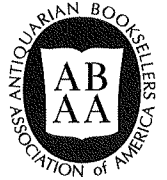




The ABAA NEWSLETTER



VOLUME TEN, NUMBER 1

ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

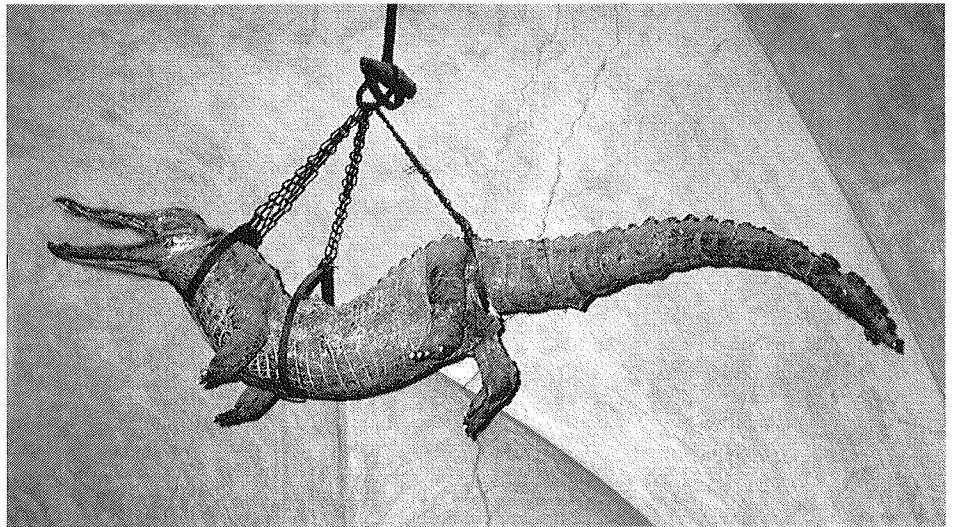
FALL 1998

Vienna Congress a Winner

by Rob Rulon-Miller

Two hundred and forty-three attendees representing 158 ILAB member firms from 17 countries attended the 34th ILAB Congress in Vienna, Austria, October 4-7. Registration was at the Hotel Marriott, which was the Congress headquarters. The hotel was on the Parking, the ring-road built where once stood the old city walls, and the road by which all directions are given in the city: inside the Ring, outside the Ring, on the Ring, near the Ring, Ring finger, and so on. On the evening of registration there was a grand opening reception and the first of several multi-course dinners—this at the Kunsthistorisches Museum with a live quartet and, after dinner, a viewing of the paintings in the Gemäldegalerie.

Myself, I arrived in Vienna a day earlier, on Saturday, October 3 at 1:20 p.m., after a flight from Chicago via Amsterdam. The ILAB Committee Meeting at 3:00 on the same day—yes, I tried to stay awake—was held at the headquarters of the Austrian association, the Verband der Antiquare Österreichs, in its Buchgewerbehäuser on the Grünangergasse, a large, cavernous building on a small, cobblestone side street in central Vienna. In the dimly lit atrium were three large hand printing presses, and the marble stairwell up which the Committee ascended was graced with classical statuary in the alcoves. At the top, the room in which the Committee met was paneled in a dark-grained, somber wood. It was largely empty, except for a long, narrow table covered in a green tablecloth, on which



One of the sights of the 34th ILAB Congress in Vienna, Austria: an eighteenth-century crocodile from the Nile, stuffed and hanging from a ceiling in the Burg Forchtenstein.

Why Johnny Can't Sell Books: Education and the Future of the American Rare Book Trade

At the author's insistence, the following article has not been edited. The ABAA Newsletter takes no responsibility for errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, or style.

by John Wronoski

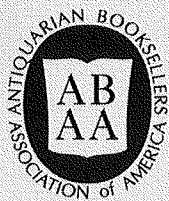
The profound, indeed mystical, attraction of books, the attraction that each of us failed to resist, is diminished amid the noise of the present. Ever fewer young people feel the pull of the world of rare books, or of the world of books at all, even in a time when more and greater numbers of books are being published—and publicized—than ever before—though the complementary poles of

“entertainment” and “information” which dominate the publishing industry, both inherently ephemeral, and eminently unworthy of preservation, discourage the modes of engagement with the book upon which the rare book trade rests. The kinds of education and practice, bolstered by tradition and common experience that underlie the intimate or even sacral relationship with the text and with the book as object, have eroded in America, where, it may be argued, they never in fact really had a chance to take root to any significant degree.

From the inception of our (version of) civilization, the notion that we represent a new beginning has been more or less

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continued on page 8



Nominating Committee Seeks Candidates

by Robert Fleck

Chair, Nominating Committee

In April 1999, the terms of the three governors who comprise the Class of 1999 will expire. The seats now held by David Margolis, representing the Southwest Chapter; Phillip Pirages, representing the Pacific Northwest chapter; and Taylor Bowie, Governor-at-Large, will be filled by three new governors who will serve as the Class of 2003.

According to the ABAA By-Laws, the Nominating Committee must ask for names of candidates who would like to serve. Replacements from the Pacific Northwest and Southwest chapters are mandatory; the Governor-at-Large may come from any chapter.

The Nominating Committee consists of a representative from each chapter, two out-going Board members, and myself as past president. Candidates should confer with their regional chapter chairs, representatives, and/or apply directly to the committee before the end of 1998.

Apply to: Robert Fleck, ABAA Nominating Committee, 308 Delaware Street, New Castle, DE 19720; phone: 302-328-7232; fax: 302-328-7274; or via email at: oakknoll@oakknoll.com.

Letters to the Editor

From: Peter L. Stern

Like Steve Bernard ("Letter to the Editor," ABAA Newsletter, IX, 4), many of our members may feel that book fairs are not worth their time, effort, and money; but to suggest, therefore, that the ABAA should "redirect its efforts" elsewhere is short-sighted. Certainly, not every one of our fairs is a success; Washington was canceled due to lack of interest, and Chicago's fair has limped along throughout its history. I disagree with [Steve's] characterization of Boston as "mediocre," but it is, admittedly, not as strong as the New York or California fairs. Our book fairs not only contribute to, rather than drain, our national treasury, but they are also major sources of revenue for individual members.

Steve hopes that the ABAA, instead of sponsoring book fairs, will substitute other "promotional activities and improved marketing strategies." Allow me to point out that the fairs are effective promotional and marketing tools. The total of the advertising and public relations budgets for these fairs is well into six figures, and results in thousands of people attending the fairs, many of them for the first time, and most paying for the privilege, all at no cost to Steve and others who are not participating.

His point would have some validity if the ABAA was ignoring other opportunities, but the Board is constantly pursuing other avenues, which, given our limited financial resources, are more limited than we might like to admit. ■

The 22nd Annual Boston International

ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR




Illustration and border design by Ben Waters, Indian Hill Press.

NOVEMBER 20-22, 1998

Hynes Convention Center, 900 Boylston St., Boston, MA

OPENING NIGHT FRIDAY 5-9PM * TICKETS \$10
(Opening Night ticket valid throughout the weekend)

SATURDAY 12-7PM * SUNDAY 12-5PM * TICKETS \$5

For more information, please call Commonwealth Promotion at (617) 266-6540.
Sponsored by the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America.

www.bostonbookfair.com

ILAB Adopts Internet Proposal

by Robert Fleck

At the Vienna Congress the ILAB Committee, the national presidents, and the General Assembly each unanimously approved a broad Internet proposal put forth by the special ILAB Internet Commission, consisting of George Bern, Bob Fleck, and Alain Marchiset. The proposal, offered in the true spirit of ILAB, is as follows:

- 1) All national association web sites will provide links to all other ILAB association web sites.
- 2) No national web site may provide links to non-ILAB booksellers. It is recommended that no ILAB bookseller provides links to non-ILAB booksellers.

3) The ILAB web site shall contain a search engine that searches all ILAB member catalogues and databases. Each member country web site shall contain the same search engine, and that search engine will be restricted to find only books held by the dealers in that country. Each member country site will also include a search engine for all ILAB members as a secondary way for the public to search for books.

4) The basic fee of \$1500/year shall be paid for maintenance of the ILAB web site. This expenditure shall be added to the dues of each country in the proportion that they currently pay dues.

