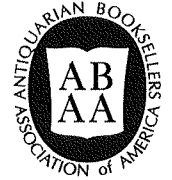


The A B A A NEWSLETTER



VOLUME TEN, NUMBER 2

ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

WINTER 1999



Tucker Respass at the 1998 Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair.

MAC Sponsors Appraisal Seminar

by Daniel De Simone

On October 27, 1998 the Middle Atlantic Chapter of the ABAA presented a program on rare books appraisals in the Exhibition Hall of The Grolier Club, New York City. The speakers included William Barlow, Mary O'Neal, Marsha Malanowski, and David Redden. The program was opened by MAC chair Daniel De Simone, who introduced the panel and outlined the goals of the program: to provide guidance for ABAA members when doing rare book appraisals, especially as they relate to the IRS; and to inform members of frequent problems that arise when doing appraisal work, along with suggestions for avoiding them.

The evening began with twenty-minute statements by each panel member; these were followed by an intermission and then about one hour of questions from the audience. Forty-five people attended the program, which was videotaped with the hope of making it available to other chapters. MAC paid for the entire program out of its treasury.

William Barlow of Oakland, California, is a CPA who has extensive experience with gift appraisals and the workings of the IRS. He is well known as a private collector who has formed significant collections: the printing of John Baskerville, antiquarian bibliography, American auction catalogues, stamps, and wine. Most recently he has begun collecting Duncan Hines food menus.

Book Cataloging: Present Future

by Dan Gregory

Predictions of the future, particularly when involving technology, often confuse what *may* happen with what is *likely* to happen. In the first few decades of the twentieth century the potential of human-powered flight engendered an enthusiasm that predicted, in some quarters, that we would all be zooming amid the skyscrapers of Manhattan in our own personal biplanes at the century's end. Needless to say, this is not the case; and although existing or emerging technologies have the potential to replace traditional books and rare book dealers' catalogs, what may happen is not what is likely to happen.

Computers are no more likely to extinguish printed book catalogs as they are to replace printed books themselves. The convenience and pleasure of holding and

reading printed and bound text, be it a great work of literature or a dry list of inventory, has yet to be supplanted—and will not be for the foreseeable future. But just as certain types of books *do* translate well to a digital format (particularly reference tomes such as dictionaries and encyclopedias, biblical and Shakespearean concordances, etc.), advances in technology offer increasingly attractive alternatives to traditional book catalogs. This article will confine itself to the realm of printed catalogs and the changes new technologies have allowed; a forthcoming article will discuss digital alternatives to printed catalogs.

Until recently, for most rare book dealers, particularly those without an open

continued on page 8

continued on page 7

Letters to the Editor

From: Steven C. Bernard

I would like to set the record straight concerning the thrust of my earlier letter to the editor regarding ABAA-sponsored book fairs. Most of that letter addressed shortcomings of the Chicago Book Fair, which drew only thirty-five exhibitors. Peter Stern's reply in the Fall 1998 ABAA *Newsletter* suggests that I want ABAA to stop sponsoring book fairs and instead "redirect its efforts" and substitute "other promotional activities and improved marketing strategies." The quoted phrases are accurate, although a bit out of context and incomplete. In full, I said, "I would rather see ABAA redirect its efforts to promote all our business in a way that benefits us more broadly." I did not, nor do not, advocate doing away with ABAA-sponsored book fairs, but I was suggesting that perhaps ABAA should consider a shift in the heavy emphasis on book fairs to other promotional activities that may benefit us more broadly." An improved presence on the Internet, increased advertising of ABAA and its members, and efforts to promote book collecting in general are a few examples of emphasis I had in mind.

As for Peter's statement that ABAA-sponsored book fairs are conducted "at no cost to Steve and others who are not participating," I respectfully disagree. Not all ABAA book fairs are entirely self-supporting. To the contrary, some past fairs ended up in the red, and funds were allocated from ABAA's general funds to cover the deficits. Does that not constitute diverting funds that might have been used for other purposes than to bail out a financially-failed book fair.

As of this date (November 10, 1998), there are 458 full members of ABAA. With the exception of the San Francisco Book Fair, seldom do more than 150 members exhibit at a given ABAA-sponsored fair. That means that, on average, less than one-third of our membership are regularly involved in ABAA's book fair programs. I have no quarrel with the fact that only a minority of our members choose to participate in such events, but alternatively, it was my suggestion that

ABAA consider shifting its priorities somewhat and spend more time, energy, and funds on promotional activities other than *predominantly* book fairs. In so doing, it seems to me that the end result just might "benefit our members more broadly."

*From: Ed Henderson
Scottsdale, AZ*

With the threatened demise of the letters column in the ABAA *Newsletter*, yet another opportunity for learning teeters on the brink of elimination, due to people willing to stare at computer screens all day. Over the years, I've found much of interest here, from relaxing anecdotes to things that made me think of new ways to do business.

Would I have found these things were I to have access to them only on line? Doubtful. For so many of us, computer time has to be minimized, both by preference and by other pressing matters. A newsletter, a book, a catalog, I can read over dinner, in bed. Print fits itself into daily life, computers don't.

Dealer catalogs go on line. *AB* gets thinner by the week, replaced by its own website and the other book search engines. Thoughtful print media are replaced by instant gratification rambling via email. There is no doubt that much can be accomplished this way, but we are witnessing the sad death of the art of browsing for information.

I grew up with computers, part of the first generation to have them in school. But I got my education in books from print—from searching dealers' catalogs to see what was being offered and for how much; by spending hours with *AB*, looking at both the wants and the for sale ads; by spending hours poring over price guides, just seeing what was there. I imagine most of you did the same. And how often has that paid off, how often have you come across a book you'd not seen before, a true find that was perhaps far from your field, but about which you were able to think, "Wait, didn't I just see that...?"

Despite the terminology, you can't browse on line. You have to go looking for *something*. That immediately narrows what you're going to find. The possibility of surprise is eliminated. You may find plenty of books—I'll leave the discussion of how the net has ruined sane pricing standards for someone else—but you won't find anything you're not looking for. And aren't those usually the best finds?

Furthermore, a generation of booksellers is now appearing that knows no other way of doing business. How are they going to be educated in the oddities, how are they going to broaden their knowledge of what's out there, who wants it, and what it is worth? Without the browsing sources, how are they going to learn anything besides what they already know? Cruising the shelves of local bookstores will only take you so far. Booksellers are made by years of accumulated experience. The net has already nearly overwhelmed us with amateurs who have no experience; now, I fear current trends will make it nearly impossible for anyone to raise themselves into a level of full professional bookselling, having the wide base of knowledge that has allowed you and me to make whatever living it is we do in this field we love so much.

There is no going back, obviously. Nor do I have a solution to fend off the inevitable. All I have is the suggestion that, before putting our entire lives on line, we remember how we got this far. Print. Isn't that what we're here for to begin with?

From: Bennett Gilbert

John Wronoski's article, "Why Johnny Can't Sell Books," is one of the most thoughtful and consequential pieces on the rare books trade to have been written in recent years. The author rightly joins the state of the trade to the spiritual qualities of the book itself. He correctly argues that both have a common future.

continued on page 10

University of Rochester Book Fair Celebrates 26 Years with a Boost from MAC

by John Westerberg

Last winter a number of upstate New York Mid-Atlantic Chapter members met for lunch in cozy surroundings across the street from John Spencer's recently restored nineteenth-century building, known as Riverow Bookshop, in Owego, New York. The purpose was to find new ways to stimulate, influence, and spread publicity about antiquarian book collecting in upstate New York regional locations.

Daniel De Simone, current chair of MAC, presided at the meeting. New York City area dealers generally have carried the burden of administration and promotion for this chapter. But, with a bulging treasury, the chapter is now considering how best its money can be injected to promote long term benefits in areas outside the metropolitan area.

Rochester seemed a perfect target. Located between Buffalo and Syracuse, it offered an established book fair together with a large population. Long sponsored by the University of Rochester Friends of the Library, the Rochester Book Fair needed a

shot in the arm to achieve greater attendance and to stimulate dealer participation.

