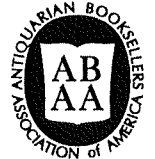


The **ABAA** NEWSLETTER



VOLUME SEVEN, NUMBER 4 ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

SUMMER, 1996

ILAB/LILA Congress and Fair Issue

Rare Book Affairs Then and Now

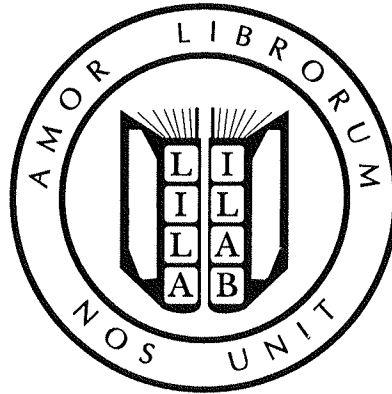
by Agnes Ng

The year was 1967; the month, September. The city was Los Angeles. The world's largest antiquarian book fair to date was being held at The Ambassador Hotel under the auspices of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers (ILAB), also known as Ligue Internationale de la Librairie Ancienne (LILA).

Then-mayor of Los Angeles, Sam Yorty, paid an official visit to the fair and stayed three times as long as he had planned. The international antiquarian book community was abuzz with excitement. Even the mishap of a colleague did not dampen the booksellers' spirits—Quaritch lost \$98,000 worth of rare books in transit from London, and they didn't reappear until after the fair had closed. Book lovers who attended the fair missed the opportunity to see Quaritch's famous rarities.

The hard work of Roy Boswell, the Los Angeles bookseller to whom everyone attributed the superb organization of the fair, paid off. One-hundred nineteen dealers from twenty countries came to exhibit and to sell their wares. The participation was double that of the first ILAB/LILA Book Fair held two years earlier in Amsterdam (fifty-five dealers exhibited then).

The rise of the western American collector helped fuel the success of the first American ILAB/LILA Fair, and all subsequent antiquarian book fairs on the West Coast. The ILAB/LILA Book Fair, which returns to California for the first time since 1967—"Once in a Generation"—promises to dazzle all in attendance.



Greetings from the ABAA President

Over the next ten days, the ABAA hosts the 33rd International League of Antiquarian Booksellers Congress and the 16th International Antiquarian Book Fair. More than a year and a half of intense preparation and hard work by a dedicated group of ABAA volunteers should result in what I think will be a spectacular experience for our ILAB colleagues and participating ABAA members.

The Congress has been ably planned and implemented by the tireless efforts of Mark Hime, Howard Rootenberg, Leon Rootenberg, Gordon Hollis, Nancy Rupert, Kenneth Karmiole, Michael Dawson, Muir Dawson, Bennett Gilbert, and James Pepper. The Book Fair is the result of the combined talents of Jordan D. Luttrell (Chair), John Durham, Edwin V. Glaser, Thomas A. Goldwasser, George R. Kane, Bernard M. Rosenthal, and Jeffrey Thomas. Hugh Tolford, our Congress manager, and Lynne Winslow, the Book Fair manager have stayed on top of all aspects of this giant preparation process.

My wife, Millie, and I have participated in Congresses in Tokoyo, Amsterdam, and Cologne and have made many friends among our foreign colleagues. The memories of those gatherings will always be with us; I can only hope that our Congress will create that same feeling of goodwill that we felt at the end of each Congress we attended. If you are not taking part in either event, please try to visit the book fair. It will have the largest group of foreign dealers that have ever exhibited at a book fair in the United States.

Greetings from the ILAB/LILA President

To All Participants in the 33rd ILAB/LILA Congress:

A warm welcome to you all in Los Angeles, especially to those who have taken the trouble to come from very far away.

The agendas of the various meetings and the program of the Congress Symposium show clearly that we will have quite a number of serious problems to discuss. This is the main object of our congresses. They enable us to exchange ideas and to give support to colleagues in countries where our trade meets with hindrance and/or legal disability. Also, the increase in stolen material appearing on the market demands our attention. With many new means of communication at our disposal we will have to join forces to optimize our battle with illegal trade.

On behalf of all of you, I would like to express our sincere thanks to our hosts, the ABAA.

I wish all of us a pleasant and, above all, a fruitful Congress.

Letters to the Editor

*From: Bradford G. Lyon,
Elisabeth Woodburn Books*

I'd like to express appreciation to whom-ever is responsible for running the notices about the ABAA Elisabeth Woodburn Fund Scholarships for the Colorado seminar-workshop which I've seen in both the *ABAA Newsletter* and *AB Bookman*.

I am particularly struck by the prominence given in these notices to Elisabeth herself, not only as an ABAA President, but also as a "distinguished bookseller," as it is so nicely worded. She loved the Association so much—its potential, its accomplishments, its diversity, and its spirit—that it is truly touching to see the Association remember her and keep her spirit alive in this way.

She was a firm believer in the importance of reaching out to what she saw as "the new generation" of book dealers coming up: engaging and educating them about the profession, encouraging membership and involvement in ABAA, and most importantly, listening carefully to new ideas about the directions we might take as an Association and as a profession. And because of this it is very gratifying to see that not just the "new generation" of booksellers who follow her, but those who will follow us as well, can be helped by these scholarships to further the Association's objectives of maintaining the highest standards for the profession. I see also that the Woodburn Fund's coffers continue to grow, so there must be others who share Betty's commitment to financial assistance for training in our profession.

Again, I imagine there must have been some kind of meeting or conversation, among other, more pressing topics, about how to word the scholarship announcement, and someone must have said something like, "We should probably say something about who this Elisabeth Woodburn was..." To whomever worded it, or helped to word it, and to the others involved in decision-making around it, I say, "Thank you; your efforts do not go unnoticed."

From: Bennett Gilbert

The complaints by Frank Manasek and Tom Suarez about the discussion of book

fairs on ABAA-Booknet are misdirected. There are interesting challenges and problems posed by internet commerce but discussion of trade issues is not one such problem.

Manasek seems to believe that ABAA-Booknet is serving only the high-end dealers—if he only knew!—and that building an internet infrastructure for our trade is "hijacking" ABAA's funds. And he has a bizarre polemic about the New York Fair scholarships that seems to argue that any expenditure of pooled funds that does not directly benefit absolutely everyone in the pool is misuse. Who could argue that Federal low-interest college loans have not helped to create contributors that have benefited the whole US economy?

Suarez seemed to miss the difference between a discussion and a vote.

I wish them both well. For us on-line their letters should indicate a well of resentment against the ABAA's internet moves, a resentment founded on errors and misunderstandings and on objections from principle, doubtless not in equal measures.

However, Manasek brought up the split between second-hand dealers and rare book dealers. In truth it has absolutely nothing to do with the ABAA's internet presence, though he imagines it does; but this is a valid issue that may be behind these feelings about the internet presence. It should be discussed. It is an issue that affects the character of our book fairs and the success of our international alliance, and it will have an effect on internet business activities as improved search engines force all dealers into the larger pools they will serve. The question of places at the table is intimately tied, as well, to the problems about what kind of meal will be on the table in the 21st century.

From: Erik Heldfond

Manasek's comments regarding the potential benefits of a tiered split of the ABAA... rare booksellers and the rest of the riffraff... appears to me to be as boorish as it is impractical. A salient question to be asked in regard to this proposal is just where is the line to be drawn? Is there a "pure" rare bookseller who does not deal at least some "common" stock? Or vice

versa? And what is common? What is rare? Who shall adjudicate and implement the criteria? A more valuable expenditure of energy may well be putting forward ideas which unify us as an organization, as opposed to the advocacy of schemes which divide us by design.

Additionally, the implication that our ABA cousins solved a similar quandary by creating a steerage-type hybrid (PBFA) is unfounded. That organization, as I understand it, was generated quite autonomously by booksellers seeking an alternative to the ABA and not, as was implied, by threadbare bin-dealers who should not have been allowed past the front door of the Grosvenor House.

From: Fred Schreiber

I just read the *House Calls* article by Tom Congalton ("Ripped") in the recent issue of the *ABAA Newsletter*, which I enjoyed and found quite entertaining. However, permit me to make a suggestion: instead of further booksellers' "wacky" tales of book acquisition, why not a column devoted to booksellers' accounts of how they became booksellers? It has been my experience that the majority of the members of the ABAA started out their professional lives in other endeavors, becoming booksellers only as an "afterthought."

I personally feel that a column devoted to booksellers' accounts of how they became booksellers would provide a much more interesting and insightful view of our business and ourselves.

Just a thought.

From: Steve Bernard

If I understand your response in the Spring 1996 *ABAA Newsletter* to my letter about the perversion of the lottery system for book fair booths, the following circumstances exist:

1. The ABA sanctions a lottery system which in theory provides for random booth selections on an equal chance basis.

2. The ABAA Book Fair Rules allow chapters to "price booths differently for whatever reason."

In other words, the ABAA endorses a fair, random selection process on the one

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ILAB/LILA Announces \$10,000

Prize for Best Bibliography or Book about Books

The International League of Antiquarian Booksellers (ILAB) is pleased to announce a call for entries for its Twelfth Prize for Bibliography. This prize, given every four years, awards \$10,000 (US) to the author of the best published or unpublished scholarly bibliography or work pertaining to book history, typography, or works of general interest relating to these subjects.

