



The **A B A A**
N E W S L E T T E R
 VOLUME TWO, NUMBER TWO APRIL, 1991



MEMBER
 ILAB

ABOUT BEN BOOKMAN

By Nelson Bond

About Ben Bookman (worthy of esteem)
 Awoke one night from an untroubled dream
 To hear within the silence of his den
 The soft persistent scratching of a pen:
 An angel, writing in a book of verse.
 Ben, with a valiant effort, still'd a curse,
 And to the presence at his desk he said,
 "What writest thou?" The vision rais'd its head
 And with a smirk that rous'd Ben Bookman's rage
 Answer'd. "My comments as I read this page."
 "Is that my reading copy?" asked Ben, fearing worst,
 "Nay," said the scribbler, "'Tis thy pristine first."
 Ben Bookman, fuming, begged, "I pray thee, then,
 "Tomorrow night wilt thou return again?"

The angel smiled and vanish'd. The next night
 It came again. Now Ben took careful sight
 And as the vandal paus'd to scrawl a note
 Ben raised his gun and shot him as he wrote.

**MEMOIRS OF A (SOON-TO-BE) EX-ABAA
 SECRETARY**

by Peter L. Stern

Six or seven years ago two outgoing members of the ABAA Board of Governors approached me at the Washington Book Fair. As members of the nominating committee they asked me if I'd be willing to serve as national secretary. They said they thought I'd be good at the job, and besides, "...you go to all the book fairs anyway so you won't cost the association anything extra."

Flattered by this ringing endorsement of my abilities, I expressed my misgivings in filling this position. For one thing my handwriting is indecipherable, particularly to myself. My bank manager once received a call from the bank processing center questioning my signature on a check. She told them that if the signature looked Japanese, it was mine. "No problem," my admirers assured me, "Janice (our then administrative assistant) actually takes notes at the board meetings."

I was pleased with this; a title with little actual responsibility, and an opportunity to hear all the dirt about who was doing what to whom.

Those two guys suckered me. The first meeting I attended was a brief meeting (continued on page 2)

BLUMBERG UPDATE

In January Steven Carrie Blumberg was found guilty of stealing more than 20,000 books and 10,000 manuscripts, worth an estimated \$20-million, from university libraries across the country. These include Idaho, Iowa, Oregon, Washington, Brown and Harvard Universities, adding up to a total over 140 libraries in the United States and Canada. He will be sentenced in April.

Blumberg's defense included an insanity plea and records showing a history of schizophrenia. He regarded himself as a "keeper of the Victorian era," never selling the books that (cont. on page 5)

**FINANCIAL SERENDIPITY:
 PETER HOWARD ON THE
 BUSINESS OF BOOKSELLING**

On two occasions I have taught at the Denver Booksellers' Conference, sponsored in part by ABAA, each time talking about the financial aspects of the booktrade, drawing on my own financial records for texts. I thought then and think now that information of this kind is not widely circulated, though of no small value to would-be booksellers. I have always used my own financial history to discourage young and prospective booksellers, but recently have (continued on page 5)

BY-LAWS REVISION

This month the By-Laws Committee will be presenting to the Board of Governors a revised set of ABAA by-laws. Over the last several years it has become increasingly apparent that the existing by-laws do not contain precise enough language on some of the issues which frequently come before the Association. As the Association continues to grow, so do our responsibilities. Consequently, both the number and complexity of the problems grow as well. It was the decision of the Board, therefore, to empower the By-Laws committee to draw up a (cont. on p. 5)

(Stern, continued) for the new board at the New York Fair. The first full-fledged meeting I was to attend was at the Chicago Fair. The day before the meeting a hurricane struck the east coast, Janice couldn't fly out, I had to begin the meeting by protesting the unfairness of it all, and then dutifully take notes. Worse yet, the same hurricane brought an oak tree down on my sailboat. The insurance paid off, and that money somehow got converted to a pearl necklace. My poor boat is still sitting out back with a big hole in it.

Even more dismaying was the realization that there wasn't really that much good dirt that I couldn't have heard without getting up for 8:00 a.m. meetings. We are sworn to confidentiality and will not discuss such matters outside of the board. Hence, everyone assumes that whatever we're discussing must be really juicy.

