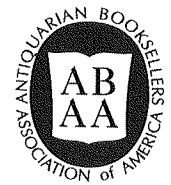


The **A B A A** NEWSLETTER



VOLUME THIRTEEN, NUMBER 4

ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

SUMMER 2002

INSIDE: *London Book Fair Week 2002.* PAGE 3

The More Things Change: Where We Have Been and Where We Are Going in the Online Book World

by Richard Weatherford

Richard Weatherford, founder of Interloc and its successor, Alibris, was this year's keynote speaker at the Colorado Rare Books Seminar. The text of his address follows in full.



A favorite haunt of London book fair exhibitors.

Some Thoughts on the Maturing of the Rare Book Market at the Turn of the 21st Century

by Ken Lopez

ABAA President Ken Lopez was among this year's speakers at the FABS symposium in Chicago. The text of his address follows in full.

Greetings. I'd like to thank you for having me here today. I'd like to talk about what I see as dramatic changes that have taken place in the rare book market in the last ten to fifteen years—and even more dramatic changes in the past five or six years. I want to talk about what kinds of changes we've seen, and what has caused them. What do they mean for

now, and what are their implications for the future?

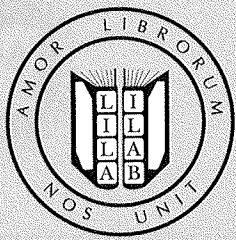
I'll try to talk in terms that are applicable to the market in general and not limited to, or focused on, my own specialty of modern first editions. Probably most of my examples—to the extent that I illustrate my theses with examples—will come from modern firsts, since that's my specialty and where most of my experience lies. So this may sometimes result in a bias, or even in getting something plain wrong—generalizing from a phenomenon

First, the beginnings—at least for me. By the time this particular day rolled around in late October 1978, about a week before Halloween, I had been buying and selling books for a half dozen years. I had a book catalogue finished and at the printer, but my "real" job was as an Associate Professor of English at The Ohio State University. My wife, Harriet, and I had two sons, Matt, age 9, and Steve, age 6, so we were pretty busy with academic life, school and activities for our sons, and the book business.

I had hired two of my graduate students to help us sort the address labels for my new book catalogue into zip code order for bulk mailing. This involved typing 2000 names and addresses onto 4-part carbon sheets of address label paper, gummed on the back and separated into about 40 labels per page. This meant that,

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ILAB Book Fairs

2002

October 25–27

Boston, MA (ABAA)
Hynes Convention Centre

November 8–10

Melbourne, Australia (ANZAAB)
Malvern Town Hall

November 22–23

Stockholm, Sweden (SVAFF)
Stureplan

2003

January 31–February 2

Stuttgart, Germany (VDA)
Württembergischen Kunstvereins

February 7–9

San Francisco, CA (ABAA)
San Francisco Concourse

March 7–9

Zürich, Switzerland (VEBUKU)
Volkshaus Zürich

March 20–22

Amsterdam, Netherlands (NVVA)
RAI Congress Centre

April 10–13

New York, NY (ABAA)
Park Avenue Armory

June 5–8

London, England (ABA)
Olympia Exhibition Centre

2004

June 3–6

London, England (ABA)
Olympia Exhibition Centre

Letters to the Editor

From: Collier Brown

I'm wondering whether ABAA members and other *Newsletter* readers might think about a possible contribution to the discussion I'm trying to start ("Letters to the Editor," *ABAA Newsletter*, volume XIII, number 3). Recently, a distinguished dealer for whom I have considerable respect told me he had been to a fair not long ago and really didn't know why he should go to another—everything there was "Internet priced," there were no bargains, and thus no particular reason to be there as opposed to shopping online. I could add that while I don't do a lot of business with collectors (given the nature of our store), I feel I have really seen peo-

ple looking at the things we have at Powell's Technical Books, going home to look them up online, and then perhaps purchasing them only if they are competitive with what they see elsewhere. I invite you, as experienced dealers and exhibitors, to think about these notions and provide your comments as appropriate. I would certainly like to be told that I'm all wet and none of this is taking place... (Of course, given today's financial market situation, it's hard to imagine anyone at the fair being able to spend more than \$20 on anything—with what's happening to my "retirement" accounts, I could be on the job for quite a while, if there still is a job!). ■



The 26th Annual Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair

October 25–27, 2002

Hynes Convention Center
900 Boylston Street / Boston, MA

- ▶ TICKETS: \$15
Friday, October 25 from 5PM–9PM
(Tickets are good throughout the weekend)
- ▶ TICKETS: \$8
Saturday, October 26 from 12NOON–7PM
Sunday, October 27 from 12NOON–5PM

Rare and antiquarian books, modern first editions, maps, and autographs for the serious collector and curious browser.

The Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair coincides with the New England Print Fair also at the Hynes Convention Center. Admission to one gains admission to the other.

Visit www.bostonbookfair.com for more information or call Commonwealth Promotion, Inc. at (617) 266-6540.



Sponsored by the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America

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London Book Fair Week 2002: Booked Out in Seven Days or Less

by Rob Rulon-Miller

As much as they stay the same, book fairs continue to be unique. Weather, restaurants, economic trends, parties, famous people, venues, theft, hotel bars, all provide indelible signatures. So, is it a wonder that there seems too much to write about after the nearly dozen fairs inside that first part of June known as London Book Fair Week?

A travelogue is to be written about the venturing from one fair to the next (Is taxi better than tube? Is there a good restaurant nearby? Can we stop by Maggs on the way?). In the interest of brevity, let it be said that the combined efforts of the ABA (Antiquarian Booksellers Association), the PBFA (Provincial Booksellers Fair Association), the sponsors of the old Café Royale Fair, now the Olympia Hilton Fair (Book Fairs Ltd.), and the sponsors of the new HD fairs (I asked a few exhibitors but no one seemed to know who or what HD

stood for)—have paid off: credit them all for coming up with the most efficient way of cramming as many fairs as possible into a week's time. I spent ten days in London this trip, and ostensibly I went to a different fair every day, though I saw many of the same books fair to fair. For the adventurous bookseller who can purchase in a variety of fields, there are many good books to buy. Even for the specialist there is enough to make the trip worthwhile.

I began at the PBFA Fair No. 1. I attended this fair only on its second day, and consequently it was fairly empty of visitors. Even though this fair might have been picked over, I still bought three or four books that made my day if not exactly my trip. Just a block or two away, at the same time, was the HD Fair No. 1. The quality of books here was not up to the PBFA standards, but there was plenty to look at, so much so that two days later I came back, to the HD Fair

No. 2. Jim Burmester said he did very well buying there, but as an exhibitor, he got the early pickings. I ended up buying only one book at the HD Fairs, and I bought it from, predictably enough, Mr. Burmester. PBFA Fair No. 2 was a clammy crush. This fair featured perhaps a third of the same booksellers who exhibited at PBFA 1, but two-thirds offered fresh stock, and I could see that those who exhibited back to back did their best to replenish what they could. Already I had bought a lot, and I wasn't half way through the week.

The main event, so to speak, was and continues to be the ABA Fair at the Olympia complex. This fair is held in conjunction with the Olympia Fine Art and Antiques Fair and the Hali Carpet and Textile Fair, all of which are under the same roof, though in different halls.

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Endangered Bookseller Customs and Courtesies

by David Szewczyk

In early June a check arrived here at PRB&M from Rob Rulon-Miller. Cynthia, my partner, could not associate it with any active invoice nor trace Rob as ever having owed us that amount. When she asked me if I had any idea what it might be for, a quick check of my memory bank interfaced with the cerebral calculator to come up with the surprising and unexpected answer.

The ABAA's 2002 New York Antiquarian Book Fair was memorable for suffocating heat and generally poor sales, the latter despite an extraordinary array of good and great books and manuscripts on display. Among the covetable books that I saw was a nice, early Quito imprint on a shelf at Rob's booth. The price was just what I would have put on the book, so I did not purchase it. But I did promise Rob to send him the name and

email address of a collector who might well be interested in buying it.

In the week following the fair I emailed the promised information to Rob, and indeed, he made the sale. The check, I realized, was Rob's courtesy honorarium for providing the profitable connection.

When I started in the book business in the 1970s, it was common for dealers to send five percent or ten percent of the total of a facilitated sale to the colleague who helped—not as a matter mandated by ABAA or ILAB codes, but strictly as one of voluntary custom. Thirty years on, I suddenly realized that though I've always given my colleagues many tips similar to the one I gave Rob, his was the first honorarium I had received in about six years.

This started me thinking, and I identified another once common, now uncom-

mon, type of honorarium: the finder's fee. By this second non-codified practice, reward could be expected for telling a colleague of a book, manuscript, or collection that was more in his or her area of specialization than in one's own. The amount paid to the colleague who passed along the tip was usually ten percent of the purchase price. I suspect this practice may also be unfamiliar to many, and perhaps both "rules" are now essentially things of the past.

Price Codes

Another bookseller practice that is rapidly becoming history is price coding in books. When I began in the book business, beside selecting a name for my company, I had to decide on a price code to put in each of my books, so that I (and I

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Why Qualified Professional Appraisals Are Important

by Thomas J. Joyce

Probably the most important lessons I have learned about written appraisals are lessons I have learned from witnessing incompetent appraisals.

My mentor in the business of rare bookselling was Van Allen Bradley. Although I don't recall him doing appraisals for tax purposes, he contributed to standardizing prices by compiling his *The Book Collector's Handbook of Values*. I learned a lot about the prices and market values of books back in the early 1970s by helping him finish that book and by occasionally assisting in his book shop.

What I learned from Bradley I applied in my own business. It wasn't until the late 1970s, after I had started my own rare book firm, The Scholar Gypsy, Ltd., in Geneva, Illinois, that I felt competent to do an appraisal for pay: an appraisal that I felt could stand up to rigorous scrutiny and that could be convincingly defended. I have completed dozens of paid appraisals since then without a challenge from the IRS, but I have encountered at least four appraisals by non-ABAA/ILAB booksellers that demanded to be challenged by somebody. Let me tell you about the damages caused by less than scrupulous book and manuscript appraisers and the qualitative differences resulting from the higher standards that most often characterize ABAA/ILAB professionals.

More than twenty years ago, I was offered the chance to purchase *en bloc* a collection described as two million pieces of Lincolniana. There were certainly close to that many pieces, though I did not count them all, housed in at least nine huge cardboard cartons at a moving and storage warehouse. Of course, a primary consideration for me was, "Did the seller legitimately own this material?" I checked the appropriate legal documents at the courthouse and assured myself that, indeed, he had inherited all of the material that I saw—and some that I did not see.

Not many years earlier, during the previous owner's tenure, the entire collec-

tion had been appraised (for insurance purposes, I guess) at roughly \$50,000 by a prominent Lincolnian rare book and manuscript dealer. As a neophyte to self-promotion, I was very impressed by the crisp folder to which the appraisal was attached. There was nothing informal or casual about it. Then there were its preliminary pages, not unlike those of a term paper, consisting of a page of title, a page of impressive stationery, and two pages of biographical details about the greatness of the appraiser and his qualifications. These were followed by an embossed, notarized statement testifying that all of the preceding was true. As I remember, I had to flip through ten leaves of paper before I reached the first listing of the goods. This bookseller knew how to make an appraisal seem very, very important (or was it that he knew how to make *himself* appear very, very important?).

The \$50,000 appraisal value was split almost equally between Lincoln manuscript materials and the nine large cartons of memorabilia. As I recall, there were about twenty pages detailing the contents, individually and in bunches, of the nine large cartons. That is, there were about twenty pages detailing half of the value of the collection. The description of the other half of the value—the manuscripts—occupied *at most* six lines at the top of the first page! That was completely disproportionate, inept, and fraudulent.

The reason it mattered, predictably, is that the manuscript materials had been stolen by a relative who felt cheated because the collection had not been given to him! When I asked to see this part of the collection, the seller—the real owner—said that he could not produce them, that they had been removed, and that he believed that they were in the keeping of one of his relatives.

"Then why don't you call in the police?" I asked. "Because I can't prove that any letters they might find are letters which belong to me," he replied.

He could not provide a modicum of proof of ownership because the paid

appraiser had failed to provide even enough documentation to identify the correspondent and the date of each letter. These facts are the least the appraiser ought to have provided in his appraisal.

In the late 1980s, I encountered another example of an appraiser's gross malfeasance. I was approached to do a small appraisal by a client who, as a youth, had collected the work and illustrations of Frank Brangwyn. Now Brangwyn is not a household name, but he was a member of the Royal Academy and, in fact, the only living member for whom it had sponsored an exhibition.

My client's mother had died at his boyhood home in New Jersey. A moving company had packed and transported her furnishings, including his book collection, to Chicago. Somehow, the books never arrived (had they fallen off the truck?). The moving company had hired their own bookseller (not an ABAA member) to evaluate the collection based upon the listing that my client supplied, from memory, after the loss.