5) The cost of adding and maintaining the search engine on the ILAB web site

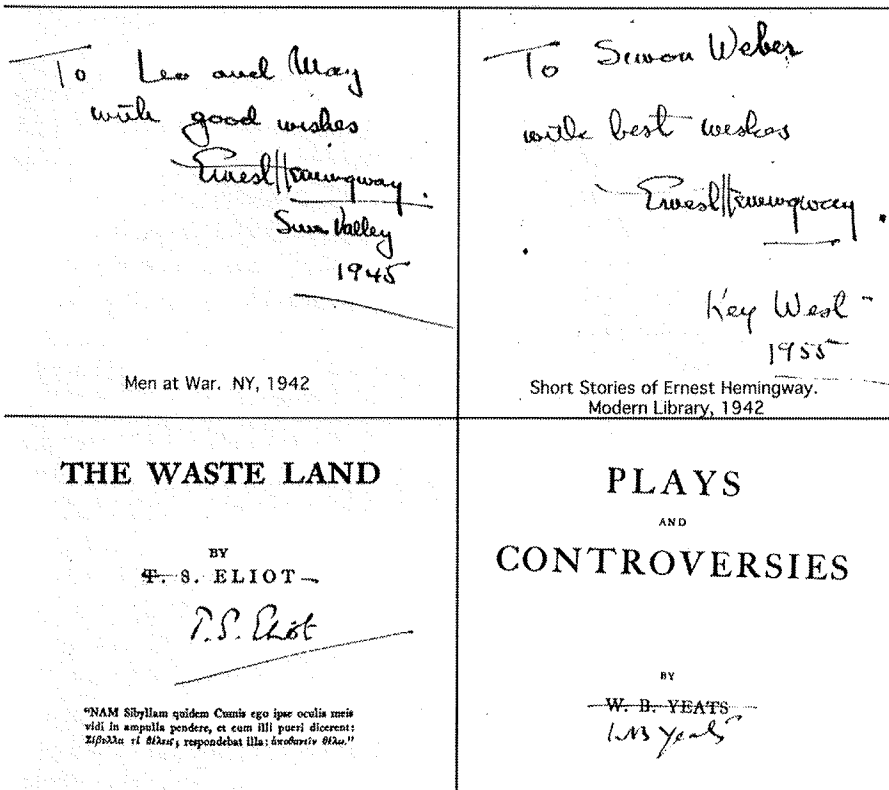
will be shared by the dealers using it. It is recommended that the estimated cost will be \$20 to \$30 per month for each member with books for sale using this search engine. The fees will be collected by each country and sent directly to the Internet consultant doing the work.

6) Mike Harris will be hired as ILAB Internet consultant.

7) ILAB book fair catalogues, directories, leaflets, etc. should contain an advertisement for the ILAB web site.

The search engine will be implemented first by ABAA, and once tested and proved it will be moved to the ILAB site and the sites of the other national associations. ■

ABAA Security Committee Forgery Alert



Signatures and inscriptions recently forged in New England include those of Ernest Hemingway, William Butler Yeats, and T. S. Eliot.

In the past six months, the ABAA Security Committee has issued advisories about forgeries recently circulating in the trade. These have been perpetrated by one or more forgers thought to be operating in the New England area. Please examine the accompanying examples carefully.

The New England forger is also known to be counterfeiting signatures and inscriptions of John Steinbeck, William Faulkner, Rudyard Kipling, Evelyn Waugh, Joseph Conrad, and Ezra Pound. There are certainly others as yet unreported or undetected. The Committee has attempted to inform local law enforcement officials as well as the FBI. It has also sent examples to the Universal Autograph Collectors' Club, the Professional Autograph Dealers' Association, the Manuscript Society, and numerous auction houses.

Anyone with information that might lead to the exposure and possible prosecution of this forger is encouraged to contact the ABAA Security Committee, c/o The Brick Row Book Shop, 49 Geary Street, #235, San Francisco, CA 94108; email: abaasecurity@Brickrow.com



ILAB Book Fairs

1998

November 20-22

Boston, MA (ABAA)
Hynes Convention Center

1999

January 28-31

Stuttgart, Germany (VDA)

February 12-14

San Francisco, CA (ABAA)
Concourse Exhibition Center

February 18-20

Amsterdam, The Netherlands (NVvA)
RAI Congress Centre

April 15-18

New York, NY (ABAA)
Park Avenue Armory

May 6-8

Los Angeles, CA (ABAA)
Marriott LAX

May 26-30

Paris, France (SLAM)
La Maison de la Mutualité

June 3-6

London, England (ABA)
Olympia Exhibition Centre

October 14-17

Florence, Italy (ALAI)
Palazzo Corsini

November

Boston, MA (ABAA)

2000

February 25-27

Los Angeles, CA (ABAA)
Marriott LAX

May 25-28

Paris, France (SLAM)
La Maison de la Mutualité

September 21-23

Edinburgh, Scotland (ILAB)
18th International Book Fair

BPL Establishes Flood Relief Fund

Trustees of the Boston Public Library have established a "Flood Relief Fund" to help pay the multi-million-dollar costs resulting from a massive water main break on August 16 that flooded the basements of the Central Library in Copley Square, destroying or damaging hundreds of thousands of books, documents, maps, recordings, and microfiche. It was the worst disaster to hit the nation's first public library in its 150-year history.

The response by individuals and corporations throughout New England was immediate and gratifying, according to BPL President Bernard Margolis.

"Patrons came to the library carrying milk crates from their homes, while others offered cash contributions to help in the effort. It has been clear right from the start," Margolis said, "that people were taking the library's loss personally and wanted to be a part of the relief effort."

More than \$100,000 in cash and in-kind contributions have already been received from corporations and individuals, ranging from \$10 from a woman in Malden and an anonymous individual gift of \$10,000, to a gift of 25,000 milk crates worth more than \$50,000 by Hood Milk Company.

The City-Wide Friends of the Boston Public Library, a grass-roots organization of neighborhood library advocates, contributed \$10,000, and the Friends of the Roslindale Branch Library added another \$200. Cash gifts have also been received from Staples (\$15,000), the Boston Globe Foundation (\$10,000), the History Chan-

nel and Cablevision (\$5,000), and Bromer Booksellers (\$2,500).

Early on, the library made a public request for milk crates and boxes needed to ship its water-damaged materials to restoration facilities in the western part of the state and to Texas. In addition to the 25,000 crates provided by Hood, the library received 500 crates each from Wal-Mart and Gillette, and 200 crates from Rent-A-Crate in Waltham.

Other gift-in-kind contributions received to date include four photo copiers from Ikon, valued at more than \$16,000, with the mechanisms to make them coin-operated, valued at \$4,000, donated by Statler Associates, the company that services the library's photocopiers.

Starbucks held a unique giveaway in Copley Park in front of the library on August 26, which raised \$3,000 for the library. The purveyor of fine coffee and coffee ice cream bars donated \$5 to the BPL for each ice cream bar they gave away to passersby. They ran out of the allotted 500 ice cream bars long before they ran out of willing takers. They also gave away Starbucks t-shirts to anyone who donated \$5 or more to the fund, which netted an additional \$300.

The library welcomes additional monetary gifts and gifts-in-kind from interested individuals and corporations. Contributions should be sent to the BPL Flood Relief Fund, c/o of The Boston Public Library Foundation, 376 Boylston Street, #503, Boston, MA 02116, or call 617/247-8980. ■

New at ABAC: Committee, Newsletter

The Antiquarian Booksellers Association of Canada has elected a new executive committee: President, Michael John Thompson; Vice-President, Steven Temple; Past-President, Richard Shuh; Secretary, R. R. Knott; Treasurer, Antonia Greenwood; and Directors, Mike McBurnie, Jeri Bass, Wilfred de Freitas, and Joanna Hagar.

All ABAC correspondence should now be directed to Michael John Thompson,

4376 West Tenth Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia V6R 2H7, Canada; phone: 1-604-224-4832; fax 1-604-224-4832; email: mjt@mjtbooks.com. The ABAC web site remains www.abac.ca.

Michael John Thompson will now also be editing the *Newsletter* of the ABAC. Items of interest to the Canadian book scene can be directed to him at the above addresses and phones. ■

Bibliography Bar

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

by Rob Rulon-Miller

The holiday season is upon us, and before too many more copies of *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* are misdescribed, I thought I would share what little I know about the various printings of one of our most famous Christmas tales.

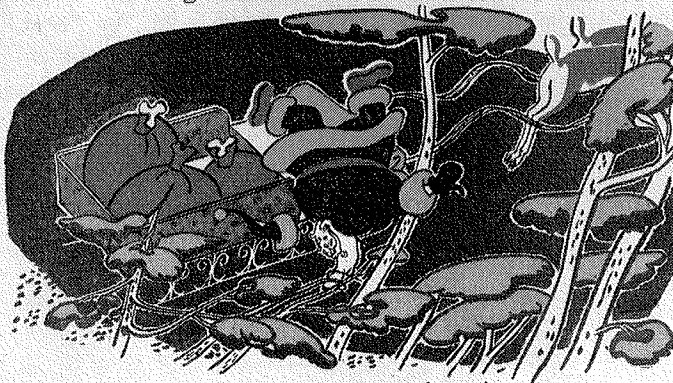
The story was written by Robert L. May of Evanston, Illinois for Montgomery Ward for free distribution during the Christmas season, 1939. There were two issues of the 1939 edition. The regular issue, of which some 2.4 million copies were printed, was given away to customers and customers' children at Montgomery Ward stores. This issue is bound in glossy red paper wrappers with Rudolph illustrated on the front and a "Merry Christmas" greeting from Montgomery Ward on the back. The book measures 10-1/4 x 7-1/2 inches, and contains [32] pages, plus wrappers. It is illustrated throughout in red, brown, and two shades of blue. The illustrator was Denver Gillan.