I've served with four ABAA Presidents, and even if this wasn't for publication, I'd still only have good things to say about them all. Lou Weinstein was definitely the funniest and provided the best food; humor and good cuisine are the best relief from showing meeting tedium. Ed Glaser was the most easy going and conciliatory, rarely showing disgust even when we deserved it. Mike Ginsberg showed real spirit under fire. His tenure dealt with the toughest issues that we faced. Muir Dawson took charge at full speed, and showed a welcome ability to keep the meetings moving on track. I especially liked the way he appointed small committees, thus encouraging their efficiency.

I'd single out extraordinary board members, of which there many, for praise except for the fact that some others might properly feel slighted at their exclusion. However, I can't recall any to be

embarrassed about, which is a lot more than you can say for the U.S. Congress. We're also fortunate in having Larry Fox as our counsel. He's been to board meetings longer than any of us, and has a historical as well as legal perspective on our organization. He likes books and he likes us, which, depending on your view, may be two strikes against him. Although he's a high-priced New York attorney, Larry goes to great lengths to save us money by combining his trips to meetings with other legal business. His advice is pretty good, too, at least for an attorney.

Liane Wood-Thomas joined us last year as executive director, and is a tremendous improvement over Janice, who did what was asked of her, but no more. I'm sure that the entire board expects that, over the next few years, Liane will do many excellent things for which they'll steal the credit.

Having served two terms and seen several new boards, here are some recurring questions and themes:

1) How come you don't kick the auction houses out?

Answer: Because they met the membership criteria at the time they applied. As a matter of fact, Swann and Sotheby's (by the way of Parke-Bernet) were founding members of ABAA. Sorry, you may not like it, but that's the way it is. Likewise, print dealers, etc.

2) What are you guys gonna do about that crooked bookseller's application to ABAA?

Answer: Nothin'. You gotta write a letter. Don't look to us to knock someone off with hearsay. That goes for expelling someone too. This is the United States. You've got to prove unethical conduct.

3) How come part-timers can join?

Answer: Restraint of trade laws.

Write your congressman.

What have we done in the last five or six years? I can't remember it all, but for a start we developed book fair rules (there weren't any); ethics guidelines and procedures (what we had were too loose to be enforceable); established financial controls (booksellers, with some justification, don't know what a budget is, and the board used to doze through the treasurer's report); tightened membership application procedures; and, developed a security system.

Some worthy projects never got off the ground, including a public relations program (very expensive), and a credit checking system (in my opinion probably unworkable but highly desirable). Given the fact that all of this has been accomplished on a volunteer basis, the record of these boards has been pretty impressive.

I'm particularly pleased to leave office having proposed and had passed a reduction in the book fair tax. The tax was my idea originally. We were in dismal financial condition and this tax, if you'll pardon the expression, saved our ABAA from the abyss. However, thanks to good financial management (for which, other than submitting a book fair committee budget for \$0.00, I cannot take credit), our treasury is in good shape.

Our period of economic uncertainty was the greatest difficulty faced by the board during my tenure. When I came onto the board we had just received a large settlement from Graham Arader for legal fees we incurred in his expulsion. Sometimes having a little money is a dangerous thing, in this case because it lulled us into a false sense of financial security. At about the same time, Edith Wells retired from the Antiquarian Booksellers Center. The Booksellers' Center shared

space with ABAA headquarters, but was otherwise affiliated only informally with the Association. Several members were personally responsible for the Rockefeller Center lease, and it was rightly proposed that ABAA assume responsibility for its remaining term.

Unfortunately, we also got involved, against the better judgment and objections of several of us, (but admittedly, with our final grudging approval), in an attempt to resuscitate the Center, and move both it and headquarters to a more expensive location. In the end, however, only one board member, George Ritzlin, stuck to his guns and voted against this proposal.

To make a long story short, this project was a drain on our treasury, and the potential liability of a new lease and financial losses in the operation of the Center was a scary prospect indeed. Our then treasurer, Ray Wapner, took over this new lease, and now operates the center as Antiquarian Booksellers International at Place Des Antiquaires. ABAA, on the other hand, was able to sign a favorable new lease on the Rockefeller Center space, sharing space with New York Bound.

Another thorny financial problem was the failure of our last New York Fair to be held at the Armory. To make yet another long story short, the Middle Atlantic Chapter hired a new fair manager, based on strong recommendations from a member who had worked with them before, and on an impressive presentation from this firm on what they could do for us.

