



# The ABAA NEWSLETTER

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MEMBER  
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## ABAA ADOPTS NEW CODE OF ETHICS

[At the July 5, 1990 Board of Governors' meeting the ABAA unanimously approved a new Code of Ethics, replacing that one adopted in 1982. Work on the project was begun two years ago by Ed Glaser and Lou Weinstein, and finished this year by Peter Howard, Jennifer Larson, and Rob Rulon-Miller. The new Code will be included in the upcoming edition of the ABAA directory, and the Board has suggested that the regional chapters include it in their local directories.]

### ABAA CODE OF ETHICS

The Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America was founded in 1949 to encourage and promote interest in and appreciation of antiquarian books and other printed materials, prints, and manuscripts; to establish and maintain professional and ethical standards; and to foster friendly relations both among the membership, and the bookselling community at large.

The ABAA recognizes that members are obligated to operate their businesses in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. ABAA members are expected to exercise common sense and courtesy in dealing with each other and with the general public. Members must share in the responsibility of furthering mutual trust and respect between the trade and the public by conducting their businesses with fairness and integrity.

The privilege of membership in the Association and the display of its logo carries with it the responsibility of maintaining and furthering the objectives of the Association. Towards this end the following ethical guidelines are provided:

1) An ABAA member shall be responsible for the understanding and use of the specific terminology of the trade.

2) An ABAA member shall be responsible for the accurate description of all material offered for sale. All significant defects, restorations, and sophistications should be clearly noted and made known to those to whom the material is offered or sold. Unless both parties agree otherwise, a full cash refund shall be available to the purchaser of any misrepresented material.

3) An ABAA member shall be responsible for passing to the buyer clear title to all material sold, and shall not knowingly purchase, hold, or attempt to resell

stolen materials. An ABAA member shall make all reasonable efforts to ascertain that materials offered to him or her are the property of the seller. An ABAA member shall make every effort to prevent the theft of antiquarian books and related materials. An ABAA member shall cooperate with law enforcement authorities in the effort to recover and return stolen material, and apprehend those responsible for the theft.

4) An ABAA member shall vouch for the authenticity of all materials offered for sale, and shall make every reasonable effort to establish their true nature. Should it be determined that material offered as authentic is not authentic or is questionable, that material shall be returnable for a full cash refund, or other mutually agreeable arrangement. Material proven to be not authentic, or of disputed or undetermined nature, shall not again be offered for sale unless all facts concerning it are disclosed in writing.

5) Terms and conditions of sale should be clearly and explicitly stated in all catalogues and in offers, and it should be made clear at the time of offer whether or not material is offered subject to prior sale. An ABAA member should pay in full for all material purchased within 30 days from date of invoice unless other arrangements are made. Terms of sale should be clearly defined between seller and buyer at the time of sale and payment should be made in accordance with these terms. However, these terms are not immutable and may be renegotiated by mutual consent.

6) Responsibility for damage in transit shall rest with the sender, unless other wise stipulated. ABAA members should see to the careful and appropriate handling, packing and shipping of material in order to insure that it arrives in the same condition as when purchased. The cost of returning material incorrectly described shall be the responsibility of the seller.

7) An ABAA member should permit any other ABAA member in good standing to buy from his or her inventory any material offered for sale [i.e. priced], and to extend to that ABAA member a reciprocal trade discount.

8) An ABAA member should have all material offered for sale clearly marked with the selling price. Material not for sale, or in the process of being catalogued should be appropriately segregated.

9) An ABAA member offering appraisal services shall be responsible for knowing [cont. on page 2]

**[CODE OF ETHICS, cont.]**

current appraisal regulations as stipulated by the Internal Revenue Service. An ABAA dealer shall conduct such appraisals in strict compliance with these regulations.

10) An ABAA member should neither approach nor solicit customers in any other bookseller's shop, book fair booth, or place of business without the introduction or consent of the proprietor.

It is essential for the reputation of the Association that complaints or disputes involving ABAA members be resolved in a manner befitting the objectives of the Association. Claims against ABAA members, or disputes among members, should be made in writing to the President of the Association, who may either mediate personally or refer the matter to the Ethics Committee. ABAA members should abide by the decisions of the Board of Governors. Willful or continuous violation of these ABAA guidelines will be grounds for suspension and/or expulsion from the Association.

**BY-LAWS COMMITTEE**

The ABAA By-Laws Committee is considering changes in the ABAA By-Laws in order to make the newly adopted Code of Ethics a more powerful instrument. Comments are welcome.