The University of Rochester was about to receive its three-millionth book. This event presented opportunities to honor the occasion and to stimulate ideas that would put our purposes in motion. Working by phone, Dan and University of Rochester fund raiser Tom Cassada began to put a plan together. MAC would present a \$1000 gift to the University Libraries as a commemoration, and the University would hold a gala benefit the Friday night preceding the show, inviting dealers, friends, Bibliophile Society members, collectors, faculty, and library staff. This was a chance for all concerned to meet in a common purpose. Representing MAC, I was given the opportunity to speak and to officially present the MAC gift.

Thus, many advantages accrued to both MAC and the ABAA. Upstate MAC members were able to have an event of their own, separate from those that are centered in the New York City area. Both MAC and the ABAA were touted as book

fair sponsors, including on the book fair contract. Expanded publicity included the city's mayor declaring a special "Rochester's Day of the Book." Furthermore, the fair itself joined forces with "Writers of Books Fair," which promotes new books and offers classes and lectures. These two separate fairs were connected by a shuttle bus running between the two fair locations. The antiquarian fair, at least, maintained a steady attendance, with new faces and serious buyers. Dealers not currently members of ABAA benefited by the increased attendance and sales, and perhaps their exposure to the ABAA might make them more inclined toward ABAA membership in the future.

It is my opinion that fairs organized around an academic sponsor might very well use an ABAA stipend and participation. In the future, Syracuse, Buffalo, and other locations might be candidates. I'm convinced that the expanded horizon that developed for this fair was a direct result of ABAA participation, support, ideas, and enthusiasm. ■

Appraisal Videotape Available

by Priscilla Juvelis

On October 27, 1998 the Middle Atlantic Chapter held a program addressing issues of book appraisals at the Grolier Club in New York City. This is exactly the sort of event that the Board of Governors envisioned when it voted to apportion the greater share book fair revenues to chapters rather than the national: an innovative event held in one chapter that would eventually be shared with all. The entire appraisal seminar was videotaped, and it will soon be available to other chapters for viewing. The New England Chapter has already requested a copy of the video for their next meeting. Special thanks must go to Dan De Simone and the other officers of MAC for making this happen.

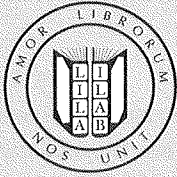
In addition, William Barlow, one of the program's four presenters, distributed an

informational handout that included general comments about current laws concerning donations, as well as copies of the forms necessary for submitting appraisals and current IRS regulations. This is available to ABAA members from Liane Wade upon request.

Mr. Barlow also brought up the matter of insurance for appraisers, specifically "errors and omissions" insurance, and the insurance committee is investigating the possibility of DeWitt Stern or other agencies providing this type of coverage. Chair Phil Pirages will report to the Board of Governors on the committee's findings. At present, each ABAA member receives a template "Letter of Engagement" in the gray loose-leaf ABAA guidebook. This will be updated and examined by ABAA counsel, Laurence Fox. A letter of

engagement between the appraiser and the property owner was stressed by all of the program speakers to be crucial before starting an appraisal.

At the suggestion of one of our mutual customers, David Redden, of Sotheby's, New York, and I have been exploring the possibility of establishing a book and manuscript advisory panel that would function similarly to the IRS art advisory panel. This board, which meets several times a year, reviews taxpayer cases, and their decisions are accepted by the IRS. A book and manuscript board would probably consist of representatives from the ABAA, institutions represented by the RBMS, private collectors, and auction houses. We will be working on this, and I'll report back as soon as we have something concrete in place. ■



ILAB Book Fairs

1999

February 12-14

San Francisco, CA (ABAA)
Concourse Exhibition Center

February 18-20

Amsterdam, The Netherlands (NVvA)
RAI Congress Centre

April 15-18

New York, NY (ABAA)
Park Avenue Armory

May 26-30

Paris, France (SLAM)
La Maison de la Mutualité

June 3-6

London, England (ABA)
Olympia Exhibition Centre

October 14-17

Florence, Italy (ALAI)
Palazzo Corsini

November 19-21

Boston, MA (ABAA)
Hynes Convention Center

2000

February 25-27

Los Angeles, CA (ABAA)
Marriott LAX

May 25-28

Paris, France (SLAM)
La Maison de la Mutualité

September 21-23

Edinburgh, Scotland (ILAB)
18th International Book Fair

1998 Boston Fair Highlights Popular "Book Fair Weekend"

by Betty Fulton

1998 marked another successful year for the Boston International Book Fair, which took place November 20-22 at the Hynes Convention Center. This year's book fair featured 141 dealers from around the world (one of the highest participation levels in the history of the fair) and attracted 5,000 book collectors over three days. Many significant and interesting sales were made, including Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis' personal copy of *Profiles in Courage* (\$3,500); *A Happy Pair*, the first book illustrated by Beatrix Potter (\$47,500); an inscribed copy of a George Gershwin songbook (\$3,200); a first edition of *The Hobbit* (\$2,500); and a copy of *Nicholas Nickleby* signed by Charles Dickens (\$60,000). Overall, feedback from participating book dealers indicated that this was one of the best Boston fairs to date.

Boston has seen a rise in related events surrounding the book fair over the last few years, helping to create an increasingly desirable destination for serious collectors. The Boston Book Fair Committee is hoping to further develop this trend to ultimately create a "Book Fair Week" in order to benefit from cross-promotional opportunities and to maximize the number of collectors converging upon the city and the book fair itself. The many related activities that took place

during this year's book fair weekend included an antiquarian book and paper show; a book and manuscript sale sponsored by Skinner Auction Galleries; a rare books, documents, and ephemera auction sponsored by Kenneth W. Vanblarcom; a motion picture poster sale by Skinner, Inc., and a rare book auction sponsored by John McInnis Auctioneers.

1998 also marked the addition of a new element to the Boston Book Fair: *Cultural Row*, an interesting exhibit featuring the Museum of Fine Arts, the Peabody Essex Museum, the New England Historic Genealogical Society, the Boston Public Library, the American Antiquarian Society, and the Boston Athenaeum. Each had a booth at the book fair and offered details on their organization, along with interesting items to purchase. The addition of these well-known and highly-respected New England cultural institutions helped to increase the visibility of the book fair and added further to its overall success.

The 1999 Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair is scheduled for November 19-21 at the Hynes Convention Center. For more information on the book fair, please call Commonwealth Promotion, Inc., at 617-266-6540 or visit our web site at www.bostonbookfair.com. We hope to see you in November! ■

Newsletter Forms Editorial Board

In an effort to reduce the editorial and other work of the ABAA *Newsletter* editors, the Publications Committee has formed an Editorial Board. Members of the new board are Daniel De Simone, Rob Rulon-Miller, and Rose Weinstein.

They will be responsible for assisting in many editorial duties, but especially they will solicit suitable articles for publication. Many of the articles they seek will appear in the *Newsletter's* established columns: "Bibliography Bar," "House Calls," "Obituaries," "Recent Books by

Members," and "Books, Briefly Noted." Others will be run as feature articles appearing on the front page.

In addition to ABAA members, the Editorial Board will look outside the organization for contributors. As in past issues, articles by librarians, scholars, and collectors, will enrich your reading experience.

Please be forewarned! Dan, Rob, or Rose may be calling on you to help with writing articles, book reviews, and tales of the trade. And, as always, do not hesitate to contact them directly. ■

Bibliography Bar

The Great Gatsby

The Great Gatsby

Here is a novel, glamorous, ironical, compassionate—a marvellous fusion into unity of the curious incongruities of the life of the period—which reveals a hero like no other—one who could live at no other time and in no other place. But he will live as a character, we surmise, as long as the memory of any reader lasts.

“There was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life. . . . It was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again.”