This award has become the most important and recognized international prize for bibliography. Past winners and those obtaining special recognition include bibliographies relating to printing, book illustration, botanical and horticultural literature, travel and exploration, bookbinding, private libraries, American literature, and architectural books. The Eleventh Prize was shared by Jacob Blanck's "Bibliography of American Literature," edited by Michael Winship, and Eugene Rouir's "Felicien Rops."

Entries are welcome from all countries and are subject to the following three conditions:

1. The work must be in a universally used language.
2. If the work is already published, it is eligible only if published within the four years immediately preceding the closing date for submissions (1993, 1994, 1995 or 1996), or if it has an imprint date falling within these four years.
3. Specialized catalogues of one or more books intended for sale, periodicals, and public library catalogues are not allowed. However, catalogues of private libraries *are* permitted.

Unpublished works not selected for the Twelfth ILAB Prize will be returned to their authors within two months following the Prize's announcement. Published works not selected will remain the property of the ILAB unless special arrangements are made between the competitor and the Prize Secretary before December 31, 1996.

The ILAB is not committed to publishing unpublished works winning the Prize.

However, the ILAB does not dismiss the possibility of publishing such Prize winners. The Prize winner will, however, retain all rights of publication. The ILAB Twelfth Prize for Bibliography will be awarded in 1998 at the ILAB Congress in Vienna, Austria.

The ILAB includes the National Associations of Antiquarian Booksellers from Australia and New Zealand, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States of America. The judges presiding over the competition are composed of the President of the ILAB, the Secretary of the Prize, a member nominated by the League Committee, and three persons recognized in the field of bibliography who are not ILAB members. These last three members of the jury are chosen from countries speaking different languages and will be helped by specialists, appointed as necessary.

The judges will reserve the right to withhold the ILAB Prize for Bibliography if they decide that the submitted entries do not reach a sufficiently high standard. Their decision is final and in the case of a tie, an unpublished work will have the advantage over a published work.

To submit entries from the United States, the author or publisher must send two copies of each work, published or unpublished, to Roland Folter, the American member of the Prize Jury, at H.P. Kraus Inc., 16 East 46th Street, New York, New York 10017 by December 31, 1996. Special cases in which only one copy can be sent must be cleared with Mr. Folter. Publishers or authors submitting copies will receive confirmation of their entries.

For more information about the Twelfth ILAB Prize for Bibliography, please contact Mr. Folter at (212) 687-4808, or by fax at (212) 983-4790. ■

16th ILAB/LILA Fair Features Bancroft Library Exhibit

The Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley will showcase a special exhibit of rare books and manuscripts at the upcoming 16th ILAB Book Fair in San Francisco. The exhibit documents the international heritage of the state of California—a heritage that dates back to Sir Francis Drake and before.

Entitled "California Arrivals: The International Heritage of the State," the hand-chosen exhibit presents rare materials not usually displayed, and includes items from the personal collection of H. H. Bancroft. The three-day public showing, from September 6-8, will feature early maps, depicting California as an island, that Europeans used in the 16th and 17th centuries, accounts by the first Japanese sailor who came to the state, documents testifying to Chinese prosperity despite the "Exclusion Act," and letters from Adolph Sutro discussing his San Francisco cigar stores. These and other items reflect the wealth of diverse cultural influences in California's history.

The Bancroft Library has selected the theme of the exhibit to mark the return of the ILAB Book Fair, recognized as the world's most prestigious rare book fair, to the United States. The Bancroft exhibit joins the 16th ILAB Book Fair at the Concourse Exhibition Center in San Francisco.

The 16th ILAB Book Fair will also feature seminars on the history of children's books and how to use the internet to find rare books. And, on "Discovery Day," September 8 from 1 to 3 p.m., the public can bring up to three books for a free appraisal by experts.

At the ABA London Fair, June 27-29

by Rob Rulon-Miller

As I write I'm a month removed, but the feeling that remains with me about the fair is that I'm going to do it again. This fair is sponsored annually in June (they've been doing it now for thirty-seven years) by our collegiate association in Great Britain, the ABA (Antiquarian Booksellers' Association), the senior member of all national associations affiliated with ILAB, and ILAB's forebear. (The title-page in their *Directory* adds in parentheses the word "International" to their trade name.) Their fair has suffered lately from the diligence of the competitive PBFA (Provincial Book Fair Association) which has better serviced the needs of many of ABA's membership. Consequently, the ABA's fair has grown to be more of a fair for top-end dealers making it a difficult fair at which to buy, or at least buy well. And it is a fairly expensive fair to do, especially with the travel required for ABAA members. But even with airfare included, one can take a half-booth in London for about the same cost as a half-booth at the ABAA Fair in New York.

I shared a booth with Don Lake, which is another story altogether, but my half-booth was spacious enough and well-equipped. For the ABAA members, PES offered a timely and hassle-free service. They handled three trunks for me back and forth from my front door for under a thousand dollars.

This year's fair was by most accounts better organized, better run, better attended, and better sales were reported than in previous years, and the comment we heard most was that the

ABA finally had their act together. A good number of the Japanese and American trade were in the aisles, as were a number of other familiar American faces. In many respects this fair had the look and feel of a fair of our own, although with a much more international flavor.

I stopped exhibiting in London along with several other Americans five years or so ago, when the business there seemed to go slack. I had been exhibiting in London since the ILAB Fair in 1984 which was a big success for me, but the success declined year to year. I'd forgotten how much fun London was, and what a good city for books it is. There's a fair a minute there, what with two PBFA fairs and another at the Cafe Royale in the week preceding. There are major auctions at Christie's and Sotheby's, quantities of good and interesting books abound, and there are many dealers to visit. Nor was I overwhelmed by the modern first edition market, which in Britain holds less a proportion of the market than it does in the United States. For even the specialist, London in June should be a must.

But as good as this fair seemed to me, ABA is still struggling with it, looking to find a way to expand and otherwise improve it. Finding a venue both large enough and economical has presented a particular problem. One of the suggestions currently on the table is to return to the Grosvenor House, and offer back to back fairs, with some exhibitors staying the whole time, and others switching on and off. This seems to be a convoluted idea to me, and I believe it would be best if an adequate space could be found to service the needs of all concerned. I believe more American dealers would be attracted to exhibit at a larger, less expensive fair—if only for the buying—and I think ABA would see increased attendance from the continent as well. For many American dealers, London remains the gateway to much of the continental trade, and the ABA fair offers a prime opportunity for ABAA dealers looking to do business in Europe.

Furthermore, neither the trade nor the private sector has the patience required for a back-to-back event. Most fair-goers want to know and feel that it's there all at once for the taking, and don't want to wait for a second preview two days later that promises to be only half as good.

The ABA also offers a second fair in London, in Chelsea, open only to ABA members. Writes Paul Minet in the most recent *ABA Newsletter* (July, 1996): "There is a slight kerfuffle going on in the US about the fact that everyone exhibiting at our Chelsea fair is homegrown. Who knows, this may reveal a large potential for US dealers to mix with our own members in Chelsea-type ABA fairs in London." Perhaps more ABAA members will join the kerfuffle (an English colloquialism meaning "clamor") about London fairs, about ABA's policy of exclusivity in Chelsea, and specifically with regard to book fairs, about every national association's obligations to their ILAB colleagues.

In the meantime, one big London fair, where Chelsea-types and Grosvenor-types can mingle with the foreign trade, whether they be exhibitors or not, seems in everyone's best interests. ■



Upcoming Book Fairs

Please make note of the following book fairs sponsored by ILAB member associations:

October 11-13, 1996	Cologne
November 8-9, 1996	Chelsea
November 14-17, 1996	Melbourne
November 15-17, 1996	Boston
November 15-17, 1996	Stockholm
November 22-24, 1996	Barcelona
January 23-27, 1997	Stuttgart
February 21-23, 1997	San Francisco
March 14-15, 1997	Edinburgh
April 17-20, 1997	New York
May 22-24, 1997	Chicago
May 29-June 1, 1997	Paris

From the President's Desk . . .

by Robert Fleck

Planning for the Future

Priscilla Juvelis, our Vice-President and new Chair of the Planning Committee, called for a meeting of that Committee. It took place in New Castle, Delaware, on August 10th. Ten members of the ABAA took time out of their summer to gather for a full day to discuss such things as public relations, advertising, use of the Internet, book fairs and other business matters that will lead to a better ABAA. The results of this meeting will be discussed at the Board meeting in San Francisco in September (7:30 am on a Saturday morning—how is that for dedication). Don Heald will be showing off the new computerized accounting system

which has been installed for our headquarters. We will have access to much greater detail to spending versus budget because of his efforts.

New ILAB Committee

The guiding committee of ILAB will be undergoing major changes with the meeting of the General Assembly of ILAB at the September Congress. The Committee will be expanded to eight members. There are five new members proposed for the Committee with our own Rob Rulon-Miller as one of the nominees. We know that he will be a real asset to the Committee based on the track record of hard work that he has done for the ABAA. ■

House Calls

“Western Americana”

by Rob Rulon-Miller

I was green. I had moved to the Midwest at the end of '79, during the week of the Jonestown suicides, which punctuates my residence in the heartland. At the time, I had had only one memorable experience in the book trade here, which seemed very ripe and much less competitive than in New England, whence I had come. Did I say memorable? I meant marginal. I overpaid Keith Huntress for his collection of shipwreck accounts. It made a nice catalogue for me, though, being the collection on which he based his *A Checklist of Narratives of Shipwrecks ...to 1860*, Ames, 1979. Ames is in Iowa. In fact, I'd driven my Rabbit to Ames, south on 35 out of St. Paul to get the collection, my first road trip from the Twin Cities, on the same road Steven Blumberg made famous driving back and forth to Ottumwa.