Amend Article II, Section 14, as below:

**OLD READING:**

A member of the Association may be expelled for an action or actions which endanger the good order, welfare, character, or reputation of the organization, or which would have been a ground for denial of membership had the individual not been a member, or for a material misstatement in the member's original application for membership. On

receipt of a complaint to the Association against a member, the Board shall determine whether an action warranting an expulsion has been alleged. In such case, the Board shall notify the member of the nature of the complaint and afford the member an opportunity to appear in person to present his/her case, in addition to presenting it in writing. After such hearing the Board may, by vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Board of Governors present, vote to expel such member and such expulsion shall be effective immediately on such vote.

**PROPOSED READING:**

A member of the Association may be suspended or expelled for the willful violation or deliberate neglect of the ABAA Code of Ethics. A member may also be suspended or expelled for a material misstatement in his or her original application for membership. On receipt of a complaint to the Association against a member, the Board shall determine whether the allegation merits action. In such a case, the Board shall notify the member of the nature of the complaint and give the member an opportunity to appear in person to present his or her case, or to present it in writing. After such hearing the Board may, by vote of two-thirds of the Board of Governors present, vote to expel the member, and this expulsion shall be effective immediately.

**DIRECTORY COMMITTEE**

On July 10, 1990, the Directory Committee sent out requests for corrections and updates of members' listings for the 1990-1991 ABAA *Membership Directory*. Two changes were made this year which we hope will be an improvement over past directories. First, the title has been changed to incorporate two years, 1990 and 1991, thereby making it more accurate as the directory's usefulness

typically runs from autumn to autumn, based on dues paid by the March 30th deadline. Second, in order to make the listing of specialties more equitable, the committee decided to limit dealers to 145 characters (approx. 3 lines) for a description of specialties, rather than the confusing "no more than five" which with combinations such as "prints and drawings," and "voyages and travels of the 17th and 18th centuries" sometimes ran on to seven lines. Comments and suggestions should be sent to the Directory Committee at National Headquarters.

**BOOK FAIR COMMITTEE  
REPORT**

[Peter Stern, chairman; Michael Ginsberg, Priscilla Juvelis, Ellen Schreiber].

The Book fair committee is in the process of revising the ABAA book fair rules, a draft of which follows this report. These rules will come up for a vote by the Board of Governors in November. The most significant change we are suggesting is that *booth locations be determined by lottery at every fair*. In other words, no one will necessarily be offered that same booth that they had in the previous fair. The only exception is for local book fair committee members, whose booths may be assigned as their committee sees fit. I hope that the committee, for security and organizational reasons, would spread its membership across the fair. I would exempt local fair committee members from the lottery as a gesture of gratitude for the time and, sometimes, expense given by the committee to the good of all fair participants. This policy may also provide an incentive for future volunteers.

When the rules were originally formulated some years ago, we

proposed this rule. Among all the proposed rules, this was the only one that generated a great number of responses, most of them negative. For the most part, dealers felt that when they had the same booth year after year customers knew where to find them. Many expressed that returning to the same booth gave them a feeling of being at home.

However, there is nothing in the planning of a fair that gives the local committees more trouble, especially charges of favoritism, than the assignment of booths. Some of those charges have in the past been true, but some have not. Not only can these troubles be simply avoided by impartial lottery, but also it eliminates what has been, to my mind anyway, a fundamental unfairness. Members, whether new or old, should have the same opportunity to exhibit. If we were a private business we would be free to pick and choose and assign however we wanted to. As we are not a private business, or a club, we don't have that freedom.

Under these proposed rules we *would* allow dealers to swap booths up to a given deadline and under terms set by the local committee. In addition, dealers who wish to share booths would have their names drawn together, as would dealers wishing to have adjacent booths.

Another suggestion regards the price structure of booths. Corner booths in good locations are usually in demand. There is no reason to price these the same as a booth along a back wall. In such cases where there is a disparity of booths, more than one lottery may be held. For instance, say there are eight corner booths for which there are fifteen applications. In this case, there would be a lottery first for those booths, and those who are unsuccessful would have their names placed in the general lottery. Likewise, fairly undesirable booths, such as those obstructed by pillars or buried deep into a large room's corner, should be priced lower, and likewise be subject to a lottery if oversubscribed.

The book fair committee welcomes your comments and suggestions on these proposed rules.