The first appraiser reported to the movers that no one collected Frank Brangwyn any more and that most of his books were worth from \$25 to \$50 each. Admittedly, Brangwyn was no Arthur Rackham or Harry Clarke, but his works were certainly often worth more than that. The client claimed to have had a number of the limited editions by Brangwyn that, according to *American Book Prices Current*, fetch a lot more than \$50 at auction. (For example: *The Etched Work of Frank Brangwyn*. London, 1908. One of 100 with signed original etchings. \$600+. Or, *A Book of Bridges*. London, 1916. One of 75. \$561.)

I spent an afternoon being deposed by the moving company's attorney. I faced him confidently, because I had done the work and I could prove that the other appraiser had engaged in chicanery and guesswork. Because I was working from the same listing, I knew that he had never looked up most of the citations: the

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October 1834: Chapter One

y Greg Gibson

The last issue of the Newsletter featured an excerpt from material that was not included in ABAA member Greg Gibson's recent publication, *Demon of the Waters: The True Story of the Mutiny on the Whaleship Globe* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2001). Part II of that material appears here for the first time.

It took a single glance at the catalogue of the Strong Family papers for me to realize how wrong I was. There were thousands of documents, with probably 500 pieces of paper relating in one way or another to Augustus Strong. His people were upper class—the kind who saved everything. It would've taken me months to do justice to the wealth of material those dozen boxes contained.

Strong's mother, Submit Rockwell (Miller) Strong, was from Connecticut. She came to Cincinnati with her father, who was a professional military man. There she met her husband, Elija Strong, also a professional soldier from New England, related to Governor Caleb Strong of Massachusetts. Elija died in 1810 on duty in Natchez, and Submit made the journey from Natchez to Cincinnati with her two young children, a long haul for a single woman in those days.

All this was recounted in an obituary article published on her death in 1874. The story had a romantic twist. In 1834 her son Augustus, a promising naval officer, had died prematurely at the age of twenty-six. Submit traveled down to Pensacola to retrieve his body. She brought all his belongings back in a large trunk, which she kept for her whole life but never opened. "After her death," the article says, "the trunk was unlocked in the presence of a large number of Cincinnatians, and was found to contain a complete naval outfit, uniform, gold epaulettes, cords and tassels, Lieutenant Strong's commission, and nautical books and charts of the day." It's a good bet the trunk also contained Augustus' personal papers, and it is my guess that his mother looked at them once, realized what they meant, and locked them up

for the rest of her life, unwilling to part with them but not wishing to release them to public view.

It was not until 1906 that Strong's artifacts were sent to the "National Museum at Washington, D.C.," where perhaps Jean Hort now has charge of them. The papers stayed in Cincinnati and were donated to the Historical Society by Miss Elizabeth Strong and Mrs. Robert Strong in 1962 and 1970. At about this time, Strong's journal had somehow escaped the family into the possession of Ted Langstroth. Perhaps he was a relative, or perhaps a friend. A man with sufficient bluff to try to buy a print off a courthouse wall could have found some way to persuade a dowager to part with an itty-bitty old book.

Letters to family members, primarily his mother and his brother David, trace Augustus' career after joining the Navy. A place on the *Dolphin* for her cruise to the Pacific was indeed desirable duty. On the eve of the ship's departure, Augustus wrote his mother:

Aug 12, 1825

The Mulgraves, we visit for the purpose of taking the mutineers, of the American Whale Ship Globe. It is a very desirable cruise, and all our officers have made application; none have succeeded except Lieutenant Paulding, Mids. Lawrence, and myself. On my making application to the Commodore, he replied that he did not know how to part with me... Capt. Percival is Commander. He has been very desirous for me, to sail with him.

Strong returned to New York on the *United States* with Hull and Percival, broke, and had to borrow money from his brother David, to whom he wrote, "Peru is one of the most exorbitant places in the world, and I can give myself this credit that I am one of the few who returned not

in debt." The officers were granted leave, and Augustus took up residence in Flatbush, NY, awaiting orders and studying for the exam that would promote him to lieutenant.

In May 1827 he wrote David, "I still reside in this place pursuing my studies, and relieving my mind mornings and evenings with an agreeable and improving walk, in company with my particular friend Mr. Paulding." He kept in close contact with other officers from his South American days. Commodore and Mrs. Hull took him to the theater, and Mad Jack wrote him regarding his lieutenant's examination, "I am very anxious you should pass, as all who were with me, that have presented themselves, and none are left to surmount this terrifying ordeal but yourself and Mr. McBlair... study hard my dear boy, and believe me your Sincere Friend."

Strong's next duty was on the *Falmouth* in Pensacola. He spent 1828–1829 there, still preparing for his examination, chasing pirates in Cuban waters, and showing the flag in Mexico. Judging from his letters to family members, it was agreeable and exciting duty.

In February 1830 he took and passed his examination. He was then stationed on the *Brandywine* in the Mediterranean, and in 1831, having been promoted to Lieutenant, he transferred to the *Boston*, also on the Mediterranean Station. After three months' leave in 1832, he was sent in 1833 to the Schooner *Experiment* in Pensacola, where he probably served as First Lieutenant. His money problems eased after passing his exam, as evidenced by a pay slip for \$119.90 for May and June 1830. Strong was very conscious of raising himself in the world. When his brother asked him how he was doing with the ladies he replied, "No one is more fond of innocently coquetting with them than I, but thus have I conquered myself, and shall ever act the defensive in respect to your intimation, until I have established a character."

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Gibson

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Inevitably there is the sad record of his demise. On October 8, 1834, he wrote his mother, "Pensacola is extremely sickly & has been for some time. In the last week there has been several deaths... We have had the same epidemic on board, but was mild in its nature." There must have been other letters in which he complained of being sick because both David and Submit write that they are sorry to hear he has been unwell. On October 21, his mother wrote a lengthy and tender letter—eight pages of her precise script—ending, "I think when you have decyphered this long scrawl you will not wish to receive another soon unless it is better written, accept of the prayers for your happiness of your affectionate mother S. R. Strong."

Her son would not receive the letter. He had died on October 18, 1834.

Thus, Augustus Strong's family correspondence delineates his short life and its last years. Judging from his letters home, he was a well intended, if unexciting, young man. However, other papers that came home from Pensacola in that long-unopened trunk tell a different story.

What, for example, was I to make of this letter to Strong from his shipmate Midshipman Edward Schermerhorn? This was the man who'd been with Paulding when he rescued William Lay, and with Percival when he quelled the riot outside missionary Bingham's house.

Woahoo, Apr 6, 1826

I have received your advice but let me tell you don't give "advice" without first casting the [unreadable word] out of your own eye and then take the beam out of they brother's I came in the world on two legs and I hoped Strong you would consider I have a right to keep them.

I have been accused but not found guilty I do not attempt to clear myself from your censure or from

any other person in Woahoo—but "it is, as it is" and the man who reported the story which has been construed in the worst manner to injure the female who is the only sufferer in this case—what has been said upon this blackguard subject is a gross falsehood and the reporter I expect finds it such. I am as well & in as good spirits as ever—although sorry for the females sake. Fate drops the curtain I can do no more. Your friend, Edward Schermerhorn

Something happened with a woman during the *Dolphin's* wild Honolulu visit, and as a result some serious difference arose between Strong and his shipmate. Strong's side of the tale is not preserved in the trunk, but a week later he got another letter from Schermerhorn:

Apr 12. 1826

Your sentimental letter has given me considerable gratification, it has relieved me of a heavy burden, and one which I nearly foundered under, that of being a "rival." ... The attempt, which I have reason to believe is your first, at poetry, I cannot admire, though... I will recommend you to persevere in your undertaking, you have a poetical look!! Your countenance almost accuses me of guilt although I hope your heart does not—in attempting to "drill a hole in a female's belly" and of "being able to do family duty" is laughable my dear fellow my old breeches will get a girl with child, then why should not my person. I am afraid you have sew'd your seed in stony ground if you have don't do so any more, for you know you are fast advancing in age—and but a few years will make him—lie dormant:—Then what will be your excuse that you have ruined your constitution in your youth... I cannot tell what you or Lawrence thinks about the shift, and as for my own part I would as leave have you to think it to be true, as not; you are mistaken that females are impressed with an idea they have "a sufficient

number of holes—" they have but one hole which gives them pleasure and that pleasure is so very great that they would willingly have a dozen more—I should like to understand what the "cream" of the joke is that you are so desirous of keeping to yourself... The girl of your heart has just left here. She is in good spirits.

A sufficient number of holes?

While a long, patient, Cincinnati freight train whispered past the library's back windows, I struggled to reconcile this strange document with what I knew of Augustus Strong—and failed. The letter ran on in a similar fashion for three pages, and whatever Strong had done to occasion Schermerhorn's strained locker room banter, it must have been equal in kind to the writing before me. I thought of Captain Percival's letter of recommendation: "Your conduct was both moral, and gentlemanly, and free from captious or litigious disputes with your associates." Would this pass for moral and gentlemanly? Strong seemed bothered by the loss of a woman's honor and may have accused Schermerhorn of getting her pregnant. Perhaps that was moral. As far as gentlemanliness was concerned, Percival had set the bar pretty low in Honolulu. How could these young men not have been influenced by everything that was going on around them?

I pulled more folders from the boxes piled in front of me and soon found two penciled drafts of an angry note from Strong protesting the manner in which he'd been called to watch by another midshipman. Here was trouble brewing again. I attempted to convince myself that the notes were therapeutic literary exercises, in the manner of Strong's story about the duel, and even concocted a theory that the Schermerhorn letters were the inspiration for that story. But now I wasn't so sure. Strong had a love life, and a raunchy streak, and might just go off in your face if you pressed him. My image of Augustus Strong was starting to crack.

I could imagine the crimson flush racing across the face of his mother, Submit Strong, as she read those phrases—"the

'cream' of the joke... The girl of your heart"—and the sudden surge of shame then anger in her own heart, all confused with the bottomless sorrow and love: tumbling, tumbling, till she thought she'd drown in it. Then, in my imagining, she'd gritted her teeth in that stinking Pensacola heat, stifling the cry, and closed the trunk forever, preserving all that her son had been, even those letters from his friend.

And friend he was, despite their difference in Honolulu. When the *United States* returned to New York, Schermerhorn remained in South America. On January 4, 1827, he wrote Strong, asking him to forward a letter to Captain Percival. "Wishing you my dear friend a safe and happy return to your long absent relations and friends I remain your friend Edw. Schermerhon." Augustus Strong was a large enough person to repair whatever differences he'd had with his shipmate.

Then I came across a letter from Strong that began as follows:

U.S. Ship *Falmouth*
May 6th 1828
Sir:

As you are determined that one or both of us, shall be launched into everlasting Eternity—My choice is ship's pistols, at the distance of ten paces...

The "work of fiction" again. The next item in the folder was a copy of a letter Strong wrote on May 7 to Turner's intended second or "Friend," in which Strong rejects him, "not owing to my own, nor to the opinion of my Friend, but the... opinion of others." And then, on May 10, this note from Strong to Turner: I cannot reconcile myself to meet you in the manner you have suggested, but if you can provide a suitable individual, merely as witness that justice is done you, this affair shall terminate." Each note included the address of the intended recipient on the outer half of the folded sheet.

In his bibliography of manuscripts in the Navy History Museum, Admiral George Emery catalogued Strong's story of the duel as "probably a work of fic-

tion." When I examined this notebook, I agreed with the Admiral that it was a fiction. It thus became part of the evidence for my supposition that Strong had considered the idea of publishing the account of his adventures on the *Dolphin*. These are the notes I made at the time:

The "work of literary fiction" is well written, and effective, in the form of a series of letters between Strong and an antagonist named Bushrod Turner regarding a duel in May 1828. The argument supposedly occurred aboard the *Falmouth*, since the duel was to take place as soon as the ship arrived in Pensacola... The account closes with a letter from another man saying that since Turner didn't fight Strong, he would, "Now or Never," giving the romance an almost comic twist.

In the same way that my image of Augustus Strong was unable to withstand the content of Schermerhorn's letters, so the theory of the duel as a work of fiction was being challenged by the evidence at hand. The next two letters demolished my theory.

The first one was dated May 11, written in an obviously different hand, and signed "B. W. Turner:"

May 11th 1828
Sir

I hope that I have at last procured a friend that may suit your scrupulous conscience. You will give me written information as to this, and the terms proposed will be put into execution the first opportunity.

The final document in this remarkable series was apparently a draft of a letter to his commanding officer. It was in Strong's hand, dated June 25.