Unfortunately, the only thing impressive about their management was the variety and amount of their charges. Not only were their bills outrageous, but they also kidnapped our bookcases, moving them, against our wishes and

instructions, to their own warehouse. As our next year's fair was approaching, our counsel worked out a settlement in which they would return our cases and we would pay the remaining undisputed portion of our bill. They reneged on this agreement mere days before the fair, obviously in the hope that we would be up that well-known creek without a paddle. However, we were prepared for this contingency, and were able to order replacement bookcases in the nick of time. This was Larry Fox's finest hour in our service; working closely with Mike Ginsberg he was able to avert much more costly legal action, and a book fair without bookcases.

Unfortunately, this threw the New York Fair off its stride. After literally decades of success, the fair seemed to be foundering. I understand now that we may be returning to the Armory next year, traditionally the prime location for the best shows in Manhattan.

Maybe I've been afflicted with ABAA secretary burn-out, but my patience has gotten very short with questions from the membership which begin, "What are you guys going to do about..?" Hardly a member who has asked me a question like this ever wrote a letter to the board about whatever it was. In my terms the board spent a great deal of time going over members' letters, occasional member presentations, sending out and then discussing the results of various questionnaires. The board is a diverse group, truly representative of the membership, and once I'm gone you can have complete confidence in its judgment.

There are some things I think ought to be done. I think that we should change the membership application, getting rid of the essay question for one thing. We should require three sponsors, who are

allowed to sponsor only two applications a year, and something like ten recommendations from members. If you can't come up with this many ABAA members you've done a reasonable amount of business with, you probably haven't been active enough in the trade.

Reduction in the size of the board has been my particular cause, and this, together with other by-laws changes, is being wrangled over by the board right now. A legitimate complaint about the board had been that its work gets carried over from meeting to meeting. Much of this has to do with the size of the board. For one thing, a small board could meet more often. For another thing, there would be fewer opinions to be voiced.

Personally, I prefer a board comprised of members who are all elected at-large. Chapter chairmen, or their designees, should be ex-officio members of the board, and should attend meetings to represent a chapter's particular view. To further help broad representation, nominees for office could be required from every chapter. I don't believe that the interests of the chapters and the national are in conflict. The ABAA created its chapters, the chapters did not create the ABAA. However, there seems to be a strong feeling, based mostly on fear of the board being dominated by large chapters, that there should be a board member from each chapter. I suspect that we're not going to land up with anything much different than what we have already.

Another issue we've been tossing back and forth has been that of booth allocation at book fairs. Responding to years of complaints (which, once again, I hasten to point out, have usually been justified), we changed the rules to require a lottery each time. The

hue and cry has been such that the board may go back to the old system of allowing previous exhibitors to retain their booths. I believe that, as a board, we should do all we can to assure impartiality to all members, and we should avoid granting what is, in most cases, economic benefit to any one member or group of members. This is the only aspect of our activities in which we grant seniority, and for the long term good of the association, we should eliminate it once and for all.

Necessarily, the board's time has been involved with the nuts and bolts of running the organization, and has not had the opportunity to delve into more interesting philosophical issues. Tom Taylor, in his resignation letter to the board, posed the important question of whether we are a professional or a trade organization. While this is a philosophical argument, it does have a practical application in determining our policies and direction.

Personally, I'd like to think of us as a trade organization. We're merchants, that is to say, we sell *merchandise*. This doesn't exclude maintaining professional standards. In fact, in my view, it demands it. The perception of the quality of our merchandise should be based on our expertise. When a bookseller describes a book as "rare," this description should be based on solid evidence, and not on the need for hyperbole to market it. The authenticity of an autograph, or book, or map, should obviously be based on the dealer's experience and knowledge, or another's expert opinion, not on wishful thinking.

While maintaining these and other standards, our primary objective should be furthering the trade by promoting business. So long as they're good members we should have more members; so

long as they're good book fairs we should have more and bigger (so long as bigger is better; for some fairs smaller may be better) book fairs.

Booksellers have a split personality. There's an element of scholarship in what we do. There's also a lot of the collector's mentality. When I entered the trade (which I did inadvertently, without thought of the consequences), an uncle of mine told me that he worked for Parisian booksellers in the late thirties, and in a lifetime in business they were the only businessmen he encountered who were unwilling to sell their merchandise. We could use a little more shameless self-promotion.