There was also a limited issue of 1000 copies bound in brown cloth with the front wrapper (only) of the regular issue laid down on the front cover. This edition was distributed to executives of Montgomery Ward and other company VIPs including suppliers. I have seen a copy bound in red cloth with both front and back wrappers laid down, but I believe this to be merely a rebound copy, as I have it on May's own authority that the back cover of the issue of 1000 is devoid of illustration.

A second edition of *Rudolph* was published in 1946. This edition, of which 3.6 million copies were printed, is identical to the first edition of 1939 except for two changes in the illustrations. In the first edition on page [9] the airplane has only three engines. By 1946 four-engine planes had come into prominence, and the illustration was changed to depict a plane with four engines. Also, in the 1939 edition page [6] shows elves helping Santa load his sleigh. In the 1946 edition the elves are not present.

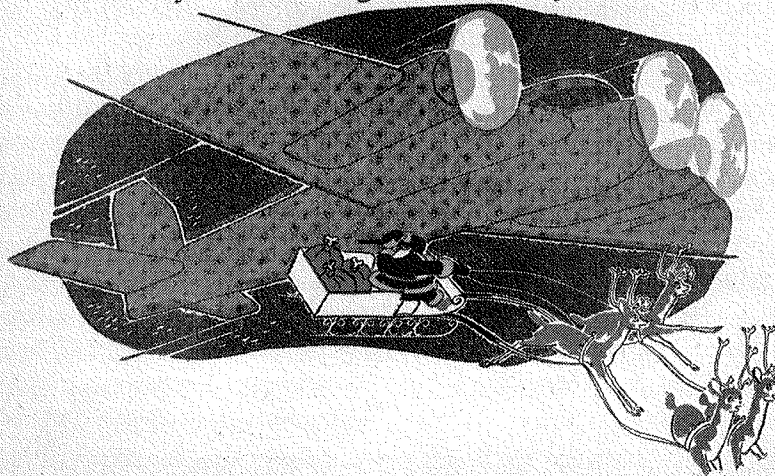
Just NOT-getting-LOST needed all Santa's skill . . .

With street-signs and numbers more difficult still.



He tangled in tree-tops again and again,

And barely missed hitting a tri-motored plane.



Based on the sensational success of the Rudolph character, a trade edition was published by Maxton Publishers, Inc., New York, in 1947, in the publisher's "Maxton Books for Little People" series. The (unattributed) illustrations are by Marion Guild. It measures 10-1/8 x 7-1/8 inches and is bound in glazed pictorial paper-covered boards, with Maxton ads on the back cover. This edition contains [32] pages and is illustrated throughout.

Maxton also published a pop-up edition of *Rudolph* in 1950. This is spiral-bound in stiff paper wrappers, also with illustrations by Marion Guild. It measures 10-5/8 x 8-1/2 inches. There are 5 pop-ups and a number of other illustrations throughout.

As an aside, Paul Wing made a recording of the Rudolph story on the

RCA-Victor label, a double album produced in 1947. In 1949, composer Johnny Marks, who was a friend of May, wrote a song about Rudolph. It was recorded in 1949 by Gene Autry, and it became Autry's biggest selling record. There were also Rudolph slippers, a Rudolph cuddle-toy, Rudolph jigsaw puzzles, a Rudolph push-out "puzzle toy," and a Rudolph sweatshirt, all available from Montgomery Ward.

This column is open to anyone who has bibliographic information not readily available in published bibliographies. Please send your contributions to the Newsletter at 400 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55102 or via email at rulon@winternet.com.

ILAB Congress

continued from front page

had been placed a white coffeepot, cups, and several water bottles and glasses. This empty room must be so cold and damp in the winter that, even now, in my mind, I can feel the chill; but with nine live bodies (seven committee members, a past president, and the chair of the Bibliographical Prize), heated discussion, and general good cheer there was nothing but warmth there during two days of meetings.

The Committee discussed a number of issues, including a new edition of the *ILAB Directory* (due out at the end of 1999), an Internet proposal put forth by Bob Fleck, Alain Marchiset, and Georg Beran (reported elsewhere in this issue), finances (ILAB made money last year and is operating in the black), the *ILAB Newsletter* (next issue is January 1999), rules (a new edition, with guidelines for book fairs and congresses, is scheduled to be issued late in 1999), elections (a controversy over the recent ballot was averted), the Bibliographical Prize (as reported in the last issue of the *Newsletter*, it was awarded this year to Lucas Heinrich Wüthrich for his four-volume work on the seventeenth-century Swiss

engraver, Matthäus Merian, entitled *Das druckgraphische Werke van Matthäus Merian*), and other assorted matters of business. These matters were all brought together and presented at the Presidents' Meeting on the following day, Sunday—same building, different room, this time a two-tiered library lined with books inside glass cabinets, a very appropriate and conducive setting for the matters at hand. This meeting consisted of twenty-seven attendees, including the nine mentioned above, sixteen national presidents or their delegates, and two translators. Although there had been considerable debate over at least one issue in the Committee Meeting, the Committee presented a unified front to the Presidents, and all was harmony.

After the Committee meeting on Saturday there was a dinner for the committee members, the presidents, and their spouses at the restaurant Do & Co., overlooking the Stephansplatz. After the Presidents' Meeting on Sunday we were served lunch at the restaurant König von Ungarn, one of the finest restaurants in Vienna, or so I was told, where we were served endless courses. When the waiter brought on the sherbet, I thought we were done, having had already a salad plate of hors d'oeuvres, soup, and a plate of shrimp with stuffed green peppers. But this was

not all, for we were also served duck with morel mushrooms and carrots, and then chocolate mousse and orange cake, and finally coffee. This lunch didn't end until 4:00 p.m., which gave us three hours to muster the courage for an evening buffet. So ended the business meetings of this ILAB Congress, and the theme of the Congress—food—was already set in stone, a good chunk of which had already settled in our stomachs.

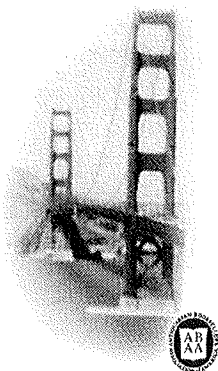
The General Assembly was held on Monday, October 5 in the "Wirtschaftskammer Wien" (the tradesmen's hall), while spouses and guests were invited to visit the Kaiserappartements and the Ehemalige Hofsilber-und Tafelkammer. After the General Assembly, a hefty lunch, including tongue and bone marrow, was served at the Hotel Marriott. During the afternoon ILAB sponsored its Book Trade Symposium, modeled after that held at the ILAB Congress in Los Angeles in 1996. During this symposium—introduced by Kay Craddock of Australia and moderated by Arnoud Gerits of The Netherlands—Simon Finch (ABA), Rodolphe Chamonal (SLAM), and John Wronoski (ABAA) each presented a talk designed to provoke discussion about the book trade. Mr. Finch spoke on the relationship between booksellers and clients; Mr. Chamonal presented a tribute to his late father, Francois Chamonal; and Mr. Wronoski presented a paper on "Why Johnny Can't Sell Books: Education and the Future of the American Rare Book Trade." Approximately eighty attendees crammed into a small room in the basement of the Radisson Hotel (just a block away from the Marriott), and there was a good deal of discussion afterwards, especially in reference to Mr. Wronoski's presentation.

That evening we were treated to a "Heuriger" dinner at the Beethovenhaus, the old house/restaurant of the Mayer family, which is purportedly completely unchanged since Beethoven lived there in 1817. At that time a spa was located nearby, which Beethoven visited, hoping to find relief from his worsening deafness. Here, during an earlier stay, he composed his Sixth (Pastoral) Symphony and also worked on his Ninth (Choral) Symphony. The delegates occupied four rooms of

32nd

CALIFORNIA
INTERNATIONAL
ANTIQUARIAN
BOOK FAIR

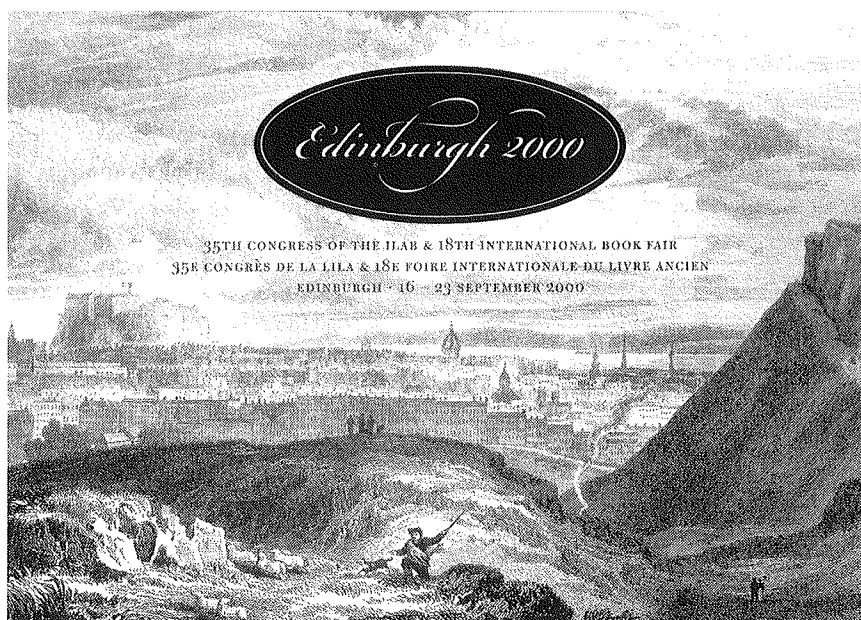
Concourse Exhibition Center
635 Eighth Street (at Brannan)
San Francisco, California, USA
February 12th, 13th, 14th, 1999



long, narrow tables, and we were served a special vintage of both red and white wines made from grapes grown by the Mayer family on their own self-managed vineyards. We dined on a cold buffet, warm roasts and sausages, with cheese and strudels, and were delighted by a strolling violinist and accordion player. In spite of the rain, the evening was indeed very festive.