Sir You have my word the affair between Md. B.W. Turner and myself shall not take place while under your command together—

It stopped there, incomplete and unsigned. I recalled sitting at my work-

table in the Navy History Library, reading what I then thought was Strong's "story" about a duel, with a complete run of Navy *Registers* on a shelf about five paces away. I cursed myself now for being so sure of my theory that I didn't even consult the *Registers* to see if Bushrod Turner was a real person.

But the current of luck that had carried me here was with me still. In the next folder was Strong's copy of the Navy Register for 1827. In the section listing "Passed Midshipmen" Bushrod Turner's name appeared. He'd been born in Virginia and entered the Navy in 1824.

There really was a Bushrod Turner, and all the while Strong had been assuring his brother how grand things were aboard the *Falmouth*, he'd been getting ready to fight to the death. For whatever reason, the duel never occurred, but events leading up to it had made an impression, and Strong had been careful to record the particulars. The "story" I'd seen in Washington was probably a copybook, Strong's record of the incident. Later, he'd somehow gotten the actual letters back.

At this point the numbers clicked into meaning for me. They were evidence of the most basic sort, but I'd always been slow at math. If Augustus Strong had been twenty-six years old when he died in 1834, he would have been born in 1808.

The Vevay journal had been written by a seventeen-year-old boy.

A few folders later I found another piece of paper that completed the deconstruction of my image of Augustus Strong. It was another draft of a letter, probably unsent, interrupted by Strong's death.

Pensacola Oct (no date) 1834
My dear Madam:

You will pardon, on the eve of departure, the introduction of a subject, on which more of my happiness depends than I had supposed... I would have done it orally but multiplicity of duty prevents... You must have noticed my increasing preference for her and the manner in which it has been

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Gibson

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received... That I have found her a more kindred spirit than I have ever met, I will not deny. That I have been irresistable drawn towards her, is beyond contradiction—...Miss Mary has been by no means the loser—under every circumstance I have been her warmest supporter; but then it

was purely from friendship. It has since, on my part, settled into something more serious.

On the eve of his death from yellow fever in Pensacola, Florida, in 1834, Augustus Strong was getting ready to propose to a woman named Mary. I understood now that there was a vital, passionate being who existed outside the tidy box I'd fashioned for him—a man who'd seen more by his twenty-sixth year than most men

see in a lifetime, a man highly valued by his senior officers who was able to pick his own complicated way through his relations with his peers, a man rash enough to put his life on the line in defense of his honor, but who was sufficiently sensitive of the feelings of family members to hide his battles from them, a man contemplating marriage—a man who died before his prime.

But that's another story. ■

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theoretically, when I finished typing all the addresses, I had enough labels to do four mailings of my catalogues, which I sent out about four to six times a year.

In order to make the process of correcting and adding names more efficient, I made separate sheets for each state and for other countries. Thus, I could add and delete names from the correct sheets and still be able to do a bulk-mailing sort for the catalogues when they were ready to distribute.

This typical fall day in central Ohio was a good one for indoor work, so Harriet, my two workers, and I were on our hands and knees in our living room sorting the small address labels into piles. It was grueling work, and we had been at it for some time and were nearly finished when we heard the boys talking and shouting as they approached the front door. As always, they were happy to be home, ready to play, and swung the door wide open and ran into the room, accompanied by the blustery winds of an Ohio October day.

The address labels blew across the hardwood floor like leaves, piling up around the furniture and scatter rugs we had moved to the sides of the room. There was a long moment of absolute silence. After we locked all the doors and windows, it took us about four hours to gather them all up and re-sort them into state and zip code piles.

This became one of those small, important moments that can change

one's life. I resolved to find some better way of doing that job. And since the first personal computers had just begun to appear on the market, I resolved to get one as soon as it could store names and print mailing labels.

It wasn't until three years later, after I had quit teaching, had moved back to the Seattle area, and had gone into the book business full time, that I finally purchased my first computer. It did store and print mailing lists, one or two states per floppy disk, but it did not yet store and print catalogues. I was still typing the catalogues, each with approximately 500 entries, by hand on a manual and, later, an electric typewriter.

The more I learned about computers—these were the days when you had to wire up your own printer cables, and modems ran at 300 baud or slower (that is even slower than I can read!)—the more I realized the potential these machines held for a business dedicated to keeping lots and lots of information that had to be reused, including book descriptions and names and addresses. This may seem pretty obvious now, but it was really an abstraction at the time—people talked about doing it, but only a handful were actually experimenting with computers. I put a small system together: an original Winchester data storage drive that had a huge spinning platter powered by a large rubber band in a frame the size of a small refrigerator, a tiny little monitor, and a keyboard that spoke an 8-bit language called ASCII. That gave me my first real experience with computers. I liked it despite the difficulties, and it started to become apparent what might be possible.

I began transferring more of my manual work to the computer, printing texts I had previously typed by hand, and as I accustomed myself to a new way of thinking, things slowly started to improve. Not surprisingly, I found things that worked well and things that did not. I started getting calls from my book-selling contemporaries asking for advice, and I guess I gave good advice, because pretty soon it seemed like I had become an authority. It wasn't planned; it just happened that way.

In the spring of 1983, I wrote an article titled "Computers in the Antiquarian Book Trade" and submitted it to *AB Bookman's Weekly* for publication. Much to my surprise, the editor of the magazine, Jake Chernofsky, not only published it but also called to ask if I would write an occasional column about computers and bookselling. I agreed and wrote more articles over the next several years, the effect of which was that I became a de facto "expert" in computers. These articles covered such stirring topics as what is a floppy disk and what is the difference between a dot matrix and a daisy wheel printer. I suggested equipment, I explained ways one could use computers to make repetitive tasks easier, and I talked some about software.

After about six columns had been published, Jake Chernofsky called to ask if I would come to the Colorado Book Seminar for a day to talk with the students about computers for their businesses. Shortly after giving the demo, which consisted primarily of my explaining what a computer was and how it worked, and answering lots of questions, I was

approached by one of the faculty members. He came right up to me, wedged his way through the small group of people asking questions, looked me right in the knot of my tie (he was a little short), poked his index finger at me, and told me he didn't like computers and didn't think they had any place in the book business. I left early for the airport!

This person, who shall remain nameless but whose initials are M.G., did me a huge favor that day. First, he let me know that I would meet resistance to my enthusiasm for using computers in the book trade and that I had better get used to it or quit now; and second, he taught me that everyone in the trade did not want or need to use computers to run their businesses, that the traditional ways had and would continue to have merit, and that the business was about the books and the customers, not the typewriters, fax machines, and computers.

Pre-Internet Online Database and Information Sites

The very first serious attempt to create a book listing service was Interloc. I formed it as a company in 1983 and produced a business plan based on the used auto parts network model. The company was in negotiations for funding in 1984. The plan was reasonable, but the concept of an electronic marketplace for out-of-print and scarce books was too new to get funding, so Interloc was put on hold. But only on hold—the idea remained fresh and continued to develop.

The first book "site" to actually operate was Antiquarian Databases International (ADI), founded by Larry Costello in 1988. It was a Bulletin Board Service, or BBS. Computer programmer Tom Sawyer created the now-standard UIIEE record format for use by ADI and supported it directly with his BookMaster software. Larry was a student at this seminar and asked me to help him launch his service. I declined to be personally involved, but I did spend some time working with him, making suggestions regarding problems and strategies. ADI launched but worked only briefly. Let's remember, those of us who were in the business back then and haven't suffered

serious memory loss, that before the Internet became available to commercial users, all so-called "online" activities involved modems and telephone calls, usually directly to computer venues, like CompuServe and Delphi, that were essentially bulletin boards.

The next was BookNet in 1989, which wasn't a "site" but rather an office with a bunch of fax machines. The concept here was that booksellers would fill out want list forms and fax them to the BookNet site. The computers there would "read" the faxes using optical character recognition (OCR) software. The BookNet computer would parse the information and match the wants against the items listed for sale. The results would then be faxed back to the dealer, who would be responsible for contacting the seller. This system also had a very short life.

Then came BookQuest in 1989, the first dialup service to have more than 100 dealers. BookQuest was owned by the Faxon Corporation, a large company with 100 years of experience providing magazine and journal subscriptions to libraries worldwide. There were actually two components to the service: BookQuest for monographs and SerialsQuest for journals. When the Faxon leadership discovered that their investment was going nowhere, they told BookQuest to find someone who could help them fix it. I was called in as a consultant and was later hired as a Vice President, but my insistence that they needed to rewrite their software and change their business plan, including their methods of charging users, fell on deaf ears. Faxon closed BookQuest in May of 1993, and the entire Faxon Corporation collapsed the following month.

Meanwhile, BookBytes opened in 1991, operating from a small bedroom in Bellevue, Washington, a suburb of Seattle. It lasted a few years but never attracted enough subscribers to make it profitable.

Then AB Bookman began developing a system in the late 1990s. Their Automated Bookman system was an attempt to build on the large volume of wants that the magazine published every month, but the system design was not successful. This was really a shame, a

huge opportunity lost for the magazine, as I still believe that a good system design and a reasonable business plan, along with the many thousands of loyal *AB Bookman's Weekly* subscribers could have been tremendously successful.

After BookQuest failed, the idea of Interloc still persisted. Several dealers who were using BookQuest to buy books for their customers and sell books to other dealers for their own customers called to encourage me to start a listing service. It would be a kind of automated *AB Bookman's Weekly* that booksellers could use to find books for customers by listing wants and to sell books to other dealers for their customers or for stock. In those days, subscription magazine publishing was the natural business revenue model. That was because it was an entirely dealer-to-dealer environment. The idea of a listing service collecting a commission for an online sale was as foreign as *AB Bookman's Weekly* trying to collect a commission on a sale generated by its want ads.

Past failures made it clear that we had to do it far better than it had ever been done before if such a system were to be successful. Before I decided to do the project, I called Tom Sawyer, author of BookMaster, then the leading software program for booksellers, and asked him if he could work with me to design an online dealer-to-dealer system for buying and selling books. After several long telephone conversations, he told me he could do the job, but that we would need a computer network and systems expert to set up and run the data center. For that job, he recommended Brad Councilman, a computer consultant who had been supporting dealers for years in the Connecticut River Valley area of Western Massachusetts, which many of you are aware has perhaps the highest concentration of antiquarian booksellers in the country. I called Brad Councilman, and we talked about what it would take put together what he called a "data center:" toll-free phone lines, computers, backup systems, tech help, and all the rest of it.

After talking with these two gentlemen, I realized that this would take

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money (several tens of thousands of dollars) and, most important, would put me in the position of running a company from a distance, dealing with two people I had never met. I would have to trust them with my money and that of my investors, with my vision, as it was modified by their experience and knowledge, and with my reputation, such as it was, in the book trade.

Furthermore, we would have to operate as disconnected individuals in different parts of the country. We would have to design and code software for both the back-end system and for the booksellers using our service, software that had never been conceptually written. We would have to create a hardware architecture that supported the flow of information we envisioned. It would have to be totally secure and reliable, yet be capable of working through existing telephone lines and on most computers. We would have to make the whole thing work on a fully automated basis, controlled by the very booksellers who would make use of it. And, we would have to do it with three people in six months.

The whole idea was, frankly, crazy. But I had learned while working in the book business for about a dozen years that honesty and trust are essential to the working of the book trade. Would it be any different working with programmers and technical consultants? It might, I believed, so we decided that each of us should have a large vested interest in the success of the company. My philosophy was that I retained control, but if I could not convince one or the other of my business partners about the wisdom of a direction I wanted to take the company, they could pool their stock and outvote me. I explained this to them, and they agreed that it was a sensible plan. So, we formed a corporation, issued the stock, raised some money from friends and a few booksellers, and launched what was actually the second iteration of Interloc in mid-1993. As it turned out, this was one of the best decisions I ever made. Tom

and Brad consistently supported my management, and I in turn supported their efforts in every way I could. The issue of voting never arose, and we had a superb working relationship. We are still friends.

For anyone interested, the name “Interloc” was one I derived from the term “interlocutor,” meaning a person who facilitates a communication between two other parties. For me, at the time, it defined the nature of the listing service model for books. Interloc customers were the booksellers. We were like a newspaper classified advertising service. We derived income from booksellers, but we did not participate in any way in the transaction between the booksellers who subscribed to the service and their customers. In fact, we were forbidden by company policy from buying and selling books at all, since that would put us in direct competition with our subscribers. Thus, when Interloc started, I resigned my membership in the ABAA. Our advertising campaign was directed toward getting more dealers to subscribe. We held workshops all over the U.S. and even in London, England, to help train booksellers on the use of the system and our software, the Interloc Record Manager. And we advertised in bookseller magazines like *Firsts* and *Book Source Monthly*, among others.