It is the story of this Jay Gatsby who came so mysteriously to West Egg, of his sumptuous entertainments, and of his love for Daisy Buchanan—a story that ranges from pure lyrical beauty to sheer brutal realism, and is infused with a sense of the strangeness of human circumstance in a heedless universe.

It is a magical, living book, blended of irony, romance, and mysticism.

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

It is the story of this Jay Gatsby who came so mysteriously to West Egg, of his sumptuous entertainments, and of his love for Daisy Buchanan—a story that ranges from pure lyrical beauty to sheer brutal realism, and is infused with a sense of the strangeness of human circumstance in a heedless universe.

It is the story of this Jay Gatsby who came so mysteriously to West Egg, of his sumptuous entertainments, and of his love for Daisy Buchanan—a story that ranges from pure lyrical beauty to sheer brutal realism, and is infused with a sense of the strangeness of human circumstance in a heedless universe.

The first printing of the *Gatsby* dust jacket, with the “J” corrected by hand (left & top detail: From the Matthew J. and Arlyn Bruccoli Collection of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC). The second printing, with the “J” reset (bottom detail: Courtesy of Camilla Reiersgard).

by Jeffrey H. Marks

The dust jacket for *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald is, and has been for many years, the black tulip in the collection of twentieth-century literature. The front panel of the jacket shows the eyes and lips of a young woman in a deep blue sky, beneath which appears a brightly lit amusement park. There are lines in the sky that suggest water, and an area which might be a reflection of a single green light on its surface. The back panel contains a blurb for the novel. The front flap bears a \$2.00 price and a list of books by the author; the back flap has two blurbs for books by Ring Lardner.

As early as 1924, the year preceding the book's publication, F. Cugat's jacket design was of concern to the author: “For Christ's sake don't give anyone that jacket you're saving for me. I've written it into the book,” Fitzgerald wrote to Max Perkins in August of that year. This statement has been described as a reference to Fitzgerald's description in the novel of an abandoned billboard upon

which the enormous eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg “brood on over the solemn dumping ground” between West Egg and New York (see Turnbell, Andrew, *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, p. 186, note). Such an interpretation leaves out the reflection in the water, which suggests nothing so much as the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. What can Fitzgerald's comment to Perkins have meant? Our understanding of the creative process must of necessity be incomplete; but surely what is shown in the sky is Gatsby's vision of Daisy, not “dimmed a little by many painless days,” but perfectly preserved while it remains beyond reach. The notion that the dust jacket art inspired or influenced a theme so central to the novel is almost inconceivable. The reverse seems more likely, and since we know that the artist made studies for the jacket that are greatly different from the finished painting, it wouldn't surprise me if it was the artist who changed the dust jacket artwork to reflect some aspects of the text.

Not everyone found the dust jacket so appropriate to the text. In *A Moveable Feast*, Ernest Hemingway describes his embarrassment at the “violence, bad taste, and slippery look” of the “garish” dust jacket on the copy of *The Great Gatsby* given him by Fitzgerald. “I took it off to read the book,” he says. Other accounts state that Hemingway crumpled the jacket and threw it away.

We know that 20,870 copies of the first printing were produced and that in the first line of the second paragraph of jacket text on the back panel the “J” in “Jay Gatsby” was found, at a very early state, to have been printed in lower case. I say very early because I know of no surviving examples of the first jacket that have not been corrected by some means.

It is generally believed that the office staff of Scribner's immediately grabbed their fountain pens and started to correct the error by drawing an upper case “J” on the jacket. This is, in my experience, the

continued on next page

Bibliography Bar

continued from previous page

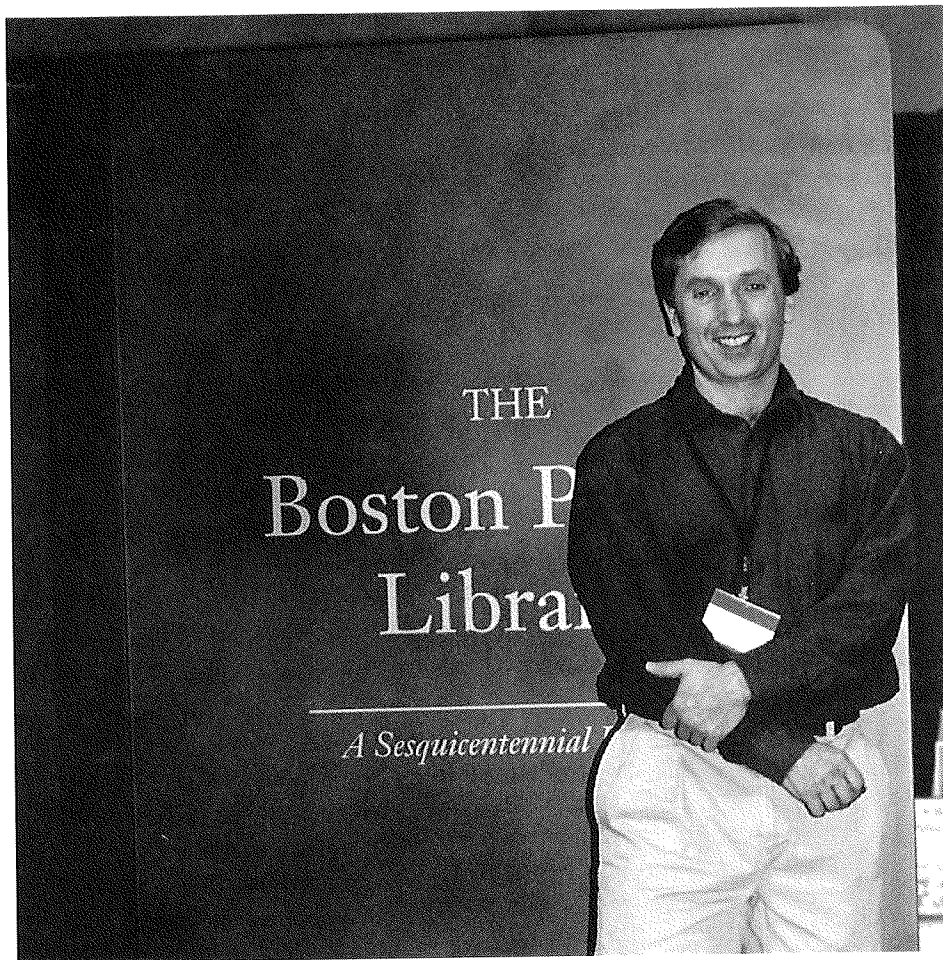
scarcer of the two types of modification to the first jacket, and it makes sense to say that it is earlier. This method was presumably found to be impracticable within a short time because of the number of copies, so the Scribner's clerks were supplied with hand stamps. The stamped upper case "J" was usually not dark enough to cover the original printing, and even a perfectly placed stamp will reveal the small "j" beneath it.

The back panel of the jacket was next reset with an upper case "J." The bottom of this "J" is abbreviated, and it appears to be of a different font, although battering of the previously used type may contribute to the difference in appearance. The lower case letter is not present, of course.

The third printing of the jacket employed a new back panel, headed "Perilously near a Masterpiece," and printed some of the many excellent reviews the novel received, in direct opposition to the author's often stated prohibition. This and other efforts to push the book failed, and Fitzgerald's share of the proceeds was just a little bit less than his advance.

No one would suggest that any of the three jacket printings described herein are rare, but they are scarcer than would be expected. I have owned a second printing of the book with its original jacket corrected with the hand stamp, and this suggests that 20,000 of the first printing jackets were distributed. Where are they today? The best explanation seems to be that because the jacket is about three or four millimeters taller than the book, it became tattered and unsightly soon after purchase, causing even the unusual owner who kept jackets to discard it.

The damage caused by the mismatch in size has had another consequence. Almost every copy of *The Great Gatsby* dust jacket that has surfaced since the late 1970s has been irreversibly restored. The time is coming, if not already here, when the presence or absence of such contemporary modification will be as significant to the determination of value and desirability of the book made in 1925. ■



Ken Gloss with "The World's Biggest Book" at the Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair.

