' It takes many years to get one. You've got to write a book, or something, and they call you 'Doctor' after you get one."

I knew that this was what I wanted and couldn't settle for less—besides, as I mentioned, I am a completist. I now asked my final question. "Nathan, what is the best and most famous university in America where one can obtain such a Ph.D.?" "Harvard University," he replied. "It's in Massachusetts, near Boston."

"Nathan," I heard myself say, "I'm gonna get a Ph.D. from Harvard!"

Twelve years later, shortly after my daughter Rachel was born, I was awarded my Ph.D. in Classical Philology from Harvard. On graduation day, Ellen, my wife, surprised me with a rare edition of Homer's *Odyssey*, my favorite book. It was the Riccardi Press edition, limited to 500 copies, with illustrations by Russell Flint, which I had been admiring longingly for several weeks in the window of the Temple Bar Bookshop, on Massachusetts Avenue. The volume, which Ellen had inscribed to me with a sentiment commenting on my graduation and what it represented in my life, is the prize possession in my library.

After graduating from high school at night, I had been admitted to Queens College (CUNY) as a regular day student, supporting myself on a student loan and the money I had saved from my job. It was at Queens that Ellen and I met. After graduating from Queens I was admitted to the Harvard Graduate School on a Woodrow Wilson Scholarship, and Ellen supported us by joining the staff of the Widener Library. After obtaining her MLS from Simmons College, Ellen was placed in charge of the Filing and Searching Department of the Harvard College Library.

Why did I pursue a doctorate in Classics? When I had originally expressed

the—at the time seemingly impossible—wish to become a psychoanalyst, what I really was expressing was my desire to have the sort of humanistic education that Freud and some of my other intellectual heroes (like Rabelais and Victor Hugo) had enjoyed. These men all knew Latin and Greek; others, like Shakespeare, had a smattering of both. Before long the study of classical languages and culture turned from being a means to an end to the end itself, and at Queens College I took a major in Classics. Looking back, I think that my choice of a specialty may subconsciously have been based on the following simple-minded syllogism:

1. I want to be educated;
2. All the educated people I read about and admire knew Greek and Latin;
3. Therefore I must study Greek and Latin.

While pursuing my graduate studies I found that I was often just as interested in the manuscript and printed tradition of the authors I was studying as in the texts themselves. For instance, I became intrigued by the fact that the text of Plato, whether in the original Greek or in translation, is cited according to the "Stephanus" reference. After some easy research I discovered that the "Stephanus" numbers go back to a sixteenth-century edition of Plato published by the French scholar-printer Henri Estienne, also known under the Graeco-Latinized form of his name, Henricus Stephanus. The "Stephanus" reference numbers correspond to the sections into which Henri Estienne divided the pages of his momentous edition and which conventionally still appear in the margins of all modern editions of Plato, in every language.

Should I admit it? When I discovered this fact, I found it far more fascinating than anything I had read in Plato's *Dialogues* themselves!

In the Harvard Classics Department, before students are allowed to submit a doctoral thesis topic, they must first undergo a battery of oral and written examinations. For the final orals a student must prepare two special authors, one Greek and one Latin, as well as one special field. The Greek author I chose was the comic playwright Aristophanes. Naturally, I used this as an opportunity to begin collecting all the editions and translations of Aristophanes that I could find

and afford. For that purpose I had my name placed on most appropriate booksellers' mailing lists, here and abroad.

After obtaining my doctorate, I followed what I saw as the only logical course open to me: propagating my recently acquired knowledge by becoming a college teacher. I joined the faculty of Herbert Lehman College (CUNY), where I eventually became an Associate Professor. Soon after being granted tenure I realized that my objective all along had not been so much to teach as to be educated—or rather, to prove to myself that I could be. What I truly wanted now was to spend the rest of my life with antiquarian books such as those I read about in the catalogues I was now receiving. Some of the most exhilarating moments of my life had been those provided by my frequent visits to bookshops, first in Paris, where I spent my Sundays browsing at the stalls of the *bouquinistes* along the *quais*, and later in New York, among the multitude of bookshops—each with its own distinctive atmosphere, but all equally seductive—that once lined lower Fourth Avenue, then known as "Book Row." I also remembered with fondness my visits (after my collecting interests had graduated to limited and signed editions of books illustrated by artists like Arthur Rackham and Edmund Dulac) to such New York shops as Inman's, Philip Duschnes, Walter Schatzki, Herman Cohen's Chiswick Bookshop, as well as the Rare Book Rooms at Brentano's and Scribner's.

