



The ABAA

NEWSLETTER

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT - Muir Dawson

I have been reading a good number of reports of past Presidents of the ABAA and find common themes that appear - that a two year term of office is quite long enough (don't change it), one year goes by in finding how things work and then one year is spent in trying to accomplish something. There is a sense of optimism in the reports that indicates the hard work that went into the two years has resulted in some accomplishment. There is also a sense of gratitude expressed for the trust that members place in the hands of a president and for the opportunity of working with the dedicated officers and Board of Governors.

I agree heartily with all these themes. There is much to be grateful for. Our treasury is stronger than ever and our accounting procedures have been greatly improved. Membership keeps increasing. The Benevolent Fund is higher than ever before. The *Newsletter* is providing an important means of communication in our Association. Our Executive Director has now been on the job for over two years and is keeping the ABAA office functioning smoothly. With the help of our new computer she is able to take on added duties of bookkeeping and work on the *Directory*.

A great deal of work went into the recently adopted By-Laws. The revision will assist the ABAA in committees, nominations, and membership applications. One of the most important features of the new By-Laws has to do with Ethics. The membership has long wanted to see stronger action when ethics violations have occurred, and the new By-Laws spell out more options in the handling of complaints. A new article was added to cover indemnification of all national and chapter officers in case of legal action against them. This article, together with insurance and a legal defense fund of \$50,000 which our treasury has earmarked, gives our Association and its officers legal protection that did not previously exist. In the past, certain actions were taken out of fear of legal problems. The ABAA now has more strength to do things that should be done. Our legal counsel, Larry Fox, has been our guide in all these matters, both legal and practical.

The last two years have seen an increased interest in our Book Fairs. New problems of how to handle

oversubscription of space and how big is too big have required time and thought to manage. The International League of International Booksellers have been invited to have their Congress and International Antiquarian Book Fair in California in 1996. The Board of Governors will be making some basic decisions on this soon and the entire ABAA will eventually be involved in this important activity.

The last two years may be looked upon as the first of the FAX era for the ABAA. The wide use of this machine by our members and officers has enabled us to transact more business more quickly and to consult more widely. The reports of Committees and Officers will give detail and show how much work goes into the functioning of the ABAA. Those who are able and willing to serve often do so at considerable time and expense. Having seen how much effort is contributed for the good of our Association, I wish to heartily thank our Officers and members of the Board of Governors and ask the members to join me. Without this willingness to serve, there would be no Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America.

[*Editor's note: This report, along with those of the Committee chairs, have already been mailed to the membership. For reasons of space, only the President's Report is reprinted here.*]

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the ABAA will be held on Thursday, February 13, 1992 in the Pacific Ballroom of the Airport Hilton Hotel, Los Angeles, CA at 6:00 p.m., to be followed by a reception and dinner at 7:00. Those seeking additional information should contact Headquarters in New York as soon as possible.

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ETHICS COMMITTEE REPORT TO ABAA MEMBERSHIP

Herewith is an account of the Ethics Committee's inquiry into the conduct of Peter Tumarkin. All disclosures are made with the consent of Mr. Tumarkin and are printed at the will of the Board of Governors.

On May 6, 1991 ABAA member Fred Schreiber reported in a letter to ABAA President, Muir Dawson, that Peter Tumarkin, upon confrontation, acknowledged to Schreiber that he had removed from Schreiber's stock without permission two books, approximately two and a half years before. Tumarkin catalogued these books in his own catalogue for a Cologne Fair, listed them in the Fair exhibition catalogue, and subsequently consigned them to a German auction house, Reiss & Auvermann. Schreiber noted them in proofs of the auction catalogue and traced the provenance back to Tumarkin.

The Ethics Committee sought a formal written response to the charge which had been set forth in a letter to Tumarkin dated May 11, 1991. A written response dated June 13, 1991 was received by the Committee in which Tumarkin, without denial, explained that his conduct, which he had later suppressed, arose from personal disappointment when Schreiber had declined to be a sponsor for Tumarkin for another organization.

The Committee received in support of Mr. Tumarkin's character, letters from Lucien Goldschmidt and Daniel DeSimone, together with a letter from Tumarkin's psychiatrist, who reported that Mr. Tumarkin discussed the incident with him with forthrightness and integrity; and, that the peculiar psychological complex that led to the incident was no longer present. The psychiatrist added his belief that the taking by Tumarkin of Schreiber's books was an isolated event and in his medical judgement was not likely to recur.

On the basis of this information, the Ethics Committee by majority vote recommended to the Board that Mr. Tumarkin be invited to testify on his own behalf at the November 1991 meeting.

Mr. Tumarkin did so appear, with videotaped representations on behalf of his character and bookselling competence from Peter Kraus and Lucien Goldschmidt; with a tape-recorded and transcribed character and professional witness from the German dealer, Konrad Meuschel; and with a videotaped assessment from his psychiatrist.