As for our future book fairs, Boston is oversubscribed. Chicago is planning a fair at the Palmer House, May 23-25, 1991. The last Chicago fair was a great success, and a tremendous improvement over the previous events. San Francisco is well under way, and will almost certainly be the phenomenal success it has been in the past. The New York Fair is in the planning stages, and will probably be held in April 1991 at the Sheraton Centre.

#### *PROPOSED REVISIONS TO ABAA BOOK FAIR RULES* [comments welcomed]

1. Participation in ABAA sponsored fairs is limited to members in good standing of the ABAA and ILAB. Applications for bookfair participation are to be mailed well in advance and at the same time to all members. Notification of fair dates will be sent to all ILAB organizations for notification of their membership. Applications are to include a statement in which the applicant verifies his or her membership in good standing of the ABAA or ILAB. The fair committees will confirm their memberships with the national office.

a. Local book fair committees may set aside an area of the book fair, separate from the main exhibition area, for booths to be rented to appropriate non-bookselling exhibitors. Appropriate exhibitors in this area may include, but are not limited to, suppliers of computer hardware, software or on-line services, supplies for book care, bookbinders, restoration services, printers, insurers, etc. Approval of such exhibitors, and fees to be charged to such exhibitors, is at the discretion of the local book fair committees. Such exhibitors may not have access to the main exhibition area in hours when the area is closed to the public. Such exhibits will be subject to the ABAA \$100 per booth fair tax.

2. Subject to modification and approval by the ABAA board, fairs are held in Los Angeles in February of even numbered years, San Francisco in February of odd numbered years, New York annually in the spring, Boston annually in the fall, and Chicago biennially in May.

3. A member of the ABAA board must be a member of the local book fair committee. When this is not possible, chapter chairs or their designated representatives, who may attend board meetings, will serve this function as liaison. The chapters shall be responsible for informing the ABAA administrator with the names of the members of the local committee.

4. All booths will be assigned by impartial lottery each year. The only exception is for local book fair committee members. The local committee may assign booths to its members as it sees fit. Committee members' booths may not be traded. Where booths are priced differently, there may be more than one lottery held. After booths are assigned, an exhibitor may arrange to trade booths with another exhibitor up to a deadline set by the fair committee. All such exchanges are subject to approval and to any guidelines set by the local committee. In the case where a fair is oversubscribed by the application deadline, an impartial lottery will determine which applicants will be assigned full booths.

a. Provision should be made, when dealers request to have adjacent booths, to draw names together from the lottery.

b. The local committee may price booths differently, depending on location, size, or other pertinent factors. It is strongly suggested that booths in poor locations, or booths that are obstructed by pillars, or for other reasons

undesirable be priced lower in the interest of fairness. Notification of the availability of such booths should be made in advance of the drawing.

5. It is the fair committee's responsibility to certify to the board that the lottery has been held in a completely impartial manner. It is strongly suggested, in order to avoid accusations of partiality, that a member of the Board of Governors be present at the drawing. Local book fair committees are responsible for seeing that all book fair policies have been followed. Any deviation from the rules must be approved by the Board, or its Executive Committee when timing does not allow consideration by the entire board.

6. As ultimate financial liability lies with the ABAA, a proposed budget and contract must be submitted to the board or the executive committee for its approval.

7. The fair manager selected by the local book fair committee must be present at the fair with a staff deemed sufficient to properly coordinate the fair's operation. The manager and staff will be supplied with distinctive badges. Book fair committee members should also be supplied with distinctive badges so that they are available to assist with complaints or problems.

8. The fair manager is expected to provide an appropriate number of complimentary tickets to local librarians, collector's groups, etc. Each exhibitor should be provided with at least ten (10) complimentary tickets, and arrangements should be made to provide additional tickets at the fair during open hours to any ABAA member with a current membership card.

9. No one with coats, satchels, briefcases, books, etc. is permitted entry to the fair. Such items are to be checked in a facility provided by the fair manager. All packages, bags, etc. are subject to search leaving the fair. A statement to this effect should be contained in advertising for the fair, and on tickets and posters. It is the fair manager's responsibility to provide

bags and other packaging, and stickers for merchandise purchased at the fair by attendees.