1999 Directory, Annual Meeting Celebrate ABAA Jubilee

Founded in 1949 "to encourage interest in rare books and manuscripts and to maintain the highest standards in the antiquarian book trade," the ABAA celebrates fifty years of achieving these goals in 1999. The association will mark its auspicious anniversary with special editions of its *Membership Directory* and Annual Meeting.

The 1999 *Directory*, while providing up-to-date contact and specialty information on the ABAA's 464 members, will also contain two essays offering retrospective glances at the ABAA.

Ed Glaser, ABAA President from 1986 to 1988, will write on "The ABAA at Fifty: Notes Toward a History of the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America." The ABAA's legal counsel Lawrence I. Fox, of McDermott, Will &

Emery, New York, will offer a personal account of his quarter-century affiliation with the organization and the events that have influenced its development during his tenure.

The 1999 Annual Meeting, to be held in New York City in April, will honor the ABAA's fifty years with a keynote address by autograph and manuscript dealer Kenneth W. Rendell, who will speak on the future of antiquarian bookselling. ABAA Counsel Fox will also speak.

The 1999 Jubilee edition of the ABAA *Membership Directory* will be available in mid-April. ABAA members should look for their copies in the mail. Non-members can request a free copy by contacting Liane Wade, ABAA Headquarters, 20 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036-6604; phone: 212-944-8291. ■

Appraisal Program

continued from front page

Even after Barlow explained his reasons for building this collection, I didn't understand it; but he says that he is having a great time finding menus on the Internet and as offered on on-line auctions. Barlow is the former president of the Bibliographical Society of America, and a member of The Grolier Club and the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco, as well as other bibliophilic organizations. He also is the accountant for a number of booksellers who are members of ABAA.

Barlow had prepared an eighteen-page paper entitled "The Tax Aspects of Contributions of Collections and the Appraiser" for the appraisal seminar. This paper was accompanied by copies of IRS form 8283 and its instruction booklet, and IRS publication 561, *Determining the Value of Donated Property*. This handout was made available to those attending the program, and ABAA members can obtain copies by contacting the ABAA office in New York. Barlow's paper includes information on the several subjects relating to book appraisals and the IRS: the basic rules of charitable contributions, fair market value, engagement letters, a qualified appraisal report, the qualified appraiser, form 8283, and conclusions.

Because Barlow was allowed only twenty minutes for his opening remarks, he concentrated on just two of the areas mentioned above. He began by explaining in some detail that appraisals for tax purposes require adherence to strict IRS standards. He noted that most booksellers, for whom appraisals are only a part of their businesses, must be made aware of potential penalties that could be levied by the IRS if a signed appraisal does not meet certain requirements. He mentioned that booksellers who do appraisals for submission to the IRS should look into certain types of insurance that may cover "errors or omissions," and that the ABAA should adopt "standards of practice," which members can follow when doing appraisals.

The second point that Barlow emphasized was the need for an "engagement

letter" between the appraiser and the client. This document is explained in some detail in his handout, but essentially an engagement letter states "what the appraisal is to do and the nature of the report that the client can expect." This letter can also include an estimate of the time the appraisal should take and its cost.

Mary O'Neal, owner of David O'Neal Books of Boston and a member of ABAA, has extensive experience with appraisal work and does appraisals for many of the libraries and institutions in the Boston area. O'Neal described her approach to appraisal work, emphasizing how she deals with clients, and how she qualifies the purpose of each appraisal. She was very adamant about pinpointing the limits of appraisals, as her experience had taught her that in some cases, if its aim was not made explicit, an appraisal could be used for a different purpose than was intended. Appraisals are usually conducted for tax purposes, estate purposes, insurance claims, or divorce settlements. Each has its own requirements, and if it is used for a different purpose, the appraiser may be held accountable. Her advice was to be as specific as possible. O'Neal also emphasized the need for very good documentation, especially as it pertains to "comparative value" as defined by the IRS. Good research, documentation for books over a certain value, reasonable assumptions about items which have no comparable counterparts, and written explanations for how conclusions were drawn for these types of books are all part of the appraisal report. O'Neal was of the opinion that any appraisal used for income tax purposes would be examined by the IRS, and this realization has motivated her to be extremely careful when documenting her valuations.

Marsha Malanowski, of Sotheby's, New York, spoke next. Malanowski is a Vice-President at Sotheby's and the manuscript expert responsible for many of the appraisals Sotheby's conducts. Her statement covered some of the same ground as Mary O'Neal's, and she provided numerous examples of how hard Sotheby's works when doing appraisals

for income tax purposes. She also reinforced O'Neal's assertion that the purpose of an appraisal must be determined in advance. For example, she described her experience when an appraisal for estate purposes was used in a divorce case, and the parties to the divorce argued for and against the merits of the appraisal. During the question and answer period Malanowski contributed specific information on how Sotheby's documents its appraisals and why this is necessary.

Our final panelist was David Redden, Executive Vice-President of Sotheby's and a well-known figure in the New York auction scene. After embellishing a couple of the points made by Malanowski, Redden discussed IRS challenges to appraisals. He framed his remarks in the context of the art market, and described that in the past IRS challenges were made by inexperienced "experts" who had the power to deny deductions for charitable contributions because they did not agree with an appraisal. This problem became so great that the art dealers association petitioned the IRS to form a panel of experts who would examine those appraisals challenged by the IRS. This panel consisted of members of the art trade, auction houses, art museums, and private collectors who had considerable experience in valuation. This panel eliminated worthless challenges, and protected appraisers and donors alike from unfair IRS penalties.

Following an intermission the panel entertained questions for about one hour with each speaker making significant contributions to the discussion. Daniel De Simone acted as moderator.

A videotape of the program and copies of William Barlow's handout are available to ABAA chapters and members. Please see the article on page 3 for details. ■

Book Cataloging

continued from front page

shop, the most effective way to acquaint a large number of prospective customers with a large quantity of books for sale was to issue a catalog. Beyond the utility of selling individual books, catalogs often provide an insight into the character of the bookseller—the choice of stock and method of description offer a preliminary introduction when the two parties have yet to meet face to face (or over the phone). Before the advent of the personal computer, rare book dealers had several options when preparing to issue a catalog. Information about available books was generally typed on a standard typewriter in a listed format. This list could then be xeroxed and sent to one's customers. A somewhat more polished catalog could also be produced by having the typed pages photostated (and likely reduced in size), printed, and bound by a professional printer. And for more elaborate catalogs there has long been the option of having the text typeset. Through the services of professional printers, dealers could also vary the typestyle and layout for a more engaging display, and even add visual elements such as photographs or illustrations to enhance the catalog. The expense of these features, however, was prohibitive to the majority of rare book dealers; thus, they were infrequent. The development of the personal computer has brought significant changes to the rare book trade, both in the ways catalogs can be produced, and in the role catalogs play in the market.

That the pervasive implementation of computers is radically changing the book world is indisputable. In the 1970s some vendors of new books began to track sales via computer and use advanced algorithms to predict future sales of a given author, title, or genre in a variety of markets. It became possible to stock 100,000 titles in hundreds of locations across the country and not lose money; thus, the major superstore chains were born. (Discussing the impact that chain bookstores have had on the world of used and rare books would be the subject of a separate essay itself.) Throughout the

1970s and into the early 1980s personal computers were primarily the machines of enthusiasts. Word processing programs, introduced in this period, were an immediate aid to rare booksellers, allowing them not only to type and edit their catalogs more efficiently, but also to easily modify and reuse old descriptions by inserting them electronically into new lists. Database programs, also developed in this era, had many of the same advantages and also allowed for the convenient sorting and comparing of stock. For example, without leaving his or her desk a dealer could quickly review and sort the inventory of a particular author and, within minutes, print a list of that stock. However, the options available for mass producing that list so that it would get into the hands of mail customers were the same as they had been for decades. The outward appearance of the average book catalog remained relatively unchanged.