Not long after returning from Ames I received a call from a bookseller in Tulsa I had never heard of, a man named Charlie Petersham who some of the long-standing Americana booksellers will recollect, though I suspect but vaguely. At the time, Charlie was already on the way out. But he knew enough to call me.

“Misty Miller,” he said on the phone. “I be a sick man and gottalotta books I need

to sell. Mostly western Americana, some good stuff from your nekkidda woods, too. Ephemera” (which he pronounced with a long initial “e”).

I probably didn't know enough back then to give ephemera a second thought, but having moved west in America the western Americana piqued my interest, as did Minnesota material of which there seemed to be a dearth. (For dearth read death: there was no Minnesota material around for a reason.)

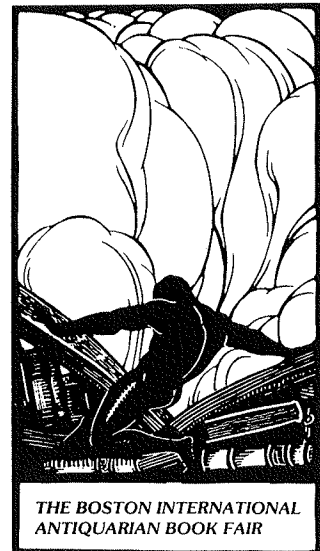
I was still working for my father at the time, at least technically, and especially technically when money was involved. I had visions of spending, going down there and buying the whole damn store if I could. But I was nervous. Charlie had talked about thousands of books and I was admittedly ignorant of all but the most obvious of western Americana. And besides, how could I move it all in a Rabbit?

“Mostly nineteenth century. I gottalotta overlands,” he said excitedly, coughing and dropping the phone. At the other end of the line as I heard the loud ding. I imagined spending \$30 or \$40 or even \$50 thousand, which was far more than I'd ever spent before. I could get the money, I knew that, but I didn't know if I

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THE COPLEY PLAZA HOTEL, BOSTON

SPONSORED BY THE NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER OF THE A.B.A.A., INC.



THE BOSTON INTERNATIONAL ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR

NOVEMBER 11, 12, 13, 1977

ADMISSION PROCEEDS BENEFIT OF THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The program for the first Boston fair sponsored by the ABAA in 1977.

Boston Fair to Celebrate 20th Anniversary

This year, the New England Chapter of the ABAA hosts its twentieth Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair on November 15-17. The first, held November 11-13, 1977—a weekend declared “Rare Book Days in Massachusetts” by then-Governor Michael Dukakis—drew 104 exhibitors. Thirteen bookselling firms from Canada and overseas joined representatives from 88 ABAA members, along with two auction houses and the Boston Public Library.

The Boston Fair has grown steadily since its inauguration. According to Commonwealth Promotion, the firm managing the event, this year's fair is sold out. One hundred and forty-two exhibitors will fill one-hundred and thirty-three booths at Boston's Hynes Convention Center. Twenty of the exhibitors are from Canada and overseas.

House Calls

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had either the knowledge or the courage to spend it.

Thus was I presented with a second big chance for a Midwest score, a chance to make some serious money.

It was winter, and I remember it being very cold. I'd worn my best goosedown coat over the standard Brooks Brothers issue. I flew down early one Monday on a Braniff flight that was going to South America, that made a scheduled stop in Tulsa, where I disembarked. Petersham didn't meet me at the gate. His instructions to me were to meet him in the front circle on the arrivals level, and to look for him standing next to his car. He'd be wearing a red Hudson's Bay jacket, which he was. The car was a '73 pea-green Ford LTD, with over 160,000 on it. His wife, Eileen, was in the front seat. I quickly shook Charlie's hand, then jumped in back and landed on a comatose female Labrador loath to move, crowded as she was by—yes, it was a green, cylindrical oxygen tank, with a small phalanx of gauges and valves at the top. "That's Kiki," Eileen said. "She's just a little sleepy. Aren't you, Kiki? And Charlie's got emphysema, in case he didn't tell you," she said, pointing to the big green tank. Eileen was very round and billowed on top, and she jiggled when she spoke, which was often, and provided me with a much-needed diversion over the course of the day. I remember when I saw her stand for the first time, wondering how she kept upright on such spindly legs. Kiki wouldn't move, or perhaps couldn't move, having just had her third operation for cancer, so the three of us sat together on the front seat, with me in the middle. I still had my goosedown on, and this is when I remember realizing I was a layer or two overdressed.

The ride from the airport was not memorable. What do strangers say when generations apart, crammed three to a seat, and headed north towards Kansas? I'm certain we talked about books. I probably tried to pry about the deal that lay in front of me: I might have asked about shipping facilities, or trucking companies. Probably tried to get more specific about what kinds of books I was going to see—this laced with all the charm and wit I could muster.

We arrived at the Petersham house—a small, neat Cape Cod with the gables lopped off—that sat next to an Exxon station on the outskirts of Tulsa. Eileen helped Kiki out of the car. Charlie struggled out on his own. Charlie kept waving his arm across the sky above him, referring indeterminably to his "other properties" and made sure I understood that this is not where the books were, and that we'd have to drive there later. We were just stopping here for some coffee "and a look around." Too bad I didn't look around well enough myself; for I was being baited.

We sat in the kitchen at a white wrought iron table with a glass top that made all the coffee cups clank, and Charlie told me about his emphysema, that he was dying of it, and quickly at that. I give this to Charlie: he knew where he stood with the reaper. Hell! I remember thinking afterwards. It served him right.

I was never invited past the kitchen which was at the dark end of the house, under trees, but I could see into the living room where there were some books, 19th century ones mostly, in publishers' bindings, and a number more recent, in jackets. They were all neatly arranged, and on the wall between the two biggest bookcases was a colorful and exciting Frank Montana Show poster. I was encouraged. Only the tip of the iceberg, I imagined.

Charlie coughed and hacked, and hacked and coughed, and breathed when he could. Just walking from the driveway to the kitchen had done him in, and everywhere he went the tank of oxygen went with him, which he or Eileen wheeled around like a set of Pings. He had a tube in each nostril, sometimes even when he drove, and he took a handful of pills four times a day. When we finally left the house for parts unknown, the back of the car was filled with meds, medical equipment, and the cancerous canine, too. We continued to ride three in the front, only this time I was quick to open the door for Eileen so I could ride shotgun. I could see I'd be needing the air.

I don't know if I ever knew where we were going. Wherever it was, it was way out there—not down on any map I ever looked at—and for a good part of the trip we were on dirt roads. I remember wheat. Miles and miles, counties and counties, a hundred miles or more, of winter wheat. There we three sat in the front of the Ford,

hurtling through the infinite tracts of western Americana: a Brooks Brothers suit, a Hudson's Bay jacket, and between us Eileen in something quilted and turquoise. They offered me lunch, and pulled over at a bowling alley to eat. But the snack bar there was permanently closed (as were lanes nine and ten), and Charlie and Eileen seemed a little ticked they had to take me to Denny's, which was a bit upscale for the occasion this was becoming.

A wiser man would have seen through that veil of wheat, would have seen that misty figure, Dreck, over the tops of the amber seed, would have known that there were no more books out here on the Kansas frontier than there were years left in the Ford or in Kiki, or, for that matter, in Charlie himself, who continued to hack and wheeze as we sped along dusty roads. For my part I kept dreaming of an arrival at a quaint and charming farm, with neatly manicured lawn, with elm trees towering over a freshly painted white farm house, shiny old Packards in the driveway, a stone gate, and beyond a well-roofed barn fully shelved, teeming with great books not just underpriced, but stupidly underpriced, and maybe even that one, unimaginable rarity one retires on.

Shortly after lunch we pulled off the dirt road onto a paved one. Several old signs by the side of the road were visible, but not legible. Traces of a little town appeared: a gas station with a single pump with a single hose, a community garage, a couple of vacant store-fronts. On an intersecting lane was a small, run-down, tarpapered office building and a rusty hopper on either side of railroad tracks that went straight out of town into nowhere. There were perhaps eight buildings in all in this nameless place. Beyond the office and the hopper, straight ahead and over the tracks, on what could only be Main Street, was the only structure that was built for habitation. Set apart by the tracks and a quarter-mile removed, it was as if the town had been built for it alone. The Ford bounced on its springs as we pulled into the driveway, which was all of two ruts and a few loose stones. To the right was a two-story house with red shutters, built on a slab, with a porch that was level with the dry, hard yard. It could have been a farm for all the land, but there were no crops in, just fields and fields of wildflowers and scrub. And there, to the left, was my

quarry: a low, long red building. On the far side of it was attached a henhouse. Not quite what I had imagined, but somehow I remained hopeful.

Charlie had trouble with the key for this building (we never got in the house itself), and blamed Eileen for the hypertension his struggling with it had caused. He was all out of breath.

"Eii-eye-leeen! Wahdyah dew theeze tings ta me, babe? Wah, Eye-leen?"

Though weak, his voice echoed throughout the town. There was no one to be seen, no one to hear the dull echo. A gentle breeze blew from the south. Eileen pulled him aside and sat him down in a folding chair she'd brought from the car, and got him settled with his tubes and oxygen. He sat still and breathed heavily in the mid-day sun. Kiki lay at his feet. Not a cloud was in the sky, and even though it was winter the day was growing warm. I remember stripping down to my gray flannel suit, ready to do business with whomever. Eileen took the keys and went to the garage door which was locked with a padlock. Here it is, I thought, my first big midwest kill, a ton of great books locked up here in the heart of the continent.