While still teaching, I decided to try my hand at bookselling, and, to test the waters, so to speak, I issued a catalogue of my own. Although I called it a "catalogue," it was no more than a list, offset from my typewritten copy, offering a selection of various editions of the Greek and Roman authors, mostly 19th- and 20th-century books of the used and out-of-print variety.

My list did contain at least one book which I then considered deserving of the appellation "antiquarian": an 18th-century edition of the treatise on the Education of the Orator by the first-century Roman writer Quintilian. The circumstances of the sale of this volume was the occasion of one of the most valuable lessons I was to learn as a bookseller.

Priced at \$50, the Quintilian was the most expensive book I was offering, and I

was certain that I would never sell it. Indeed, I could not imagine how its obsolete text and antiquated commentary (by a certain Johann Matthias Gesner) could be of use to anyone. Imagine my surprise (and exhilaration) when the first order I received was for the Quintilian. The order did not come from a library or a private collector, but from a bookseller, one Emil Offenbacher, in the borough of Queens, in New York City. I was so thrilled that, instead of mailing the book to him, I decided to deliver it personally. I had already heard about this erudite bookseller specializing in the history of science, medicine, and other technical subjects, and felt that this was a perfect opportunity to meet him and perhaps ask him some pointers about entering the book business. I must say that I was also rather curious to find out why a bookseller, who had a reputation for “knowing what he was doing,” was interested in an old, obsolete edition of a Latin classic, whose content had no bearing whatsoever on the subjects of concern to him.

When I delivered the Quintilian Mr. Offenbacher must have sensed my curiosity, for he asked: “Are you wondering why I ordered this book from you?” As I admitted that the question had crossed my mind, Mr. Offenbacher proceeded to leaf through the volume looking for a specific passage. After finding the page, he handed the open book back to me, asking me to translate a certain passage of Gesner’s commentary. When I had finished translating the passage, in which Gesner compared the laws of oratory to those of musical structure, and described a certain “Bacchius” playing some kind of wind instrument, Emil smiled and said, “What you have just read happens to be the earliest published biographical reference to Johann Sebastian Bach, and as such it is of great importance in the history of musicology.” Emil accompanied this bit of information with a triumphant smile which made me realize that the Quintilian, which I thought overpriced at \$50, was in fact worth considerably more.

The lesson Emil Offenbacher taught me that day was that there are many facets to a book, some of them concealed below the surface. No doctorate in classical philology had prepared me to uncover them. If I wanted to become an antiquarian bookseller, I plainly had to expand my

bibliopolic tunnel vision by opening my eyes to all the hidden possibilities and learn how to *really* look at a book. In sum, that day I learned that in the antiquarian book business knowledge is truly power.

After that visit, I became painfully aware of the narrowness of my intended field of expertise, and of how little knowledge or preparation I had to enter the book business. It was clearly not enough to know the Greek and Latin classics if one wished to survive as an antiquarian bookseller. Suddenly, the idea of changing careers did not seem like such a wise course. After all, I was already in my forties, had a family and a mortgage. How could I give up the security of steady employment, with good benefits, and even tenure? I had no training in the book business, and perhaps even worse, I had no capital to speak of.

One day, as I was debating these issues for the thousandth time, I heard a distant voice in me say, “Besides, I don’t even know algebra!” I then realized that the real obstacle to my ambition was my old enemy: Fear of the Unknown. Indeed, this fear—even when it is legitimate (as in this case)—can squelch any hope or ambition before it even takes shape. But I also was aware that I was no longer a green recruit, and had at least once already done battle against—and overcome—this insidious enemy. That time I had been alone, but now I had a mighty ally against hesitation and insecurity—my wife. Ellen’s encouragement and absolute faith in me and my abilities proved to be considerably more valuable than any training or capital, and were the deciding factor in my giving up my tenured professorship and striking out on my own as a bookseller.