I will miss some of the lively arguments we've had. In truth, some of our meetings have not exactly been models according to *Robert's Rules of Order*. Some board members complain about these occasionally unruly debates, and although I sympathize with their objections, passionate and sometimes mildly heated discussions speak well of our board members' deep concern for ABAA, and bring forth points of view that might otherwise remain unexpressed. What speaks even better for the board is the lack of personal animosity in these meetings.

I am looking forward to a return to "civilian life," with its minor pleasures like being able to sleep past 7:00 a.m. during book fairs, and nursing a hangover privately rather than in front of twenty people. I will enjoy writing long letters to the board, which they can then discuss while I'm enjoying a room service breakfast while watching *The Three Stooges* from the comfort of my hotel room bed.

ABAA PLAQUES

Later this Spring ABAA plaques will be mailed to all members of ABAA elected since January 1, 1984. ABAA records indicate that at least 122 members have not received plaques since they were last distributed in 1983. If you do not receive a plaque by July 1, and have not been sent one in the past, please be in touch with ABAA headquarters in New York.

ILAB DIRECTORY

The long-awaited new edition of this directory, published by the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers, is now available. In 866 pages it lists some sixteen hundred leading dealers, being the members of the seventeen national associations affiliated to the League. Arranged geographically, the entries give names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, hours of opening, fields of specialization and details of bank and giro accounts. There are separate indices by name and by speciality.

Although it contains more entries than the 1986 edition, which it replaces (in some countries new names and changes of address amount to 50% of the entries), it is slimmer and more convenient to use. It is also little more than half the price.

Retail price is \$35, \$27 to ABAA members. All members should have received by now a complimentary copy from ABAA. If you need additional copies or would like to offer it for sale, please send your order to ABAA headquarters in New York.

(Blumberg, cont. from p. 1) he stole. But Blumberg was a "scholar" in investigating university libraries. When arrested in 1988 for breaking into the library at the University of California, Riverside, "research materials" found in his possession included a computer-generated list of special collections departments, floor plans of the Clemens library at the University of Michigan and the Arizona state capitol at Phoenix, and newspaper clippings about holdings at various libraries, all this according to an article in *Library and Archival Security* by Sergeant J. Stephen Huntsberry, campus police officer at Washington State University in Pullman. Huntsberry's article appeared during the month of Blumberg's arrest a year ago.

Prosecutor Linda Reade of the U.S. Attorney's office in Des Moines commended Huntsberry for his role in the apprehension of Blumberg. Huntsberry originally became involved when \$500,000 worth of books disappeared from Holland Library at Washington State University. During his investigation he became an expert in the area of book theft from university libraries. He checked all leads, researched earlier cases of book theft, inundating the West with bulletins about them. A librarian from UCLA telephoned Huntsberry about an intruder caught in the university's archives. Then shortly afterwards, a man calling himself Matt McGue was arrested at Riverside, after being caught in the rare books department with burglary tools in his possession. Huntsberry obtained McGue's fingerprints and ran them over the western half of the United States, finding a match in Minnesota that identified McGue as Stephen Blumberg. Huntsberry sent Blumberg's record, which included an arrest in 1974 for possession of books stolen from universities in Iowa,

Minnesota, Nebraska, and Colorado, to the FBI.

The FBI did not investigate Blumberg until Kenneth Rhodes, a longtime friend of Blumberg's, informed them of Blumberg's collection. Included among the nineteen tons of books found in his house and elsewhere, were a 1480 Bible, a music manuscript from the eighth century, and three shelves of incunabula.

(Bylaws, continued from page 1)

proposed revision, tightening the language of the existing version, and augmenting and revising where needed.

By-law changes affect every member of the Association, and every member will have a vote in their adoption. Among the issues being considered:

1) What should the size of the board be? Should every chapter be necessarily represented on the Board, or should board members be elected from the membership at large, without preference to chapter? How long should a governor's term be?

2) Should we let auction houses join ABAA? If so, should they come in under a special class of membership? Should we allow them to join if they abide by ABAA's Code of Ethics and By-Laws?

3) How should the nominating committee be formed and of whom should it be composed? This is in theory a very powerful committee as it decides who to recommend for national offices. Does each chapter need to be represented on the nominating committee?