I don't have to tell you what I found inside. The molt of pigeons lifted into the air as Eileen swung open the door. Cobwebs everywhere. Stench of mold. On one side the roof was falling in. The cement troughs along the walls made me realize this was once a building for livestock. I could tell vermin made their home here now by the droppings along the wall and in the troughs. Opposite the troughs there were sagging, wooden shelves which reached the ceiling at the very point where a square gable rose up another half story for the whole length of the building, as if we were in a hard-chined ship upside down. On the walls of that extra half story were more shelves with even dustier and moldier books, the spines so faded and worn that even on close inspection were illegible. Orange-crates full of old magazines were against the far wall; odd volumes of broken sets abounded; many books had been stacked in piles on the concrete floor, and the piles had toppled and the pages of these books were being enhanced by the absorption of puddles and rat pee. How many books? Maybe five thousand, tops.

Mostly turn of the last century. All of them moldy and smelly, most of them waterstained, many crumbling already, and sprinkled with the remains of the roof above. I remember looking at my watch and wondering if I could catch the early flight back.

There was a separate room off to one side—the henhouse, it was—which contained the remnants of what could only have been a pawn shop for the variety of certifiable junk it contained, including a rack of old doll's heads—no bodies, just heads—and boxes of faded and broken china. In this room was the "ephemera" I had been told about, which consisted of maybe a dozen pamphlets on the repair of harvesters or on the premiums at the county fair. These were in an old glass case covered in dust. There was also a large remainder stack of a pamphlet on the history of the Osage Mission, printed about 1910, and a jar of old motel matchbooks. Perversely, I thought about arson.

It was now warm outside, but still cold and damp in the building. I went back to the car for my coat. Charlie Petersham was still outside in the folding chair next to the tall green cylinder on wheels. When I came back from the car he pressed me.

"Cannyr promise me anythin'?" he asked.

I didn't hedge. "I don't think so."

"I was thinkin' maybe twenty would do it," he said.

"I'm sorry. It's just too much for me to handle."

"Twenty thousand," he said. "And it's worth evvy dollar. But I tellyr we'll take five cause we need the money. Cannyr promise me anything? What cannyr promise me, Misty Miller?"

"That's generous," I countered. "But I just don't think I can do it."

Eileen had come outside now. "We won't take anything less than fifteen," she said, "and that's final."

It was an easy thing to make no promises in Kansas. Taking Eileen's lead I let it be known I wanted to get back to catch the earlier of two flights that evening. Charlie shuffled to the car, the tank in tow. Eileen gave her shoulder to the door and pushed the padlock shut. I cringed as I lifted Kiki's scaly caboose into the back seat. The three of us sat together in front for one last time. I don't remember talking much the whole way

back, but do remember the wheezing and hacking. We let Charlie off at the house and Eileen took me to get the airport shuttle which left from the Hilton downtown.

There is an ironic epilogue to this story and it is not the predictable passing of Charlie Petersham. A day or two after I'd returned home, Petersham called. He said he was feeling sorry about my wasting a day and airfare only to go back empty-handed, and wouldn't I like to buy one of the most precious treasures from his private collection.

Perhaps I was feeling a little sorry, too. "What is it?" I asked, resigning myself to a self-defeating endgame.

"It's a very important Civil War letter," he said, and went on to describe a long document secretly written by the Confederate senator and diplomat, C.C. Clay, to Jefferson Davis on the progress of negotiations with Canada to effect a truce between the warring parties. "I got it out-avan old Missouri museum," he said wheezing. "I only want \$1,500 for it. I tellyr, it's a goddamn treasure."

I was intrigued enough to ask for it on approval. But when it arrived I became suspicious. The paper was a little too glossy for the period, and did not show absorption of the ink, and the ink was a little muddy around the edges of the letters and markedly pale. I called Petersham right away.

"Oh, it's good, all right," he said. "I got it outava museum. I've gotta get \$1,500 for it pretty quick, though. The doctors want the money and I gotta sell. If not to you, then..." His voice trailed off in a cacophonous gasp. I told him I wanted to do some more checking.

But being new in Minnesota I didn't know where to check. I tried the University, but couldn't find anyone there who knew any more than I did. I was referred to a local manuscript collector who had written a book on the Civil War, but he didn't have an opinion one way or another. I showed it to another bookseller. I sent it to Charles Hamilton who returned it without a verdict. I called Petersham again seeking more assurances, a better provenance. "I'll tellyr what," he said. "I'll guarantee it. If it's no good it's returnable." He wheezed.

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House Calls

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"Guaranteed" was the last word I heard from Charlie Petersham.

We don't know why we do things sometime. We want to trust, want to place our faith unquestionably in the hands of others. (Is there an ethics gene that makes us do this?) Yet, we know there's always someone with a devious bent in the shadows. I still don't know why I did it. Maybe it was for pity. Maybe I was stupid. Surely, I was green. Maybe I just wanted to be done with him, the way a dog does fleas. I sent the \$1,500.

I still have the letter. I may frame it some day in honor of my youth. ■

Letters

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hand, but also sanctions an option which allows sponsoring chapters to manipulate, distort or circumvent the lottery system through such methods as setting aside "premium" booths so that select members can avoid any downside associated with a pure lottery. Excuse me, but where I come from that is called "talking out of both sides of your mouth."

It seems to me that the ABAA should either operate a pure lottery system or go back to what previously existed where longtime book fair exhibitors were allowed to retain their booth locations year after year. What now exists is a hybrid which gives the *illusion* of fairness, but, in fact, gives preferential treatment to those willing to ante up a higher fee. This is both disingenuous and a contradiction. The membership should be made aware of precisely what is going on and be afforded the opportunity to vote for or against a pure lottery.

Bernard's premise is not quite correct. ABAA does not sanction a lottery system which only "provides for random booth selections on an equal chance basis." It sanctions a lottery system which provides for random booth selections on an equal chance basis within pre-determined price categories. It has always been this way, for full booths and half-booths have always been priced differently, and applied for and allocated separately.

The Editor ■

In the Toad's Hole With Philip Larkin

by Sheila Markham

So much goes on nowadays that one simply doesn't understand. Take this business of faxing cod. To my own taste it's much better grilled or baked, though of course I have yet to find a successful or indeed any recipe for faxing it. Presumably much depends on your equipment. My own machine has so far rejected every attempt to insert the fish, on or off the bone. And the mess is indescribable, whether you choose to add butter or not.

Obviously I have consulted any number of people who claim to know all about fish. In the course of these inquiries, I discovered quite incidentally that 3,000 books from Elizabeth David's collection are currently sitting in the Guildhall Library awaiting the funds to catalogue them. A figure of £3,000 has been mentioned in this connection. In other words, a pound a book—the kind of catchy sound bite from which one could no doubt extrapolate any number of earnest facts about the future of library funding.

For fiscal and farcical comment on the public library service, Philip Larkin can hardly be equaled. In a letter to Barbara Pym, Larkin mentions the arithmetic of cataloguing, "This is the question laymen always ask: does it take £3,000 of staff to deal with £300 of books?" (Anthony Thwaite, *Selected Letters of Philip Larkin*, 1992). Larkin suggests that the answer much be that they do lots of other things too, which of course he knew from his own experience as a librarian.

Larkin began his career as a librarian in Wellington, Shropshire. He had recently come down from Oxford, failed to enter the Civil Service and settled for this dismal appointment on December 1, 1943. Wellington was after all Housman country and Housman was unquestionably the "poet of unhappiness... No one else has reiterated his single message so plan- gently" (Larkin, *Required Writing*, 1983). For a man of Larkin's depression, this was undeniably a good omen.

And he was not disappointed. Within a very short time, the combination of boredom and isolation chimed in tune with

his own self-image. "I have never felt anything but *degraded* as the librarian in this hole of toad's turds." Now it could be argued that this powerful, and some would say moving imagery refers both to the books and the readers in Wellington Public Library. This is art and we must not be afraid to call a spade a spade or indeed books "crap," as Larkin does in the last line of his poem, "A Study of Reading Habits."

According to the job advertisement in the *Birmingham Post*, Larkin's duties included "the operation of a Lending Library (open access) and Reading Room supervision." He was the only member of staff, in charge of 4,000 books of which 3,000 were fiction and most were unreadable. His time was spent "handing out tripey novels to morons." For intellectual stimulation there was always the boiler to stoke.

As the library was open to the general public, women kept coming in. Larkin had mixed feelings about them at the best of times. However as far as books were concerned, women were quite clearly "stupid sods." On the other hand the male readers tended to be "quiet men in cloth caps who take out books of a rather serious kind with a serious expression on their face, as if they are seriously trying to get a grasp on things."

But the job did have its compensations. For several hours each day, Larkin found time to retreat into his office and devote himself to writing. There he wrote two novels and a book of poetry in three years, writing with a fluency he never experienced again. Toads' turds were not obstacles to creativity. On the contrary, "in Wellington he had found reasons for being unhappy which matched for the first time his instinct for misery" (Andrew Motion, *Philip Larkin, A Writer's Life*, 1993). Larkin himself always acknowledged the toad factor in his writing. On one occasion he remarked that "deprivation is for me what daffodils were for Wordsworth."