For many innovations, widespread acceptance has as much to do with timing and marketing as with their inherent capabilities and utility. This was very much the case in 1985 when Steve Jobs of Apple introduced the Macintosh, the first mass marketed personal computer to incorporate and attractively market two key elements developed years before: GUI and WYSIWYG. GUI (graphic user interface) meant pointing and clicking at various areas of the computer monitor with a mouse to achieve what had previously been accomplished solely by typing computer instructions into the keyboard. WYSIWYG (what-you-see-is-what-you-get) meant just that, that what you hoped to print out—different typestyles and different type sizes; bolding, italics, underlining; the works—was finally visible right on the screen. Printing embellishments that hitherto had been the sole province of the professional printer were suddenly possible with a computer and a laser printer affordable to most small business owners. Commercial printing changed also, as jobs traditionally done with mechanical paste-ups could now be undertaken more efficiently with computers and imagesetters. The desktop revolution was born.

Today personal computers, word processors, database programs, and laser printers are no less useful to rare book dealers than they were fifteen years ago. To this list of the rare bookseller's tools we can now add desktop and web publishing programs, modems, scanners, digital cameras, and ink jet printers. An increasing number of rare book dealers are using these technologies to enhance their catalogs and to find alternatives to printed catalogs. As with any technology, the potential advantages of all these elements must be weighed against the time and expense necessary to either learn how to use them yourself, or to pay someone to do it for you.

There are many database programs available to rare book dealers; I would not claim to be familiar with all of them, or to be in a position to champion any one in particular. However, most or all will provide an efficient management of stock and allow for the quick output of inventory information into either a catalog or one of the many on-line book search services. Many dealers still type their book entries into a word processor—any dealer with more than 1000 books in stock who is not currently using a database should give serious consideration to changing over. Databases provide greater versatility and facility in manipulating information than a word processor. With a database program you may easily put your books on-line *and* create a printed catalog in the same day, an unlikely time frame if you start from a word processor.

That is not to say your word processor is ready for the trash can. For years the two major programs (Microsoft Word and Corel WordPerfect) have vied with each other for market share, adding new features at every turn and trying to become easier to use. Among their enhancements is the ability to place images alongside text and perform intricate layout and desktop publishing. But these programs are still most useful for their original purpose: to compose and edit text documents. Conversely, the two major desktop publishing programs, PageMaker and Quark, are rather limited in their word processing capabilities but they are the software of choice for creating complex, professional

looking documents. PageMaker and Quark are also the two programs used by most professional print houses—documents created in either of these programs can be transferred to a disk, handed to a printer, and, with little or no modification, printed from plates output directly from an imagesetter. Because the Macintosh operating system had a head start over IBM-clone PCs with GUI and WYSIWYG capabilities, it was for many years the system of choice for graphics professionals. Though Microsoft Windows has for the most part caught up, many professional printers are still more comfortable with the Mac platform, and many need to convert files from the Windows format. While such conversions should, in theory, go off without a hitch, they very often result in minor glitches that, in a carefully composed document, may be exasperating or unacceptable. Of the many elements that go into creating a complex catalog, without question the most important is a good rapport with your printer. Making certain he or she knows what you would like to accomplish and the limits of your budget may take considerable experimentation and dialogue. When incorporating new features into your catalog, be sure to discuss beforehand what constitutes printer error, and who pays when something needs to be redone.

Illustrating rare book catalogs with images of the books themselves is nothing new. However, technological advances have made doing so, and doing it well, much more affordable. The prices of scanners and digital cameras are quite low, with acceptable models readily available for under \$300. Scanners are well suited to ephemera and other flat material, as well as to the front boards or dustjacket panels on most books. Most scanners can produce images that, when professionally printed, are of quality comparable to photographs. However, not all scanners are created equal—their capabilities and ease of use vary considerably. Digital cameras are not as adept at producing high quality images, particularly for print media. They are, however, more versatile, and the quality of the better non-professional models (under \$1500) has been steadily improving. Furthermore, pictures taken with most digital

cameras will be more than adequate for on-line viewing. Whether from a scanner or a digital camera, images may require digital manipulation before they are ready to be printed. While much can be done with either of these devices, using them to get to an attractively illustrated printed catalog will require significant time and experimentation. Digital photo-editing and paint programs, which often come bundled with new hardware, can produce stunning results but are not necessarily easy to master. Without a commitment to tackling the learning curve inherent in both hardware and software (or to hiring someone to do it for you) your purchases are likely to be little more than frustrating toys.

Prior to the development of affordable scanners and digital cameras, few dealers had any need to print in color: aside from accents or the occasional photograph, a list of books will look fine in black and white. Laser printers are ideal for this type of printing, as they are quick and produce crisp, professional results. In the last few years good, dependable ink jet printers have dropped considerably in price, making color office printing easier. Ink jets are slower than laser printers, they tend not to live as long (as happens with any electronic device with lots of moving parts), and the cost per page is higher. The quality of color images has improved considerably from early models, particularly on plain paper. Since most copy centers now have color photocopiers, it is now possible to print color catalogs without going to a professional printer. However, color copies are rather expensive, and the quality is not stunning; this option is best for lists or catalogs with small distribution. Other color printing technologies available to small businesses, such as dry-ink or color laser printing, are also limited by their slow speed and high per-copy cost. Once you have taken your color pictures and placed them in your catalog, the best way to showcase them is still through the four-color (or more) press employed by a professional printer. This last step remains a stumbling block to many dealers because the cost, even when all the material is prepared electronically, is prohibitive.

What then, aside from biplanes across Fifth Avenue, is the future of printed book

catalogs? For one thing, scanners and digital cameras will become easier to use. Like computers before them, they will break out of the limited realm of the enthusiast. While the specifications of today's better personal computers are staggering (450mhz, 128MB Ram, 11GB hard drive) and may seem utterly unnecessary for normal use, much of the extra processing horsepower of these souped-up machines will be helpful running programs that appear more straightforward than their predecessors but that are actually much more intricately programmed. As it becomes easier to get images into digital format, and easier to use them once you have them, we can expect to see more black and white catalogs with pictures. When you get right down to it, rare book dealers are selling objects, and in most cases it is easier to sell an object with an illustration than without. However, adding pictures changes the nature and character of catalogs, and many dealers will not feel the need or inclination to do so. Countering the natural tendency to stick with the traditional will be the increasing presence of new, relatively inexperienced booksellers who will be able to produce attractive catalogs appearing to be the products of seasoned professionals. Thus some dealers may incorporate images not because it is easier or because they are inclined to do so, but because the competition for the attention of customers in their segment of the rare book market will be getting more profound. Because printing color in quantity will remain expensive, color book catalogs will continue to be found only in lists of limited distribution or among dealers who can already afford to work with professional printers in this capacity. And finally, in the long run fancy catalogs are nice, but knowing and having the right books for your customers will remain the key to successful catalog sales.

While getting a printed color image to hundreds of people will remain cost prohibitive for most, getting a digital version of that image to millions of people via the internet is relatively simple and extremely economical. In the next issue I will review non-printed alternatives to the traditional book catalog and venture more predictions of change. ■

Letters

continued from page 2

The peculiarities of the American book collector to which John draws attention would indicate that the true American book collector is the library. In the years since World War II Americans have invented the modern research library where, for example, 3,000 rare books on a subject yield more knowledge and understanding than 30,000 volumes in older European libraries have yielded, because of the environment of related collections and acquisitions, secondary sources, cataloguing and access, conservation, and reference librarianship. Many of the most worthy American private collectors have directed their books to our institutional libraries over the last century and a half, and great American collectors continue to do so in a way still not often practiced in Europe. There is a considerable number of American rare book and special collections librarians who, by virtue of their knowledge, market skills, and accomplishments in building collections, must rank among the greatest book collectors of all time. Because of their efforts, the American research library becomes a profound spiritual destiny for many books.