Thus began the firm of E. K. Schreiber (“E. K.” are Ellen’s initials). I soon realized that for learning the ropes and expanding my knowledge I actually had teachers who were far more useful than any standard apprenticeship I might have served, in the form of some of the catalogues I was now receiving regularly. These were rich in the erudition and expertise of booksellers who had been trained in the best tradition here and abroad: scholarly booksellers like Marianne and William Salloch, Leona Rostenberg and Madeleine Stern, Otto Ranschburg (of Lathrop Harper), Emil

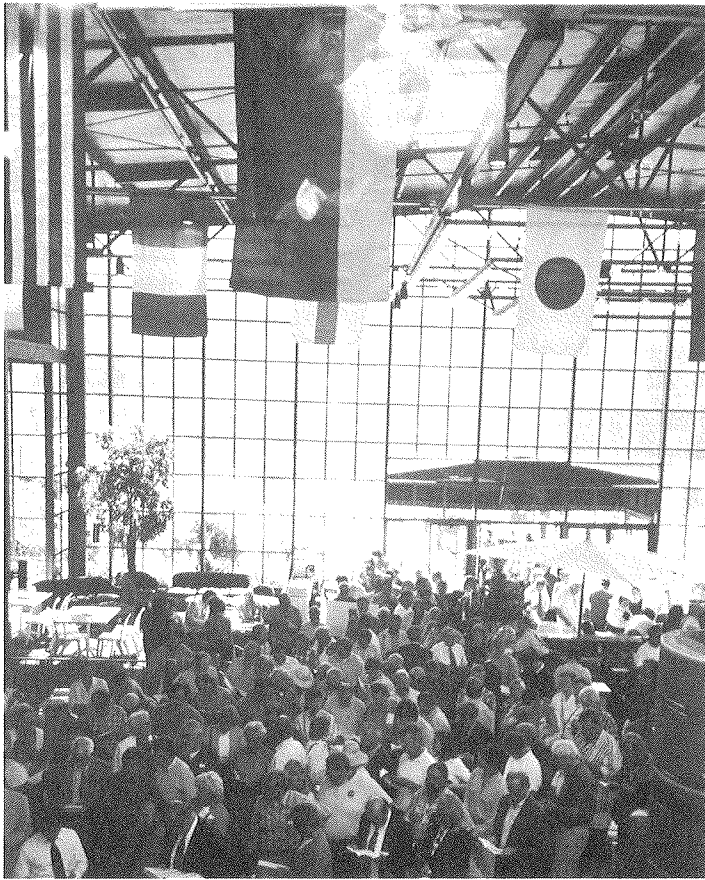
Offenbacher, Laurence Witten, Bernard Rosenthal, and many others.

To capitalize my enterprise, I decided to sell off my Arthur Rackham collection, which had lain fallow for some time. I had managed to acquire every known Rackham edition, and was left with no more mountains to climb in that range. Besides, as I mentioned earlier, my new collecting passion had become Aristophanes.