After a lengthy discussion of this case and after each member of the Board spoke his or her view, the Ethics Committee by a majority vote recommended to the Board that Peter Tumarkin be suspended from the Association and that he be censured publicly in the *Newsletter*. The consensus was that extraordinary mitigating circumstances affected this case; that despite widespread publicity about the event, no other written charges against Mr. Tumarkin's character and competence were forthcoming. Moreover, in a letter dated August 21, 1991 Fred Schreiber expressed the belief that Tumarkin's action was an emotional response rather than a premeditated attempt to violate the law, and that Tumarkin would benefit more from therapeutic assistance than from disciplinary action.

By a 13-1 vote the Board of Governors (all voting, 1 voting to expel) decreed that Peter Tumarkin be suspended from the ABAA for one year, during which period he shall have no rights of membership whatsoever, and shall relinquish and cease utilizing any stationery using the ABAA logo, or in any other manner represent himself as an ABAA member; and that, further, he shall not exhibit in an ABAA-sponsored bookfair for an additional period of one year commencing one day after the conclusion of the suspension period.

FORGERIES REPORTED EMANATING FROM NYC

The *Newsletter* has learned that a large number of forged typed letters have come out of the New York City area in the last 18 months. Los Angeles dealer George Houle reports that they are being offered for sale by a woman who claims to have inherited them, and they are being offered by mail, telephone, and in person.

Houle reports that the forgeries have been widely dispersed in the trade and among collectors, and have appeared both in dealers' catalogues and at auction. Houle writes: "A common characteristic of the letters is what can be called *too good to be true* content, wherein the writers either discuss their own work in some detail, or discuss well-known contemporaries. For example, Noel Coward discussing Vivien Leigh; Louise Brooks discussing her film career, etc.

"The forgeries include letters by Noel Coward, Lillian Hellman, Louise Brooks, Clara Blandick (discussing *The Wizard of Oz*), Dorothy Parker, Ernest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams, and others. The forger appears quite knowledgeable on film, theatre and literary history."

Readers of the *Newsletter* who suspect they may have purchased one of these forgeries are urged to contact Jennifer Larson (Yerba Buena Books), chair of the Questioned Imprints Committee for procedural information.

NEWS FROM ILAB

At the recent President's meeting in Copenhagen, the following new Committee for the ILAB was elected: President: Anton Gerits (Netherlands); Vice-President: Godebert M. Reiss (Germany); Secretary: Helen R. Kahn (Canada); Treasurer: Paul Jan Poulsen (Denmark); Committee Members: Raymond Kilgariff (Great Britain);

Gerard Oberle (France); Bernard M. Rosenthal (United States).

At the same meeting, Korea was welcomed as a new member country, bringing the total of countries affiliated with the ILAB to 18.

Also, the 10th Bibliographical Prize of the ILAB has been awarded to Anthony Hobson for his work: *Humanists and Bookbinders, The Origins and Diffusion of Humanistic Bookbinding 1459-1559*. Cambridge University Press, 1989.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Ken Starosciak:

Regarding the article in Vol. 3, #1 (Fall 1991) *Newsletter*, "Overpricing for Bookfairs," I'd like to say that I can think of three good reasons why a book might be more expensive - even tho' it's the same copy - than it was in a dealer's catalogue. It seems to me it goes far beyond any organization's privilege to tell its members how much they can charge for material. I'd say that any ABAA member would have a very strong legal case if punitive action were taken against that member. What's next? Price Police?

From Wayne Somers:

Anton Gerits' letter on behalf of the ILAB Committee [Fall, 1991 *Newsletter*], regarding the incident wherein a European dealer allegedly increased "by several hundred percent," for the occasion of the Tokyo Book Fair, the price of a book he had previously offered in a catalogue, raises a question in my mind quite different from the important one Mr. Gerits intends to raise. And that is, simply stated: Why must we be so coy about these matters?

If the two prices are known (and they must be, or a valid complaint could not have been made), why can't we be told what they are? (Although a principle is at issue, the magnitude of the alleged offense is necessarily

germane to the discussion.) And since "there was unfortunate publicity in a journal in the dealers' own country," what possible reason can there be for keeping the identity of that country secret from the rest of us? Indeed, if the "unfortunate publicity" included the name of the accused dealer, and of the complainant, those names are also public knowledge. In any event, issuing a catalogue and exhibiting at a book fair are both public actions, and thus legitimate subjects for comment.

The excessive coyness isn't Mr. Gerits' fault; it has become characteristic of the official utterances of book trade organizations. We see it much closer to home in the minutes of ABAA meetings, where the guiding consideration seems to be, not "How much can we reveal within the limits imposed by law and simple fairness?" but rather, "How little can we reveal and still show that we've had a meeting?"

One is reluctant to snipe at people who generally work hard and in good faith at thankless jobs, but this attitude of compulsive secrecy ultimately ads to the organizations' problems. It sends the paternalistic message: "Don't worry about it - we'll take care of things - you don't need to know the details," and thus encourages the indifference on the part of the general membership that is so often the cause of concern.