During its first two years, from 1993 to 1995, Interloc created many of the features we take for granted today, but it did so in a pre-Internet world. For example, Tom Sawyer created a very sophisticated wants-matching service. Many people think it was far superior to anything available on the Internet today. He created “Best Seller” and “Most Wanted” lists. And he adapted a program that would allow him, with the client’s permission, to dial in to a customer’s computer and fix problems. He also created the Interloc Record Manager, a subset of his popular BookMaster program. During the Interloc days, more than 5,000 copies of the Record Manager were downloaded from the Interloc site, and many of these are still in use.

Brad Councilman set up a “data center” on a folding banquet table in the back of his consulting office in Green-

field, Massachusetts. The accommodations were, of course, sumptuous, as befits a computer-related company. In fact, Brad Councilman was provided with a sleeping area in the office so that he could keep track of the computers. And for his bed, we provided nearly new bubble wrap. After extensive testing, the computer there received its first call on March 24, 1994, at 2:00pm. It was capable of receiving millions of book records to be listed, deleted, and changed every day. Brad also worked with a friend of Tom’s named Dennis Drew, one of those electronics geniuses of legendary ability, to design and build telecom switches that routed customer calls past busy lines until it found an open line and connected the caller’s computer. At this time, these switches were available for thousands of dollars each, but Dennis designed and built several of them for us for a fraction of the cost of one of the type we could purchase. This meant that multiple Interloc customers could simultaneously dial in and use the system to upload, retrieve match reports, and search the database pretty much anytime, day or night.

You might be interested to know that in the five years Interloc existed as a listing service, from 1993 to 1998, Tom, Brad, and I met together only three times—once in late 1993 to do the preliminary design for the service, again in 1996 to work on taking Interloc to the Internet, and finally in 1998, when we discussed the transition from Interloc to Alibris.

The Internet Begins

In 1995 the Internet went commercial. Within a year, two Interloc customers, Michael Selzer of Farshaws Books in Massachusetts and Rick and Vivian Pura of Timeline Books in Victoria, BC, launched listing services similar to Interloc, namely Bibliofind and The Advanced Book Exchange. The Internet made the investment in such services relatively small; while the companies needed to develop software for searching for and displaying books online, they did not need to develop any software for their bookseller clients (Interloc already had done that), and they did not need any telecommunications infrastructure like

toll-free numbers, rollover switches, and multiple phone lines. The Internet replaced all of that. And they didn't even need to find customers—both of them, as Interloc subscribers, had our complete customer list. They didn't steal it—it was available to everyone.

It took a few months, but my partners and I realized that the small amount of money needed to start an Internet listing service would eventually make it possible for just about anyone to get into this business. For this reason, I believed that Interloc, as a listing service, had a limited time to live. So, in 1997 I began casting about to find a new business model that would make it possible for Interloc to survive in an Internet-focused world. If Darwin taught us anything, it was that if you don't adapt, you die.

The business concept I settled upon is one familiar to all booksellers. Instead of being a listing service, we created a new bookseller called Alibris. We dropped all listing fees and, instead, earned our money *only* when we bought a book from one of the booksellers who agreed to make their stock available to us. To make the business model work, however, we had to do a lot of advertising and, by doing so, make more buyers aware of the rich selection that the used and out-of-print book world had available. So far, it has worked, and Alibris continues to make changes to its business model, as do many companies that try new approaches to established markets.

Many of you know that this change from Interloc to Alibris was not the most popular decision in the history of the business. Even though Alibris was closely modeled on the role of the traditional bookseller, many dealers, especially those who were familiar primarily with the Internet listing service model, didn't like it. Alibris bought books from other booksellers at a discount and marked them up to its own customers. This was standard practice for hundreds of years in the book trade. Alibris also bought books for its own stock. Again, standard practice. And when Alibris offered a book to one of its customers via its web site, it did so under its own name. Once again, standard practice. Many

booksellers familiar with the long-standing practices in the business understood what we were doing. Others, many of whom were new to the business or were focused primarily on the Internet, didn't like it, and it was this group that began to refer to me as "The Great Satan." My children agree, of course, but my wife considers this a bit of an exaggeration.

I still think the change from Interloc to Alibris was a smart move. In the past half-dozen years, more than sixty listing services have appeared on the Internet, but more than half of them have failed. The rest (not counting ABE) have had trouble getting dealers to list with them. The reason is quite simple. Interloc worked as a listing service because the people who subscribed were also the customers, just like *AB Bookman's Weekly*. It was a dealer-to-dealer community in which transactions were carried on between dealers. Booksellers kept and served their own customers with the help of other Interloc subscribers. But on the Internet, all of this changed in some fundamental ways.

1. With the explosion in the number of people using computers and the Internet, anyone and everyone can become a bookseller. It takes no training, no knowledge of books, no investment, and, most important, no reason to support the long-standing conventions and ethical standards that have made the antiquarian and used book trade so attractive to the small number of dedicated people who have worked for hundreds of years to build and sustain it.

2. Pre-Internet bookselling was about the booksellers themselves—their sources, their knowledge, and their customers. To the degree your stock was unique and your customer service was good, the business was about you. In those days, you sent out your catalogues and found books for your customers, but you never, never shared your mailing list. You kept your customers coming back to you. This is why Interloc was designed as a dealer-to-dealer community.

Internet bookselling, on the other hand, is not about the dealers. It is about

the customers. That is easy to say, but the implications are enormous, and they are just beginning to be understood by most booksellers. For example, it is customers, not dealers, who set the prices of books, because we now operate in a supply and demand economy in books. But wait a minute. Hasn't it always been supply and demand? Of course! What has happened is that the Internet has removed much of what business people call the "friction" from the marketplace. Instead of expensive, slow, and necessarily periodic paper publications (like catalogues and magazines), or technically arcane PC-based databases (like Interloc) dependent upon expensive proprietary telecommunications infrastructure, we now have the Internet, which is an immediate, inexpensive, transparent, high-bandwidth infrastructure available to practically anyone, seller or buyer.

The promise of the Internet for booksellers has always been a seemingly ever-increasing number of customers. This is, to some extent, still true. The problem, however, is not that there aren't enough customers. It is that there are far, far too many books. When the supply of some titles exceeds the demand for those titles, prices fall. And when prices fall, customers demand lower prices by not buying at higher prices. They are willing to wait for prices to fall because, in essence, the number of books that are truly "rare" has fallen sharply. Even these scarce books sometimes suffer price deflation simply because customers see so many books online that they assume that all books are common.

There are many titles, millions probably, that are nearly unsaleable today. For these books, there is so much supply that prices have fallen to nearly zero (or \$.15 on Half.com). This has already happened with some books we thought would remain scarce, including signed copies of the first printings of works by major writers of fiction, history, cooking, travel, art, photography, self-help, religion, biography, and other areas.

Two brief stories will illustrate what I mean. The first is an incident that hap-

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pened at the Boston Book Fair in 1997. Brad Councilman and I had a room next to the book fair venue where we showed the Internet version of Interloc to potential customers—booksellers and book buyers. Our agreement with book fair management was that we would not allow people to search books online for fear they would do price comparisons in order to haggle with dealers at the fair. We demonstrated the Interloc service, but we used only a few commonly available books as examples. About halfway through the second day of the fair, the book fair manager came to our room and asked if we were allowing people to do searches. We weren't and told him so. He left satisfied. Then he returned in an hour or two saying that booksellers were complaining that customers were looking at the books in the fair booths, making notes, and then leaving the fair. They were then coming back to the booths saying that they had found a similar copy on the Internet for less money and offering that reduced price to the bookseller, who more often than not was very unhappy. It turns out that a listing service was set up in the non-ABAA fair across the street and was allowing people to do searches to compare prices on books that they found at the fair. The customers were setting the prices, and if they couldn't buy at the price they wanted to pay, they went home and bought the book via the Internet, or they waited until the price fell to one they were willing to pay.

The second story is about a dealer I know in the Midwest who a few years ago purchased several boxes of signed first edition hardcover copies of Elmore Leonard, Robert B. Parker, and several other good popular writers. He paid about \$6 to \$8 a copy for these when he bought them by the carton, most of them left over from personal appearance tours and signings at bookstores. When I last checked there were approximately 400 copies of signed Elmore Leonard books on Alibris and more than 1,750 on ABE. A search for signed Robert B. Parker

books brings up 450 on Alibris and nearly 1900 on ABE. Unsigned copies of these books by these authors total a staggering 12,000 copies of Robert B. Parker books on ABE and 11,000 Elmore Leonard books on ABE. The bookseller who bought these signed copies admits his investment is now essentially worthless; it costs more to store the books than it would to recycle them.

3. The vast majority of book buyers are not collectors. They are readers, libraries, businesses, researchers, museums, government institutions, nostalgia buyers, etc. who have little or no interest in the o.p. book trade as such. Many have probably never considered entering a used bookstore. In other words, they are just people, companies, and institutions that want to buy a book or two. This appears to be good news until you consider that it takes far more money to reach these buyers than it does to reach collectors. That is because book collectors have always known about the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America, Interloc, ABE, and individual booksellers and shops that trade in books of interest to them: they read the same magazines, go to the same book fairs, and talk to the same people we do. And the collector market is still very small and probably will remain so for a long time. The public market is, however, huge. It represents millions, possibly hundreds of millions, of current and future book buyers.

One problem is that these buyers may purchase only one or two books a year, or a few books over a lifetime. Even so, the opportunity is enormous, but so is the problem of reaching these customers. "Customer Acquisition Costs" is a phrase I heard a good deal in the Internet world. What it means is that it costs a certain amount of money to find a person who comes to your site and buys something. A couple of years ago, it was not uncommon to hear companies talking of spending \$100 to \$150 to get *each* customer to their site to make a purchase. Supposedly, if they had a good experience, the customers would come back, and those high costs could be spread across several purchases. But maybe not. This is why

Amazon, for example, will not share its list of more than 32 million customers with anyone, and it is why Barnes & Noble gets mad when it finds dealers trying to go around them in order to sell directly to their customers.

For listing services, the problem and the expense of reaching end buyers don't really exist, because their customers are not book buyers but booksellers who list books on their sites and pay subscription and listing fees. The money these services get from bookseller subscribers goes back into keeping the site running, upgrading computers, buying more communications bandwidth, hiring more customer service reps, developing software, etc. The listing service derives no direct benefit from getting more book buyers unless it receives a percentage of those sales as either a fee or a commission. It does derive an indirect benefit from getting consumers to purchase books in that more dealers will list with the service if other subscribers are selling books.

Not All Bad News

Since books are one of the easiest, most natural commodities to sell on the Internet (along with CDs, videos, and DVDs), more and more large companies are getting into the Internet bookselling business. Just as it was initially easy for book listing services to start up, now individual booksellers are competing against Amazon, Barnes & Noble, eBay's Half.com, Buy.com, Alibris, etc., etc. I predict that as these large companies grow their customer lists and their sales, the number of people buying from listing services will dwindle. Collectors will continue to use listing services and any other venues that may have books they want, including auction sites. But general book buyers are migrating to the larger, better-advertised sites. Customers want what customers want, and most Internet buyers want easy one-stop shopping, low prices, and secure transactions. They also want interesting, jargon-free content, easier and more natural searching, and they mostly want books that have been published in their lifetimes. So, I further predict that people who are not committed to the book trade will lose interest

over time, and those who have the stamina and imagination to build a viable book business will stay the course.

The major difference between these large companies and individual booksellers and their listing services is that the large companies have the financial resources to find, attract, and keep customers. So individual booksellers appear to have a choice. They can either compete with these large companies, or they can work with them. At first blush, competing against them may seem like the purest folly. Most booksellers are content to work with these companies, even though they realize that when they sell to someone else's customers, they do so under terms dictated by the company who has those customers. However, I would argue that most smart booksellers do both—they sell to the large companies, but they also keep and cultivate their own clients and build their own distinctive businesses. Nobody thinks this is easy, but it can and is being done. In fact, it is being done by most of the booksellers currently serving on the faculty of this seminar. Each of them will tell you how they work, what their approach is to the business, as it exists today, and why they believe their approach works. They won't give you the names of their customers, and they will keep their sources of books to themselves, but they are all realists, and between them they have well over a century, probably more than two centuries, of experience to share. Three centuries if you include me.

As much as anybody in this room, I grieve for the passing of the old days of bookselling. Dealers have traditionally resisted any changes to what they, in their time, believed was the perfect environment. My guess is that they didn't like mechanical printing, they didn't like the advent of the post office, they didn't like the first mechanical typesetting machines, they didn't like the telephone, and I know that they didn't like computers and the Internet.

This is my thirtieth year in the business, and while I have witnessed some major changes, I firmly believe that the o.p. and rare book business is still viable, even thriving. Would I go into the busi-

ness today? Yes! Would I be nervous about my prospects? Not any more than I was in 1972. Would I have a clearly defined plan? Not any more than I did earlier. Most of us came into the book business from other pursuits. It has been a choice, not usually something handed down to us from our families. Because we have chosen it, either as a full or part-time occupation, we have more reason to want to succeed, to make the business interesting and challenging for us. I don't speak for everyone here, of course, but here are some of the things I would do if I were starting out.