4) Should we tighten our requirements for membership?

5) Should we make the Code of Ethics enforceable?

6) How and of whom should our committees be composed, and what powers should they have? Should committees be open to

non-Board members?

These philosophies as well as legal details are presently under discussion. Because of their importance the Board is eager to hear whatever comments you might have about any issue. Mail or fax comments to ABAA Headquarters in New York. No phone calls, please.

CORRECTIONS TO ABAA DIRECTORY

Please note the following corrections in the 1990-1991 ABAA Membership Directory:

Marjorie Parrott Adams, 32 Kapeldreff, 3220 Holsbeek, Belgium (Tel.: 041-227-8429); **Antiquarian Bookworm**, 1307 Templeton Place, Rockville, MD 30852 (Tel.: 301-309-8888); **Argus Books and Graphics**, 1311 21st St., Sacramento, CA 95814 (Tel.: 916-443-2223); **Book Case Books**, POB 60457, Pasadena, CA 91116-0457 (Tel.: 818-449-3443); **L. Clarice Davis**, POB 56054, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413-1054 (Tel.: 818-787-1322); **Bruce Ferrini**, Gallery 754, 754 Kenmore Blvd., Akron, OH 44314 (Tels. 216-753-7447; 800-321-3753; Fax: 216-753-2302); **Michael Ginsberg-Books, Inc.**, POB 402, Sharon, MA 02067 (Fax: 617-784-1826); **Isaiah Thomas Books**, 4632 Falmouth Rd. (Rt. 28), Cotuit, MA 02635 (Tel.: 508-428-2752); **Karl Schick**, 72 Bears' Den Dr., Sunderland, MA 01375 (Tel.: 413-665-7339).

Please delete the following: **Victoria Bookshop**, 303 Fifth Ave., Rm 809, New York, NY 10016.

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(PETER HOWARD, continued from page 1) felt somewhat guilty at making a prosperous living in a business which I previously downplayed and discouraged. Even more recently I have begun to see that other booksellers have succeeded financially far more wildly than I. (cont. page 6)

(Howard, from page 5) Here is an encapsulated overview:

SERENDIPITY BOOKS - Economic growth to April 30, 1989

<u>Year</u>	<u>Gross</u>	<u>Profit</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1963	2850.	79. (4%)	From home ¼ time. Catalogue #1.
1964	15372.	354. (2%)	¼ time. 4th year graduate student.
1965	19967.	2077. (10%)	¼ time. Home rent: \$90.00 per month.
1966	34482.	323. (1%)	½ time. ABAA member.
1967	43873.	6725. (15%)	½ time. 1st storefront; 2nd child. Across fr coop.
1968	57832.	16115. (28%)	Full time. Store rent: \$1706 per year.
1969	87974.	14191. (16%)	New storefront, 1790 Shattuck; 1st employee; wife works.
1970	114394.	9397. (8%)	2 employees. Rent \$2695 per year.
1971	149793.	14070. (9%)	2 storefronts; part-time wrapper added.
1972	164231.	8673. (5%)	4 storefronts; 3¼ employees. Rent: \$6720 year.
1973	219284.	12103. (5½%)	4 employees. Rent \$7650 year.
1974	209872.	19642. (9%)	Manager Shoemaker (5 yrs) leaves; will start SAND DOLLAR BOOKS; eventually will start NORTH POINT PR.
1975	212729.	18934. (9%)	3 employees. I inherit \$40,000.
1976	280674.	33617. (12%)	2 employees. We publish "Lepper." INCORPORATION.
1977	434385.		\$38,000 payroll (excluding myself).
1978	556450.		\$68,000 payroll (excluding myself).
1979	711409.		\$93,000 payroll (excluding myself).
1980	832745.		
1981	942978.		
1982	941578.		
1983	988940.		
1984/5	800291.	<u>Corp. Profit</u>	<u>My salary</u>
1985/6	854324.	<u>after taxes</u>	
1986/7	1076329.	44210.	50000.
1987/8	1196346.	13949.	53000.
1988/9	1400000.	32315.	63200.
	(approx.)	18906.	90000.
		50000.	125000.
			(approx.)