On Tuesday we took a bus excursion to the Burgenland, along the Neusiedlersee to Eisenstadt where we visited the Esterházy Castle. Here, in a concert hall where Joseph Haydn once performed, we listened to a Haydn concert and were then able to visit the castle as well. After lunch in the "Schlosstaverne" opposite the castle entrance we had free time to stroll Eisenstadt. Many of the delegates visited the Haydn home, which is now a small but interesting museum, the Jewish Museum, and the Bergkirch, a rather bizarre church with a plethora of badly made statues of Christ and the Apostles in crypts along the parapets. The architecture was unfathomable and seemed a bad mix of Turkish influence and the Spanish Mission architecture of southern California. The church, even with Haydn's mausoleum within, was a delight to leave behind.

Late in the afternoon we were again on the busses and headed to the Burg Forchtenstein, a large medieval castle on a high promontory, surrounded by a prodigious moat. Since the seventeenth century it has been owned by the Royal House of Esterházy, and it played the crucial role of an unconquerable bulwark for the Hapsburg Empire against invading Turks from the east. Inside the castle we climbed perhaps a hundred stairs (or so it seemed) to the impressive collections of ivory, silver, and porcelain, a remarkable library, and a wonderful seventeenth-century Turkish tent with an accompanying leather chair and table out front, all ready for peace treaties to be signed. The best artifact in my opinion, however, was an enormous and thankfully stuffed eighteenth-century crocodile from the Nile suspended like any ordinary chandelier from the ceiling of the entryway to the castle. I imagined it, perhaps, ranging to and fro in the moat, making this a most impenetrable fortress, even to the



AN INVITATION TO THE 35TH ILAB CONGRESS

It is with greatest pleasure that the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association invites ABAA members to Scotland to take part in the 35th ILAB Congress from September 16-20, 2000. The Congress will be followed on September 21-23 by the ILAB Book Fair, to be held in Edinburgh's handsome Assembly Rooms.

Many regard Edinburgh as the most beautiful city in the United Kingdom; it is known for its romantic Old Town as well as its neo-classical New Town, both with a multitude of literary and historical associations. The full program of business, study, and entertainment will be staged in Edinburgh's most magnificent interiors. The ABA also looks forward to showing you some of the surrounding countryside.

Further information and application forms will be circulated in Autumn 1999.

Any interim inquiries should be addressed to:

The Administrators, Antiquarian Booksellers' Association

Sackville House, 40 Piccadilly, London W1V 9PA

PHONE: 0171-439-3118 FAX: 0171-439-3119

EMAIL: aba@antiquarian.com



bravest of attackers. After an hour of wine-tasting we ate dinner in the castle's cavernous wine cellar, which looked very much like a London tube stop, and we were all delighted, and indeed reveled in the Tamburizza music provided by a group of Croatian Hungarians who later hawked CDs and booklets about themselves to us. This seemed a little tacky, but there was much dancing, good cheer, and high spir-its, and to this delegate, the evening was the highlight of the Congress.

On Wednesday morning the delegates went by bus to the Schönbrunn Castle, but

by this time I was so worked over by jet lag and the ferocious pace of the Congress that I slept in, not waking until nearly noon. Refreshed, I rejoined my fellow delegates that afternoon at the Nationalbibliothek, billed as the most beautiful library in all Europe, if not the world. The library, commissioned by Charles VI, is an example in the extreme of high Baroque architecture, with a most impressive display of shelves of books, of marble columns with gilded capitals, and of

continued on next page

ILAB Congress

continued from previous page

cherub-filled frescos. Of particular note were the four late seventeenth-century Coronelli globes which articulated the central atrium. Once again we delighted in a baroque concert, this time by the Clemencic Consort, which played largely from the works of Johann Heinrich Schmelzer (1623-180).

The farewell dinner and dance on Wednesday evening were held at the

Palace Schwarzenberg. Unfortunately, the dinner was broken up into three very separate rooms, with the music, the traditional farewells, and the presentation of the ILAB Bibliographical Prize in one room, and general mayhem in the others. I was in the mayhem. There was a public address system that piped in the speeches and presentations, but the system was so poor that no one could understand what was being said, and so much wine had been poured by that time that I fear there was much sarcasm in the wild applause that ensued at the end of the presentations.

All in all, this was a happy Congress containing all the best traditions (music, food, and good cheer) of central Europe, and the Austrian Association and the committee it put together to coordinate this event deserves the highest praise. Dr. Hansjorg Krug, Hans Dieter Paulusch, and Norbert Donhofer are to be thanked and praised for all their hard work. Anyone in ABAA who worked on the Los Angeles Congress will all the more appreciate their efforts, especially since the work was largely undertaken by these three men alone. *Danke, Wien!* ■

Wronoski

continued from front page

accepted at almost every level in American society. It has not been our inclination to look back upon the Sodom and Gomorrah of the old world. Not only is this the general attitude of a nation, but it is the individual approach of nearly every upstart businessman in it, and that includes the antiquarian bookseller. Because there are so few book firms that survive beyond the death of their founders in America, and because there is (thus) little opportunity or for that matter desire, among American booksellers for apprenticeship in an established firm, in which circumstances one might expect substantial exposure on a regular basis to a wide range of real antiquarian material, the average American bookseller is *sui generis* in the same way that we Americans tend to perceive our nation itself. Furthermore, nothing prevents anyone here from establishing himself as an antiquarian bookseller—as a colleague puts it in his humorous occasional magazine column documenting the absurdities to which his fellow booksellers sometimes fall prey, “you don’t need a license to be a bookseller.” A distinguished collector recently remarked to me, “it’s a good thing that the book trade is completely unregulated, that one can’t expect a mandatory level of competence or knowledge, otherwise we (collectors) would never get a break.” That we are not encumbered by history probably has its benefits to us as well. It is surely responsible for a

healthy willingness to take a new approach to an old enterprise, and it stimulates motion where there is the constant threat of stagnation.

The American book trade, though ostensibly vigorous, is far from univocal in its forecasts for the future. Even as unprecedented numbers of customers are flowing to the trade through the internet, there is a widespread belief that our customer base is dwindling. To all appearances, the quality of material in the trade is at a strong level, yet it is generally lamented that it is becoming more and more difficult, and more expensive, to acquire significant material. Although hundreds of book fairs take place in the US each year, large numbers of which are oversubscribed, there is a common perception that book fairs have proliferated to the point that they no longer arouse much public interest. Few rare booksellers are sanguine about the ever more dominant role of the auction house in the American book trade, even though more and more booksellers themselves seem willing to place material in the hands of both the traditional houses, and the newly established on-line auction services. Many worry that there is a critical lack of young booksellers, while others are concerned about the superabundance of new booksellers coming to the internet and diluting the stock and the quality of stock in the book trade as a whole. The internet is changing the way we do business irrevocably, and for the worse say some, while more and more of their colleagues embrace the technology which provides them access to

untold numbers of customers they could never have reached before. The prevalence of such antinomies in the dialogue of the American book trade suggests a tension that may indicate that we have arrived at a critical moment in our history.

Of late there has been particular concern among the American rare book trade, notably among the Board of Governors of the ABAA, that there is no obvious next generation of booksellers, that, in effect, there are no “young” booksellers; that the competence of each succeeding generation is in decline; and that the need for such organizations as ABAA or ILAB is not apparent to the young bookseller, to the extent that he exists at all. At present, the ABAA can boast fewer than ten booksellers under the age of 40; the typical applicant for membership in the organization is much more likely to be in his or her fifties than in his or her thirties, and will almost certainly come from the ranks of collectors who have retired from another profession than from a long career as a bookseller or an assistant in the trade. The myriad distractions of our post-modern way of life do not conduce to the protracted solitary relationship with books that is the *sine qua non* of the bookseller’s path. Clever young introverts today can readily find dozens of engaging calls upon their attention that do not involve books, and they have many more career options than existed when we became booksellers. The least talented computer drudge can easily expect to find employment more lucrative and secure than that which awaits most ambitious young booksellers.