10. Exhibitor's badges are limited to those individuals pre-registered by the exhibiting firms, and must not be given to non-exhibiting dealers, collectors, or librarians, and all such badges are supplied at the discretion and with the approval of the local book fair committee. Exhibitors must wear their badges at all times on the fair floor, and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the local book fair committee.

a. An exhibiting firm who in any way provides access to an ABAA fair to an unauthorized person at any time other than posted exhibition hours may, at the local fair committee's discretion, be expelled, as will the person who gained such illegal access. The expelled exhibitor will not receive any refund of booth fees, equipment rental, book fair taxes, or any other costs or fees.

b. The local fair committee will notify the ABAA Ethics Committee of this and any other serious infractions of book fair rules.

c. Only in extenuating circumstances, and at the discretion of local book fair committees, can helpers at book fairs be in the categories mentioned above. In such cases where it is allowed, the helper may not, under any circumstances, be in other booths or make purchases prior to the fair's opening. The book fair committee is responsible for enforcing this rule and providing disciplinary measures, up to and including expulsion of both the exhibitor and the helper who violate it.

11. Non-exhibitors may not distribute catalogues or sales lists at the fair. Want lists are acceptable.

12. Exhibitors may not set up until all booth fees and other assessments are paid for in full.

13. Refunds for cancelled booths are payable at the local book fair committee's discretion.

14. All booths are to utilize

uniform fixtures provided by the fair manager. Any non-uniform fixture must be approved in advance by the local book fair committee, or the exhibitor may be denied the right to set up. All exhibits must be within the width, length, and height of the booth space rented.

15. All signs displayed must be approved in advance by the fair manager of book fair committee.

16. All exhibitors must display a reasonable amount of merchandise for sale at the fair. The determination of a reasonable amount is at the discretion of the local fair committee. Exhibitor catalogues do not qualify as merchandise in this determination. All displayed items must have prices clearly marked and must be for sale. Sold items must be removed from display.

17. The ABAA display panel is to be prominently displayed. It is the responsibility of the local book fair committee to see that it is shipped from headquarters, set up for opening, and shipped back to headquarters.

18. Each local chapter of the ABAA is entitled to retain all net revenues from book fairs in its own treasury until a maximum of \$10,000.00 (ten thousand dollars) has accrued. By virtue of their biennial fairs, the Northern and Southern California Chapters and the Midwest Chapter may retain all net revenues in their treasuries until a maximum of \$20,000.00 (twenty thousand dollars) has accrued. Thereafter revenues over this maximum will be turned over to the national treasury of the ABAA.

19. Chapters will collect \$100.00 (one hundred dollars) per booth, payable to the national treasury. In addition, the chapter will collect \$10.00 (ten dollars) per exhibitor for the ILAB. The chapter may add these amounts to the booth fee or raised the funds

in any other acceptable way to meet its obligation. Payment of such fees to the national headquarters is due fifteen (15) days after the last day of the fair.

20. The local committee will include any statements on ethics or other matters required by the ABAA or ILAB in contracts, advertising, programs, or wherever else deemed appropriate or necessary.

21. Every book fair shall contribute a portion of their gate, or arrange a fund-raising event in conjunction with the fair for the benefit of Antiquarian Booksellers' Benevolent Fund.

#### NEW ILAB RESOLUTION ON BOOKFAIRS

Antony Rota, president of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers has informed the ABAA of a new resolution concerning bookfairs promoted by member associations of the League, passed last September at a meeting of the Presidents of the League in Yverdon, Switzerland. The intention of the resolution is to advance the good name of the trade by publicizing a statement about the authenticity and bibliographical completeness of all material offered for sale. This statement will appear from now on in all bookfair catalogues, and will be prominently displayed on the book fair premises.

#### RESOLUTION:

"This bookfair is officially sanctioned by the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers, the largest trade organization of its kind in the world.

"This means that the consumer can rely upon the experience and professionalism of participating dealers and the authenticity of the item available for purchase. Simply stated, all books, manuscripts and related material have been carefully examined for completeness and bibliographical

accuracy.

"The level of inspection will ordinarily depend on the value of the item(s) offered. Sometimes short notations of defects are lightly pencilled near the price. More valuable material is usually described in detail on slips that are loosely inserted. Please read them carefully.

"Any item is returnable for a full cash refund if defects or bibliographical inaccuracies are found, providing: 1. inspection is made and reported within thirty days of receipt (an immediate phone call or fax is urged); and 2. material is returned in the same condition as when it was sold.

"All ILAB members are obliged to abide by this warranty, and any violator is subject to expulsion from the association."