As a librarian, Larkin's first appointment must also be counted a success. The

number of books borrowed rose from 300 to 1,000 a month: Aldous Huxley, Lawrence and Joyce joined Arthur Ransome on the shelves, and the modest building was transformed into a more congenial environment. Wellington Public Library was in short “no longer a menacing, gas-smelling, ill-lit tramp-infested den of sloth” (Motion).

In September, 1946, Larkin moved up the ladder and became Assistant Librarian at the University College of Leicester. At this stage he was still largely unqualified, although he had recently enrolled in a correspondence course in Library Classification. Many years later, he was made a Fellow of the Library Association, noting in a letter to a friend, “I am now a FLA instead of an ALA; the latter designation always suggested unoriginality (*à la*).”

Although Leicester was an academic library, the work involved much the same drudgery. In fact the “duties were only a little more focused than they had been in Wellington. As the one adult male member of the staff [Larkin] was expected to open packing cases, change light bulbs, climb ladders and cart around heavy objects” (Motion). Only a few weeks after his appointment, Larkin wrote in desperation to Kingsley Amis, describing the toad-like tedium of cataloguing “rotten

old books. You get BLOODY TIRED of writing the same things over and over again.”

After a few years at Leicester, Larkin moved to Belfast in 1950 to become Sub-Librarian at Queen’s University. It was a big increase in salary. But the work was much the same, although it now included supervision of eighteen members of staff, an in-house bindery and a photocopy department. It was an important appointment, which Larkin believed he owed entirely to the “unforeseen defection” of four other candidates.

This was a typically self-effacing remark. Amongst librarians, Larkin was regarded as having made an outstanding contribution to the profession. This is particularly true of his final and most significant post as Librarian of the University of Hull from 1955 till his death in 1985. It was a high-profile appointment which was from time to time questioned in unofficial circles. In the lavatories, for example, someone scribbled on a fuse box high up the wall, “Knock three times and ask for Philip Larkin.”

During his time at Hull, Larkin oversaw the establishment of the Brynmor Jones Library and the computerization of the catalogue. Staff numbers rose from a dozen to over a hundred and the collections increased fourfold. The Brynmor

Jones Library rapidly became one of the most distinguished provincial libraries and the first library in the United Kingdom to develop a comprehensive online information service. Nominally in charge of the automation, Larkin viewed the computer as the “beast in the basement,” and the project as “a kind of lunatic professional hari—kiri.”

Meanwhile there were other more immediate dangers. During the early Thatcher years, government spending on the university of Hull was cut by twenty percent. Larkin battled long and hard with all the problems of under-funding—staff axed, expenditure on books cut, subscriptions canceled. Although he adored Mrs. Thatcher and liked to praise her to anyone who would listen, the policies of the Conservative Government had effectively reduced him to “the captain of a liner steaming straight for an iceberg with the steering wheel immovable.”

The political climate did not improve and Larkin succumbed to a vision of the future which must now be shared by any number of his colleagues in the public library service. “I began my library career single-handed, and it looks as if I shall end it that way, sitting at the turnstiles of a vast bat-haunted cob-webbed building beside one flickering candle stuck in a bottle.” ■

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More overseas booksellers are participating in the 16th ILAB/LILA Book Fair than at previous fairs in the United States—nearly 40 percent of the 174 exhibitors come from Australia, Canada, South America, Europe, and Japan. The American booksellers are expected to offer a full array of the finest items from their stock, from rare law books to scarce *incunabula* (books printed before 1501) to early American literature. The large international representation will mean an increased selection of older books, manuscripts and maps, handsome *livres d’artistes*, emblem books, antiquarian medicine, science and technology, and rare books from the Far East and behind the former iron curtain.

“The ‘world of the book’ in its printed form has covered a time span of more than half a millennium,” says Jordan D.

Luttrell, the 1996 ILAB/LILA Book Fair committee chair whose San Francisco firm, Meyer Boswell, Inc., specializes in antiquarian law. “At the fair, we will see the book’s embodiment of civilization since time immemorial,” he adds.

The first rare book fairs

Peter Murray Hill, the rare book dealer from London who organized the world’s first antiquarian book fair in 1958, probably never thought that his idea would catch on quite so well and so quickly.

According to Nicolas Barker, editor of *The Book Collector*, Mr. Hill came up with the idea of a rare book fair because he thought that having as many dealers as possible gather together and show their books would create interest in book collecting. Twenty-eight booksellers, all

members of the United Kingdom’s Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association (ABA) participated in this first fair held at the National Book League in London.

Whether today’s proliferation of rare book fairs indicates an increased interest in book collecting, or an increased number of booksellers, Mr. Hill’s experiment seems to have worked. There are now rare book fairs almost every weekend throughout Europe and the United States, and the major fairs sanctioned by antiquarian booksellers’ associations draw collectors and book lovers from all over the world.

The fairs in the United States all started in New York in 1960, with the antiquarian book fair organized by Madeleine Stern, partner of the New York firm founded by

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Leona Rostenberg in 1944, Rostenberg and Stern Rare Books. Sponsored by the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America (ABAA), that fair's enormous success surprised even the participants.

"There were crowds of people at the fair," exclaims Ms. Stern, still incredulous about the seed that she planted in 1960. An estimated 3,000 to 5,000 people came to the New York fair, and the 23 exhibiting book shops sold a total of about \$40,000 to \$50,000 in rare books. "Today we would add a zero or two," says Ms. Stern.

She is not exaggerating. At the 1993 ABAA Book Fair in San Francisco, for example, Heritage Bookshop of Los Angeles sold a beautifully decorated Bible on vellum printed by Fust and Schoeffer in 1462 to a private collector for \$500,000. A year later, the collector sold the item on consignment through Heritage for \$650,000 to another private collector.

The great value of antiquarian books notwithstanding, good, collectible books could—and can—be bought inexpensively. A cooperative booth with books priced at £5 or less was set up at the 1958 fair in London, and ever since, the ABA, ABAA, ILAB and other sanctioned fairs always include selections of reasonably-priced books.

"Educating the public and encouraging new book collectors appears to have been the first reasons to have rare book fairs," comments Muir Dawson of Dawson's Book Shop in Los Angeles, an organizer the 1967 ILAB Book Fair. "It still is a strong element in our book fairs."

Some find it hard to believe that the antiquarian book world did not put on a book fair until 1958. After all, the Frankfurt Book Fair was renowned as the largest book fair in Europe in the 16th century, just shortly after the invention of printing. It remains, to this day, a popular hunting ground for retail booksellers looking for salable books and for publishers promoting new titles.

Naturally, the significance of the Frankfurt Book Fair should not be downplayed. It has been and continues to be one of the world's most important book-selling events. The Frankfurt fair, how-

ever, has always been primarily a venue for selling new books, thus disqualifying it as an antiquarian book fair.

Why, too, do we seem to ignore flea markets and used book fairs where, long before 1958, bibliophiles have found rare books? Simply because not all used books can be considered antiquarian or collectible.

Antiquarian vs. Used books

Professor Terry Belanger, head of The Rare Book School at the University of Virginia, defines *rare* or *antiquarian* books as those with "more copies desired than are available" with the latter term implying "an item of certain age." He goes on to explain that "almost all rare and antiquarian books are used books except for *press* books that have sharply limited editions and are printed specifically to be collectible items."

Further, Edwin V. Glaser of Sausalito, California, a rare bookseller who often lectures on rare book collecting, notes that "not all collectible books are rare and not all rare books are old." There are certain 16th century books that are relatively easy to find while some that are only 10 years old are extremely hard to locate in good condition.

"Sometimes it is not even the scarcity that makes a book collectible," Mr. Glaser adds. "For example, there may be an obscure 400-year-old collection of sermons by a forgotten clergyman that might be of little interest to collectors, whereas the first book printed in a small quantity by an author who has gone on to considerable acclaim could command a high price," he says. For example, Hemingway's first book, *Three Stories and Ten Poems*, published in Paris in 1923, might be worth somewhere between \$10,000 and \$15,000 in today's market. So-called hyper-modern books such as first edition Stephen King novels can fetch up to several thousand dollars.

"Just *used* books implies down market and would have little or no collectible value," Professor Belanger points out.

"Used book fairs are the bargain basements of antiquarian book fairs," says Mr. Glaser. "You may find some real gems, but you have to know what you're looking for."

In fact, there are differences between the various types of antiquarian book fairs. The strict codes of ethics of the

ABAA and similar antiquarian booksellers' association's in other countries offer collectors an assurance of the quality, authenticity and correct pricing of what they are buying—and a method of recourse if the product turns out not to be what it seemed.

"Our code of ethics is what distinguishes our antiquarian book fairs from the many others," says ABAA President Robert Fleck of Oak Knoll Books in Delaware. "Further, we are willing to take whatever steps necessary to enforce the ethics of our organization."

Collectors can be confident that almost every item, priced from a few dollars to hundreds of thousands has collectible value at an antiquarian book fair held by one of the accredited organizations. Other rare book fairs, however, may offer treasure alongside junk, and buyers usually have no recourse if they happen to buy the latter by mistake. This is particularly true as the proliferation of non-sanctioned book fairs enables individuals to sell books without having obtained training, experience or a reputation in the trade.

How it all began

One of the first-known collectors was a woman in Germany named Hroswitha of Gandersheim. A Benedictine nun of the 10th century, Hroswitha was a prolific poet and a dedicated collector of manuscripts. She is considered one of the most remarkable women of her time.