In fact, something of the air of failure or incapacity for life in the world hangs about many of even the greatest antiquarian booksellers—as a colleague put it to me, “most of us were too feeble for real employment;” another typically asks of new booksellers he meets, “So what’s wrong with *you*?” That the book is a retrograde technology is a truism which only now, after the first waves of the new electronic world are subsiding, is coming to be assessed rationally. Yet already many even among the guardians, the librarians themselves, have been seduced by the notion that their calling is the management of information. Rather than the paradise that the great Argentine librarian Jorge Luis Borges imagined as being structured like a library, they are intent upon a vapid hell built of reams and reams, or bites and bites, of what had once been despised as “data.”

The young American bookseller of today faces not only an entrenched bastion of accomplished elder colleagues in mid-career, many of whom have pioneered the bookselling strategies he must somehow now employ in competition with them, not only a prospect in which the traditional avenues of bookshop and book fair have become economically unviable, but an environment radically changed, and rapidly changing in which he must compete, and one in which it is harder than ever to establish a reputation, or even a public identity. The outlook for a young prospective bookseller with no particular prior connection to the trade, but only a desire to spend his time among books, is grim. There is no comfortable means of entry into the trade in which one can expect to be educated in its arcane ways. The likelihood of a young bookseller finding a mentor or an apprenticeship are negligible, even if it were a position he could afford to take. The costs of establishing himself in business and the level at which he must immediately become competitive are forbidding, and the common view among established booksellers would seem to be that fewer rather more booksellers are needed, in light of the diminishing quantities of rare material, and especially the decline of the traditional bibliophile.

It is the opinion of many American booksellers that there really is no American “book market” anymore, but only varying numbers of wealthy trophy-hunters speculating, more or less casually, for a few years at a time until it no longer piques their interest to do so, or until they deem it time for “profit-taking.” We aren’t selling books, they say, these wealthy “collectors” are buying them, and more often than not, they are buying them on their own terms. In the words of a colleague, “we can’t expect that a man who has made a billion dollars in the stock market is suddenly going to become a different sort of person when he comes to collect books.” The speculative element that infiltrated all antiquarian markets on the tails of the art trade of the sixties has become entrenched in the American book trade, and we have been irrevocably changed by it. Very few booksellers can continue plying a traditional way of bookselling with equanimity in the face of the frantic commerce in a relatively small number of fetishized titles going on around him. There are, of course, exceptions both among the trade and among collectors, but they are exceptions that prove the rule. Those who can afford to make a patient appraisal of the current situation will recognize that what is real in the book world will persist; others will observe that the underbidder on the Caxton Chaucer had begun collecting less than a year ago.

In America, scholars, the obvious and real constituency for many antiquarian books, seem to abide by a puritan ethic, a distrust of the “object” in favor of the “text.” In the weary words of Walpole scholar and bibliophile S. Wilmarth Lewis, “why is it that so many academics hate books?” This disturbing observation reflects the deeper reality that a tradition of book collecting has never really taken root in America, even among those who would seem to be the most natural custodians of the book. Our earliest bibliophiles were deracinated Europeans who looked to the East for their inspiration. In the glory days of American book collecting (and bookselling), Americans brought a new sense of scale, a seemingly unslakable thirst and, perhaps, a new set of tactics to the enterprise, but essentially, the

great American collectors were aping their European forebears. Although our history and literature have now become deep enough that they can sustain a uniquely American form of book collecting, the mere fact that modern printing arose in Europe dictates that American bookselling and collecting remain largely a collateral phenomenon. Many more books of all types flow to America than flow away from it. If there are few who any longer regard America as the destiny of the West, it has become, at least, the destination of the rare book and of the rare book trade.

The motives of most contemporary American collectors are not grand—they don’t feel that, in however small a way, they “are preserving the history of the world.” They aren’t creating a personal picture of a time or a subject, and certainly not an analogue of the cosmos. Their “libraries” don’t resonate with unexpected juxtapositions like the disparate guests at a wonderful party. They are instead hanging a ready-made and fully sanctioned portrait on their wall, one which many another collector is hanging on his own at the same time, yet one they may expect will do well when inevitably it is put back upon the block. There was a time not long ago, when almost every collector was at least in some small way or in small locale more “expert” than any bookseller. It behooved the bookseller to serve these collectors by being a generalist, providing a bounty for numbers of discriminating customers. Today, almost every bookseller seems more aware of the meaning of his books than any of his customers, and it behooves him to be a specialist the better to engage the much narrower range of customer he will encounter. Very few collect out of passion for books or from an inner need or in response to an inner voice. They aren’t eccentrics burrowing further and further into an idiosyncratic trench that constitutes an *ex-libris* in itself. Nowadays, collectors are eccentric only in the general characteristics they share with the negligible portion of mankind who wish to surround themselves with books. Book collecting is no longer a spiritual quest in America, or a part of the “good life,” or even a natural

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part of everyday life. American collectors aren't busy books assembling because to have many it is a pleasant thing. Our collectors are not collectors, they are merely aping collectors, or worse yet, perhaps, merely aping what they have heard about collectors. Most are not collecting for essential reasons, in fact, most of them have no idea why they're doing it at all. Book collecting has degenerated into a hobby on the lower levels, and an investment at the heights, and there is little in between. The creative element in collecting seems to have been submerged. Lacking a personal agenda, many collectors recapitulate *Printing and the Mind of Man*, *Connolly's 100*, *Queen's Quorum*, or the currently popular price guides—in a colleague's premises recently I chanced to overhear what turned out to be a very enthusiastic new collector of modern literature declare, rather more vociferously than I'll be able to manage, "First book, big book: isn't that the way it works?" And in fact, the primary price guide in use in America proposes just these as the key to a picture of an author's work. The fact that important literature, even if only the safest "canonic" titles, has become an ever more vital collecting area suggests only that conspicuous consumption still appeals to the American success story, but even very enthusiastic collectors in the field typically remain active for only a few years. There is too much money involved, and too much awareness of the amounts; there is too little of the simpler desire just to be surrounded by many books, or out of a need prior to any thought of money. The market is broad enough to sustain itself, but it is not sufficiently nourishing to sustain the most collectors for a lifetime. The young collector, unless he be blessed with substantial means, has no chance at all.

Though our practice should be directed to the latter, the contemporary trade requires so many more frivolous customers than real collectors in order to survive at the level to which it has become accustomed in recent years, that we end up serving the casual buyer, the hobbyist, the

trophy hunter, the least rather than the most ambitious. Our stocks become narrower, less adventurous and less textured. We are complicit in consigning vast ranges of books to oblivion, and we are permitting the sort of customer whose interests are not to the long-term good of the trade to dictate our behavior. And these are precisely the collectors whose books will be represented by auction houses when they have "finished" their collection, a notion which itself strikes one as odd. It will be the disdained idealists of the collecting world who will persist in the face of what they must perceive as the antagonism of the trade. The truly great American collectors almost uniformly collected against the grain of the trade, recognizing value in what had been disdained by the marketplace. In the eyes of the trade, Thomas Streeter, William Loring Andrews, George Harding, James Lennox of Henry Wagner were collecting junk. And current practice must be even more discouraging to the visionary collectors of today.

There is no topic that currently engages the thinking of rare booksellers in America more than the Internet. Every day dozens of members of the ABAA join in electronic discussion and argument about the role of the internet in the trade, the future of the internet, the value of the internet and what our presence as an organization on the internet ought to be. There is no consensus, but among the rather nuanced arguments one hears, it is apparent that dealers in rarer or esoteric material tend to be suspicious of its blandishments, while the general dealer with a less expensive stock and specialists in many kinds of more modern books are enthusiastic about its effects upon their businesses. Even one of the most prestigious firms in the country recently registered on-line that the internet has become crucial to its own business.

Until fairly recently, almost all antiquarian bookselling was local bookselling. Each bookseller gradually established a sphere of influence, and a coterie of more or less loyal and more or less local customers and sources. Each business was somewhat opaque to other booksellers, and because of this, maybe even to itself. These small duchies were more or less

impervious to outside influence as they responded to the needs of a personally developed group of customers whose trust in and reliance upon the bookseller permitted him to take advantage of his own knowledge of the broader world to secure books sought by his customers from his colleagues. Bookseller and collector engaged in a long-term dialogue in which they influenced each other mutually. In some important respects, it would have been more accurate to describe a constellation of individual book businesses than to speak of a "book trade" in a general sense.

Over many years, and especially with the advent of the book fair, the trade came more to resemble a bazaar in which all or most of its possibilities became, at least in principle, more or less a matter of public knowledge. The simultaneous decline of the large open bookshop pressed more and more booksellers into increasingly specialized private businesses which acted more or less in the manner of the traditional local bookshop, but on a national or even international scale, relying upon a vigorous catalogue trade, lavishly supported by the burgeoning of institutions of higher learning, and upon book fairs for sales, the latter becoming especially important as a source of new customers and stock.