1. Internet bookselling is changing and will continue to change in ways no one can predict. Sites will come and go, dealers will start and abandon businesses. Companies will be bought and sold. And the stock market will do things we wish it wouldn't do. Don't worry about these things, and don't live in the past. Worry about your own business. If someone offers you a viable, profitable opportunity to sell books, take it. Remember that you are booksellers. Leave the philosophizing to people who can afford to spend the time on it.

2. If you think the Internet encompasses the whole o.p. and antiquarian book trade, you are peeping through the keyhole to get a look at the whole house. Opportunities abound, and they are limited only by your own creativity and hard work. Every day I get letters (email actually) and phone calls from people griping about how they can't make a living in books on the Internet. I ask them, who said you can only sell on the Internet? If you rely entirely upon some other company for your income, you are likely to be disappointed.

3. One of the people who trained me in the book business—his name was Arthur Phillips, and he was a book scout for Ernie Wessen of The Midland Book Company in Mansfield, Ohio—told me that it would take me a minimum of eight years to learn the business. I trusted what he said, but I think he was short by at least twenty-two years. For example, a

couple of months ago I attended the New York ABAA Book Fair. In the nearly twenty years I was issuing catalogues, I listed approximately 40,000 Americana books and pamphlets. But I saw lots of Americana items at the fair that I had never encountered before. And I'll bet if you ask the faculty members here this week, they will tell you the same thing. To keep your edge and to enjoy what you do, you need to continually see new things and take on new challenges. The more open you are to learning about the business and about the books, the better you will be as a bookseller and the more satisfying your experiences will be.

4. You have already taken an important step in your quest to become a successful bookseller. You have taken the time and spent the money to attend a seminar that has, for many years, trained many of the best and brightest people in the antiquarian book trade. It is no exaggeration to say that the future of the book trade is in your hands. Some of you may become leaders in the trade, officers in local and/or national groups. Some will become opinion leaders or will, by example, show others the rich possibilities the profession holds. What you learn here will give you a useful, practical basis for making good business decisions and conducting yourself as a professional in a world that is changing in some ways but in other aspects is not changing at all. Be sure to ask questions, take notes, keep handouts, and talk with the faculty and the other students. The people who teach at this seminar are following a long tradition of investing their time in and sharing their experiences with you and, through you, in the future of the book trade.

They, and I, hope that you have the best, most interesting, and useful week in your bookselling careers. Now, let's get to work! ■

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in modern firsts when in fact that phenomenon is specific to modern firsts. If so, I'm hoping your questions and comments after the talk will show me the errors of my thinking.

For the most part, though, I feel confident in this approach for two reasons. One is that modern firsts is a legitimate and inextricable part of the current rare book market, especially in the U.S. and Britain but also around the world. And secondly, especially in the U.S., modern firsts is a more volatile part of the rare book market than many other segments and therefore trends in the overall market are often more readily visible in this segment than elsewhere.

As early as the early 1990s we began to see prices accelerating at an unprecedented rate, especially prices of "high spots," or those books most universally agreed to be valuable, collectable, etc. Several factors contributed to this. The beginning of the longest economic boom in American history played a part: more people were beginning to have more disposable income than before. Ironically, the recession that preceded the boom contributed to this by encouraging a small but relatively wealthy segment of the population to diversify their investment holdings, with rare books being added to the list that previously included stocks, bonds, real estate, fine art, and other collectibles. In this context, books were rightly seen as having been undervalued for a long time: fine first editions of significant books were selling for anywhere from a tenth to a hundredth of the prices of a similarly scarce Picasso print, for example.

Also, in certain circles—notably including, but not limited to, Hollywood—there began to be a certain cachet or sexiness to book collecting that occasionally brought it to the general public consciousness in a way that hadn't happened before.

And, finally, the building of, and sale of, certain notable collections—the Garden collection, in particular, being one—lent credence to the notion that there was

still a challenge to assembling a fine book collection, even one built upon, as Garden was, the "received knowledge" of previous collectors, bibliophiles, bibliographers, and scholars.

All told, the early nineties were an auspicious time for book collectors, and the game was pursued with money and verve, and a discriminating—and at times partly mercenary—eye.

All this contributed to good times for book collectors and booksellers, and a general increase in prices, which included a sometimes astounding increase in prices of high spots: as more people pursued the rarer books, they became even rarer, and the ratio of demand to supply skyrocketed, dragging prices of the most sought-after books upward at a frenetic pace. The trend was exacerbated by the fact that as more money came into the market, new collectors were more likely than in previous times to start at the top—buying the best and most expensive—rather than beginning with modest collections and inexpensive books and gradually working their way up to more expensive rare books.

So, much of the pressure was focused on the top end of the market, and drove those prices upward disproportionately fast and disproportionately high.

A corollary effect of this was to bring a larger number of collectors' copies of these high spots into the market more rapidly than ever before, also creating an upward pressure on prices. You may wonder, how does an increase in supply force prices upward?

In the past, when prices were moderately stable or increasing at a slow, even pace, collectors would have had to wait until their books doubled in value, more or less, before they could merely break even. For them to realize a substantial profit when they sold their collections, the books would have had to triple in value, at least, and this could take not just years but even decades.

In the early nineties, however, we were seeing books—high spots at least—beginning to sell at ten times what they had brought only a decade earlier. Even at the dramatic wholesale to retail differential in the rare book trade—often a 100

percent markup is involved—a collector who had bought a book in 1982 for \$125 could sell it for five times that much in 1992, and the dealer could still double the price he had paid for it.

So, an unusually large number of copies of these high spots began to be recycled within the collector market, always predicated on the fact that the price increase had been great. Since these were collectors' copies—that is, already selected a decade or more earlier as being among the best copies available—they typically came into the market at the high end of the current price range. Collectors wanting to maximize their profits on the books that they were disbursing from their own collection—i.e., get as high as possible a percentage of current retail—and dealers wanting to have these best possible copies in their stock combined to further fuel the upward pressure on prices of the rarest, or at least most sought after and collected volumes.

The early nineties saw price records broken one after another in a continuous stream, at least for the most collected books. This trend continued and increased through the mid-nineties and was fueled by what we now call the "dotcom bubble," which at the time was more generally called the "new economy." Thousands of overnight millionaires, maybe tens of thousands, contributed to this simply by virtue of the fact that in any demographic there will be a certain percentage of book collectors. The dotcom millionaires were no exception, and they were both a wealthy and an educated group. And, despite some efforts in the marketplace otherwise, they tended to be more inclined to collect a first edition of *Moby Dick* than a first edition of Lotus 1-2-3.

The dotcom bubble burst, as we all know, but the dotcom revolution continued to contribute to changes in the rare book market, most notably by harnessing the power of computers to match databases of books wanted with databases of books available. Very soon after this process began in earnest, the networking capabilities of the Internet began to influence not only the availability of books—viewed from the other side, the availability

of customers—but, much more importantly, the availability of information.

For generations, the rare book market had operated by means of a fairly rigidly defined hierarchy or food chain. There were book scouts who scoured the land for valuable books of all sorts—and here I mean “valuable” in terms of “books that would have some value to someone,” i.e., “saleable” books, not necessarily expensive books. There were a large number of general bookstores in most big cities that would buy books in great volume and had sufficiently educated and experienced staff to recognize when a book was particularly rare and valuable—and here I do mean, in general, expensive—and who knew moreover whether the store was likely to have a retail customer for such a book or whether the best way of selling it was to funnel it to a specialist bookseller, someone whose stock consisted exclusively, or at least primarily, of the rarest books in a given field or number of fields, and who was also therefore most likely to be in a position to have an actual retail customer for such a book.

This basic configuration of how books moved through the market went on for years essentially unchanged, even into the early and mid-nineties. It was predicated on two things: market position for the bookstore and specialist, that is being in a position to move those books, whether to another dealer or a retail customer, and more importantly for all three, especially the scout, a body of information about what was valuable—what people wanted and would pay for, and what wasn’t commonly available. This body of information came slowly, over time, through much experience and trial and error (usually including a lot of errors); eventually the market resembled a somewhat efficient vehicle for moving rare books out of attics and tag sales and into the hands of collectors and institutions.

The advent of the Internet changed all that profoundly, although it’s taken some years for the change to fully permeate the marketplace.

In 1997 we issued our third catalogue of Native American literature—books written by American Indian writers. It was actually our fourth such catalogue,

although one of them was never issued. We did our first in 1992, and it was received very well, especially by institutions. No one I know had ever done a catalogue in that field before, and we got a very favorable response. In terms of the percentage of books sold, we did fifty to seventy-five percent better than our general literature catalogues, which were already doing quite well by the general standards of the trade. Our second Native American catalogue was in 1994 and did even better; with our third catalogue we sent out a half dozen advance copies to the heaviest buyers from the first two, while the catalogue was still at the printer. We sold so many books from those advance copies that we cancelled the print run: the catalogue had mostly sold out, and the remaining books, even if every one of them sold, wouldn’t have brought in as much as the printing and mailing costs would have been.

Then, in August 1997, we sent out our fourth—the third to be generally issued—and on the first day it hit I got a call from a librarian, effusively thanking me for my very informative catalogue and telling me that he had found two-thirds of the books on the Internet for one-third the price.

I don’t know if he thought he was being clever, as though this were a game and he had scored a point, or if he was being sincere and was just oblivious. But I do know he didn’t buy any books from that catalogue—despite the fact that he was deeply interested in, and committed to, that field. And I also know that his call was, for me, the clearest wake-up call I could have gotten. It was clear that the rules were changing, the playing field was changing, the market was changing. And what was changing most of all, and fastest of all, was the availability of information. All those books that he had found on the Net had been available the day before. But he didn’t have the information to recognize them. Now that he had the information—which I had freely given out in a kind of transaction that had worked for both sides in the earlier market—he did not need my books.

Native American literature is a field primarily of scarce, not rare, books. Most

are scarce because they were printed by small publishers in small editions, since the publishers had rightly recognized that there was only a small market for them. A lot of these were books an average browser might well have not stumbled across in a year’s worth of browsing used bookstores, or might have missed even if they were there. When encountered, they could often be bought for \$3 or so. And we could buy a book for \$3, price it at \$45—or roughly double what a new, widely available book might cost—and feel we were doing a good thing, both for ourselves and for our customers—and for posterity, by ensuring these books were preserved. Given the cost of printing and mailing catalogues, not to mention some sort of compensation for the time and effort it took to find and catalogue the books, \$45 would be a little better than a break-even point for us. We’d make a few dollars on a book at that price, but that’s all. Our customers enjoyed the benefit of our having done the work of finding these books or them and the benefit of our knowledge in recognizing them, and they would get a book that might be ten to a hundred times (or more) scarcer than a new book for roughly twice the price of a new book.

In its own way, this was a market that could be characterized as efficient—that is, it worked. It got the books from wherever they were located—a small used bookstore in Kansas or Idaho, for example—to where they belonged—that is, where they would complement an existing collection, be seen in context, etc., often someplace like the Beinecke or Newberry libraries. Still, in terms of efficiency, it left a lot to be desired. It could take a year and a half to amass enough books for a catalogue, a couple of months to prepare the catalogue, and only then would the books begin to sell and the customers be able to add to their collections. There were plenty of other inefficiencies, too. We might print 2000 copies of a catalogue and mail them, and in the end 80 percent of the buying was done by 20 percent of the customers—a typical scenario in any kind of business. But if you don’t know which 20

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percent that might be, you have to print all those catalogues and send out all the ones that don't elicit any orders, just to be as sure as possible that you'll reach the buyers who will order.

We did the calculations a number of times and concluded that every book we sold in such a catalogue cost us about \$30 to sell, not including the cost of the book. On the \$500 and \$1000 books, that's not so bad, but spending \$30 to sell a \$45 book can hardly be characterized as efficient. (One could, of course, calculate this differently, with those costs amortized over the total dollar value of sales as opposed to figured on a per book basis. This would result in a more reasonable number, but in a field like Native American literature—where the books tended to be scarce but not rare—it wouldn't be a huge difference: there tended to be a lot more books under \$50 in those catalogues than over \$500.) What made this approach work, however, or at least be viable, was that there was a scarcity of information as much as, or more than, an absolute scarcity of books. While many of these books were, and are, in fact, truly scarce, customers for them are just as scarce, or more so. In absolute terms, the supply usually outstripped the demand for all but the scarcest of them. But the supply was not available to fill the demand except through the intermediary of the book catalogue (and more generally, the entire "food chain" of the rare book market referred to earlier).