Another famous book collector was Richard de Bury, who lived in the 13th and 14th centuries in England. *Philobiblon*, a manuscript in which he wrote about the joys of collecting, has been reproduced repeatedly. To this day, publishers are printing new editions of the popular book.

So bibliophiles seemed to have collected books long before the advent of printing. It is understandable. Each handwritten or hand-copied or hand-illuminated manuscript was scarce, a one-of-a-kind item. Some may argue, however, that scholars in the Middle Ages mostly hoarded books to read them. These scholars were not, in a strict sense, collectors. Collectors typically are interested in books for reasons not limited to their contents, they are interested in books, for example, as historic artifacts or as art objects.

It is also not clear if book collecting existed just after the advent of printing, during the *incunabula* or “cradle” period of printing. Sure enough, books were in demand at that time. According to Bernard Rosenthal, a highly respected authority on antiquarian books and a fourth-generation rare bookseller who emigrated from Munich, Germany, to Berkeley, California, medieval printers sold from about 200 to 2,500 copies of each of 29,000 editions from the early 1450s to 1500.

The early printer, who often also functioned as editor, publisher and bookseller (it was not until the late 15th century that these tasks were separated), would travel from village to village selling his books. Most of the items from this *incunabula* period are highly collectible now. But at the time they were produced, they were still new books that were bought for the purpose of reading.

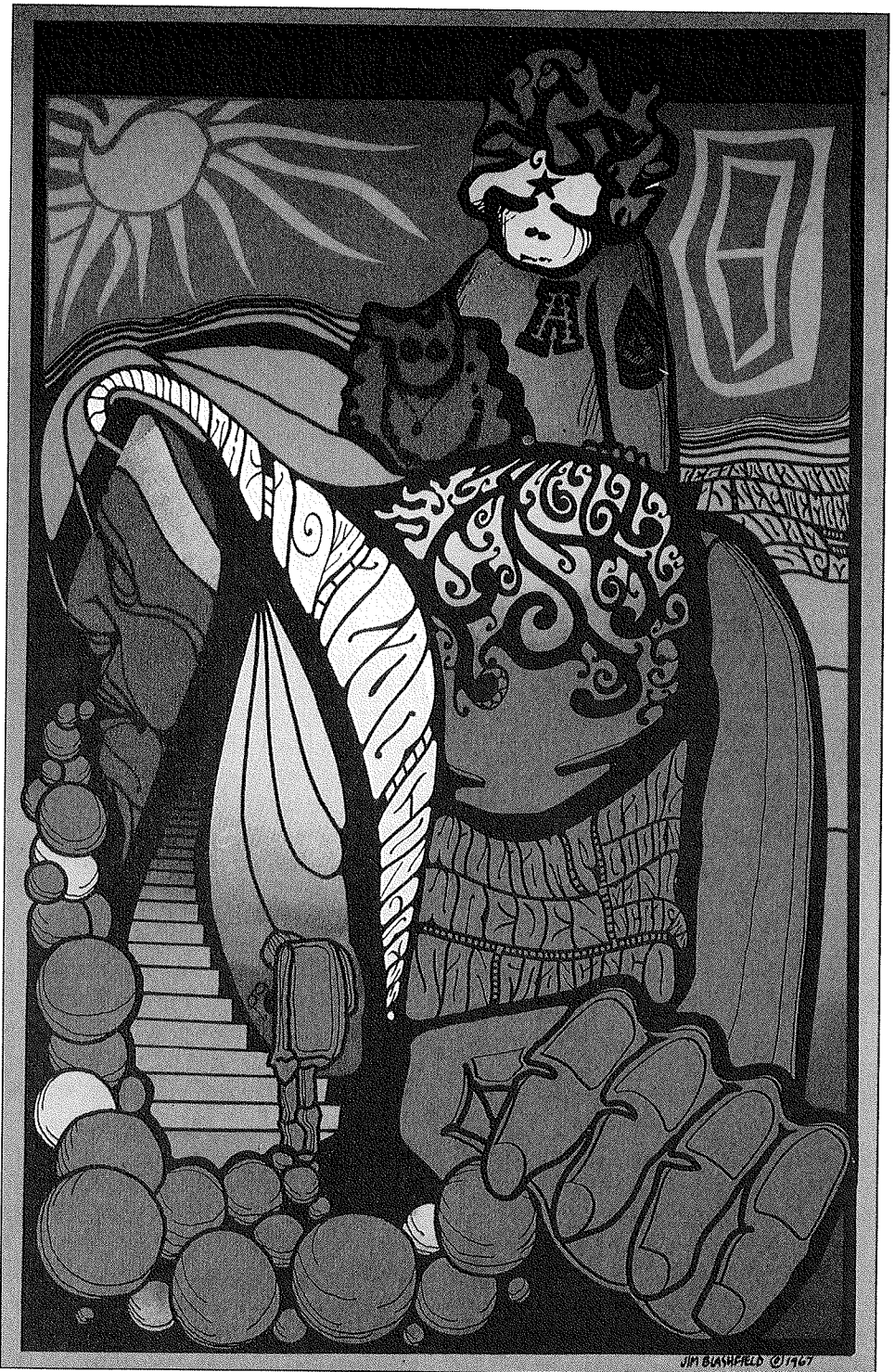
The roots of book collecting

“Antiquarian book collecting had its roots in the enormous book auctions that took place in Holland in the 1600s,” explains Mr. Rosenthal. “These first book auctions, which sold off libraries of old volumes, led to an interest in the early printed books.”

During this period, collectors were able to buy old printed books mostly at auctions. “The shift came in the 18th century, when collectors in the western world began building libraries not just for reading,” says Professor Belanger, “but for other reasons as well.”

By 1750, antiquarian book shops had sprung up in major cities throughout Europe, many clustering in bookselling districts. The soon-thriving trade received a boost in the early 19th century when monastic libraries were dissolved and the collections of aristocratic families reached the market after the Napoleonic Wars. The rise of the American collector in the 1830s and 1840s further contributed to the growth of book collecting.

The early antiquarian book trade established strict rules and codes of ethics. Lengthy and often hard-to-obtain apprenticeships were prerequisites to jobs in the field. Extensive experience was required before bookselling licenses were issued. Honesty and accountability were necessary traits. These codes of ethics have served as



This poster, which recalls the renaissance of poster art in San Francisco in the 1960s, was designed specially for the 1967 ILAB/LILA Congress and Book Fair in San Francisco and Los Angeles. The poster was commissioned by antiquarian bookseller William P. Wreden of San Francisco. Courtesy of William P. Wreden Rare Books and Manuscripts.

the basis for the codes of many antiquarian booksellers’ associations of today.

Adolf Hitler had a great impact on the antiquarian book community earlier this century. Many rare booksellers in Europe were Jews; many had their shops and wares confiscated by Hitler’s regime. Consequently, many of those who could,

fled Nazi-controlled areas for the United States and freer regions in Europe.

The formation of ILAB/LILA

Indirectly, the Nazis also influenced the formation of ILAB/LILA, the premier

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Books, Briefly Noted

● *The Bernard Becker Collection in Ophthalmology: An Annotated Catalog.* Compiled by Lilla Wechsler, Christopher Hoolihan, and Mark F. Weiner. Third edition. St. Louis: Bernard Becker Medical Library, Washington University School of Medicine, 1996. 180pp.

Reviewed by Terry Tanner

First published in 1979, and expanded in 1983, the Becker catalogue has indeed become what Lilla Wechsler in her introduction describes as “a highly respected and often cited standard source in the history of ophthalmology.”

This third edition of the Becker catalogue contains 100 new primary entries, and about 60 additional cross references. These new entries were inserted alphabetically and numbered with decimals, retaining the numbering sequence of the 426 entries of the second edition of 1983. Each primary entry is annotated and contains a statement of pagination, plate count, size, and references. Because the

text for entries that appeared in the second edition was not altered for this new edition, several items fail to include a reference to the latest edition of Garrison-Morton (e.g., Guillaume Pellier de Quengsy's *Précis ou Cours d'Opérations sur la Chirurgie des Yeux*).

As in the earlier edition, there is a section listing graphics in the collection, as well as a short-title list of “Post-1900 Imprints.” This last section is somewhat misleading because the primary section of rare books contains several post-1900 imprints (e.g., items 9, 82, 151, 156, 162, 197, 266, 366, and 387). This new edition retains the subject index, and restores the useful chronological and geographical index of the first edition of 1979, although unfortunately not the publishers/printers' index.

New to this edition is a section containing a short-title listing of “selected titles from the library's collections complementing the Bernard Becker Collection in Ophthalmology.” Also new to this edition

are sixteen full-page illustrations on eight plates, many in full color, of the prints and graphics in the collection, and there are considerably more text illustrations than in the previous edition. Unfortunately, the reader is not informed that a manuscript scroll shown in full color on the verso of the final plate is not described in the catalogue, and this reviewer wasted a fair amount of time trying to find it. I finally phoned the library to confirm its absence from the *Catalog*.

Physically this third edition is a distinct improvement over its predecessor. The layout is pleasant and easy to read, and the book is attractively bound in red cloth with a full color label on the front cover. This edition is a worthy successor to the earlier editions.

The Bernard Becker Collection in Ophthalmology is available for \$45 (including shipping and handling) from Washington University, Bernard Becker Medical Library, Box 8132, St. Louis, MO 63110. ■

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international bookselling organization which, in time, would sponsor one of the most highly regarded antiquarian book fairs in the world. The story is recounted in *Second Impression* by Barbara Kaye (Muir) (Oak Knoll Press, 1995).