The better private collectors of the future will probably continue to use dealers, notwithstanding the Internet, for two reasons. The microcosmic reason is that they will value dealers for the services they render. The dealers have more time to devote to searching for books both within and without the Internet, the dealers know the wider sources of books, and the dealers provide good advice as to completeness and quality of copies. In this regard, the better private collectors will, I believe, ruthlessly sort out knowledgeable and able dealers from all the rest. This situation can therefore provide support for a high quality trade amidst the open seas of Internet commerce.

The macrocosmic reason is our absorption with virtual reality is self-limited. I believe that humans have a natural mechanism that will eventually limit how much time and energy we devote to digi-

tal existence. The Internet and computers are, after all, just tools. Our natures draw us back to the reasons we work with the tools. Nearly everyone, in the end, will shut off his computer and go out for a beer or coffee, because we are wired for direct physical contact with other humans. Thus, despite the Internet, people are traveling more than ever, both for business and for pleasure. There was a time when we all feared the CD-ROM would obliterate the book, but it now co-exists with all the old media. People crowd into Borders shops to buy all of these things and to drink coffee.

Why, then, do we despair as to the value of what we do? It is my view that the old basic needs and hungers are there still, and people will always seek to fill them. Painting did not die when photography was invented, because people found their emotional and spiritual needs filled by creating and looking at paintings. Most traditional handcrafts are cultivated to one degree or another despite their having been replaced by machine manufacture. Old books speak to deep parts of ourselves, as icons or fetishes or even as sacred objects, to the extent that an object can partake of the sacred; and yet often we are riven with a doubt that we ought to replace with single-minded, wide-eyed, crazed and obsessive confidence in the worth of our mission.

John rightly stressed that we teach others how to see rare books through "the practices and principles of antiquarian bookselling." The old book has a great and special destiny, now that it is largely released from its original job. Our responsibility to it increases in the same measure as our destiny has grown, and the shame of our failing to meet that responsibility has increased not a whit less.

*From: Charles Vilnis
Boston Book Company*

I read John Wronoski's presentation to the recent Vienna Congress with great interest and enjoyment (see *ABAA Newsletter X,1*). I have known John for a number of years now, and I find his mind a noble one and his foul shot unerring. If there is any criticism that can be leveled against him, it is that he is a product of

his times and his age, and that is unfair criticism indeed. Romantic adherence to the postmodern may produce resonance in all our postmodern hearts, but, in the end, remains unsatisfying if it cannot encompass both art and science.

It seems that the last few congresses have produced a compulsion to confess in some quarters of the ABAA. Certainly, most of the membership couldn't give a damn one way or another, but there is a Europhilic faction which finds it hard to be so misunderstood, even scorned, by our colleagues abroad, particularly those who deal in European (for which read antiquarian) materials. It might be interesting to note in this context that our own New World antiquaria are usually relegated to the "ana" status—early colonial materials are by definition Americana or Latin Americana, but never unadulterated antiquarian books. One might argue that age alone dictates such a distinction, were it not for the fact that many items of historical and literary interest in the New World are as esoteric, as rare, and as important as many from Europe. The knowledge required to compass them intelligently is just as extensive. Yet the distinction remains and certainly has been applied to farther fields as well—as, for example, the books and related materials of the whole rest of the world, particularly Asia. Ignorance can be no excuse here. The fact remains that the Eurocentric ideal which lies behind the concept of the "antiquarian" may be central to the very problem John laments in the trade today and certainly bears some examination.

Suffice it to say that I have found a charming level of ignorance to exist fully among as many of my European (and Asian) customers (and colleagues, alas) as my American ones. However, there may be a certain iconoclastic glee among the Americans which recreates (and sometimes embellishes) ignorance as a positive virtue. Mark Twain was not the first American to pretend to know a bit or a lot less than he did for a purpose, and he wasn't the last either. (Lame Duck, indeed!) The joke, however, is that we are sometimes overeager to believe our own notices, especially when they are

republished and codified by our more secure European friends.

Collectors were, are, and always will be our patrons, whether their budgets are personal or institutional. As such, they are human and products of their time. In the end, distinctions of value are weighed, decisions made, and money changes hands. The true bookseller, if there really is such a rarefied creature, exists as a mere craftsman of the ineffable. In this, there is certainly no distinction to be drawn between the antiquarian and the modern, between the European and the American. The printed book as object and the bourgeoisie arose together and share equally suspect pretensions to breeding and good taste. The audible sniffing that goes on about the debased nature of American collecting is at best disingenuous and at worst ignorant of history. There must exist a vast unknown of discarded antiquaria: collected, then rejected, then resurrected, finally to be lost. Someday, some part of what is collected of our modern world will be recycled into antiquaria. Anyone who pretends to know what will or won't survive, as object, is being uncomfortably arrogant.

Again, if, as John seems to indicate, there is something sacral in the book, then at the basest level the magic we supply is of a distinctly lower order, a sleight of hand which transforms useless paper and ink into potatoes and mortgage payments. If we pretend to or even encompass some higher initiation, then perhaps we can become priests in service to the Book. But we are selling indulgences, nonetheless. If we find our customers somehow trivial, flighty, and even a bit dense sometimes, then maybe it is because we love books too much and ourselves too little. Like proud parents of a treasured child, we find every possible match a bit wanting. Frustrated collectors all, the bibliophilic bookseller is doomed to regret every treasure passed to other, possibly unworthy hands. It should be mentioned in this context that all artisans share a similar fate, from woodworkers to pastry chefs. We all become procurers, sending beauty to an uncertain end.

Then there is the other side of the bookseller's world, the side which dic-

tates the sale of "high spots," of canonical rarities which assume value for reasons sometimes mysterious, sometimes all too clear. If we are occasionally guilty of supplying to well-heeled customers what they want beyond all bounds of reason or taste, then so have all artists, all artisans, all priesthoods. There must also be a guilty pleasure in it as well. Having mentioned a great American like Twain, it would be a mistake to ignore another: P.T. Barnum. He doubtless considered himself an artist as well.

At the last, it might be well to return to the whole idea of the book as medium of the sacral. If, as John points out, Europe is the home of the book, then our American profession of the book is inevitably collateral, for all the obvious reasons of history and culture. However, the present world, with its lightning fast proliferation of the ephemeral, a world whose emblem is the Internet, is then, again by reasons of history and culture, inevitably American in its thrust into the future. That much may be obvious, but its implication for our trade is not. What resides at the root of what John has to say, and what has been bruited by many others in our trade, is a profound sense of unease with the virtual world coming into being all around us. The magic of the book is being transformed. At the lowest levels, the book may well become an object of some post-modern cargo cult of collection, a misunderstood and awful relic of the unknown. But it may also break the bounds of the immanently sacred which have shackled it since we forgot how to tell stories and merely read them.

As John so truly noted, great collectors (and great booksellers, I believe) have always been willing to break the bounds of the canonical. If we are disappointed by the timidity of the rich, then we may fool them into courage, tempt them into knowledge—what other means do we have? If they don't have the wit to respect what we lay at their feet, then, like court jesters, we must drive them to it willy-nilly. In tandem with this, we must resist any effort to water down the importance of our own role as creators

of taste. If young booksellers are not coming to sit at our feet to learn a noble trade, perhaps it's because we have become too lost in our pursuit of mere money—not the first time that has been noted as a part of living in our world. If we wanted simply to make money, then we should collect money, like bond traders and insurance underwriters. To lose sight of which is the tail and which is the dog is to render our profession trivial. We become not booksellers, but book butchers, haggling over the choicest cuts. On the other hand, if we want to make a living in a trade we love, then bookselling is a good way to do it, if we help each other, if we respect each other and the objects we handle everyday.

The explosive proliferation of information in our world has made the possibility of whole new contexts within which to create collections. But we have to be open to the riches of a whole world beyond the Eurocentric canons imposed on us by the past, and the timidity of customers whose tastes are addled and idled by cultural gluttony. It is a challenging time, and if there is any genius to the pastiche called American culture, then it is the juxtaposition of the unexpected. Who knows what we can expect from the combination of the rare book world and the Internet? I, for one, can hardly wait.