The advent of the Internet changed that. Booksellers were among the first large group of retailers to embrace the Net en masse. As far back as 1997, there were already 6000 used booksellers on the Internet—this at a time when a recent census of booksellers concluded that there were slightly over 7000 used booksellers in the country. (Now, the number online is somewhere north of 10,000, but some significant portion of those would not be included in a current census as they are more part-time hobbyists or individual collectors selling off small portions of

their collections.) A recent *New York Times* article pointed out that sixty-five percent of the used booksellers on the Advanced Book Exchange—the largest database of used books and used booksellers on the Internet—have only an Internet presence: no bookstore, no catalogues, no book fairs. These do, however, include a significant number of full-time booksellers who either have closed their brick and mortar stores or, more commonly, who began their bookselling careers at a point where having only an Internet presence was, and is, sufficient to support a legitimate full-time business. Whatever the actual numbers, the percentage of knowledgeable full-time booksellers who have their books listed on the net is extraordinarily high—probably as high as or higher than any other comparable field.

So the Internet suddenly made, in effect, all books available to everyone, directly, and pretty much instantly laid waste to the traditional hierarchy, or food chain, within the book trade of years past—scout, general bookseller, specialist.

The disparities that still existed were in the area of information: the bookseller listing a Maurice Kenny title, for example, might not recognize him as being a Native American writer. The librarian building a collection might not know that Carol Arnett was Native American, or George Plymell, the Beat writer and first publisher of *Zap Comix*.

In the first years of the Net's prolific growth, it was not uncommon to find specialist dealers trying to figure out how to hold onto their specialized knowledge—which they'd generally worked long and hard to acquire—rather than giving it away for free, once and for all, by posting their listings on the Net. Their concerns and fears were justified, too: in the early years of the Net, there were those who were computer-literate enough to simply take the postings of all dealers, copy them and post them as their own, running an algorithm on the prices to mark them up; if a book sold, they could buy it from the dealer who actually had it, sell it to their customer, and make the markup as free and clear profit. This happened numerous times, and one large database actually made this a feature of their offering: you

could re-list all the books that other dealers had posted on the database, and they would give you software that allowed you to mark the prices up en bloc, making it look like you were the bookseller who had all the books. They even gave the resulting phenomenon a name—a "super-site" they called it—and provided it as an inducement to get dealers, or at least aspiring "dealers," to list with them. (From a marketing perspective, this was probably not so unwise. If any individual could overnight become the owner, or at least the lister, of millions of books, then the potential number of subscribers to the "super-site" was not limited by the actual number of booksellers out there, those who actually had books to sell, but it could include anybody and everybody.)

There were, as you might guess, a few problems with this approach. For one, in the case of dealers who had written exhaustive catalogue descriptions based on their own knowledge and research, thus putting the books in historical and literary context, there was the question of copyright violation. Those descriptions belonged to the dealers who wrote them, and appropriating them without permission, and without attribution, is not allowed under our copyright law. The ABAA took a strong stand against this on behalf of our members, because many of the most knowledgeable dealers, who wrote the most thorough catalogue entries, were ABAA members.

But beyond that, there were more practical problems: if a dealer appropriated the listing for a first issue of, say, *The Sun Also Rises*, in a first issue dust jacket, what was he supposed to do when a customer asked "What's the issue point on the dust jacket?" and he didn't know? Or, even worse—and in some cases even more likely—what if a customer asked "What's an issue point?" or "What does 'first issue' mean?" and the "dealer" himself didn't know. This happened many times, since a lot of information was available to people who did not have the knowledge or experience to understand that information and know what it meant.

Still, for all its limitations, the Internet has meant that much more information is readily available to collectors, librarians,

and even booksellers than ever before. And information, in every market, is the real key to efficiency. Almost by definition, a market in which every participant has 100 percent of the available and relevant information will tend toward being the most efficient. And information-rich environments, or markets, tend to reward creativity, ingenuity and innovation: if everyone knows exactly how much it costs to put a new roof on a house—how much time it takes, how much the materials cost, etc.—then the person who figures out how to make a higher quality roofing tile for the same price as existing ones, or an equivalent tile that costs less than current ones, will have the advantage in the marketplace. He'll be rewarded for his effort and knowledge; his customers will get the benefit of his knowledge and the best deal possible. The rest of the players in the market, his competitors, will be encouraged to be similarly creative or risk falling behind.

So what does all this mean for booksellers and collectors? That's not so clear right now, but we can take a few stabs at it based on what we know about markets in general, and also what we know about this market in particular.

For one thing, as I've told collectors—and even other dealers—numerous times in the past couple of years, we are probably going to look back on these few years before and after the turn of the century as a Golden Age for book buyers. More books have become more readily available to more people at one time than has ever been the case before or will ever be the case again. There simply aren't another 10,000 dealers out there, beyond the ones who have done it already, to list their stock online. (Although here I should introduce qualifiers: Europe, South America, and the Far East have been several years behind the U.S. in this process and are just beginning to approach the kind of market saturation that has been the case here for several years. For those people whose collecting interests run to books more likely to be found in those countries than in the U.S., your Golden Age is just beginning.)

During this Golden Age there has been tremendous competitive pressure driving prices downward for all but the scarcest or

most highly sought after books. When there are twenty copies of a legitimately scarce book available online, the dealer who comes up with the twenty-first copy has a strong incentive to keep the price down to compete with those already available: there aren't likely to be twenty-two customers for those twenty-one copies all at once, and each dealer wants to sell his own copy to the next customer who turns up. But I think we'll find that, over time, there will be more than twenty-two customers for that book, and that those first twenty-one copies, as they are sold, will not be replaced by twenty-one more. The number of available copies of these legitimately scarce books—and if there are only twenty copies available of a book among the stock of 10,000 book dealers, representing the vast majority of books on the market in a country of 300,000,000 people, we can feel safe in calling them “legitimately scarce”—that number will tend to dwindle over time by attrition, and yet for most of the time that they'll have been available, there will have been very strong competitive pressures driving the prices down.

In a certain sense, the customer these days is in the position of the book searcher back in the days of *AB Bookmans Weekly* (book searching being another niche in the book trade effectively obliterated by the Net). In those days a searcher could advertise for a book wanted by a customer, get quotes for several, sometimes dozens, of copies, and then pick the one to buy. The buyer had all the options, knew all of what was available, and could choose among them. These days each individual customer can do that. The difference today is that dealers can also see what books are being offered at and can condition their listings accordingly, and they do: by far the largest amount of bandwidth used by the major book database search engines involves booksellers pricing their books, not customers buying them. But the buyer has the advantage of seeing all the books available, and since there's no corresponding database of collectors on the net, the buyer is at a great advantage.

Of course this is only true of those books that are common enough that there

isn't a sufficient demand, at a single moment, to outstrip the available supply. For those books in high demand or truly rare, or both, the same situation works toward an opposite end: dealers who have copies of one of these high spots can see what's available and price their book competitively, but these copies will tend to cluster at the top end of the price range and, if a dealer has a particularly special or nice copy, it may be in his interest to price it higher than any other copy, so that the price itself signifies that this is a superior copy. In this way, the same market forces that exert a downward pressure on prices for “medium rare” books exert an upward pressure on prices of rare books and high spots. And in a market that is, for the reason previously discussed, tending to emphasize high spots more than in the past, this upward acceleration of prices can be truly astounding.

About three years ago, I wrote an article called “Trends in Modern Book Collecting” that discussed some of the phenomena and processes that I've mentioned today. One thing I said, however, bears noting because it was so wrong. The price of a fine first edition of *The Catcher in the Rye* had recently risen from about \$1250—where it had been for quite some time—to about \$3000, fairly suddenly. And then, virtually overnight—really somewhere between six months and a year—it shot up to \$6000. I said in my article that we could be fairly certain it would take longer to double from \$6000 to \$12,000 than it had taken to get from \$3000 to \$6000. Well, in April 2001, a copy sold at auction for about \$33,000, and a month later another copy sold in the market for \$35,000. These days, even fairly shabby copies of the book command over \$12,000. My mistake, I believe, was in seeing only one side of how these pressures are working on the market; my guess is that as this Golden Age of book buying passes, and even medium rare books become scarcer by attrition, a similar upward pressure on prices will be felt on an ever-larger pool of books.

So far—as promised, or threatened—all of my examples have been from the realm

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of modern firsts, but I believe similar examples could be drawn from a wide range of collecting areas in the rare book world, although perhaps sometimes not quite as starkly obvious as the ones from modern firsts. In 1992, I bought a collection of Western Americana manuscripts with several other dealers, and we put out a joint catalogue. Americana is a field I know very little about, and I had to do a great deal of research to do my share of the catalogueing. But it was more than just learning about the material: I had to try to learn something about the Americana market, which seemed to me to work very differently from the market for modern firsts. A friend of mine, an Americana dealer, used to tell me that he would get a copy of a book, catalogue it for \$50, get ten orders for it, and then when he got another copy of it—maybe a year or two later—he'd catalogue it for \$50 again. I asked him why, and he said, "Because it's a \$50 book." In the field of modern firsts, where one assumes a certain volatility in prices—in part because the books are so modern and a few more years elapsing can make a significant difference in terms of how available copies are—we would take ten orders for a \$50 book as a sign that our estimation of supply and demand was skewed, and surmise that the price of the next copy—especially if it were going to take a year or two to turn up—should be much higher. I think a lot of areas of the book trade tend to work more like the Americana field than like modern firsts—prices change more slowly because the books have a longer track record. Nonetheless, in the past decade or so, we have seen books in a wide variety of fields break all previous price records.

The Frank T. Siebert collection of American Indian and American frontier books and manuscripts set a number of records that were astonishing: many of the items sold for several times what any previous copies had ever brought. Our 1992 Western Americana catalogue, which was scoffed at for its high prices at the time—three of the four dealers involved in pur-

chasing the collection were primarily modern literature dealers, and we tended to apply our own rationales to pricing the material—now looks almost like a bargain catalogue. Prices in the Western Americana field—especially for the truly rare material—have escalated to unprecedented new levels, not just incrementally but often, like the Siebert collection, in multiples of previous highest prices.

We've seen the same thing with manuscript archives. In 1992, shortly after she won the Nobel Prize for Literature, Nadine Gordimer's archive sold for \$300,000. A few years later, the Allen Ginsberg archive sold for almost \$1 million, and last year the manuscript of one novel—Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*—sold for \$2.6 million and helped put the value of the rest of his archive, which went to the New York Public Library, at an estimated \$8 to \$10 million. Susan Sontag's archive sold for \$1.1 million a couple of months ago, and Norman Mailer's archive will reportedly be put on the market this year at an asking price of \$2.5 million. So, in this field as well, the top end is reaching unprecedented levels at an ever-increasing rate. (I could here also illustrate the corollary that we discussed earlier with modern firsts: that "medium rare" material has had downward pressure on prices and is in many cases much harder to sell today than it was in the past, but with manuscript archives, even though that is approximately true, the forces affecting the prices are somewhat different than those I have identified for medium rare books.)

Audubon folios and quartos have broken price records repeatedly through the nineties, often by a large margin, as have the Edward Curtis North American Indian portfolios. And getting back to literature: a copy of *Moby Dick* sold to a dealer for \$48,000 at the California book fair this year, breaking the previous price record for that book by about \$12,000, and then sold to a collector for \$76,000. Another is now on the market at \$85,000. And last year, at the New York Book Fair, a children's book dealer put out a copy of *The Hobbit*, which he had held onto for many years, at the world-record price of \$50,000. It sold to a dealer instantly, who sold it a few minutes later to another

dealer for \$80,000, who then put it on the market at something like \$125,000 or \$150,000. Now, even so-so copies of *The Hobbit*, when they turn up, are priced in the \$30,000 to \$50,000 price range.

All of which illustrates the changes in the market and the forces at work in it in recent years, and emphasizes that they are not random changes, nor are they successful attempts to manipulate the market by a small group of booksellers: nobody in the field has enough clout to do that, it seems to me, or if they do, then they don't need to do it. On the contrary, these are mostly changes that have come about because of a specific series of forces at work in the current marketplace that are different—sometimes in degree, sometimes in kind—from the forces that long governed the rare book market. Understanding those forces and the changes they have produced should help all of us—collectors, librarians, and booksellers alike—view this new market from a more informed perspective, and navigate it with a surer hand.

To summarize: there is far more information available today than ever before about what books are out there, what they are priced, etc. There are also far more books actually available to any given buyer than ever before, and as well there are more potential customers more readily available to dealers than has ever been the case before. All of these are combining to keep a lid on prices of scarce, but not rare, material and at the same time are helping force prices of the truly rare and/or most sought-after books to new highs.