#### BLUMBERG UPDATE

With the arrest of Stephen Blumberg on March 20, 1990 in Iowa, some details of massive thefts of books and manuscripts from U.S. libraries began to unfold. Blumberg has been charged with interstate transport of stolen property and is free on bail (with and electronic monitor attached to his wrist) while the FBI continues to prepare the case for trial.

Found in Blumberg's home in Ottumwa, Iowa, were over 30,000 books and manuscripts that had been removed from about 140 university and college libraries. The dollar value may never be known but estimates have ranged from \$20 to \$40 million. [The Minneapolis Bureau of the FBI says the total theft, which included gold coins, architectural antiques, stained glass, etc., may well exceed \$100 million.--Ed.]

The FBI is expending much effort on this case but they still asked for help from libraries and the book trade. The OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) offered to list the material by sending computers and operators to Omaha, Nebraska, where the books are now stored.

The ABAA has contributed to the appraisal and identification work by making it possible for Glen Dawson of Dawson's Book Shop to work for a week and a half in Omaha and further appraisal work in Los Angeles. Barbara Rootenberg, head of the ABAA Security Committee, received a call from Jerry Tucker, Special Agent, FBI, for an ABAA member to do appraisal work in preparation for a trial of Blumberg. ABAA member William Reese also helped by working on a section of print-outs listing early American imprints.

The information available so far about this case makes it one of the most unusual of all time. The quantity and value alone must establish a record for book theft. The stolen books were chosen with the eye of a collector for favorite books and subjects, and arranged on shelves as a collector would do. Apparently few or none of the books were disposed of since Blumberg has a sizeable income from a family trust. Large sets turned up such as Curtis' "The North American Indian" in 40 volumes, and "Works" of Hubert Howe Bancroft in 39 volumes, which makes one wonder how such bulky material could have been removed from libraries. The fact that Blumberg was arrested in April of 1988 at the University of California, Riverside, for possession of lock picks and lock-defeating tools is significant.

The book world will look forward to more details that might come out in a trial of Blumberg. In the Meantime everyone has to be watchful and cautious.

The ABAA is coming closer to putting stolen book information into its computer. There are some developments coming along that may prove to be significant. The next issue of the ABAA Newsletter should have details on this important step.

[Blumberg was recently spotted at the Saint Paul, Minnesota auction house, Rose Galleries, previewing a book sale. Rose Galleries director, Jerry Kaufhold, assured us that none of the material offered for sale was consigned by Blumberg. He called Blumberg "a hopeless case. We watched him carefully as he'd done a job on us at least twice in the past that we know of, maybe more. We watched him so closely this time, though, that he left after just 15 minutes or so, and thankfully nothing was found to be missing."--Ed.]

#### RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS the March 1990 recovery of thousands of stolen books in a house in Ottumwa, Iowa, owned by Stephen Blumberg will lead to the solution of several cases of library thefts and the return of stolen property to its rightful owners;

WHEREAS the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is working to conduct a criminal investigation and prosecute Mr. Blumberg and to return the materials to their rightful owners as expeditiously as possible;

WHEREAS OCLC (Online Computer Library Center, Inc.) sent staff members and equipment, at its own expense, to Omaha, Nebraska, to develop a database of the stolen items;

WHEREAS The Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America (ABAA), at its expense, sent a member to Omaha to help identify valuable materials;

WHEREAS the Association of College and Research Libraries (ARCL), through the Security Committee of ACRL's Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, has a longstanding interest, involvement, and expertise in matters relating to the security of books and manuscript collections;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Association of College and Research Libraries, meeting at its Annual Conference in Chicago, expresses its profound appreciation for the work and cooperation of the FBI, OCLC, and ABAA in their efforts to return the stolen materials to their owners.

#### ABAA INSURANCE PROGRAM

Six years ago the insurance company DeWitt Stern, Gutmann & Co., Inc. was asked by ABAA to set up an all-risk insurance program for ABAA members. A number of ABAA members have already joined the program. For those of you who have not, or who may wish to know more about it, the Board of Governors asked Mr. DeWitt Stern to offer some details.

DeWitt Stern provides many different kinds of insurance, but has been most active in the area of fine arts. Over 50 years ago they initiated the first All Risk Policy for rare book dealers, and it was largely due to their experience with book dealers, including many members of ABAA, that the Board of Governors approached them about setting up a special policy for ABAA members.