New developments in communication technology seem to spell the end of this rather private world. Tendentially, at least, the internet reveals the most closely kept knowledge of the trade—the "real" value of rare books, and the names of the customers who want them; it is essentially globalizing, and mandates the constantly increasing internationalization of the book trade. The carefully maintained pyramidal structure that had sustained the trade in a sort of equilibrium is eroded by the internet. Any bookseller can, in principle, locate the customer for the rare book he may find only occasionally. Information as to book values, information the last generation of booksellers learned at great expense only over many years, is readily available on the internet. Furthermore, there is no need to sell the book into the trade. Everyone has access to the customers the bookseller of the past discovered only as his business and his credibility gradually improved. And even

in the event the internet fails to cough up the desired information about a particularly unusual acquisition for the new bookseller, the emergence of on-line auctions, perhaps the chief threat to the traditional food-chain of the rare book trade, offers a rapid means of testing the water, though it casts in stark relief the always-inherent potential of auction as a mode of book-selling ignorance. The imperfect knowledge of our colleagues and the differential spread of the most current trade information can no longer be relied upon to sustain a distance between the highest and lowest echelons of the trade.

The internet has already insinuated significant changes into the American book trade. It is democratizing the book trade beyond the wildest egalitarian dreams of even the most American of us. Anyone with some books can be a bookseller on the internet. The cost of commercial space or of printing and mailing a catalogue are no longer an impediment to the beginning bookseller. On-line bookselling provides anyone access to an enormous customer-base at virtually no cost, and it has

become apparent to anyone who has even dabbled in on-line bookselling that there is a much larger book-buying public than any individual bookseller might have imagined. Their needs and buying habits differ across the full spectrum, and in aggregate they cannot be marginalized as "irrelevant to the real business of selling rare books." True, a substantial number are there to find one book only, and many of the most serious book buyers in the world will never purchase a book on the internet, or perhaps even browse it, but it would be arbitrary to ignore the many who will visit it repeatedly or their reasons for doing so. The internet has compelled many antiquarian booksellers to re-assess just what constitutes a desirable book. Many collectors have been underserved by the specialist trade in rare books. Catalogues can be only so large, and authors who are not in great public demand will tend to be neglected by catalogue booksellers. Since any given book requires only one customer, however, books by many of these neglected authors have again become commercially viable, and thousands of customers may recently

have been satisfied in ways they futilely sought for years before the advent of the internet. Many a book that has lingered on a bookseller's shelf untouched and unremarked awaiting its one customer sells instantly on the internet, because its one customer is out there waiting along with the one customer for tens of thousands of other books. And we would do well to remember that, in spite of the heady world of ever higher prices in which we operate, the true collector is often seeking relatively inexpensive titles among the hundreds or thousands he craves.

One obvious benefit of the internet is that it reveals the inventories of innumerable booksellers whom even the most diligent collector could never have ferreted out in the past. At the same time, many modern first editions that had generally been deemed uncommon, are so readily available on the internet, that the speculative prices they had achieved must be scaled back. Specialist bookseller's can no longer control the flow of these books by virtue of their privileged access to customers or the barriers imposed by business overhead. It would seem that the trade in inexpensive, say \$20-\$200 books, has been permanently damaged by the internet, where any collector or part time bookseller willing to accept less than the highest retail price may easily undercut the established bookseller. And there is such a proliferation of booksellers on the internet that there is no possibility of controlling the flow of such quantities of material. Historically, the tendency of commerce has been to reduce the role that middlemen, transportation, storage, and even advertising play in the pricing of commodities. The internet would seem to offer the ideal frictionless plane on which to conduct the retail sale of almost anything. In this environment, it is inevitable that the prices of books obtainable enough to be in competition with other copies on-line must fall. It is obvious that the strength of the internet book trade has had at least a temporarily deleterious effect upon both catalogue and book fair sales. Many customers have taken to the new technology with an initial passion that has made significant inroads into their disposable incomes.

One thing that is clear is that the internet is the bookshop of the young bookseller of the future, and this means that the exigencies of the technology and the modes of engagement with books it encourages will affect his education in books. Because the internet requires only the most minimal commitment either to books or to the commerce in them, and little time beyond an initial investment in making descriptions of them available, it is highly probable that the medium will encourage part-time or even *ad hoc* bookselling. Because the internet gives the convincing impression of being self-contained, young booksellers are less likely to look outside it for the sorts of information they seek, as to bibliography, pricing etc. Because it is a medium that encourages and rewards speed, it is likely as well to encourage cursory or even shoddy cataloguing practices, a disconcerting trend in light of the general decline in cataloguing standards: in its brief history, the commonest complaint among seasoned bookpeople is that books are not as they are described on the internet, a situation that must change, one supposes, with negative feedback. Because one isn't actually looking at books when one "browses" the internet, but only rather slight records of books, it would seem likely that the sort of intimate relationship with books that results in an appreciation of them as objects will gradually diminish. Because the internet best serves customers seeking a single title, the pleasures of browsing, and the joys of serendipity are lost to it; the senses are not satisfied and the hard-won and ultimately vastly more efficient skills of rapidly scanning shelves for the unusual fall into desuetude. Of course, booksellers will still require, and customers will still be compelled by the unruly world of the bookshop and book fair as sources, but it is unarguable that as the internet becomes responsible for more and more sales, the fortunes of the open shop must decline yet further. Although big inventories may again become desirable in the face of the diverse clientele the internet will attract and serve, the large open shop is not likely to enjoy a renaissance as a consequence. Unlike a cata-

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logue, which quickly reveals the nature and extent of a bookseller's involvement with books, and, in fact, constitutes the bookseller's signature, the internet tends to be non-hierarchical, impersonal and all but useless in helping a young bookseller to establish an identity among the other booksellers beside whom his books are offered. Because most young internet booksellers have little personal interaction with their colleagues at large, very few of them are conversant with the code of behavior that has evolved in the trade over many many years, and their education in such matters takes commensurately longer. Of course, the structure of internet business changes so rapidly that what may be said of it today may well be untrue tomorrow, and since it also inherently constitutes a forum for communal self-reflection, perhaps its present immaturity as a bookshop will quickly be redressed.

Due to the gradual natural depletion of the objects, and to the special knowledge required of a collector or seller of real antiquarian books, trade in them has become a mode of connoisseurship, in which few young American booksellers of today can hope to become accomplished. The daily involvement with a diverse range of the material which is the traditional and the best education in rare books has become a virtual impossibility as the great general antiquarian bookshops have fallen away. A small number of assistants in the premier antiquarian businesses of our day may arise from the trade to continue this tradition, but, as always, the antiquarian bookseller of tomorrow is more likely to descend from the ranks of disaffected (or failed) scholars and librarians, or of the monied bibliophiles, whose mysterious presence in the trade has always lent it a fundamental air of dignity and an appearance of timeless stability, than from within the trade itself. As older books become more and more opaque to the young bookseller of today and of the future, he has little choice but to sell young books. An active trade in modern literature, Ameri-

cana, children's books, photography, genre fiction, etc., permits him to deal in a species of rare book that is also available in common circulation: a valuable modern book may reside just about anywhere. But specialization tends to become confining. Very few booksellers beginning in the nearest-to-hand fields of modern rare books ever broaden their activities to include a significant range of older books for reasons that must be fairly apparent. The obvious tendency suggested by this situation is a less and less bridgeable rift between the modern and the antiquarian rare bookseller. Except in the instructive and hopeful cases of true generalists in rare books, whose businesses remain open to all possibilities, the trade seems in danger of dividing in two.

Some years ago, a then-very-young German colleague commented regarding the American book trade, "You have nothing old, so you must save what is new," a remark undoubtedly generated by his perplexity over the brisk American trade in relatively recent literary first editions, often of no great distinction. The same view is mirrored in a common perception of the American book trade among our own collectors and among antiquarian booksellers as well, that it is dominated by the field of "modern first editions," and this may be true in essence if not in fact. A quick perusal of the directory of the ABAA will definitively reveal that, at least among our organization, the modern first edition represents a relatively small component of the trade, but there is a basis for the perception nonetheless. The field attracts new customers at a rate of which no other specialty can boast. The reasons for this may be self-evident: there is an emotional component in the attraction these books exert, both in the nature of the literature itself and because it is steeped in the charged memories of youth, that other fields can draw upon only in rare instances; the attention that has been paid to appearance in their production comports with a deeply visual material culture, whose memory of the past itself is articulated on visual lines; and the books require no specific preparation: everyone can and does read or has read novels, and everyone has been affected by them. Even though it