In fiscal year ending 4/30/90 I took the same salary as the previous year (\$125,000); received more rent (\$90,000) and retained a modest corporate profit as well (\$17,846). That is I earned personally \$232,846 (less only the cost of my store mortgage, which was less than \$45,000). The purpose in taking so much salary was to liquidate my store mortgage as soon as possible, to reduce my business overhead to zero, to enable me to leave future salaries and rents with the business, to make business (and life and

relationships with employees) gentler.

In May 1990 (first month of fiscal year ending 4/30/90) we had \$880,000 in sales, with over \$100,000 in net profit after all costs, before taxes. This was far and away the best month we've ever had, and was based on my success in selling with partner Jeff Marks a substantial portion of Carl Petersen's Faulkner collection, which we bought outright.

Since January 1989, I made payments on principal against my building mortgage totalling

\$325,000. I bought the building in March 1986 for \$500,000 (mortgaging my home to the maximum to facilitate the purchase; agonizing personally, soliciting the loyalty of employees needed to effect expansion). As of April 1, 1991, I own the building outright, with no mortgage outstanding on home. My two principal male employees have left. All taxes are paid in full. Life in bookselling is better than I had hoped, and now I wish to serve the profession more ably than in the past.

SERENDIPITY BOOKS, INC.
BALANCE SHEETS
APRIL 30, 1990 AND 1989

ASSETS		<u>1990</u>	<u>1989</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash		\$ 6,496	\$ 2,632
Accounts receivable - Customers (Note 1)		145,436	320,853
Accounts receivable - Other		1,036	19,289
Inventory (Note 1)		697,301	412,002
Prepaid income taxes		5,391	
Deposits and prepaid expenses		7,800	6,300
Deferred income taxes (Note 1)		<u>354</u>	<u>765</u>
		863,814	761,841
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT (Notes 1 and 2)		<u>38,341</u>	<u>51,613</u>
		<u>\$902,155</u>	<u>\$813,454</u>
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Accounts payable - Trade		\$278,463	\$ 223,072
Notes payable - Current (Note 3)		129,750	100,000
Credit balances in customers accounts		11,063	13,073
Accrued and other current liabilities			
Payroll taxes		23,378	29,428
Sales taxes		1,484	852
Due to shareholder			480
Income taxes payable			<u>6,378</u>
		<u>444,138</u>	<u>373,283</u>
SHAREHOLDER'S EQUITY			
COMMON STOCK			
No par value			
Authorized - 5,000 shares			
Issued - 100 shares		30,000	30,000
		<u>428,017</u>	<u>410,171</u>
RETAINED EARNINGS		<u>458,017</u>	<u>440,171</u>
		<u>\$902,155</u>	<u>\$ 813,454</u>

STATEMENTS OF INCOME AND RETAINED EARNINGS

	<u>1990</u>	<u>1989</u>
SALES AND CONSIGNMENT REVENUE (Note 1)	\$1,515,584	\$1,620,960
COST OF SALES	<u>860,940</u>	<u>926,360</u>
	654,644	694,600
OTHER INCOME		
Interest	4,356	90
Gain on sale of assets		4,917
Other	<u>365</u>	
	659,365	699,607
OPERATING EXPENSES	<u>633,999</u>	<u>647,791</u>
INCOME BEFORE INCOME TAXES	25,366	51,816
PROVISION FOR INCOME TAXES	<u>7,520</u>	<u>12,323</u>
NET INCOME	17,846	39,493
RETAINED EARNINGS - Beginning of year	<u>410,171</u>	<u>370,678</u>
RETAINED EARNINGS - End of year	<u>\$428,017</u>	<u>\$ 410,171</u>

NOTES AND LETTERS RECEIVED

RENAISSANCE WORKSHOPS

[The following letter was forwarded to the Newsletter; interested parties should contact: Turvey, Walwyn, and Associates, Rare Books, 650 Parliament St., Suite 808, Toronto M4X 1R3.]

We are writing concerning a new series of workshops on early Renaissance books which we will be presenting in Florence, Italy, in August and early September 1991.

In recent years there has been a growing awareness of the study of early books as physical objects and of the importance of appreciating the cultural and technical forces that came together to produce books during the Renaissance. The Center for Rare Book Studies at the Centro di Dante Alighieri in central Florence is dedicated to demonstrating how close study of the design, choice of materials and physical bibliography of early printed books can throw light on almost every aspect of Renaissance society. The courses are aimed at Renaissance scholars and graduate students (including post-doctorate), engaged in research on the history of printing in Europe... Instructors include several recognized experts in rare book studies from North America and Europe...