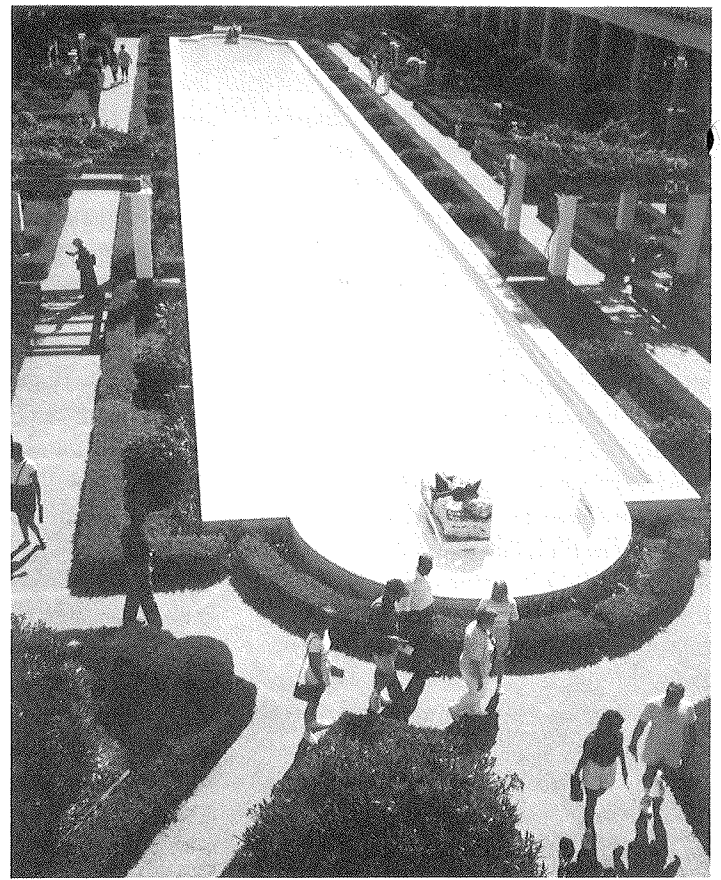
The field of bookselling that particularly attracted me was early printed continental books, where I felt that my knowledge of ancient languages could be an asset. I decided that the best and most efficient way to learn the myriad facets of antiquarian bookselling, while familiarizing myself with relevant bibliographies and reference works, was to put to autodidactic use my very passion for book collecting. Surely, I reasoned, if I started collecting the works of a prolific Renaissance printer, I would be introduced to all the various disciplines that constituted his output, and thus be compelled to research subjects about which I knew little or nothing. The first name that suggested itself was that of my old friend Stephanus, whom I had first met in graduate school while reading Plato.

Thus I began acquiring every Stephanus—or Estienne—edition I could find, and soon learned that Henri Estienne was only one member of a great dynasty of French scholar-printers, spanning nearly two centuries. Providing the universal system of reference to Plato was merely one of many important contributions to western culture made by the Estiennes. For instance, Henri Estienne’s father, Robert Estienne, is responsible for the division of the text of the Bible into the numbered verses universally followed today. So, by collecting and studying the Estiennes’ works I was introduced to such fields as lexicography, theology, early mathematics, science and medicine, early woodcut illustration, and various others. As my collection grew, I planned to prepare a special catalogue describing every Estienne book I had acquired. When my collection reached 300 items I issued this reference catalogue, to which Nicolas Barker graciously contributed a masterful introduction, and the collection was

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Opening day crowd at the ILAB Book Fair in San Francisco. *Photo courtesy of Michiko Sakai.*



The J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, built to the specifications of an ancient Roman villa, seduced many Congress participants with its lush plantings, statuary, and reflecting pool.

Schreiber

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bought *en bloc* by the University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill.

The sale of the Estienne collection made me realize that I had found an ideal way of combining my collecting passion with bookselling, and I immediately began another collection. This time too the subject presented itself quite naturally, as an outgrowth of the Estienne collection: the printer Simon de Colines, who was related to the Estiennes by both professional and family ties. With Colines, instead of dealing with an entire printing dynasty spanning almost two centuries, I could focus on a single individual, active as a printer for no more than a quarter century. I eventually managed to gather nearly 250 representative Colines editions. Once again the collection was acquired in its entirety, this time by Brigham Young University, and resulted in my publishing another reference catalogue, issued last year, with an introduction by the

world-renowned specialist in early French printing, Jeanne Veyrin-Forrer, formerly of the Bibliothèque nationale.

While still gathering Colines editions, I began to collect the works of yet another French Renaissance printer, Sebastianus Gryphius, who was active in Lyon from 1528 to 1556, and the most prolific printer of France of his time. Gryphius surrounded himself with some of the most eminent scholars and literary figures of the day, and his Lyon establishment (“At the Sign of the Gryphon”) became a popular and frequent meeting-place—or “hangout”—for “regulars” like Rabelais, Etienne Dolet, Andrea Alciati, Jacopo Sadoletto, and others. These men became Gryphius’s collaborators, not only by contributing copy to him, but also by serving as copy editors at his press—a fact that accounts for the remarkable accuracy of Gryphius editions. The Gryphius collection was recently acquired by the Beinecke Library of Yale University.