did not arise out of nothing, the field of modern first editions has provided the model for the speculative path on which the American trade has been bent for the last couple decades. It is the essence of speculation to be forward-looking. Even if it begins in locating undervalued masterworks, it must soon arrive at the cusp of the market where the future melts into the past, where the work of practicing artists is assessed *sub specie futuri*, where trained tastes can clash against each other in a battle for the future of western culture, and not incidentally, for the redemption of their vision in lucre. Furthermore, the books engage the imagination of even the non-collecting public: they are collected by movie stars, directors and giants of the financial world; in the rare instances in which the media deign to take notice of the rare book trade, the modern first edition figures prominently, no doubt because an exotic story about a book one is likely actually to have read, or which perhaps even rests silently upon one's own bookshelves is more likely to engage the common imagination than one about an obscure volume one will likely never see or for that matter read, and of which one may never even have heard. There are many customers for a small number of ever more expensive titles—one of our most esteemed colleagues comments that, really, his business consists of selling the same fifty titles on a regular basis—and there are hosts of customers for desirable books at the lower levels, including the very recent titles known as hyper-modern first editions, speculation in which can rival the pitch of excitement an IPO may ignite in the stock market. The whole texture of the modern first edition field suggests a boom-town, in which fortunes can be made overnight, and it consequently evokes the distrust, and occasional envy of the antiquarian bookseller. To the unconvinced, it may appear that the entire market is driven by considerations that are fundamentally irrelevant, the presence of dust jackets and minutiae of condition, imperceptible to most, which can raise or decrease the price of books by factors of two or three or even fifty. Though there are compelling, non-definitive, arguments on each side, the American preference for

the first edition in "original condition" and tending toward "as new," is *fait accompli* in the market. It bespeaks the magical survival of artifacts of the "gone world," so poignantly understood by the great book collector, Walter Benjamin, which re-appear in the world from under the detritus of indifferent or even hostile time as the phoenix-like eruption of the lost historical moment into the present. While the antiquarian book has become opaque, its aura impenetrable except to those privileged by specialized education to receive it, the modern book in original condition is a mystical residue, we are much readier to embrace.

Our relationships with our customers may also, to some extent, derive from the practice of the modern first edition field: they are *prima facie* rather antagonistic than co-operative. We are the knife in the invisible hand of the market, constantly exacting a bit more blood from those who would have the finest copies of the best books. A prominent dealer in modern first editions has remarked that, "if [he] receives a dozen orders for a book he's catalogued, he's made a mistake, and one that ill serves his market; a book is priced correctly when [he] receives a single order for it." If he has miscalculated so wildly the supply of, or the demand for a book, he has not only failed to serve his own interests, but he has failed his customers in providing an accurate and meaningful sense of the place of that book in the world.

The generation of American booksellers that came of age in the last decades codified the principles of modern rare book-selling. In so doing, it responded to manifest needs in the market, no doubt needs which, unpredictably, have eventuated in our current unbalanced view of the historic range of books. But it re-invented the wheel creatively, devoting the same care and passion to the books of its own century that had previously been accorded only the works of earlier ages. Undoubtedly, the enormous wave of scholarly bibliography which has made twentieth-century English language literature some of the best-documented in the history of the book can be directly attributed to this movement. When one peruses

the modern bibliographic literature of the rest of the world, one finds it inchoate at best, and more likely a shambles. The poor documentation of Russian and Soviet bloc literatures, Cuban and Latin American literature in general, that of embattled countries everywhere and even the remarkable modern literature of Germany, stands in stark contrast to the achievements of descriptive bibliography of modern books in America. While the bibliographic rigors of the modern book don't readily compare with those of the antiquarian book on the level of the individual volume, modern American bibliography reveals the wealth of modern printing under the rubrics of author and subject, which more immediately affect the contemporary reader and scholar. It cannot be a coincidence that in Russia or Cuba, where no antiquarian book trade has existed for decades, many of the most important twentieth century authors' works still do not exist in textually sound editions.

But it may be that the self-assertion of the modern book in America has completed itself in a such a way that it now stands as an equal among the great rare books of the past; that the moment of the "modern first edition" as an unruly child clamoring for attention is over; that it is now our obligation to re-integrate it into a larger picture for our customers. The battle of the ancients and moderns that has been played out in the American book trade over the last decades, need not remain a source of division, but might instead represent an accumulation of potential from which the trade as a whole may benefit.

Because we are torn by the dual imperatives of commerce and scholarship, between which most of us cannot afford but to strike a more or less uneasy balance, there is constant danger, especially in a climate so sensitized to the virtual markets of Wall Street and the internet, that even veteran booksellers might submit unreflectively to a standard beneath that to which our vocation calls us. As it is our responsibility to encourage depth and breadth among our customers, to encourage their growth or development, so should it be the duty of our organization to encourage the same among its members. The ABAA has long been

pulled back and forth by conflicting strains of populism and elitism within it. If a real and vital democracy is to be achieved, it will be only through an integration of these strains on a higher plane; and the best way to effect this may be for us to take up the matter of the education of our next generations as a responsibility of the established trade. The practices and principles of antiquarian bookselling are merely the ability to read the rare book. If they are not received by new generations, they are lost. We can embrace the positive potential of new technologies which encourages us to take a broader view of books and of the people who want them, without surrendering the patient virtues by which our trade has developed and endured.

At a time when the air, nay the very aether is thick with commerce, we would do well to recall what it is about the trade that has opened it to the possibilities that now threaten to undermine it. We are the custodians of charged or magical objects. The book is the very soul of Western culture. Like nothing else in the material culture of the west, it speaks to us: it is its very nature to speak to us. A prominent colleague, well known for his unique perspectives on the book trade, once said to me, in a way that conveyed his thrust perhaps more profoundly than its mere contents, "We're selling the best things in the world." In recent years, it seems, the world has suddenly become aware of this fact, and customers and money have flowed to the trade from all sorts of unlikely quarters—and the fact that one-third of the registered exhibitorship for the next New York book fair consists of foreign booksellers, many among the most prominent in the world, suggests that all this has not been lost on our international colleagues. Although many of our customers are not aware of it, it is its spiritual force that attracts them to the book, and it is the monastic vocation of the book trade that has conserved this force over the ages and which mediates this force for the public today. If we permit ourselves to become lost in the whirl of commerce without remaining moored in our traditions, we are lost indeed. Let us make haste slowly. ■

Middle Atlantic Chapter Offers Program on Rare Book Appraisals

The Middle Atlantic Chapter of the ABAA presented a panel discussion on issues related to the appraisal of rare books on October 27, 1998 at the Grolier Club in New York City. The program included the following panelists:

William Barlow, Oakland, California. Mr. Barlow is a noted private collector and a former president of the Bibliographical Society of America. He is also a CPA who has often dealt with the Internal Revenue Service and who has worked with ABAA members on tax issues for many years. Mr. Barlow spoke on the IRS requirements for book appraisals.

Stephen Ferguson, Curator of Rare Books, Firestone Library, Princeton Uni-

versity. Mr. Ferguson presented the institutional view of book appraisals, emphasizing library/donor relations and the need for qualified appraisers.

Mary O'Neal, David O'Neal Antiquarian Books, Boston, Massachusetts. Ms. O'Neal, a highly experienced appraiser, discussed the mechanics of rare book appraisals for the IRS.

David Redden and **Marsha Malanowski**, Sotheby's Auction House, New York. Mr. Redden and Ms. Malanowski examined how the art market deals with IRS challenges and whether similar procedures would work for rare book dealers.

A review of the discussion will appear in the next issue of the *Newsletter*. ■

Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting: An Update

by Michael Ginsberg

In the last issue of the *ABAA Newsletter*, there was a blurb about my attending the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists in Orlando. Here is an update on my participation in the session, "Dealer/Archivist Relations."

The panel was chaired by Carol Matthias of Nichols State University and included Alfred Lemmon of the Historic New Orleans Foundation, Rutherford W. Witthus of the University of Connecticut, and me. Dr. Witthus stressed the need for archivists and librarians to articulate their collections to dealers. He has prepared a checklist of information he feels dealers need to know. This checklist will be presented to the board of the SAA as a model. Dr. Lemmon stressed the need for librarians and archivists to use dealers as part of their collection development program. He also noted that dealers represent his library at auctions. He also advised the people in attendance to use dealers for appraisals and evaluations for insurance purposes. I discussed the bookseller as a resource for book history, auctions, collection development, appraisals, purchases of gift and exchange/duplicate materials, free advice on a number of subjects such as the Internet, and explained what sets ABAA dealers apart from other booksellers.

After the speeches came a flurry of questions, mostly directed to me. I answered as best I could, and tried to be frank and honest about each answer. The questions varied widely: How do we know that what we are buying is okay? What is your return policy? Where can we get an *ABAA Directory*? How do we sell deaccessioned material to a dealer? What do appraisals cost? Could we meet with ABAA people once a year and discuss our mutual problems?

It is my impression that this was a very, very positive experience. I think our association should seek out these types of conferences and meetings and propose ABAA participation. ■

Booksellers, Librarians Meet in LA

by Gordon Hollis

Earlier this year, together with Bruce Whiteman, Librarian of the William Andrews Clark Library at UCLA, I organized two successful and festive dinners attended by local booksellers and rare book librarians from the greater Los Angeles area. Almost thirty people participated in both of these dinners, and we are now planning a third dinner for spring 1999.

Since Bruce and I planned these dinners independently, we did not restrict the guest lists to either ABAA members or to academic librarians. We tended to invite those who worked with antiquarian rather than

twentieth-century materials, since southern California libraries focus on early books.