There are many attractive elements about the DeWitt Stern contract. For example, their valuation clause in the case of loss covers the dealer either at his cost price plus 30%, or his selling price less 20%.

The amount of insurance at the main location is stipulated.

Insurance limits may be provided at other locations, if required.

Extremely valuable items can be covered at a specific amount.

The policy can be extended to cover bookfairs.

The policy can be extended to cover property off premises (when taking items to the post office, for example; or when transporting collections for sale). Under this clause, the coverage would be included for UPS, express

and common carrier shipments. Ordinarily shipments by mail are not covered, but shipments by registered mail are.

While the basic policy covers only the United States and Canada, the policy can be extended to cover foreign shipments. This is an attractive feature as the Post Office provides registered mail coverage of very limited amounts (\$20 and \$25 to most countries). Furthermore, for an additional premium, the policy can be extended to cover special trips abroad, for the purchase of collections, and foreign bookfairs.

The premium charge obviously depends on the amount of insurance desired, and the construction and exposure at the insured's premises. Credits are given for alarm systems and other protective devices. The minimum deductible in case of loss is \$1,000 at the insured's premises, but many of the larger dealers select a \$5000 or a \$10,000 deductible to save on the premiums, as they feel they can absorb that amount of loss. The deductible for off-premises coverage ranges from \$100 to \$500 for shipments, and \$250 to \$1000 for bookfairs.

The minimum annual premium is \$750, which must be paid at inception. DeWitt Stern is one of the few insurance companies which recognizes the specific nature and needs of the rare book dealer's business. Ordinary policies written for retailers by unsympathetic insurance companies do not necessarily provide adequate coverage. Some dealers who conduct business from their homes think they are covered under their homeowners' policies, but virtually all home owners' policies exclude business inventory.

DeWitt Stern reports that because of several large losses in recent years the underwriters have not made any money under the ABAA All Risk contract, but the

underwriters at Lloyds have not panicked and have maintained the current rates.

We would recommend that those of you who are not insured under this program and who might be interested in obtaining more information, contact Ed Wardell at DeWitt Stern, Gutmann & Co., 420 Lexington Ave., NYC, NY 10170 (212-867-3550; fax 212-983-6483). Mr. Wardell will be happy to speak with you about the program in more detail, and will send an application form if desired.

### EDITORIAL

[This column, is open to all members of ABAA and ILAB. Any grammatically correct submission of reasonable length and timely content will be considered for publication.]

Three hours before going to press there are still five full columns needed to fill out this issue of the *Newsletter*. It gets me thinking about apathy. What was it Yeats said about the best lacking all conviction? For the *Newsletter* to flourish we need the cooperation and participation of every member, and most importantly, the cooperation of committee chairpeople and chapter presidents. In lieu of an adequate number of submissions this time, I give you a short tale of the Gorbachev visit to Minnesota in June, not an editorial at all, but rather

### FILLER

At three o'clock on a lazy Friday afternoon in early June, as I was contemplating the evening's cruise on the Mississippi with friends from down the street, and lamenting that there was definitely *nothing* going on in the book biz, I received a call from an executive vice-president of a well-known department store in Minneapolis, asking if I might be able to help him with a big problem on short

notice. He'd been looking for two weeks, he said, for a gift that Minnesota's governor, Rudy Perpich, could present to President Gorbachev, on the occasion of his eight hour visit to the state. Not just any gift. The *official* gift. The Gorbachevs were due to arrive that Sunday, in less than 48 hours. Short notice indeed.

I knew from the press (and there was a Siberian wasteland's worth of Gorby press here) that the Soviet leader was an admirer of Sinclair Lewis, one of the few American writers available in Russian translation in the USSR when Gorbachev was a student. I also knew that Gorbachev had wanted to visit Sauk Center, Lewis' birthplace, the small Minnesota town on which *Main Street* is based. The president's schedule, sadly, was too full to accommodate such an excursion, and the organizers nixed the pilgrimage for want of time. So we agreed, this retailing nabob and I, that we needed something special in the Lewis line.

It was already 4:00 p.m. in New York, so frantically I called Cummins and Horowitz; out west, where there were still three hours to work with, I called Joe the Pro, Heritage, maybe some others. Word got around I was desperate. Everyone I spoke with was delighted to be a part of the urgency, mostly, I think, because Gorbachev's charisma sparked the enthusiasm. Calls came in from east and west. First editions, limited, signed, and illustrated editions: all fairly mundane as it turned out, but what can you expect to find in Lewis on a Friday afternoon in summertime. Two books come to mind: Tom Goldwasser had a nice presentation copy of *Babbitt*, or was it *Arrowsmith*? I can't remember now for the inscription in it to Mencken; and Glenn Horowitz found an inscribed copy of *Main Street*, which he graciously had drop-shipped to me, on approval, express mail, at five to five eastern time from someone unknown to me in New England.