It is a paradoxical truism that the more one learns, the more one becomes aware of how little one knows. Although the

building of these three collections has taught me a great deal, it has also made me acutely aware of the immensity of my ignorance. Perhaps I will reduce this ignorance a bit when I work on my next collection. Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to think of an appropriate subject. I feel that I have exhausted my enthusiasm for collecting the works of printers and am ready to attack a totally different category, perhaps a literary genre or a cultural movement.

Others have written, much more eloquently than I can ever hope to, about the delights and thrills of collecting. What I personally find most exhilarating about embarking on a new collecting project is the sense of new beginning—I am tempted to say “rebirth”—that it provides. I am at present a collector without a collection. But something will turn up: collecting is not a passive but an active, creative force, and, like all creative impulses it *must* and *will* ultimately find an expression. ■

Briefly Noted

The Illustrating Traveler: Adventure and Illustrations in North America and the Caribbean 1760-1895: an exhibition organized by William S. Reese and George Miles at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. On-line version at <http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/illus.htm>

This on-line show is based on an exhibition presented at Yale during the 1996 North American Prints Conference last spring. The in-the-flesh exhibition displayed "illustrated travelers' narratives and original art by travelers from the... high Arctic to the Caribbean" and included illustrators well-known to the book trade, such as Choris, Catlin, Carver, and Kane. It was curated by George Miles, curator of the Western Americana Collection at Yale; and ABAA member Bill Reese.

As subscribers to the Ex-Libris mail server, we learned of the exhibit from a

posting of September 30: "The digital version of the exhibition includes some 100 images drawn from the original exhibition and includes the full text of the exhibition labels. The digital form allows us to include multiple images from some books and so there are images shown on the web site that were not visible during the original show. The exhibition has been arranged in six broad thematic categories which illuminate the variety and richness the illustrating travelers brought to their work. We have broken each category into three, linked web pages in order to reduce transfer times. We also chose NOT to use thumbnail images which might then be "blown up" but instead sized our images to fit easily within an 800 x 600 pixel screen."

Intrigued by the possibilities, we took the time to view a good part of this on-line extravaganza using our Spry Mosaic web browser (version 4.2) and a 28,800

bps external modem. And a goodly time it was. It took just over a minute to load the introduction and graphic, but over 28 minutes to load the text and 7 illustrations contained in "Native Americans," part II. Undaunted, we proceeded to print out 20 of the 100 images, and the accompanying labels for about 50 more.

The introduction to the exhibit summarizes 18th and 19th century travel narratives, and is followed by a list of six clickable "thematic categories": "Encountering Native Americans;" "Customs of the Country;" "Valor and Endurance;" "An Analytic Eye;" "The Sublime and the Picturesque;" and, "The Spirit of Place."

The exhibition moves along as if walking through a museum: one can move easily from one picture to another, read the label and move on. The loading time, however, proved more than a little frustrating, like waiting for the kids to get out of the



Oak Knoll Books sponsored its second annual private press book fair early in October. About 200 librarians, printers, and booksellers came to browse the fine press books of 17 American, British, and Canadian private presses, and to interact with their printers. Those participating included: Back row (l to r): David Esslemont (Gregynog Press), Andrew Hoyem (Arion Press), Don Rash, John Heyeck (The Heyeck Press), Barney Taylor (Press of Appletree Alley), Michael Peich (Aralia Press), Theo Rehak (Dale Guild Typefoundry), Carl Darrow, Neil Shaver (Yellow Barn Press). Middle row (l to r): Ben Williams (Gregynog Press), David Bolton (Alembic Press), Mark McMurray (Caliban Press), Bob Fleck (Oak Knoll Books), William Butler (Primrose Academy), Barbara Henry (Bowne & Co.), Stephen Heaver (The Hill Press), Frances Wakeman (Plough Press), Simon Lawrence (The Fleece Press). Front row (l to r): Peter Thomas (Peter & Donna Thomas), Greg Campbell (Campbell-Logan Bindery), Robin Heyeck (The Heyeck Press), Peggy Strong (Goodenough Art), Claire Bolton (Alembic Press), Gaylord Schanilec (Midnight Paper Sales Press), Fred Lock (Lock's Press). Seated: Margaret Lock (Lock's Press).