We planned these dinners in order to foster closer relationships among those in the rare book community of Los Angeles. No speeches were given; we simply got together for drinks and good food. Both dinners were wildly successful (I use the term extravagantly), proving that there is a strong desire for better communication between librarians and antiquarian booksellers. Look to a later issue of the *ABAA Newsletter* for a report on the dinner planned for this coming spring. ■

Chessler Speaks on Mountaineering Books

This fall, ABAA member Michael Chessler of Chessler Books in Evergreen Colorado is presenting illustrated lectures on the collecting of mountaineering books. He will speak to audiences in Seattle, Portland, and Denver about book collecting in general as well as about mountaineering and polar books in particular. Slides of some nifty rare books and collections accompany his lectures.

Chessler's lectures in Portland and Seattle took place in late September. His presentation in Denver is scheduled for November 18, 1998. It will take place at the American Mountaineering Center in Golden, Colorado, at 7:00 p.m. Information is available by phoning 303-279-3080. ABAA members and non-members alike are welcome to attend. ■

Recent Books by Members

● ***Under Cover: Death Stalks the Book Dealer. Twelve Tales of the Intrigue, Murder and Mayhem that Infect the Rare Book World.* By F. J. Manasek.**

Illustrations by Carrie Fradkin. Norwich, VT: Museum Street Press, 1997. 8vo, 144 pages, dust jacket. \$17.00.

Reviewed by David Lesser

"All that mayhem in Amsterdam was unsettling and I needed to do some serious bookselling to clear my head."

Among the debts of gratitude that we owe to America's intelligence operatives—those sturdy men and women who fought a lonely, largely unappreciated, and ultimately successful Cold War against the Soviet Empire—is their gift of Manasek to the antiquarian book trade. His story is one of the most fascinating in the annals of spy literature. Fortunately he has lived to tell the tale although, for obvious reasons, the veil of secrecy must continue to shroud many of his adventures. It can only be hoped that, at some appropriate time when national security is no longer at stake, Manasek will see fit to provide a fuller account of his missions.

Trained in the sciences, Manasek was recruited about thirty years ago: he spent his days at Oxford "poring over bits and pieces of data relating to scientific work being carried out in the Soviet Union," especially its research in biological and chemical weaponry. The imminent threat that Russia would transfer a peculiarly debilitating bacteria to North Vietnam's army sparked Manasek's first dangerous assignment. "It was decided that I would go into the field, and for that I needed cover." Hence, Manasek's new identity as a rare book dealer. Of equal significance, this operation marked the beginning of a lifelong friendship and collaboration with the person identified here only as Lo Ban, "a killer as well as a scholar," who became Manasek's mentor and whose skill and subtlety are much in evidence in these memoirs.

Manasek was evidently traumatized by the moral wilderness of life in the field. Of his first covert operation he says, "I

live still with the ambiguity of not knowing if anything we did prevented the use of the bugs, or if all we accomplished was to kill a few people and have an airplane of innocents blown up." If his memoirs can be believed, Manasek resigned from the agency at an unspecified time and became—in fact as well as appearance—a full-time dealer in antiquarian books and maps. Nevertheless, Evil continued to seek him out. Whether it did so because of some inherent quality of the antiquarian trade, or by virtue of Manasek's past activities as a field operative, or for some other reason, is unclear.

In any event, these pages recount the struggles of Manasek, Lo Ban—now himself a dealer in antiquarian books—and other close associates against international drug cartels, German assassins, unreconstructed Nazis, violent religious zealots, and other foul characters, whether in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Amsterdam, uncivilized Ohio, or rustic Vermont. It is obvious that, despite the book trade's ugly secrets and his fortuitous entry into that questionable occupation, Manasek has come to love his life as an antiquarian: whenever murder and mayhem threaten his equilibrium he turns to the joys of buying, researching, and selling, and to the good fellowship of his peers (well, some of them anyway). He has replaced the moral ambiguity that plagued life as an agency operative with the close and trusting friendships of associates with whom he confronts the world's evils.

Those ostriches among us who refuse to contemplate the dark underside of our trade should not subject themselves to this book. Others who, like Manasek, have the courage to face unpleasant truths should get it and read it.

● ***Thomas Bird Mosher: Pirate Prince of Publishers. A Comprehensive Bibliography and Source Guide* by Philip R. Bishop. Introduction by William E. Fredeman.** The British Library & Oak Knoll Press, 1998. 4to, xvi, 536 pp. (44-page descriptive index); more than 200 illustrations; cloth. \$125.00.

This groundbreaking work firmly and finally establishes the Mosher canon: books produced by the publisher, Thomas Bird Mosher (1852-1923), whose editions helped introduce England's literature and design to the American public. Mosher was one of America's most original and controversial publishers, denounced as "literary pirate" by some, yet praised as "Prince of Publishers" by others. This work unravels the unique publishing story behind the piracy slanders, and more.

Anyone interested in the spread of British fine literature and book design through the private press movement must take Mosher into account. The literary fruits of England's Aesthetic, Pre-Raphaelite, and Arts & Crafts movements all became part of Mosher's mission. Writers like Oscar Wilde, William Morris, and D. G. Rossetti dominated Mosher's stable of authors, and books like the Pre-Raphaelite publication, *The Germ*, Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubáiyát*, and Richard Burton's *The Kasidah* advanced his publishing career. Nor were American authors neglected: the first facsimile of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* was proudly published by Mosher in 1919 as one of his crowning achievements.

Mosher's books also introduced his readers to the graphic art of British designers like Morris, Rossetti, Ricketts, and Housman. Designs from the Vale, Eragny, Daniel, Chiswick, and Kelmscott presses recur throughout Mosher's work, complementing the designs of their American counterparts: Frederick Goudy, Thomas Maitland Cleland, and Bruce Rogers.

This new bibliography fills a need for a reasonably priced reference work on Mosher books, while offering enlarged research and findings. The 1966 Hatch bibliography now commonly sells for \$275-\$350 or more.

Information on The Mosher Books is now made widely accessible to literary scholars, students of literature, special collections librarians, bibliographers, graphic arts historians, book collectors, rare book dealers, and book lovers interested in the history of the book. ■

ABAA Welcomes New Members

The ABAA *Newsletter* welcomes the following new members accepted at the Board of Governors' meeting, August 1998.

PRIMARY MEMBERS

Michael Dawson, Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles, CA.

Thomas W. Dorn, Thomas Dorn Bookseller, 1023 Oak Way, Canton GA 30114; phone and fax: 770-924-9688; email: thomasdornbooks@mindspring.com

Jerard Paul Jordan, The Jordan Book Gallery, 1349 Sheridan Avenue, Cody WY 82414; phone: 307-587-6689; fax:

302-527-4944; email: jjordan@trib.com

Howard Lakin, Lakin & Marley Rare Books, POB 1209, Mill Valley CA 94942; phone: 415-388-4545; fax: 415-388-4546; email: helicon@hooked.net

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Christine L. Doby, A Book Buyers Shop, Houston, TX

Dan Gregory, Between the Covers Rare Books, Inc., Merchantville, NJ

James J. Owens, Thorn Books, Moorpark, CA

Membership Updates

The Antiquarian Shop now has an email address and web site: ltarkus@concentric.net; www.concentric.net/~swampum/antiquarian.htm

Stephen Avedikian has a new email address: savedikian@prodigy.net

Beasley Books has a fax number correction: 773-472-7857.

Jutta Buck has a new fax number: 518-398-7720.

Elaine Lustig Cohen of Ex Libris has an address correction and a new phone number: 160 East 70th Street, New York, NY 10021; phone: 212-744-7869.

James M. Dourgarian has a new area code and email address: phone: 925-935-5033; email: jimbooks@ix.netcom.com

Garcia-Garst, Booksellers has a new email address: ggbooks@jps.net

Robert Gavora now has a fax number: 541-535-1226.

David J. Holmes has a new address, phone, and fax: P.O. Box 548, Collingswood, NJ 08108-9998; phone: 609-854-8570; fax: 609-854-8575.

G. Montlack has a new address: 88 Harwood Road, Jamesboro, NJ 18831; please check with area code 609 information for new phone and fax numbers.

Oak Knoll Books has a new address: 308 Delaware Street, New Castle, DE 19720; phones, email, and web site remain the same.

Old New York Book Shop now has an email address: cgraubart@mindspring.com

Albert J. Phiebig now has an email address: ajpincabaa@aol.com

George Ritzlin has a new address: 473 Roger Williams Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035; phones remain the same.

Charles Seluzicki has a web site correction: www.teleport.com/~cselubks

Karl Schick has a new address and phone number: 161 North Main Street, Sunderland, MA 01375; phone: 413-665-8976.

Thomas F. Schwarz has a new address, phones, and email: 30 Sunnyside Avenue, Mill Valley, CA 94941; phone: 415-383-5399; fax: 415-383-3923; email: ThFSchwarz@aol.com



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Ten Eyck Books now has a fax number
and an email address: fax: 508-490-
9954; email: teneyck@ma.ultranet.com

Ximenes: Rare Books now has an email
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