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION REGARDING CLEAR TITLE TO A CERTAIN LOUISIANA COLLECTION

Phillip Pirages, Rare Book, POB 504, McMinnville, OR 97128 (800-962-6666; fax: 503-472-5029) writes:

"I have recently made a down payment on a sizeable group of books (and a few Napoleonic manuscripts) formerly in the possession of a collector from Louisiana. Before completing

payment for the items, I discovered that some of the books had never been paid for by the collector, even though they had been in his library for more than two years.

"Not surprisingly, I am eager to find out exactly how many items in the group were never paid for, and since the collector himself will not cooperate with with me, I need to ask you for help. If you have been owed money by a collector from: Louisiana for an extended period of time, or if you know someone who has, would you please contact me right away with particulars? Please do not hesitate to use my toll-free number and/or to fax copies of unpaid invoices.

"Thank-you very much for your cooperation. May the great god of commerce spare you from such travails in your own bookselling life."

ILAB NEWS

[The following letter was received by the Newsletter from Mr. Mitsuo Nitta, of Yushodo Company in Tokyo, written on behalf of the ABAJ:]

"I have just received ABAA Newsletter Vol. 2 No. 1 thank you very much, and read article of Mr. Dawson's official report from the 30th Congress of ILAB, and your charming article of report of Congress and Fair, "From Fuji to the Ginza -- Social Life at ILAB." Your article gave me many suggestions to know how participants felt at these events, and I want to say thank you very much for your warm words about the Congress and Fair. Our organizing committee will be having its closing meeting Dec. 8th at Tokyo, at which time I will report about your article.

"Still remaining are several jobs

left over from the past Congress and Fair, but most of them are concluded and myself I look forward to returning back to normal days.

"It was so nice to see many friends, and hope these friendships lead us to good business relations between each other, and I am very much looking forward to seeing you somewhere soon, and hope you all have good business with Japanese dealers in the future.

"If you have a chance, please let send my best wishes to all who visited Japan, thank you very much, and good luck to ABAA!"

NEW MEMBERS

ABAA welcomes the following new members whose applications were voted upon and approved at the November 1990 and the February 1991 meetings of the Board of Governors. On behalf of the Board and the entire association, the Newsletter welcomes to the membership, the following:

As full members:

Vaughn (Pete) H. Baughman, Antiquarian Book House, Toledo, OH; **Stuart C. Bennett**, Stuart Bennett Rare Books, Columbia, SC; **Ursula Carol Davidson**, Ursula C. Davidson Rare Books, San Rafael, CA; **Nancy Sheiry Glaister**, Nancy Sheiry Glaister, Fine and Rare Books, New York, NY; **Chandler Walker Gordon**, The Captain's Bookshelf, Inc., Asheville, NC; **J.D. Holmes**, J.D. Holmes, Bookseller, Edmonds, WA; **Steve Maurer**, Bookmine, Old Sacramento, CA; **Dennis R. Melhouse**, First Folio, Buchanan, TN; **Bibi Mohamed**, Imperial Fine Books, New York, NY; **Douglas O'Dell**, Chapel Hill Rare Books, Carrboro, NC.

Associate members becoming full members:

Christopher C. Jaeckel, Walter R. Benjamin Autographs, Inc.; **Ruth Walker**, Reade Moore Books (formerly Sebastopol).

Full members becoming associate members:

Mary Benjamin, Walter R. Benjamin, Autographs, Inc.; **William McDonnell**, Reade Moore Books (formerly Sebastopol).

As associate members:

Denise E. Carlson, D & D Galleries; **Kenneth M. Garst**, Garcia-Garst Booksellers; **Jude Lubrano, J. & J. Lubrano**, Booksellers; **Lawrence B. Malam**, F.A. Bennett, Inc.; **Harvey J. Wolf**, Wolf's Head Books.

Readmitted to associate membership:

Beverly Haines, Argonaut Bookshop.

As emeritus members:

Francis M. O'Brien, F.M. O'Brien Antiquarian Bookseller (member since 1951); **Geoffrey Steele**, Geoffrey Steele, Inc. (member since 1949).