ABAA Welcomes New Members

The *ABAA Newsletter* warmly welcomes the following new members, admitted at the Board of Governors' Meeting in September, 1996:

FULL MEMBERS

Philip R. Bishop, Mosher Books, PO Box 111, Millersville, PA 17551-0111; phone: 717-293-9178; fax: 717-295-4922.

Gary Combs Autographs, Inc., 3 Sheridan Square, New York, NY 10014; phone: 212-242-7209; fax: 212-924-9006.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

David Joseph Brass, Heritage Book Shop & Bindery, Los Angeles, CA.

Robin Willis Cahan, Andrew Cahan: Bookseller, Chapel Hill, NC.

MEMBERS EMERITI

Elizabeth Trace, Timothy Trace Book-seller, Courtlandt Manor, NY. ■

Briefly Noted

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bathroom on a crowded day at the real museum. There was a ten or twelve minute wait to load each category, and each illustration within the category took another minute or two to come up on the screen.

The text of the labels was straight-forward, and composed for the casual visitor. The images were surprisingly clear. And while we're not sure the "exhibit" was worth the wait we had in line, we predict that more and more libraries and museums will be mounting such exhibitions on the Web. Miles and Reese are to be commended for helping pave the way. The technology will improve for certain, but we are confident that the first line of text we encountered in this exhibit will stand the test of time: "Verbal and visual texts allow a far more effective and sophisticated presentation of evidence to the reader". To which we respond, *Correcto-mundo!* ■

Membership Updates

Nick Adams & Co. has a new address and phone: PO Box 189266, Sacramento, CA 95818; phone: 916-448-0789.

Between the Covers has a new address, phone, and fax: 35 West Maple Avenue, Merchantville, NJ 08109; phone: 609-665-2284; fax: 609-665-3639. The e-mail address remains the same.

The Book Block has a new address and phone: Box 11090, Greenwich, CT 06831; phone: 203-532-1980; fax: 203-532-1981.

Dower House has a new address, phone, and fax: 11191 Westheimer #876, Houston, TX 77042; phone and fax: 713-781-6113

Joseph the Provider/Books has a new street address: 1216 State Street, Number 503, Santa Barbara, CA 93101-2618.

Joslin Hall Rare Books has new e-mail and website addresses: e-mail: jhall@tiac.net; website: www.joslinhall.com.

Edward J. Lefkowitz, Inc., now has a website: www.saltbooks.com/~seabooks/ ■

Leland Lien has a fax number correction: 612-321-9597.

Lorson's Books & Prints has a new zip-code: 92832.

A. Parker's Books has a fax number correction and a new e-mail address: fax: 941-957-3779; e-mail: aparkers@interloc.com.

James Pepper is now doing business as James Pepper Rare Books, Inc., 2026 Cliff Drive, Suite 224, Santa Barbara, CA 93109; phone: 805-963-1025; fax: 805-966-9737; e-mail: pepbooks@aol.com.

Peter Stern is now doing business as Peter L. Stern & Co., Inc., 355 Boylston Street, Second Floor, Boston, MA 02116; phone: 617-421-1880; fax: 617-536-7072; e-mail: psbook@aol.com.

Ursus Books has new e-mail and website addresses: e-mail: ursus@panix.com; website: www.ursusbooks.com.

The Veatchs Arts of the Books has a new fax: 413-584-2751. ■

13th Edinburgh Antiquarian Book Fair

The Scottish Branch of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association has pleasure in announcing the 13th Edinburgh Antiquarian Book Fair, to be held Friday and Saturday, March 14-15, 1997, at the Roxburghe Hotel, Charlotte Square, the well-established venue for the biennial March fair. The Edinburgh Antiquarian Book Fair is a designated ILAB book fair and is open to all members of the International League.

Applications for the 13th Edinburgh Fair are available from the Antiquarian Booksellers Association (International), Sackville House, 40 Piccadilly, London W1V 9PA United Kingdom; phone: 171-439-3118; fax: 171-439-3119; e-mail: aba@antiquarian.com.

The deadline for applications is December 15, 1996; confirmation and booth allocation will be forwarded as soon as possible after this date. ■

**Deadline for submissions
to the next *Newsletter* is:
January 20, 1997**

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