What I mean by "revealing as much as possible within the limits imposed by law and simple fairness" is admirably illustrated by Jennifer Larson's article on forgery and theft in the same issue of the Newsletter. It can be done.

[The following two letters were received by the Publications Committee, regarding proposed changes in the indexing of the Directory, as reported in the Fall issue. If anyone else has similar complaints, the Publications

Committee would like to hear of them.- Ed.]

From Bruce Ramer:

I was somewhat chagrined to read of your proposed changes for the 1992 *Directory*. First, as a general principle, I feel it is best that each member define his or her business rather than leaving such judgments to a committee. I do not find the subject index cumbersomely large, and in any event doubt that you will succeed in reducing it to any great extent - there might be less categories, but the number of names in many categories will increase. By eliminating the smaller, more specific categories, you are severely reducing the usefulness and meaningful nature of the volume.

Obviously, the impending elimination of *Luso-brasiliana*, which you call a small category, irks me greatly. I am the only U.S. dealer to list this category. How will potential customers or potential suppliers who use the Directory find me if this category is merged into Americana, or Travel? Indeed, neither of these descriptions are truly accurate in describing my field. Nor is the field really such a small one as you might think, encompassing as it does from a geographical standpoint half of South America, a good chunk of Africa, a member state of the European Common Market, three of the world's major island groups, a province of India, as well as various enclaves in Southeast Asia. Linguistically, it pertains to the sixth most widely-spoken language in the world. Moreover, *Luso-brasiliana* includes virtually every conceivable subject, from history to literature, from important voyages of discovery to calligraphy, from horsemanship to a large part of early Christian missionary activity in China and Japan, and a great deal more within these linguistic and geographical perimeters.

I suspect that similar appeals might be made for other so-called

small categories. More important, I fervently believe that these specialist dealers add to the richness of the American trade, and the listing of their specialties makes our *Directory* superior to others.

If you are intent on shortening the index, perhaps it would be better to limit each firm to five listings rather than seven. Perhaps also some very similar categories could be merged. However, the example of merging Pacific and Pacific Islands into Voyages and Travel is not, I feel, a good one. One firm may deal in a wide variety of Voyages and Travel, another may have a large stock in one geographical area, while a third may have a general stock of Travel books but at the same time substantial strength in a particular area - surely it is of great benefit to know this.

I strongly urge you not to take this backward step.

From Kenneth Marshall Andersen, Jr.:

I specialize in fishing, hunting, mountaineering, golf and tennis, with just a smattering of general antiquarian titles. It is only within the past year I have gotten a separate listing for all of these fields in the Specialty Index.

For example, in November I received a call for golf books from a collector who had phoned a New York dealer from California, who was able, in a flash, to give him my name from the Specialty Index for golf books. Can you imagine the New York colleague trying to flip through the directory listings while on the phone to California attempting to find a golf dealer buried in the text? I would never have received the call.

I am a member of the Golf Collectors' Society (several thousand members and growing). It's a very active field, and I'm the only specialist in the organization in this field. Similarly, with tennis, I'm the only one listed. It's a field I'm trying

to develop and I want to be known as a tennis book dealer. In a few years, it's going to be a very active field, and I want to be out front in it.

Mountaineering book collecting is a well established field and I've been active in this area, with many contacts in the American Alpine Club and the Appalachian Mountain Club. Hunting and fishing book collecting needs no introduction and deserves its own listings.

To subsume any of these fields under "Sports and Pastimes" or some other similarly inane listing would be a travesty. First of all, as I mentioned above, telephone customers would not find me quickly, which negates the whole idea of the *Directory*, as far as I'm concerned. Secondly, I sell what exactly is listed; I do not sell baseball, football (i.e. sports books) and do not want numerous inquiries about them which would be forthcoming without fail.

Previously, I used to exhibit at ABAA fairs, but the expense became burdensome for a specialist dealer such as myself. Therefore, my only real *raison d'être* for being an ABAA member, to be frank, is the Specialty Index in the *Directory* and the business it brings me. I would be very upset if it were changed.

ABAA PRESIDENTS REMINISCE

[A letter was sent recently by the Newsletter to all past presidents of the ABAA, asking to relate for the membership anecdotes, reminiscences and their impressions of ABAA then and now. The Newsletter received responses from six (of nine) presidents, whose accounts are chronologically presented here.-Ed.]

Geoffrey Steele

(4th president of ABAA, 1956-58)
The formation of the ABAA in 1949 was the direct result of the formation of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers

(ILAB) in Europe after World War II. Most of the rare-bookselling countries had trade organizations, of which I believe the British ABA International was the oldest, and because of the world-wide importance of the U.S.A. it was incomprehensible that there was no group to represent the trade here. A number of meetings, sometimes long and contentious, were held in New York and there was still a feeling among some people that for America to get mixed up with problems abroad was to be avoided. Indeed, one prominent bookseller who later was a prominent ILAB official was at first against the Association but finally the ABAA was launched with the approval of all.