OBITUARIES

LOUIS COHEN

Louis Cohen, antiquarian bookseller, founder and proprietor for more than 60 years of Argosy Book Store in New York, and a founding member of ABAA died of a stroke January 4 in New York.

Cohen began in the booktrade while still in highschool, working out of his home. With \$500 in insurance money and another \$500 borrowed from an uncle, Cohen opened Argosy in the heart of the Manhattan antiquarian bookmarket

on Fourth Avenue. In 1931 he moved to 114 East 59th St., and in 1962 moved again, this time just next door, across the street from Bloomingdales, into a six-story building he eventually acquired. The firm is still located here today. Cohen helped to build libraries for Franklin Roosevelt and Jackie Kennedy, Michael Jackson, and the Universities of Texas and Kansas, among others. He donated a marine research library to Israel and several thousand Hebrew books to Bar-Ilan University in Israel.

MITCHELL CUTLER

The following letter was received from Kenneth Starosciak, San Francisco:

It saddens me to report the death of one of our newest members, Mitchell Cutler on August 20th, 1990.

According to the obituary in *AB Weekly*, Mitchell joined ABAA in 1988. I do not think he ever exhibited at an ABAA fair, but he was a visitor to most of them.

He was involved in books when I first met him at Olana Gallery in New York in the 1970's. Becoming a member of ABAA meant a great deal to him. It is sadly ironic that Mitchell did not have the opportunity to exhibit his wonderful stock at any of our fairs.

But most of all, Mitchell was a good friend. My wife and I remember many dinners and amusing conversations whenever he was in San Francisco.

He was a confirmed optimist who believed that he could overcome his illness during this past summer. Sadly, he did not. Many of us will miss him.

ELISABETH WOODBURN

Elizabeth Woodburn Robertson died suddenly at home on

November 18, 1990, in Hopewell, New Jersey. She will be lovingly remembered by her husband, Keith, her brother Peter Hexter, and her children, Jeffry, Hope, Christina, and Mariko Sasski. Elisabeth, a renowned specialist bookdealer in horticulture for over 40 years, will also be remembered by numerous individuals in the book world. She had a passion for gardening, books, and all living things, which was reflected in her personal and professional life. Her devotion to the history and preservation of U.S. horticulture led her to develop many of the great American private and public horticultural book collections.

Believing that one's professional and private life should be mutually satisfactory, Elisabeth lived on a farm and gardened in New Jersey throughout her bookselling career with her husband Keith Robertson, a writer of children's books. During Elisabeth's lifetime the books of the past and present were her daily companions, as reflected in her stock of over 14,000 volumes in the areas of general horticulture, landscape gardening, herbs, wildflowers, fruits, and vegetables.

Professionally, Elisabeth was active in many organizations. She was a founding member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America, and held a number of offices in that organization including that of President and Committee Member in the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers. Elisabeth, who helped organize the first two International Antiquarian Book Fairs sponsored by the ABAA in New York was also a founder of the Antiquarian Booksellers' Center, a cooperative bookstore for members of the ABAA located in Rockefeller Center, New York City.

She lectured widely, generously sharing her knowledge, and she

was a frequent exhibitor at book fairs sponsored by various horticultural groups. The horticultural field in general profited by her active support of its many organizations. Her publications include a number of essay and articles as well as the scholarly 175-page Addendum to the 1988 reprint edition of U. P. Hendrick's *A History of Horticulture in America to 1860*. In 1988, Elisabeth was awarded the Charles Robert Long Award of Merit from the Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries, of which she was a founding member. Her most recent honor was receiving the Distinguished Achievement

Award from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society for her personal and professional contributions to horticulture.

Editor's Note: The Newsletter received the following missive from Betty Woodburn on the 15th of November last, three days before she died. We remember seeing her last at the Boston fair the previous weekend where she seemed the epitome of good health and infectious good will.

Dear Rob:

Another fan letter! When I finished reading your report of the meeting in Japan, I was doubled

over with laughter. I was at the first conference in 1973 and it doesn't sound to me as though much has changed!

In addition, I also want to say to you what a good job I think you did on the Newsletter in terms of news and information. It's certainly timely and reaches the membership so that everyone feels they know what is going on.

If the ABAA really does want archive material, I can probably dig up tons of it. I'm the original pack rat and throw nothing out.

Again, congratulations for a great job and thanks a lot.
Elisabeth.

ABAA NEWSLETTER
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