Hiding from the Nazis as a Jew during World War II in Europe, Menno Hertzberger conceived a dream for his life after the end of the war. He felt that the war had cut off communication and put up barriers between nations. Hertzberger, who soon became president of the Dutch antiquarian bookselling association, the Nederlandsche Vereeniging van Antiquaren (NVVA), dreamt “to bring nations together on common ground and on mutual interest.”

In 1947, Mr. Hertzberger invited members from antiquarian bookselling organizations in Great Britain, France, Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands to meet in Amsterdam. There they considered the formation of an international body that

would link various national associations to the benefit of all concerned.

The conference was held in an atmosphere of goodwill and optimism, and the participants agreed to meet in Denmark the following year when it was hoped that representatives from more countries would attend.

Representatives from ten countries met in Copenhagen in September 1948. They voted unanimously to form the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers or the Ligue Internationale de la Librairie Ancienne—ILAB to English-speaking members and LILA to French-speaking members. Mr. Hertzberger's dream became reality.

There was no national association of antiquarian booksellers in the United States at the time of the Copenhagen conference. Shortly after The Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America (ABAA) was formed in 1949, however, it was welcomed as a member of the prestigious League at the ILAB/LILA conference in Paris, in 1950. The League has since grown to represent antiquarian booksellers' associations in twenty countries.

To this day, ILAB/LILA members meet once every other year in one of the member nations to discuss book collecting issues. The first ILAB/LILA antiquarian book fair was held in Amsterdam in 1965. Now it is held every other year in conjunction with the ILAB/LILA congress.

The phenomenal success of the 1967 antiquarian book fair in Los Angeles established the ILAB/LILA book fairs as the world's most prestigious and exciting. This is still the case today, if not more so.

“The 1967 fair was the turning point,” says Mr. Dawson. “Never before had so many rare booksellers from so many countries gathered under one roof. We were proud to be part of such a grand occasion and look forward to being part of it again when it comes back to California for the first time in thirty years—there's nothing like it in the world.”

Indeed, antiquarian book fairs have come a long way. But, what is more important, book lovers now have more sophisticated, more reliable resources from the world over from which to learn about and to collect what Richard de Bury called “the heavenly food of the mind.” ■

Recent Books by Members

● *Old Books in the Old World: Reminiscences of Book Buying Abroad, 1947-1957.* By Leona G. Rostenberg and Madeleine B. Stern. Oak Knoll Press, 1996. 160 pages.

Old Books in the Old World is a nostalgic and fascinating journal about two young American women who began their adventures as rare booksellers in the late 1940s. As they brave post-war European horrors to embark on bookhunting adventures, they are rewarded with bibliophilic stories, now enhanced with contemporary recollections.

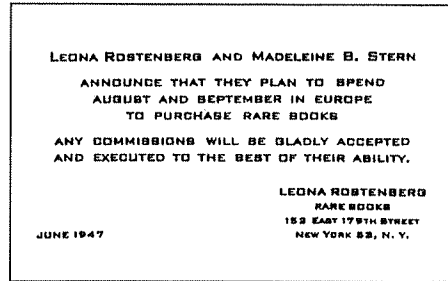
This book, filled with vintage black and white photos, evokes images of war-ravaged cities and towns where long-respected booksellers attempt to rebuild their businesses, while others struggle to merely survive. One finds intriguing, colorful and sad characters in London, Amsterdam, Vienna and Paris, ranging from a refugee in a shabby London flat to the booksellers at Maggs and Quaritch.

These two distinguished and long-respected ladies of the book trade would like to share some descriptive passages from the introduction and reveal what they found "in that vanished world between 1947 and 1957."

"By July 29 of 1947, when the *Vendam* sailed from its pier in Hoboken, NJ, the two proprietors of Leona Rostenberg—Rare Books were on board, ready to apply what they had learned, eager to fill empty shelves in some imaginary open shop, hoping to match their wits with those of dealers who were as yet merely names on rare book catalogues.

"Secure in the indulgences of home, we were far less ready, and indeed almost totally unprepared, to face the postwar horrors of England and the repercussions of the Holocaust on the continent. Accompanying the exterior horrors were the rigidities and austerities imposed in Britain by strict postwar regulations. Ration books and queues had become, it seemed, a continuing way of life....

"Across the Channel, the postwar horrors that struck us most poignantly were less external than internal....The decayed buildings, the pointed Tommy guns, the military police of occupied Vienna some-



how affected us less than the people we encountered in the Netherlands.

"Among the dealers who had survived Occupation, detention or the life of the Underground were Menno Hertzberger and Hilde Rosenthal. Survivors extraordinary, both of them, who somehow rebuilt their lives and book businesses from the ruins. We had met others too, in other countries—the refugee Baer in a shabby London flat; and in his "turreted villa" outside Paris, Michel Bernstein who had been one of the French Resistance and lived underground during the war. But nowhere did we feel the effects of the Nazi horror so keenly as in the Netherlands....

"The truly great dealers—those who valued knowledge above money and substance above glitter—were still alive, still active.... Among our greats, E. P. Goldschmidt must rank first—the scholar-bookseller of Old Bond Street, who transported us back to the Renaissance and sent us on our way treading on air.... And then there were continental greats whose habits and business methods differ from the British variety, but whose knowledge was as deep and whose perceptions were as sharp.

"The personnel of their libraries has undergone a metamorphosis since our early visits in those days when 'busy priests and satisfied nuns' walked the cobbled lanes of the Left Bank and drowsy cats and sleepy dogs basked in the sun. And so the journals that capture those years have become a period piece.... Some of the firms we visited early on have survived—Quaritch and Maggs, Thomas-Scheler, Clavreuil and Chamonal. But more have succumbed. Here they are remembered—our greats, our eccentrics, our bread-and-butter suppliers. Here they take their places in a tapestry now complete and vibrant with color."

Old Books in the Old World is available in hardcover for \$22.95 plus shipping, or in a specially signed and numbered edition in slipcase for \$45 plus shipping from: Oak Knoll Press, 414 Delaware Street, New Castle DE 19720 USA; phone: (302) 328-7232; fax: 302-328-7274; e-mail: oakknoll@oakknoll.com.

● *New Jersey Books 1801-1860: The Joseph J. Felcone Collection* [Volume II]. Princeton: Joseph J. Felcone Inc., 1996. 800pp.

New Jersey Books 1801-1860 is a must in its field, and a fitting continuation to its predecessor (which covers the years 1698-1800, and records 321 entries). In the present volume there are nearly fifteen hundred entries, alphabetically arranged by author or main entry. There are two extensive indexes and the book is very user-friendly, in a good red cloth binding that is both sturdy and not unattractive.

It is not definitive, to be sure, and it is a representative collection, but Joe Felcone has done a terrific—some would say unbelievable—job (viz. every book's precise collation and description), and these volumes will be greatly appreciated by many generations to come. Too bad, though, that 800 pages of solid bibliography couldn't have been illustrated by more than just a frontispiece.

New Jersey Books 1801-1860 is available for \$50 from Joseph J. Felcone Inc., PO Box 366 Princeton, NJ; phone: (609) 924-0539; fax: (609) 924-9078. Volume I, covering the years 1698-1800, is also available from the publisher. Trade discounts apply. ■

Christoffersen Retires After 66 Years

The ABAA congratulates member emeritus Jens J. Christoffersen, formerly of Mamaroneck, New York, on his retirement. Christoffersen was an antiquarian bookseller for sixty-six years. He and his wife, Karen, now reside in Kingwood, Texas.

Your Benevolent and Woodburn Funds



Remember them if you will!

The Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America maintains two charitable funds. The ABAA Benevolent Fund has less than \$100,000 in capital/principal. Rarely has it had more. It gives to booksellers who are ill, injured, or victim to natural disaster—in response to document direct and indirect appeal. It does not give money to dealers who make bad business decisions. The trustees never discriminate between ABAA members and non-members. And we act promptly, responsibly. In recent years the Fund has helped victims of earthquake, flood, and cancer. But our checks are barely token in size: \$5,000 to a bookseller—a mother of teenagers—diagnosed with terminal cancer!

Our second fund is The Elisabeth Woodburn Memorial Fund which remembers in purpose an ABAA President who was unable to attend college. We mean to fund education scholarships and worthy research relevant to our trade. But so far we can afford only two grants annually to the Colorado and Florida seminars, for which we receive ever more applications; we host annually a small party for librarians at RBMS meetings; we respond inadequately to requests from scholars for project assistance. Our Woodburn Fund has never had as much as \$30,000 in its coffers.

So, all our gifts and grants eat at principal. We replenish principal with gifts from members; proceeds and benefits from certain sales and in-family auctions, usually attached to our fairs; chapter gifts; and a five percent tax on dues. But our two funds function at minimal levels and do not grow substantially at all. All successful charities function with income from principal, not by nibbling at the principal. Can any of you remember the Benevolent and Woodburn Funds in your will? Each person is allowed by the government a lifetime tax credit of \$192,800 which is the tax on the first \$600,000 of taxable transfers. If you have accumulated more than you need to live comfortably, you may be thinking about lifetime gifts.

We are a very simple organization, not structured [easily] to receive or [readily] to administer gifts of property or life income gifts. Nonetheless, in all honesty, we would welcome cash gifts now, and gifts later, by *bequest*. Two members at least left us substantial sums, when they died. A bequest is a provision in your will directing a portion of your estate to a named beneficiary. Special language should be used in making bequests. The following is suggested phrasing for such a bequest:

I give, devise, and bequeath to the ABAA Benevolent Fund [and/or Elisabeth Woodburn Memorial Fund] the sum of \$_____, or _____percent of my estate, or the named property, or all the rest, residue and remainder of my estate.