Because of all the upheavals in Europe both before and during WW II there were a number of serious problems to be settled, it was hoped by arbitration; by joining the League, America had a hand in their solution.

In the '50s New York and the East Coast were considered to be the center of the American rare-book trade so all the annual and committee meetings were held there. When Frances Hamill in Chicago was elected the third president in 1954 a good deal of the work was still done in New York and devolved on the vice-president. But life was easy because the then secretary of the ABAA, Emily Driscoll, was always most efficient, agreeable and obliging. It would be very remiss not to mention the great debt the ABAA and its members owed to Richard Wormser for the great amount of time, thought and labor that he devoted to it, especially at the beginning, and of course he later became president of the League.

The regular committee meetings of the ABAA were held in the back room of the Seven Gables Bookshop at no expense to the Association. Some of the problems now seem somewhat unimportant.



ABAA booksellers at the ILAB Congress in Paris, September, 1950, the first with ABAA representation. Front row: Mrs. Geoffrey Steele and Agnes Dawson; second row, left to right: Larry Verry, Lawrence Gomme, Geoffrey Steele; back row: Otto Hafner, Louis Henry Cohn, Muir Dawson

It must be remembered that the G.I. Bill was just beginning to take effect and many educational institutions were being upgraded to colleges and universities and some knew next to nothing about bibliographic expertise and had only been buying newly published books. I was put in charge of a committee which was to assemble a collection of bibliographies which were circulated to smaller libraries for display to students and lectures were given about their use. The nucleus of the collection was books given by Arthur Swann of Anderson (Parke-Bernet)

Galleries. One wonders what happened to these books.

One of the most important efforts of the early years of the ABAA was to raise the ethical standards of the rare-book trade and insist that catalogue descriptions include mention of all, even minor, defects of a book. It should be mentioned that at that time, of course, book-fairs did not exist so did not take up the time they now do in the affairs of the organization.

There is no doubt that the ABAA and the meetings of the League created a great feeling of

camaraderie in the trade which was very rewarding. Speaking personally my business was greatly helped by me being on the League committee for about ten years, first as the American representative and then as treasurer after my presidency of the ABAA in 1956-1958.

Barney Rosenthal
(10th President, 1968-70)

There are two ways to reply to your request for contributions by past presidents of the ABAA: a long way and a short way, and (no doubt to your great relief) I shall choose the latter:

Among the major issues facing us during my tenure were firstly, Membership: we struggled with the definition of "an antiquarian bookseller", and we tried to redefine standards of admission.

Finances were another issue. It must be remembered that the ABAA at that time had virtually no money - I think our bank balance hovered around \$5,000. When an applicant who had been turned down implied that he might sue, we had to cave in, since our Bylaws prohibit us from making commitments beyond our means. At the time, this came as a real shock to me. But a little later, when I began to see this incident in perspective, I think it had a very salutary effect, because it forced us to recognize that we had grown into a trade organization, and that we were no longer a cozy club that could blackball applicants at the whim of a few.

Another problem was that the Board never had sufficient time to cover the agenda and too much time was spent on examining applications for membership rather than address matters of policy. It was during my tenure that, in order to break the logjam, I called the first all-day meeting of the Board. Previously, meetings averaged three hours at most.

Bookfairs were not yet a great problem then (except that, strange

as this may seem now, we had great difficulty in persuading out-of-town dealers to participate!), but we managed to make possible foreign participation (there was some strenuous opposition), and we introduced entrance fees (\$3.50). At the suggestion of Richard Wormser, receipts were earmarked to benefit the New York Public Library. The Library got a fat check, the ABAA got reproductions of the two NYPL lions, and the public could deduct the price of the ticket from their income tax...

Many of the problems and issues facing the ABAA today seem to be the same as twenty years ago; they were on a smaller scale, of course, but we are much better equipped to handle them now, because we have an executive director (instead of a part-time secretary two afternoons a week), and we have financial clout. Some problems will be with us forever - and that's as it should be, because we must adapt solutions to changing times: one of them is the definition of antiquarian bookseller, another is the admission or non-admission of auction houses, a third is just how far should the ABAA go in planning activities and projects on behalf of the entire membership. Attempts to have a Group Life Insurance or a Health Plan for the membership which we made in the past will probably be revived but I think they're doomed to failure now, as then.

The rewards were many - close contact with colleagues all over the country, intense discussions at the meetings of the Board of Governors, constant exchange (and clash...) of ideas. Also, I greatly enjoyed representing the ABAA at the congresses of the ILAB. And last but not least, the sheer honor of being chosen to represent our trade was a source of great satisfaction (and it sure appealed to my vanity).

Difficulties: well, the job was extremely time-consuming and

probably took one day out of every working week. There were also inevitable personal disappointments, but these were generally caused by colleagues who lacked a sense of humor and/or took personal offense at professional disagreements.