It was all very hectic. In between calls to and from dealers, I was relaying the information back to the department store VP, who was acting as a front for the governor. He hemmed and hawed. Nothing seemed just right. This was Gorby, after all, and just any old presentation copy wasn't going to do. I explained that the inscription to Mencken was nothing too shabby. But the exec had *Main Street* on the brain; *Babbitt* didn't cut the mustard.

Then this occurred to me: the best Lewis material was right here at the University of Minnesota, and all I had to do was to call up Naughty Aughty, the friendly special collections librarian and see what he had for sale. He's got the best stock in the state, you know, and I kicked myself for not having thought of him earlier. He didn't take American Express, but he told me my credit was good, and ten minutes later I had on hold a presentation copy of *Main Street*, from Sinclair Lewis and his wife no less, to Elinor Wylie and her husband. This was it! The conjugal presentation made it at once a gift for both Gorby and Raisa -- she, we learned, who was sometimes irked when overlooked by local dignitaries. We haggled a bit; the librarian drove a hard bargain, but what the hell, it looked like political slush money to me, not mine, not even the taxpayers'.

It was pouring Saturday morning, and poured all day long. Horowitz's *Main Street* arrived express about nine. I went to the librarian's house, got the Wylie copy, and drove downtown to the muckamuck's office, which had sofas, and more than one room with a view, and a woman with a thick, deep-throated Russian accent on the phone about seating arrangements at the governor's lunch.



I presented him with the two copies, explaining the pros and cons of each, the biggest con of all being that the Wylie copy came from University archives, on credit, and with no one's say-so. This was a troubling, but not insurmountable problem. All the bigwig wanted was a letter from the librarian on U. of M. stationery saying he'd take the rap if the squishy stuff hit the fan. I called the friendly librarian and he said okay. He is a man of vision, that Naughty Aughty. It was, and remains, a great gift and gesture which we all hope will someday be greatly appreciated in the Soviet Union.

"Can we get a box made for it?"

The price of eggs, already high, skyrocketed with *that* question, for mine is not a strong heart, and aggravation does not come cheap. "A box?" I asked. "This is Saturday. It's raining. The quickest I can get any box out of any binder is a week! And that's only if I keep him high."

"The governor needs a box," was the executive reply. Up to the challenge, I told him I'd try. And I told him while I was at it, I'd get a little presentation broadside printed up, too, something to assuage him and the gov if the box fell through.

Which it might have. My wife was away for the weekend and I was left with the convertible which was fine in the sun but leaked in the rain, and I was forever dodging drips in the car and watching that the books didn't suffer some last minute dampstaining. I still had Glenn's copy and didn't want to be on the line for two *Main Streets*. One is enough, even here in Twintown.

By now it's early afternoon on Saturday and Gorby's due in 24 hours, and the governor needs the book with the box by seven Sunday morning so he can *practice giving it away!*, helped by a little introductory speech I've been asked to write as part of the

bargain. I went to get the librarian and together we drove, with two *Main Streets* in the back seat, to the University library where he wrote his letter of indulgence, and I the governor's presentation notes. I called Will & Cheryl, local printers I knew well enough to uproot from in front of a baseball game, and we all hustled off to the store for some paper, then downtown again to the local center for book arts where at 4:00 p.m., after classes were over, we could get a press to work on. They went to work on the printing job. I went home to mull over the box.

Let it be known to all whom aspire to bibliographic trivia, that J.M. Barrie's *Little White Bird* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1902) is virtually the same size as *Main Street* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1920). I came to this awful bit of useless information after calling two local boxmakers, who laughed, and after combing my own shelves, panic-stricken, for something boxlike, both presentable and reworkable. God exists! There on a lower shelf, half hidden by a stack of books on the floor, half hidden by the trim of the shelves, was a half-forgotten, half black morocco box, with *Little White Bird* within, a whopping plug if there ever was one. It was a book I'd had in stock since my days at the Current Company in Rhode Island, a book which had come from a library I had bought on Nantucket in the winter of 1978. I had the book priced at \$45 for *ten years*, but it wouldn't sell. The box was worth more than the book, so I raised the price to \$75, thinking, as many dealers do, the higher price would help. It didn't. So the book was cast aside to the lowest, darkest corner I could find. And then Gorby comes along, and yes, *Little White Bird* was finally set free.