And, if there is one last thought that can encapsulate what a lot of this boils down to, it is this: it's a Golden Age for book buyers, so buy now, and buy lots; the prices are only going to go up in the future, for both the rare material and the medium rare material, which, at the moment, is being kept somewhat artificially low. And if that sounds like what booksellers have been saying to collectors and librarians from time immemorial, I suppose that shouldn't be surprising. As a bookseller, I have to believe that's a good thing. And I hope, in elucidating how and why I believe these various factors have combined to make that true, I will have persuaded you to believe it as well. ■

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(One ticket, by the way, gets you into all three.) This was the first year of the ABA adopting the American model of a full day of set-up prior to opening, and it made for a more relaxed set-up and gave extra time for buying and selling. I, for one, bought more and sold more than at any previous ABA fair at which I'd exhibited. The ABAA, on the other hand, could learn something from its British counterpart. The London fair seems eminently more elegant than any of the American fairs: the printed invitations (in full color) are both aesthetically pleasing and promotionally oriented. The circulation of promotional materials is very extensive and goes well beyond traditional book collector circles. The ABA Fair in London gets not only more press, but better press: those who write feature stories on the fairs in the London newspapers actually know something about antiquarian books. Only Boston in the ABAA fair schedule has tried, and I think with reasonable success, to find room in the given schedule for more than one fair, a concept that has been mastered in London for these many years. If ABAA ever gets back to a Chicago fair, I suggest that a Midwest Book Hunters Fair be held in conjunction with it. And Walter Larson should do a better job coordinating his San Francisco fair with the California ABAA fairs: with hard-working booksellers in the Bay Area combined with the preponderance of booksellers along the West coast, San Francisco could easily achieve the success of book fair week in London.

The Hilton Fair opened on the first day of the ABA Fair, and as this was only two blocks away from Olympia, many ABA fair exhibitors, several of whom were staying at the Hilton, took the opportunity to scour the Hilton shelves. This fair is the reincarnation of the old Café Royale Fair that used to be held in Piccadilly, back when the ABA Fair was in Mayfair, but which wisely moved out to the Olympia Hilton in pursuit of proximity with the ABA event.

On Friday and Saturday of the ABA Fair, yet another PBFA fair was held at the Commonwealth Institute, about a half mile from Olympia. Though one might think that even indefatigable booksellers by now would have had enough of fairs and books, a long line of colleagues awaited me when I arrived. PBFA Fair No. 3 seemed to me the best of all the non-ABA fairs. The venue was spacious, and even though I thought this was the best attended of the PBFA fairs, I also thought it seemed less crowded and that here were the PBFA's best books. Two other fairs I did not attend, not because I didn't have the time, but because by then I was booked out: The Fine Printing Fair and the IMCOS Map Fair. I am sure there were books to buy at both.

The ABA Olympia Fair this year was a moderate success, even though the mood seemed a bit ambivalent. I believe I read in the *Antiquarian Book Review* that sales were off a bit from last year and that the attendance was down, but I think most booksellers came with modest or even low expectations, so I don't think anyone went home completely disappointed. Some even came away feeling good about what sold and what was able to be bought. One of the biggest topics of conversation this year was the absence of Rusty Mott (his firm has exhibited at every ABA Fair in London, longer than any other American firm) and Don Lake of Toronto, whose antics were missed but not unreclected. (A query of Rusty Mott while writing this article elicited a longer response than I imagined, so for those interested in Mottiana, I have appended portions of his letter to the end of this article.)

In case there was nothing else to do in the evenings, our London Colleagues hosted a number of parties. I attended one put on by John Price, from whose house we could watch the fireworks set off in honor of Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee. On another evening, the Grolier Club hosted a party for members and their guests at the Travelers' Club.

On that last Saturday evening, hipster bookseller Simon Finch hosted a charity auction and party, for the benefit of the UNICEF "Growing Up Alone" campaign and the Embizweni Voluntary Associa-

tion, at Ormands Club in St. James, just off Gernyn Street. The room was pleasantly smoky and seemed to hang from under the rough-hewn timbers of the low ceiling. Ormands seemed a perfect club for the doddering old booksellers, thanks to the bar that kept the party-goers lit up like Roman candles. (I even got an unsolicited kiss on the cheek from an erstwhile antagonist.) I didn't arrive until almost midnight, and I understand the party didn't break up until nearly the break of day. No wonder. Simon was sitting in on rhythm guitar and the band, Phoenix 5, was rockin'. A bevy of siren groupies surrounded the stage, and friends of the band and of the redoubtable Finch formed the next circle out. On the outside, in the largest orbit (but nearest the bar), was the crowd of booksellers, many of whom were not afraid to party like it was 1999. Could there have been anything more wonderful than this riotous phalanx of old farts, bobbing and weaving to covers of Led Zeppelin and Steppenwolf like so many boxers, and working up a boxer's sweat, none of them afraid to display their yearning for immortality? I have a mental catalogue of the following, who had not quite too much to drink: ABA's Internet guru, Tony Fothergill; ABA's past-President, Peter Miller; ILAB Committee member, Michael Steinbach; Julius Steiner from the Netherlands; Marty Weinkle; Peter and Lorraine Stern; Brian Lake and Janet Nassau from Jarndyce; John Wronosky and his German intrigue and ingenue, Heide Harty; Pom Harrington; Robert Frew; Jeffrey Mancevice; and Jonathan Potter. Congratulations to all for getting to the fair on time the next day.

The area around Olympia is filling in nicely with epicurean amenities. There are now at least a half-dozen restaurants in the immediate neighborhood, including some offering fine ethnic cuisine, an airy pub that is not more than 100 yards away, and the convenient and surprisingly good Olympia Tandori across the street. The hotel of choice (though not necessarily a choice hotel) remains the Hilton Olympia, which is two blocks

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away from Olympia I and II, even though the hotel's Plum Bar, now renovated, is less warm and fuzzy than it once was.

I'm surprised that more Americans don't come to London. The books are not inexpensive, and some of them seem absolutely over-expensive, but the selection is extraordinary and London remains the best book city on the planet (Tokyo, arguably, notwithstanding). The opening of quality shops by Bernard Shapiro and Simon Finch in trendy Mayfair and the new private premises of Bjorn Lowendahl nearby is testimony to what seems like a thriving trade. Booksellers perennially complain about business, as they did again this year both at

the fairs and in the shops, but I don't see any of us getting out of it.

From Rusty Mott:

My parents first exhibited in 1962 at the old National Book League in Albemarle Street. That was the first London book fair for me as well. I was 17, and we spent the summer in London and on the Continent—eleven weeks while my parents bought books and my brother and I played. At the fair, I was usually the one minding the booth as my parents and the rest of the approximately twenty-five exhibitors repaired to the bar (there was very little business). At one point I was watching literally every booth at once. I gave up and joined my elders in the bar as no one had visited the small exhibition space for some time. I still remember lis-

tening to the wonderful war stories flying around that bar by some of the greatest booksellers who ever lived. Technically we were the first American firm to exhibit at the London fair, preceded only by Dave Magee, who, although from San Francisco, was a British citizen all his life. Either way, we were first or second. I believe the fair began in 1959. Incidentally, Dave would exhibit but twenty or twenty-five very good books, sell every one of them before the fair opened, and never have to go back to his stand.

Veta and I began exhibiting again in 1978, missing one year in the early or mid-90s, until 2002. In point of fact, I am almost positive our stretch from 1978 was longer than any non-British dealer, not just Americans... I am sure we will return at some point, maybe even next year. We like the city, the people, and the fair. ■

Szewczyk

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alone) would know at a glance how much I had paid for it. Such codes are typically nine-, ten-, or eleven-letter words with no repeated letters. The first letter of the word stands for one, the second for two, and so on. My code was BLACK-QUIRES, so "ACK" meant I had paid \$345. In my code the "e" stood for zero; in nine-letter codes any letter not included in the code word can stand for zero. In eleven-letter words, the eleventh letter is usually used as a "doubler." In other words, "KSE" meant I had paid \$550.

Yes, some dealers still code their books (William Reese, MacManus, and Emmett Harrington come immediately to mind). But database inventory numbers in place of codes are much more common. I think that perhaps those dealers who do a large number of book fairs a year and those with open shops may be the dwindling crew most responsible for continuing the practice.

"Free!"

Definitely on the wane is the custom of the lagniappe. The first time I ran into

this practice was in San Antonio in 1971. I made a nice pile of books on the bookseller's counter, and he subdivided the pile into two as he looked at the prices and title pages. One pile was small, perhaps three books. After he added up the cost of the big pile, he slapped the top of the small pile and said "Lagniappe!"—continuing the slap with a sweep of the hand away from him towards me. I had no idea what the hell "Lagniappe!" meant and said, "Excuse me?" He replied, "No charge." I also ran into the practice while living in Mexico—"Lagniappe!" being replaced with "¡Gratis!" At the Boston Book Fairs of the 1970s and early 1980s, more than a few of the older, now dead dealers regularly practiced the lagniappe. I cannot remember the last time anyone said "Lagniappe!" when throwing in a free book or two, and the practice seems now to be confined to transactions among old friends rather than a feature of those between an established dealer and novice ones, or with new customers.

Trade Tickets

Rarely used by the time I began my bookselling career, booksellers' labels are even rarer now. These small "tickets"

bear the bookseller's name and address and sometimes his or her telephone number and/or cable address. For me, they can constitute a provenance as interesting and romantic as that revealed by the bookplate of a collector. But the only bookseller I know who still puts his label in every book is a dealer in Madrid who specializes in law.

I am sure that the readers of this *Newsletter* will immediately think of other practices and customs that have passed away during the last thirty years or are rapidly doing so, and perhaps they will write in and share their thoughts. ■

The ABAA Newsletter

welcomes letters, articles,
and photographs from
all of our readers.

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descriptions supplied by my client from memory were grossly inadequate but relatively easily identified and amended from basic source materials.

I never told my non-ABAA colleague what I thought of his appraisal, but neither have I ever recommended him for an appraisal. His client, the moving company, was falsely encouraged to lowball their replacement offer because of that appraiser's incompetence. He took their money and failed to provide substance in his "work." And the man whose books were lost had to endure the additional trauma of fighting for legitimate compensation and the challenge of finding a competent appraiser. But then, had the first appraiser given a proper evaluation, I would not have been paid and the mover's attorney would have had to scratch for some other way to be paid for that day in the office. So, I guess it really was good for the economy, right?

In the eighties and early nineties, I used to charge \$75 per hour for appraisal work outside the friendly confines of my office. That was good compensation for time that I would be unable to use to actually sell books. And, even if I thought I was worth more, charging more would eliminate a clientele that needed proper work but who were not wealthy enough to afford higher-priced appraisers.

I was annoyed from the beginning by my third appraisal example. When asked by a non-ABAA dealer how much I charge to do an appraisal, I told her, and she replied, "That's what I am going to charge!" And I am sure that she did.

That was irritating: first, because as a dealer, she was a dabbler; second, because she was not ABAA; and third, because over the course of the next few months, she called me frequently for virtually free pricing advice when she could not find an item or had bibliographic questions (I say "virtually free" because once or twice she sent me a check for \$10 for my trouble). The last reason it was irritating was that she completely ignored the condition of a book when she evalu-

ated it. For example, if a very good or fine copy of a nineteenth-century book sold for \$500 or \$750, that was what she priced her copy, despite the fact that both covers might be detached or missing.

That appraiser charged her wealthy client a lot of money for a nearly worthless appraisal. Even worse was what happened afterward. When even the grossly overstated appraised value of this collection failed to be high enough to satisfy the client, the client found a prominent ABAA dealer who gave her the still higher numbers she demanded! I guess the customer is always right.

My most recent encounter combines most of the worst elements of these fraudulent appraisals with some new features all its own. In mid-February 2002, I replied to an inquiry from a New York City lawyer that I could, indeed, appraise an assortment of modern medical textbooks. The attorney needed replacement values for the exact editions in the collection. There were fewer than 200 titles. Inasmuch as no item was older than 1961, and nearly all were published in the 1980s and 1990s, I had no qualms about being able to do the work. In fact, it would be a challenge to think of an easier appraisal to do. An additional condition was that I might have to testify in New York and defend my evaluations.

The attorney had queried other candidates for the appraisal, but because he had a fast-approaching deadline with the arbitrator, I spent a good part of a Sunday and some additional time to nearly complete the appraisal. The attorney panicked a bit when I told him it was nearly finished because he had not agreed to terms of employment, but I reminded him of his own imminent deadline and that it really was too late to involve anybody else.

I spent eleven hours doing the basic work and another four to six hours polishing it. This did not include the lengthy phone conversations with the attorney discussing the work. It did, however, include the extra time required to deal with the inventory list as it was supplied to me. What I received was a faxed copy of the finished appraisal submitted by the other party's appraiser, minus that

appraiser's values. It was eighteen pages long. It could have been shorter, but the entire perimeter of each sheet was covered with a thick, floral, art nouveau-ish black border.