I miss the Antiquarian Booksellers' Center (ABC), but if it was no longer self-sustaining, it was wise to close it. I was one of its three founders, at a time when I was chair of the Middle Atlantic Chapter. An enormous amount of work (and risk) went into the ABC's creation, and I think it will always be a wonderful (and unique) example of cooperation in our trade. No other country has ever had anything to compare with it (the ABC established in Amsterdam by the Dutch Association lasted only three years).

Applying the yardstick of devotion to the ABAA, and limiting myself to the period before 1970, I would mention Richard Wormser, Walter Schatzki, Elisabeth Woodburn and Madeleine Stern as being the quartet whose idealism and vision, combined with sheer hard work, was instrumental in shaping the ABAA. Once we have a proper archive, their roles can be better assessed.

Advice: as an ex-President, the greatest favor I can do to the Board is to remain silent.

Leona Rostenberg

(12th President, 1972-74)

Thanks for giving us old timers an opportunity to discuss the past briefly:

A major issue facing the ABAA during my tenure arose when an applicant for membership threatened to sue the association upon being refused admission in 1973. Through the advice of counsel, Lloyd Almirall of Breed, Abbott and Morgan, we learned for the first time the precise nature of the ABAA. It was not, as we had assumed, a private club of the likeminded, but a trade

association. This definition proved a landmark one since it has shaped all future Board decisions and approaches to problems.

Problems today have increased because our membership is much more diversified, consisting not only of traditional antiquarian dealers but of many who deal in secondhand and junk books. When the membership was truly antiquarian, greater harmony existed and certainly greater cooperation especially in constructive and creative endeavors.

The rewards of my presidency were manifold. The ABAA was a tightly knit, smaller association, and we all pitched in together. Thus the ABAA was a truly productive organization. Fairs were at a height, attracting active participation by foreign dealers; the ABC had a membership of about 70 firms; cooperative catalogues were issued by volunteers and were highly successful. In addition, regional associations such as MAC met at least 4 times a year with an attendance of about 50 enthusiasts. In other words, the ABAA was *building* and was extremely productive. Our international meeting in Tokyo was convivial and gala, and really introduced East to West.

I am sure that not only I but many former participants miss the ABC. It was the first cooperative bookstore of its kind anywhere in the world. It was not only a venue for the purchase and sale of books, but a meeting-place for members and customers. Having worked for its establishment and seen it flourish, I believe we should have pushed for its survival. It gave the antiquarian trade a most desirable image that should have been sustained. It was both autocratic and arbitrary on the part of the Board (many of whom were not members of the ABC and perhaps had never visited it) to have decreed its termination without polling its membership.

Many now legendary figures in the book world were members during my tenure: Richard Wormser, Marguerite Cohn, Walter Goldwater, David Magee, Jake Zeitlin, Walter Schatzki, et al.

Memorable incidents were highlighted by the ILAB meeting in Tokyo.

The present Board is preoccupied with the sins of members and non-members and must devote much of its time to rectifying them. Hence it requires an Ethics Committee which was not needed during my tenure. We were not overwhelmed by fraud and forgery, security problems, etc.

The question remains whether the Board should be more inquisitorial or more productive. In this time of recession perhaps a little more creativity might be in order. Besides safeguarding the membership, perhaps the Board should give more attention to the stimulation of the antiquarian booktrade. Take a leaf from the past!

HABENT SUA FATA LIBELLI -
HABENT SUA FATA LIBRARII

Laurence C. Witten, II
(15th President, 1978-80)

The generation of booksellers who were my seniors by twenty to forty years when I began in 1951 has now almost entirely vanished, and I feel impelled to write some vignettes of those I knew. Maybe I can do that "soon."

Ain't it the truth that we presidents and ex-presidents of ABAA leave the job with a sense of frustration at what we couldn't get done? On the other hand, I'm proud of the role I played in beginning to modernize the ABAA. I went around to every chapter and spoke very directly to anyone who would listen about our obligations to give full refunds when a book we sold turned out to be incomplete. I also said very bluntly that the board would expel any member who failed

to conduct his business with standards explicit and implicit in our by-laws. I nearly had the ammunition to expel one of our most senior members (from California, and my elder by at least two decades) for selling as complete an incunabulum that had passed through Sothebys and my hands as having a leaf in facsimile; but in the end I couldn't get the Hasidic dealer, who bought it, to make a formal written complaint in English, or Hebrew, about this double-dealing. I had to drop it. ABAA admitted G. Arader after I traveled to Philadelphia to give him this message: to get elected he had to be simon-pure and carry a low profile for a year; then if he stepped over the line in future, he would be expelled. Meantime I was negotiating with Larry Fox for the powers to make it all stick. The Board Members and Officers were mostly scared to death that a rich man would sue ABAA and the organization, killing ABAA and sending *them* to the poorhouse. Everyone knows what happened.