I believe that that is our task. Not to regret the passing of an ideal bookseller's world which most certainly never existed, but to educate ourselves and our customers, whether private or institutional, in the possibilities inherent in the present. We should be using all our resources to rethink who we are and who we want to be, to gather our talents and our tools, and then set out to play together.

None of this is news to people like John, who, I believe, have injected tremendous energy and imagination into our trade over the course of the last years. I guess what I would like to say to him is that he is not alone in considering these issues. If we have something to say to our collectors and to our colleagues, then we should say it. I think these matters are truly important to all of our futures. ■

Obituaries

George Rankin Allen Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

George Rankin Allen, 79, the dean of Philadelphia booksellers and President of The Philobiblon Club, died on Friday, November 20, 1998. Mr. Allen was born near Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1919, in the house that also served as his mother and father's newly-established (1918) book firm, William H. Allen, Bookseller.

In 1921 William Allen moved the firm and the family to Philadelphia, establishing the bookstore just off the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. Allen's bookstore specialized from the start in used scholarly books, with the occasional admixture of early printed books, which came as part of the scholars' libraries that the firm constantly purchased. A particular specialty of Allen's was Greek and Latin classics. The firm moved from the Penn campus area to the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood in the mid 1930s, about the same time that William Allen died.

George Allen joined his mother in the family business in 1940, following his graduation from Haverford College, where he majored in Greek and Latin with a minor in German. He became sole owner of the business at the time of his mother's death in 1978 and continued with the firm until ill-health forced him to retire in 1997. Among the innovations he instituted as owner was the introduction into the store of personal computers in 1980. The firm became the first in the state, and one of the first in the nation, to use them.

The only time Mr. Allen did not work in the family business was during his service in World War II. He was called up in 1943, and, after the invasion of Europe in 1944, he was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division. While serving in the 101st, Mr. Allen served as a staff sergeant and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. In the final days of the war and during the immediate post-war years he was part of his division's intelligence team.

His study of German served him well in this work. He was the member of mili-

tary intelligence selected to interrogate Hitler's sister, secretary, and chauffeur, and Mr. Allen wrote the press release that the 101st Airborne issued giving the account of Hitler's death and cremation. Mr. Allen was also the first member of military intelligence to enter Berchtesgaden, Hitler's mountain retreat. There he discovered the only remaining transcripts of the twice-daily Military Situation Conferences that Hitler conducted during the War.

Common sense and his ability to speak German enabled Mr. Allen to find and arrest Nazi war criminals tried at Nuremberg. He reasoned that, with the war over, the most likely place to find ex-Nazis who were not in POW camps, or who had not fled Europe entirely, would be their pre-war homes. He made five major arrests in this way. For his military service he was awarded the Bronze Star and the Presidential Citation.

The Allen firm steadfastly refused to deal in Nazi material.

In 1952 Mr. Allen married Margaret Lyngdoh Smith, an Indian princess and ward of the late Maharajah Bahadur Ram Ran Bijay Prasad Singh of Dumraon. They had four children, none of whom followed Mr. Allen into the business, although his son George did work in the firm off and on over a seven-year period. Booksellers and autograph dealers who worked for George Allen include current ABAA members Bruce McKittrick, Catherine Barnes, David Szewczyk, and Cynthia Buffington. Keith Arbour, the bibliographer and historian, was also an employee for a number of years.

In 1997 Mr. Allen sold the inventory, good will, and business name to Wayne Radke, a long-time employee.

David M. Szewczyk

Mary A. Benjamin Hunter, New York

Mary B. Henderson, 93, known professionally by her maiden name, Mary A. Benjamin, doyenne of autograph dealers in the United States, died of natural

causes on November 30, 1998 at her home in Hunter, New York.

Following her graduation from Barnard College in 1925, Ms. Benjamin joined her father in the firm he had established in 1887, Walter R. Benjamin Autographs. That firm is the oldest in the United States dealing in autograph letters and documents and, along with Maison Charavay in France and Stargardt in Germany, is one of the oldest such firms in the world.

With her father's retirement in 1940, Ms. Benjamin continued the firm's reputation for high ethical standards and learning: letters from overseas addressed to "The Autograph Lady-USA" were effortlessly delivered to her. The firm, now in its 111th year, will continue under the directorship of her nephew and partner, Christopher C. Jaeckel.

Following World War II, Ms. Benjamin married Lt. Colonel Harold G. Henderson, who was a member of General MacArthur's staff in Japan and responsible for the re-education of that country. Henderson also wrote the script for the Japanese Emperor Hirohito's renunciation of his divinity. Col. Henderson went on to a professorship at Columbia University in Japanese art and helped initiate the love of Haiku in America with his *Introduction to Haiku* in 1958.

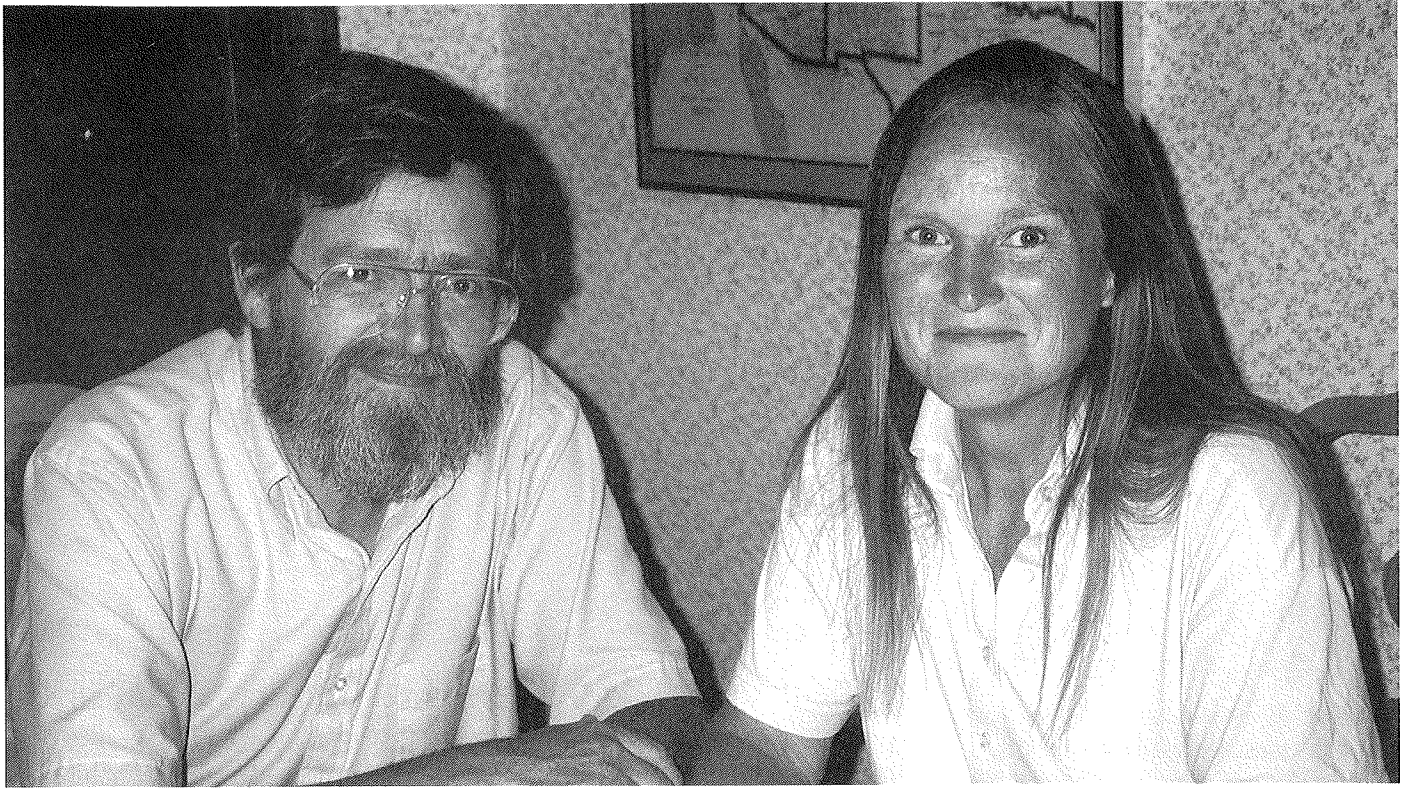
Ms. Benjamin herself wrote the standard guide to autographs, *Autographs: A Key to Collecting*, in 1946, now in its fourth edition.