Telefaxes I receive go into my computer. When I want to print one, it comes out of my regular printer. This lengthy fax with its abundant border so overwhelmed my printer that even the first page would not print out. As a result, part of my time at the beginning was involved in copying by hand the titles to be searched. Otherwise, I could have done it even quicker.

Using today's computer databases (including efollett.com, amazon.com, bn.com, et al.), a high-speed cable modem, and two networked computers, the basic searching was about as rapid as one man could make it. And, because I was determining replacement values for modern textbooks, neither condition nor collation nor the presence or absence of dust jackets needed to be seriously considered—nor was it necessary to eyeball the books first.

Before I completed my figures, I was ready to go head-to-head and toe-to-toe with anyone in defense my numbers. In fact, I was ready with the coolness of Zorro to cut to ribbons the incompetence that ran throughout my opponent's evaluation. Once I submitted my replacement figures, I was sent a copy with the other side's figures. It was then that I knew that I could prove beyond any reasonable doubt that his numbers were imaginary, inept, and fraudulent, whoever he or she was. As I will describe, the full truth was worse than I had imagined.

A typical entry by my non-ABAA opponent read, "Guthrie. *Neonatal Intensive Care*. 1988. Churchill Livingstone Publishers. \$375.00." I found replacement copies for this edition ranging from \$80 to \$127. Another example from his sheets read, "Glenn. Baire. *Thoracic & Cardiovascular Surgery*. 6th Ed. Vols. 1-2. 1996. Appleton & Lange. \$465.00." I found that this book can be ordered new from amazon.com for \$337. However, if you were to search for it using my com-

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petitor's citation, you probably would not find the book on amazon.com. The citation should read, "Baue, ed. Glenn. *Thoracic & Cardiovascular Surgery.*" Similarly, the book recorded as "Granstein. Kutby. *Complications in Anesthesiology.* 2d Ed. \$385.00" is hard to find. The correct citation is, "Gravenstein. Kutby. *Complications in Anesthesiology.* 2d Ed."

However, my favorite was his listing: "Wilkins. Rengachary. *Neurosurgery.* 2d Ed. 3 vols. 1996. McGraw-Hill. \$1000." This title is available new from the publisher at \$595 or used at prices ranging from \$100 to \$281.95.

I think that there is room for fluctuations in appraisals, but the parameter should be a margin of error of twenty percent or so. When there is a variation of 900 or 1000 percent, something needs to be explained. There were three identical, consecutive entries in my rival's appraisal, each valued at \$195: "Precis. Gynecology. 1998." Parts of these entries turned out to be typos. One should have read, "Sheld & Resnik. Precis. Gynecol-

ogy. 1988." and the next just so for 1998. But from what hat had he pulled the figure of \$195? I knew that "Precis" was not an author or an editor, but a description. There was no "Precis." With some diligence and detective work, I was able to match the description to "Sheld. Obstetrics and Gynecology Review. 1998. CRC Press. In print at \$20.50." Quite a difference from \$195!

In pre-hearing consultation, I was asked for what percentage of titles I had found exact replacement costs. It was just under 82 percent. During the hearing, my opponent claimed he had found 90 percent. I knew that was a lie. How could he find what he could not even identify?

When I appeared in New York before the arbitrator, I had a few more surprises. Knowing it was a New York area appraiser, I knew the other person's fee would be much higher than mine. I was prepared for \$3000, which would have been more than \$15 per title to evaluate textbooks mostly not more than twenty years old. I was unprepared to learn that the charge had been in excess of \$5000, or about a third of what I calculated the entire collection might cost to replace! The appraiser also testified that he and some staffers had spent over fifty hours

working on this appraisal during December 2001. I seriously doubt that they devoted that much diligent time to an appraisal in an open bookshop during what is the busiest sales month of the year for most stores.

But the worst shock of all came when he was asked by my attorney to identify any of these books (published as recently as 1999 and 1998) still available from their publishers. He replied that he could not do so. He said that he had no notes! Imagine that. With no notes, he could not even substantiate the most inarguable replacement value, the cost of the book from its publisher. He had been paid over \$5,000, was warned he might have to testify, was called to testify—and, presumably, was being additionally compensated for his time to testify—and *he had no notes* to support his report. He had screwed his employer (who was sitting there at the conference table) without so much as a kiss on the lips. It was fraud and theft, pure and simple. Furthermore, the fraud and theft was compounded by the misplaced faith that his employer had put in him, a faith that saddled the employer with the cost of the three attorneys present at that hearing to defend what he had every right to expect was a bona fide evaluation, but that was really a house of cards, bad cards.

In conclusion, I want to state that I appreciate most of the reasons why other colleagues decline to do appraisals. but still there is a need for them. Indeed some of them are even mandated by federal regulations. So, somebody has to do them. I just hope that more of them will be done and done properly and accurately, honestly and honorably by ABAA\ILAB members, rather than by the rip-off artists outside of any sanctioning body. For the good of all concerned, the work needs to be done with integrity, and done ethically as well as competently.

With that in mind, the ABAA's Suggested Appraisal Contract is a good beginning. Perhaps the Association ought also to discuss and explore other issues and elements with respect to appraisals in the Newsletter and in seminar form, in the category of continuing education. ■



Tom Goldwasser, Paul Rassam, and Peter Stern at the London fair. Note Paul's distinguished sport coat.

In Memoriam

Ella Palmer, Brampton, Ontario

ABAA associate member Ella Palmer died on July 19, 2002. Ella worked with her sister, Doris Frohnsdorff, in Doris's Gathersburg, Maryland, firm specializing in children's books, art and illustrated books, fine bindings, and miniature books. Please join the *Newsletter* in offering Doris our sincere condolences.

John Sinkankas, San Diego

An ABAA member and world-renowned authority on gems and minerals, John Sinkankas died on May 17, 2002, after a brief illness. He was 87 years old.

Sinkankas was born in 1915 in Paterson, NJ, the son of Lithuanian immigrants. His lifelong interest in gems and minerals began during his grade school years, when he started collecting specimens from nearby quarry sites.

After graduating from New Jersey State Teachers College in Paterson, where he met his wife, Marjorie, Sinkankas joined the navy and trained to be an aviator, graduating from the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, FL, in 1937. During WWII, he served as a flight instructor and flew reconnaissance missions in a seaplane. He remained in the navy until 1961, when he retired with the rank of captain.

In 1947, Sinkankas began cutting gems—the bigger the better. Visitors to the Smithsonian Institution's Natural History Museum can witness his skill in faceting by viewing examples of his work: a 7,000-carat rock crystal egg (the size of a baseball), a 4,500-carat smoky quartz egg, and a 2,054-carat golden beryl.

In 1951, while stationed in San Diego, Sinkankas began writing a lapidary column for *Rocks and Minerals* magazine. In 1955, he published his first book, *Gem Cutting: A Lapidary's Manual*. *Gemstones of North America*, published four years later, established him as a leading authority on gems and minerals. In the years that followed, he published more than fifteen books and contributed more than 150 articles to periodicals; he illustrated many of these with his own watercolors.

Foremost among Sinkankas's works is his *Gemology: An Annotated Bibliography* of 1993, based on his extensive personal collection amassed over forty years. In the 1970s, as his collection grew, he and Marjorie established Peri Lithon Books, specializing in antiquarian works in the earth sciences. In 1988, he sold the more than 14,000 books, papers, and pamphlets in his collection to the Gemological Institute of America in Carlsbad, CA.

Sinkankas was recognized frequently with honors and awards. In 1984, a newly discovered phosphate mineral was named after him: sinkankasite.

John Sinkankas is survived by his wife, Marjorie; daughters Sharon Tooley and Marjorie Coates; sons John and George; a brother, William; nine grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

In a brief letter to the *Newsletter*, Marjorie Sinkankas has written:

Through the years John and I have received much kindness and help from our friends, colleagues, and the many people we've just met along the way. I'd like to express my gratitude for the pleasure John's many relationships brought him during his lifetime. He was fortunate in those he knew and worked with.

A memorial service was held for John Sinkankas June 29, 2002, at the Gemological Institute of America. Donations in his memory can be made to the Richard T. Liddicoat Gemological Library at the gemological institute, attention Dona Dirlam, 5345 Armada Drive, Carlsbad, CA 92008. ■

Briefly Noted...

by Rob Rulon-Miller

The *Antiquarian Book Review*, founded and first published in 1974 as the *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review*, is now in its sixth issue under its new owner, new name, and new format.

Under the capable editorship of Emma Lewis and editor-at-large Steve Halliwell, this smart and flashy, full-color monthly has already taken its place in the front of the line of publications about rare books and the rare book trade. Regular items of interest include book fair calendars, book reviews, auction reports, book fair summaries, and catalogue reviews. Most appealing are the regular

columns, *Letter from America* supplied by Bill Reese and *From the Tea Room* by Ed Maggs. Other contributors over the ensuing months have included ABAA's Richard Lan, Tom Goldwasser, Sandra Hindman, and Carol Grossman. Of particular interest in the latest (August/September) issue is the gutsy article by Brian Lake of Jarndyce Antiquarian Booksellers in London, taking two prominent ABAA dealers to task for blatantly ignoring recent scholarship in the Dickens bibliography in the interest of money.

The magazine's web site, <www.abmr.co.uk>, offers direct links to booksellers, online sales, auction houses, and book-

related sites. On October 1, there will be a relaunch of the magazine's website, at <<http://antiquarianbookreview.com>>.

Subscriptions (2002 rates) are for one year (10 issues) and include first class postage in the United Kingdom and air mail to other countries. For the UK the rate is £30; for the rest of Europe, £36; and for the United States, £43. Payment should be made to Countrywide Editions, Ltd. POB 97, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, England HP14 4GH. (telephone: 01494-562266; fax: 01494-565533). Payment may be made by major credit cards. ■

Membership Updates

New member **Larisa A. Cassell's** name was misspelled in the last issue of the *Newsletter*: the correct spelling is Cassell.

Doris Frohnsdorff now has an email address and web site: email: dfrohns@starpower.net; web site: www.trocadero.com/frohnsdorff

Harper's Books has a new address and phone: 126 Wildwood Road, Sag Harbor, NY 11963; phone: 631-725-6419.

Susan Klein has a new address, phone, and fax: 1704 Barn Stall Lane, Virginia Beach, VA 23456; phone: 757-427-9393; fax: 757-427-9454.

Lame Duck Books has an address correction: the correct zip code is 02111.

John LeBow Books has a new email address: lebowbks@attbi.com

James Lowe Autographs has a new email address: jameslowe@covad.net

M & M Books now has the same number for its phone and fax: 631-368-4858; 631-368-0518 is no longer in service.

Page Books has a new email address: pagebooks@cinci.rr.com

The new toll-free phone number for **Quill & Brush** was misprinted in the last issue of the *Newsletter*: the correct toll-free number is 888-372-5299.

Henry Stevens, Son & Stiles has a new email address: henrystevens@cox.net ■

ILAB Awards 13th Prize for Bibliography

Konrad Meuschel, Secretary of the ILAB Bibliography Prize Jury, has announced that the League's Thirteenth Prize was awarded to Anna Perälä for her *Suomen Typografinen Atlas – Finsk Typografisk Atlas – Typographischer Atlas Finnlands, 1642-1827* (Helsinki: University Library, 2000).

Perälä's monumental two-volume "Atlas of Finnish Typography 1642-1827" documents type ornaments and fonts used by Finland's first printers and provides ample "tools for research into the origins of publications and... the identification and periodisation of Fennica." The atlas reproduces printers' ornaments, decorative characters, and letter forms from Finland's first printing press, established by Peder Eriksson Wald in Turku, and from the area's successive presses active until the destruction of Turku by fire in 1827.

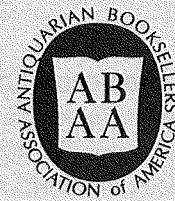
The ILAB Bibliographical Prize Jury also has bestowed special commendations to three other works: Martin Bircher's *Spiegel der Welt: Handschriften und Bücher aus drei Jahrtausenden* (two volumes; Cologne:

Fondation Martin Bodmer, and Marbach: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 2000); J. D. Fleeman, *A Bibliography of the Works of Samuel Johnson* (two volumes; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); and David W. Forbes, *Hawaiian National Bibliography 1780-1900* (four volumes; Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press in association with Hordern House, Sydney, 1999-2000).

The support of scholarship and research into the history of the book is an important part of the ILAB's mission. Its US\$ 10,000 Bibliographical Prize is awarded to publications of outstanding merit in the field. A distinguished panel of judges drawn from the academic and bookselling professions adjudicates on entries submitted from all over the world. ■

The deadline for submissions to the next *Newsletter* is

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