John Jenkins, my successor-to-be, was paradoxically very interested in the Book Theft problem, as I was. He made not entirely abortive efforts to develop a real ABAA policy on this, and he and I traveled to spread out message. We both went to a very well attended ALA Rare Books conference in San Antonio (the hottest place I was ever in). Where we held seminars on the unfulfilled responsibilities of libraries to control book theft, and ABAA responsibilities. I traveled to Oberlin to attend a similar conference where I spoke at length about these problems and participated in seminars. My main points were the responsibilities of libraries to describe and protect their collections, and to blow the whistle at once when thefts were discovered-not to hide such thefts under bushels, which they typically did and still do. Central among my

citations were the facts that several Yale under-librarians had re-sale licenses and were selling "duplicates," and that Yale's massive theft of atlases by two defrocked priests was never made public and caused endless problems for many. In the aftermath of that awful incident, the FBI stormed Frances Hamill's and Marjorie Barker's Chicago premises with guns drawn, *although* these were the two who had alerted Yale to their suspicion that they had some Yale Library property.

I'm sorry I can't recall exactly when these events occurred, but it must be in the minutes. I have the minutes of the meetings during my presidency, neatly bound up by Johnnie J. and presented to me.

May I close with this quote? Walking from Seven Gables up to the Grolier Club for an Old Book Table dinner one snowy winter's evening with Mike Papantonio, I talked about the objectives the ABAA board and I had in mind. Mike said, "Larry, don't try to do too much." I didn't take his advice, but hope your good sense will induce you to hear his cautionary remark from the grave.

Edward Glaser
(19th President, 1986-88)

When I assumed the presidency of the ABAA in 1986, I felt the major issues that needed confronting were financial soundness, communication, and continuity. In the 43 years since our founding, the ABAA has undergone a metamorphosis from a rather informal, fly by the seat of one's pants group, to a true trade/professional organization. Given that policies are conceived and executed by very busy people taking time out from their regular businesses, I think the transition has been remarkably smooth.

However, when I took office in 1986, we were facing a financial crisis. Our treasury was dangerously low and our financial planning was rather ad lib to put it kindly. For

the first time, we tried to put in place a realistic budget, that would enable us to take care of our basic needs, create a backlog for emergencies and contingencies, and hopefully be able to fund additional services and programs for the members. This is an ongoing process, but my sense is that the ABAA currently is being operated on a business-like basis and that our financial health has never been better.

Another problem was communication. As someone who had served the organization for many, many years in several capacities on both the chapter and national level, I was appalled by the "we and they" mentality of many of the members. Too many of the members seemed not to have the faintest idea of what went on at board meetings and just how and why policies were formulated. Too many of the chapters seemed to feel that somehow "the national" was their adversary, and small-minded regionalism seemed to threaten the national and international scope of our organization. It was very dismaying to spend many, many hours in meetings and on the telephone dealing with ABAA matters and to encounter the attitude that somehow ABAA leadership was a small, self-perpetuating group concerned mainly in its own self-interests. I tried to remedy this by issuing comprehensive minutes of our meetings and supplemented these with occasional open letters from the president to the membership. I was truly thrilled when Rob Rulon-Miller undertook the ABAA *Newsletter*, which is a great step forward in making every member feel a part of the organization and the process.

The third major issue, and in some ways the most galling, is that of continuity. Every president and every board seems to have to re-invent the wheel. The same issues arise over and over again, and all to

often the incumbent leadership has little or no knowledge of the historical evolution of certain policies, or the precedents and debates that earlier contributed to formulating policy. Part of the problem is the relatively short terms of office of board members and officers. Just when you're getting familiar with the problems and operations, your term of office is over and a newly-elected slate has to start in at square one all over again. For this reason, I think it is very important that board members and officers serve in responsible capacities at the chapter level before going on to national office, so they can bring a background of experience to the job.

The problem of continuity will go a long way toward solution with the strengthening of the position of Executive Director of the Association. Presidents and Boards will come and go, but the Executive Director, whose only job is working for the Association on a permanent basis, can provide a great deal of the administrative structure that any organization needs. I am very encouraged by the progress that Liane Wood-Thomas is making and as she continues to gain experience she will provide invaluable input to future Officers and Boards.

One of the most frustrating tasks I faced as President was in the mediation of disputes between members. In my experience, most of the disputes were the result of misunderstandings and differing interpretations of verbal dealings. Rarely did I encounter an outright intent to cheat or defraud. But the difficulty I faced as mediator was that by the time the dispute was referred to me, the original issues were secondary. Sensible, logical compromises were all to often turned down because positions had hardened and egos and face-saving were paramount. And, in some of these feuds, I do believe some of the disputants would rather have the

problem than the solution.