The ABAA Benevolent Fund and Elisabeth Woodburn Memorial Fund are administered by the current and last two past ABAA presidents. We feel it is wise and essential to make our capital bases large enough so we can create and utilize income, make worthier grants, and better help the needy among us. Many booksellers in the US have minimal, negligible or no health insurance. The New Orleans floods and the California earthquakes are only reminders that disaster can strike anyone at any time. Will you help us better prepare?

The trustees thank all of you for your past support. Helping booksellers and young seminar students has given me more joy and sense of fulfillment than any other act in my several years of official ABAA service. I am very eager to share these pleasures.

For the trustees,
Peter B. Howard (ABAA President, 1992-1994)

Fellow trustees:
Rob Rulon-Miller (ABAA President, 1994-1996), Robert Fleck, ABAA President

Obituaries

Jerome Melvin Edelstein Bristol, Rhode Island

Jerome Melvin Edelstein, 71, of cancer, June 12, 1996. A friend of many in the trade, and a frequent visitor to our book fairs, Mel Edelstein was an extraordinary man of special talents whose contributions to the fields of bibliography, librarianship, and art history will be long remembered.

Mel was born in Baltimore, MD in 1924, the son of Russian and Polish immigrants, the late Joseph and Irene (Schwartz) Edelstein. He was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Johns Hopkins University, and earned his master's degree in library science at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He served in the Army during World War II in the North African and Italian campaigns, and for a while was stationed in Florence, Italy. After the war he returned to Florence to study Italian history and literature as a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Florence.

Mel began his career as a bibliographer and researcher at the Library of Congress and at UCLA. He served as special collections librarian at New York University until 1970 when he was appointed chief librarian at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. Neal Turtell, Mel's successor at the National Gallery, said recently, "His main mission was to build up the research collection. Before Mel came there was not much of a collection. Today, we have over 200,000 volumes. He transformed it from a small reference collection to an international research collection."

In particular, Mel built two of the world's best libraries on Leonardo Da Vinci, "which were a source of particular pride to him," explained Turtell. He helped build the libraries of several major institutions, including what was to become the world's largest art library, at the Getty Center, which totals more than a million volumes.

Mel went to the Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities in Santa Monica, CA in 1986 as a senior bibliographer and resource coordinator. Later he became assistant director of collection development, a post he held until his retirement in 1994. Among his many

acquisitions for the Getty Library were major collections of books on Islamic and Byzantine art and architecture; books and graphics by Max Ernst, and the papers of the Italian futurist, F.T. Marinetti.

On his retirement from the Getty in 1994, Mel returned to Bristol, Rhode Island, the hometown of his wife, Eleanor, and long a favorite vacation spot. His collection of books on that town remains one of the best in private hands. Norman Fiering, director and librarian at the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University in Providence, offered Mel a job as Distinguished Bibliographer in Residence. At Brown, Mel taught a course on the history of books and printing, and worked on several exhibitions for the library including one on the Aldine press. Although early Italian printing was his specialty, Mel researched and wrote many articles on subjects ranging from Renaissance history to modern fine printing, to American and English literature.

He wrote several books including a study of playwright Thornton Wilder, and he compiled the definitive bibliography of Wallace Stevens. The latter was published by the Pittsburgh University Press in their "Studies in Bibliography" series in 1974, and is still a standard reference.

He was a member of the Bibliographic Society of America; L'Association Internationale des Bibliophiles; the James Joyce Society; the American Antiquarian Society, and the American Printing History Association. He was also a member of the Grolier Club, and Century Association, both in New York; and also of the Cosmos Club in Washington, DC. He was chair of the Friends of the Roger Williams University Library, and a board member of the United Brothers Synagogue, both in Bristol.

In 1970, with his wife Eleanor, Mel founded the Crossroads School in Santa Monica. According to Mrs. Edelstein, they founded the school for their two sons, because public education in the 1960's was not very good in California. Although the Edelsteins moved before their children graduated, the school continues to prosper.

Mel Edelstein was living in his adopted home town of Bristol, Rhode Island at the

time of his death. He is survived by his wife, Eleanor; two sons, Paul Rockwell, of Kansas City, Missouri, and Nathaniel Benson, of Bristol and Tucson, Arizona; a sister, Nadine E. Goldstein of Yardley, Pennsylvania; and four grandchildren.

Irving Keats Carmel, California

ABAA member emeritus Irving Keats died on March 16, 1996. He would have been ninety-eight years old on June 9 of this year.

According to his wife, Virginia, Mr. Keats "maintained his interest in literature to the very end, reading a few pages of Shakespeare just a few days before his death." ■

ILAB Publications Available through ABAA

ILAB/LILA International Directory of Antiquarian Booksellers, 1994/95.

ABAA members: \$30 postpaid
Non-members: \$42.50 postpaid

Dictionary of Terms and Expressions Commonly Used in the Antiquarian Booktrade in French, English, German & Italian. By Edgar Franco.

ABAA members: \$32 postpaid
Non-members: \$40 postpaid

A Dictionary of Abbreviations Commonly Used by German and Italian Antiquarian Booksellers and Auctioneers. By Bernard M. Rosenthal.

ABAA members: \$7.50 postpaid
Non-members: \$10.00 postpaid

Send your check to: ABAA,
50 Rockefeller Plaza,
New York, NY 10020.
Pre-paid orders only, please.

Joseph The Provider / Books Reorganizes Business

Joseph The Provider / Books of Santa Barbara, CA has reorganized. Effective July 1, 1996, Lee Campbell assumed the presidency of the corporation. This leadership change should not affect the operation of a rare-book firm that has been in business since 1970. Joseph The Provider will continue to issue catalogues and exhibit at book fairs.

Larry Moskowitz has relocated to San Francisco, CA, where he maintains a separate book inventory at his residence. These books can be viewed by appointment. Larry will be issuing occasional catalogues or lists, and interested parties may write to him to receive them as usual.

Ralph Sipper, too, now sells books on an individual basis at his present address, also by appointment. He will be available to professionally appraise and consult for private or institutional clients.

The three principals, while operating individually, will continue to work together, albeit in a more informal manner. Therefore, catalogues and other pertinent communications should be sent separately to all three individuals, since all will continue to be active book buyers.

Lee G. Campbell, Joseph The Provider/Books, PO Box 90, Santa Barbara, CA 93102; phone: (805) 962-6862; fax: (805) 962-9607; e-mail: joe@silcom.com.

Larry Moskowitz, 2217 Pacific, Apartment 6, San Francisco, CA 94115; phone: (415) 674-8436.

Ralph B. Sipper, 10 W. Micheltorena, Santa Barbara, CA 93101; phone: (805) 962-2141; fax: (805) 966-5057. ■

ALAI Elects Officers

At its general meeting on May 20, 1996, the Associazione Librai Antiquari d'Italia elected the following members to its executive committee: President, Mr. Piero Piani (Libreria Naturalistica); Vice President, Mr. Gaetano Colonnese; Treasurer, Mr. Francesco Chellini; Secretary, Mr. Francesco Scala; and committee members Paolo Tonin (L'Arengario Studio Bibliografico); Bernard Seacombe (Libreria Antiquaria Rappaport); Umberto Pregliasco; and Mario Scognamiglio (Libreria Rovello) ■

A Note From the Security Committee

We are pleased to announce that the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America online reporting form for book thefts and recoveries is now available on the World Wide Web. The reporting form can be found at:

<http://www.abaa-booknet.com/stolen.html>

We strongly suggest to our friends and colleagues in the library, bookselling, and collecting communities that this new mechanism be used to report thefts whenever possible. An accompanying database will go online later this year.

For more information please contact Edward Ripley-Duggan, Chair, ABAA Security Committee, at: Wilsey Rare Books, 23 Mill Road, Olivebridge, NY 12461; phone: (914) 657-7057; fax: (914) 657-2366; e-mail: erd@mhv.

**Deadline for submissions
to the next *Newsletter* is:
October 14, 1996**

Membership Updates

Thomas G. Boss has a new e-mail address, web site, and hours: boss@tiac.net; <http://www.tiac.net/users/boss>; Mon.-Sat.9-5.

Burkwood Books has a new zipcode for its post office box: 61803. The zipcode for its street address remains 61801.

Jens J. Cristoffersen (member emeritus) has a new address and phone number: 2303 Old Oak Lane, Kingwood, TX 77339; phone: (713) 359-2036.

Elgen Books now has an e-mail address: elgen@worldnet.att.net.

First Folio now has an email address: firstfol@aeneas.net.

Garcia-Garst, Booksellers has a new address: 1516 North Daubenger Road, Turlock, CA 95380.

J & J Hanrahan now has an e-mail address: hanrahan@interactive.net.

High Ridge Books has a new e-mail address: highridg2@usa.pipeline.com.

Historicana now has a web site: <http://www.antiquarian.com/historicana>.

Rulon-Miller Books now has a web site: <http://www.rulon.com/>.

Kenneth Starosciak has new on-line addresses: e-mail: artbooks@best.com; web site: <http://www.best.com/~artbooks>.

The Veatchs Arts of the Books has new addresses effective September 10, 1996: PO Box 328, Northampton, MA 01060; shipping address: 140 Crescent Street, Northampton, MA 01060. ■

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