A third bookbinder I knew was willing to pare and tool new labels. I delivered the box to him at seven Saturday evening, with understanding that he was to have it back to me by six the

next morning, Sunday, so the gov could practice his book-giving. Will & Cheryl had the little broadside done and delivered to me by nine Saturday evening.

I spent a sleepless night. The book that was destined for the Ordena Lenina Biblioteka perhaps, or even the Publichnaya Istoricheskaya Biblioteka, was right here on my desk, and boxless to boot. I had the horrid thought that after all this, the governor would not find the book appropriate, and resort to giving the Soviet president the hideous painting of a bald eagle grappling with a blood-stained grizzly on a snow-swept mountaintop, a painting both not yet dry and symbolically dated -- a painting destined to be *the* big gift until *Main Street* came along. That painting worried me. A gift like that might make me vote Republican.

But I worried for naught. The box was indeed back to me by six Sunday morning, looking absolutely regal after all those years as an erstwhile birdcage, and the governor's limo came promptly at seven. The book was presented, as planned, at the governor's luncheon, made the local news and the story circulated around town quicker than Gorby could say Boris Yeltsin ten times fast.

So much for *that*. We haven't been paid yet, and our friendly bookselling librarian is knocking at the door saying something about his behind being in a sling. I've told him not to worry. The worst that can happen is that I'll propose him for membership in ABAA.

--Ed.



**TEXT OF  
HOUSTON CONFERENCE  
NOW AVAILABLE**

*Forged Documents: Proceedings of the 1989 Houston Conference*, edited by Pat Bozman, is now available from the publisher, Oak Knoll Books, 414 Delaware, New Castle, DE 19720. The book is cloth-bound, 120pp., and contains the texts of 13 papers and four floor discussions from this important conference on forgeries, and its impact on collectors, libraries, and booksellers, with important information on the Texas forgeries. The conference was sponsored in part by ABAA. Of particular interest to ABAA members is Jennifer Larson's paper on the obligations of the bookseller. Other contributors include Tom Taylor, Nicholas Barker, Marcus McCorison, and Anthony Rota. The price is \$25 (standard trade terms apply).

**ABAA WELCOMES  
SIXTEEN NEW  
MEMBERS**

The following membership applications were voted upon and unanimously approved at the July 5 telephone meeting of the Boards of Governors. On behalf of the Board and the entire organization, the *Newsletter* welcomes to the membership, the following:

*As full members:*

**Thomas E. Congalton**, Between the Covers, Collingswood, New Jersey; **Donnis Joan De Camp**, Schoyer's Books, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; **John Dunning**, The Old Algonquin Bookstore, Denver, Colorado; **William A. Ewald**, Argus Books and Graphics, Sacramento, California; **Michael Hackenberg**, Turtle Island Booksellers, Berkeley, California; **Edward J.P. Hoffman**, Hoffman's Bookshop, Columbus, Ohio; **Aubyn Kendall**,

Limestone Hills Book Shop, Glen Rose, Texas; **Owen Dickson Kubik**, Owen D. Kubik--Books, Dayton, Ohio; **Leonard Unger**, Leonard Unger--Rare Books, Woodland Hills, California; and **Laurence Jefferson Weber**, Jeff Weber Rare Books, Glendale, California.

*As Associate Members:*

**Timothy Johns**, James Cummins, Bookseller, Inc., New York, New York; **Nathaniel Des Marais**, Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles, California; **Tania McKnight**, Heritage Book Shop, Los Angeles, California; and **Kol Shaver, B. & L. Rootenberg Rare Books**, Sherman Oaks, California.

*As Re-Admissions:*

**Daniel De Simone**, De Simone Company, Booksellers, New York, New York; and **Dick Rykken**, Rykken and Scull, Mill Valley, California.

**CORRECTION**

In the second issue of the *Newsletter* Barbara Rootenberg was inadvertently identified in the report of outgoing President, Mike Ginsberg, as West Coast Security Chairperson. In fact, Rootenberg's official title is National Security Chairperson.

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The *Newsletter* welcomes all comments and criticisms. Letters to the editor should be addressed to 400 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55102

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