The first time I was approached about whether or not I would be interested in running for President, I turned down the opportunity. Having served as a Chapter President and on the national Board, I had some idea of the commitment of time and energy that would be required. I was at that point a one-person business, and didn't feel I would be able to give the office what it deserved. Two years later, when I was asked again, I decided to go for it. Why? I have always cared tremendously about the antiquarian book world, and in particular the trade and the ABAA. It has given so much to me in so many ways, that I felt that whatever I could give back would be most gratifying. My serving as President was the culmination of about a dozen years of continuous service in one capacity or another in the ABAA. I have been inspired by the example of many of my predecessors. Larry Witten, who gave unbelievable time and intelligence to the job; Betty Woodburn, who courageously faced up to the threat of a law-suit that could have ruined the Association; Lou Weinstein, who constantly handled difficult situations with great sense and creativity; Mike Ginsberg, who presided fairly and even-handedly during the revelations of the Texas forgeries, even though many were ready to condemn him on the most damnable grounds of guilt by association. I have served with many, many Board members and officers over the years. Almost without exception, they gave a great deal of themselves for the good of the Association.

Critics of the ABAA should understand the constraints under which their leadership works: meeting only three or four times a year, taking on these responsibilities in addition to the tasks of running their own businesses, working with limited financial resources, and

always aware of the legal ramifications and consequences of their actions. There is ample opportunity for anyone who is truly interested in the Association to serve. Every nominating committee's principal problem is not choosing among possible candidates, but finding enough suitable candidates. I would urge all members who are interested to participate and experience the satisfaction of playing an active role in their Association. In summary, if I had to do it all over again, I would do it all over again.

Michael Ginsberg

(20th President, 1988-90)

My two years as President of ABAA were full of crises and dilemma at every turn. When I took office out treasury was just beginning to show signs of recovery. There were book fair contracts fraught with problems and pitfalls. Our headquarters in New York had a lease to be renewed. Shortly, after I took office, I got a one week's notice Dear Michael letter from Janice Farina. Worst of all, it was the Texas forgeries which consumed the strength and patience of my board, my officers and myself.

We dealt with our finances by creating a finance committee and having our new treasurer prepare a budget within which we would have to work. We created an executive committee to deal with matters that could not wait for full board hearings. Larry Fox, working with board members, created a standard Book Fair contract which protected our association. We also made sure that all officers, local and national, and all book fair committees and board members were covered for liability under our insurance policy. We decided to sublease half of our premises to New York Bound Bookshop, thus enabling us to have first class space for less money. Ellen Schreiber and I became the search committee for an ABAA

executive director. We hired Liane Wood-Thomas who is doing a fine job.

The whole matter of the Texas forgeries is and was a black mark on the whole book trade. Even now, after a published book, a library conference and an endless array of gossip; it is still unclear who is responsible. Our questioned imprints committee keeps an archive of all reported or ascertained forgeries as a service to the trade. During this ordeal, past president John Jenkins was murdered. The speculation still continues to this day as to what happened and why.

To sum up my two years as president as "tough" would be a gross understatement.

My most pleasant memories were of the ILAB Congress and Book Fair in Paris and the President's meeting in Yverdon, Switzerland. There was a wonderful camaraderie among my colleagues and I felt like it was all worth while. It was an experience that I will always fondly remember.

With regard to your question about the Antiquarian Bookseller's Center, I always regarded it as a worthwhile entity, but one that could not stand without subsidization. Those of us who subscribed to the center miss it, but no one wanted to underwrite it. Maybe with the right formula and leadership it can be resurrected.

The last question posed "what advice might you give to the present ABAA board?" is rather intriguing. My best advice would be that being a board member or officer of ABAA is an honor and a privilege and should be treated as such. Listen to the advice of counsel Larry Fox, he has been with us for twelve years and knows his way around the track. Always vote with your head and not your heart. Always vote with the best interests of the association. Don't make any other plans on a meeting day, and plan on eating after the meeting!!!

A final thought - thanks to all of those hard working, dedicated and caring booksellers who were my board and officers. Never did so few work so hard for so many. It was a difficult time for all of us, but we rallied and I firmly believe we emerged a better organization because of these trials.

The question about memorable booksellers is quite interesting. At the risk of leaving someone out by accident, here are some of my favorite characters (with comments and in some cases nicknames).

Bill Kelleher, a fabulous teacher and historian; Bill Morrison, one of the greatest Texan book men ever; Izzy Ehrlich, "Gene" - a great dealer and old friend; John Jenkins, John did more for the book business than anyone realizes; Warren Howell, "The Emperor" what style! He was great; Lynn Eberstadt, shrewd, calculating, and unpredictable; Jake Zeitlin, another member of the "One in a Lifetime Club"; Gene Schwaab, you could learn more in one day from him, than a year with anyone else; Mike Walsh, one of the great booksellers of the 20th century; Dick Wormser, a wonderful, flamboyant character; Betty Woodburn, a wonderful bookseller, lovely person, and staunch ABAA advocate; Jim Rizek, one of the most unforgettable men I ever met; John Van Cohn, a great guy and brilliant book man; George MacManus, a strange character, very nice, but very close to the vest; Wright Howes, a joy to listen to, a bear to buy from; Fred Rosenstock, one of the greatest western Americana dealers; David & Dorothy Magee, their kindness to young booksellers will never be forgotten; Jules Chodak, Southern Book Co and Genealogical Book Co were his. He knew a lot about books on the South.

AMENDMENTS TO BOOKFAIR RULES

Several small amendments to the Book Fair Rules have been proposed by the Fair Committee and approved by the Board of Governors. Priscella Juvelis, chair of the Committee, wishes to draw the following amendments to the attention of the membership.

To Rule #1 (on participation and eligibility requirements), add: "Local Book Fair Committees will set aside a prominent space for the ABAA booth.

To Rule #4 (on the assignment of booths), add: "In the case where a fair is oversubscribed by the application deadline, the local fair committee shall determine how best to accommodate the over-subscription in the fairest manner to all."

To Rule #6 (on the financial liability of ABAA), add: "All contracts must be approved and signed by ABAA Counsel and the Book Fair Committee with copies to the Executive Director."

Add Rule #21, as follows: "No one member shall operate appraisal booths (or similar business) in the same building at the same time as any ABAA Fair. Should Appraisal Days be scheduled by the local Fair Committee, participation shall be open to all exhibiting members. Specific guidelines for such appraisals shall be set in advance, in writing, by the local committee.

TRAVEL GRANTS OFFERED FOR 31st CONGRESS- DEADLINE SOON

The German association of the ILAB (Verband Deutscher Antiquare) has initiated a Friendship Program that is being offered to each national association affiliated with the ILAB. The ABAA has been asked to propose the names of three members of our Association who would be awarded travel grants

to assist young booksellers in attending the 31st Congress in Cologne, September 6-9, 1992.

The grants for the three ABAA members that are selected would be DM 2000 each (about \$1,300 US). Our German colleagues realize that travel to and from Germany, and attendance at the League Congress can be a financial problem for younger members, and are hence offering this Friendship Program.

Each member has by now received full details about the meeting and the International Book Fair that follows the Congress.

The general guidelines for applicants for a grant as follows: 1) Must be a member of the ABAA, preferably for less than five years, Full or Associate Member; 2) Under 40 years of age, preferably younger; 3) Has never attended an ILAB Congress in the past; 4) Must write a letter stating reasons for wanting to attend the 31st Congress. 5) Letters should not be more than one page, and should be addressed to ABAA, 50 Rockefeller Plaza, NY, NY 10020; 6) Deadline for applications is Monday, February 10th, at ABAA Headquarters in New York. Due to the late date of the announcement, all haste is urged.

Attendance at an ILAB Congress is an important part of being in the antiquarian book trade. The ABAA urges any younger members to apply for this grant and experience the international aspects of our trade.

MEDICAL INSURANCE AVAILABLE FOR ABAA MEMBERS

Ron Lieberman (The Family Album, Glen Rock, PA) reports that a one million dollar major medical insurance plan for most types of medical treatment, is available to all ABAA members and their employees.

Members interested in more

information should be in touch with Ron or with the Association & Society Insurance Corporation, 11400 Rockville Pike, Suite 700, Rockville, MD 20852 (Tel. 301-816-0045). Please mention that you are an ABAA member.

DIRECTORY CHANGES

For **The Associates**: now 6231 Leesburg Pike, Suite LL-3, Falls Church, VA 22044 (mailing address: Box 4747, Falls Church, VA 22044-0747); for **Beasley Books**: new FAX: 312-472-7857; for **Stuart Bennett, Rare Books**: now 1097 Green St. #7, San Francisco, CA 94133 (Tel. 415-929-8041); for **Bowie & Weatherford**, whose address and phone numbers remain the same, now doing business under the name **Bowie & Company Booksellers, Inc.**; for **Collectors' Editions**: now POB 5776, Beverley Hills, CA 90209-5776; for **Frontier America**: correct post office box number is 9193, *not* 1913; for **Garcia-Garst, Booksellers**: now 2857 Geer Rd. #C, Turlock, CA 95380 (Tel. 209-632-5054; FAX 209-632-0805); for **Thomas J. Joyce & Co.**: now 400 No. Racine #103, Chicago, IL 60622-5838 (Tel. 312-738-1933; FAX 312-738-1933); for **Munroe Books**: now Mission Village, 359 E. Shaw Ave., Suite 102, Fresno, CA 93710 (Tel. 209-224-7000); for **Stubbs Books & Prints**: now 153 East 70th St., New York, NY 10021 (FAX 212-794-9051); for **David Waxman**, whose address and phone numbers remain the same, now doing business under the name **Estates of Mind**; for **John Windle, Antiquarian Bookseller**: now 1226 Johnson St., Menlo Park, CA 94025 (Tel. 415-327-4821; FAX: 415-327-4921); for **Laurence Witten**: now 1995 Windward Way, Vero Beach, FL 32963.