Ms. Benjamin is survived by one sister, Yolanda Jaeckel of Cranbury, New Jersey; two nephews, Christopher C. Jaeckel of Hunter, New York, and Theodore R. Jaeckel, Jr. of Princeton Junction, New Jersey; and a niece, Pamela Oppen, of Hunter, New York.

A funeral mass was celebrated at the Immaculate Conception Church in Haines Falls, New York, on December 3, 1998.

For additional information, please contact Christopher C. Jaeckel, P.O. Box 437, Hunter, New York, 12442; phone: (518) 263-4133.

Liane Wade



Curt and Lynnette Bohling, 1995. *Reproduced courtesy of Lynnette Bohling.*

Curt Bohling Decatur, Michigan

Long-time ABAA member Curt Bohling, 60, of Decatur, Michigan, died on November 3, 1998. He is survived by his wife, Lynnette, three sons, four grandchildren, three siblings, and his mother and step-father.

Not many people knew Curt well, for he was distant both geographically and temperamentally from many of his colleagues. Yet he was a reliable source for unusual and often esoteric Americana, a knowledgeable dealer with an uncanny knack for successfully plying the library trade. I met Curt more than twenty years ago when he and his wife, Lynn, were in business in Rhode Island, where I, still a tyro in his early twenties, was just beginning to learn his way around books. I remember him at my father's house, at one of the early meetings of MARIAB, which he and Lynn, together with Peter Stern, had helped to found. And I remember rummaging through their old warehouse in Esmond, Rhode Island, theirs among the first inventories I ever scouted. As we were at the time the only two ABAA members in Rhode Island, a

special, but unspoken bond developed between us.

By a strange coincidence the three of us, Curt, Lynn, and I, found our way to the Midwest within eighteen months of each other. For Curt and Lynn it was a homecoming of sorts (Curt was born in Hammond, Indiana, on July 13, 1938), in the winter of 1977-78. I followed in 1979.

Curt had been trained as a librarian and got his first job "in the library of a small churchy college" in Missouri, where his tasks included "shelving, circulation, and shifting." Later he worked as a teacher of American and world history, and sophomore and junior English, for which he was paid \$4,000 per year. "The prospect of so much money," Curt wrote many years later for the *Antiquarian Bookman*, "impelled me to the local Volkswagen dealer where I bought a new car, which I wrecked later the same day."

During 1961-62, Curt worked on his library degree, and he eventually landed a job as Director of the Mexico-Audrain County Library in Missouri. After two successful years there, Curt moved up to Indiana University at Fort Wayne, and thence to Decatur, Michigan, as Director

of the Webster Memorial Library in Van Buren County. During his time in Decatur, Curt began to dabble in books. At a country auction he bought two lots of books for \$17. He immediately brought them to a book dealer with whom he had been acquainted through his job at the library, who paid him \$77. Curt wrote, "The die was cast."

It was then that Curt began to read untold numbers of bookseller autobiographies, rare book catalogues, and books about the trade. "One day an exceptionally large catalogue arrived from Parke-Bernet—the first of the Streeter sale lists. The sale was of immense interest to me, and the prices were more so. Oh! they were high! From my lofty point of view (I had been reading catalogues now for almost two years) I was able to laugh at all those silly people and the prices they paid."

Shortly thereafter, Curt moved to St. Clair County Community College in Port Huron, Michigan, as Director of Learning Resources, where he had "the library, the radio station, television, and the hockey team" under his purview. In December,

continued on next page

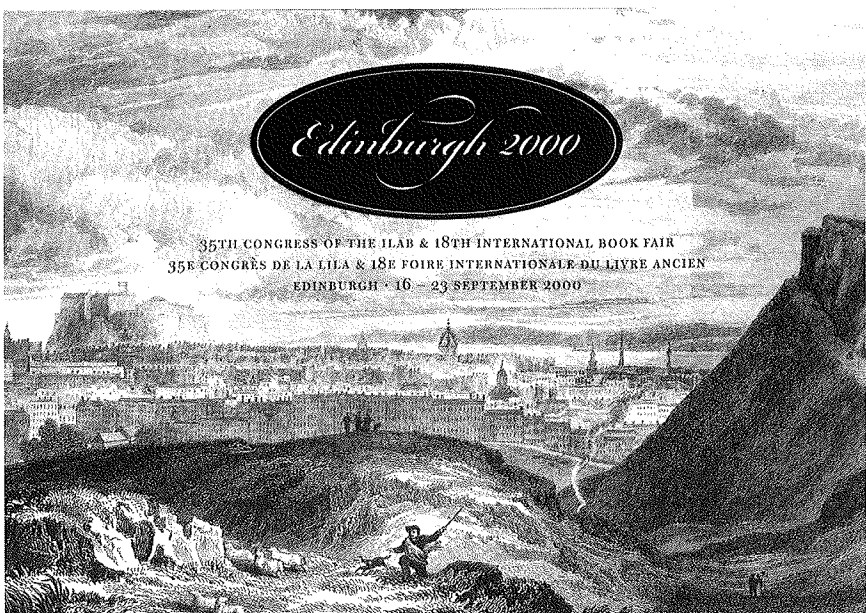

Obituaries

continued from previous page

1972, he met and married Lynn Dowd, and together they moved to Rhode Island, where Curt had accepted the Directorship of the Pawtucket Public Library. Here Curt was successful at several innovations in bringing the library into the community, but it wasn't long before his path crossed that of the mayor's. "The mayor did not share my enthusiasm for the obvious solution we had discovered [for making the library more accessible to the Pawtucket citizens]. He explained to me in blunt detail that he was a realtor, his friends were realtors, and that their interests lay in developing downtown [Pawtucket]. 'Don't you even think...,' he said to me... I resigned July 4, 1976."

Although Lynn continued with her job as library director in Johnston, Rhode Island, from that time on, Curt and Lynn concentrated on bookselling. In 1967, Curt had issued his first catalogue of ninety-one items, "mostly of an historical nature." That catalogue showed an early prescient interest in regional Americana, the field in which both Lynn and Curt excelled. There was a large section of Benjamin Purnell and his religious colony in Benton Harbor, known as the House of David, and a fourteen-item lot of pamphlets by Laura Haviland and Elizabeth Comstock on the plight of the "Exodusters" in Kansas. Now that Curt and Lynn were in New England, they spent many a weekend driving through the small towns scouting books, and their home in Narragansett began to fill up, mostly from the influx of 40,000-odd volumes of Americana purchased *en bloc* from the New England Book Company in May of 1976.

After Curt resigned his position in Pawtucket, he and Lynn moved their books into an old paper mill warehouse in northern Rhode Island. Later that year Lynn resigned her library position in Johnston, and bookselling began in earnest. "With a new typewriter and a used mimeograph machine," Curt wrote, "we worked long hours cranking out catalogues of New England local history at minimal prices." One of the bigger problems was finding shelves





AN INVITATION TO THE 35TH ILAB CONGRESS

It is with greatest pleasure that the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association invites ABAA members to Scotland to take part in the 35th ILAB Congress from September 16-20, 2000. The Congress will be followed on September 21-23 by the ILAB Book Fair, to be held in Edinburgh's handsome Assembly Rooms.

Many regard Edinburgh as the most beautiful city in the United Kingdom; it is known for its romantic Old Town as well as its neo-classical New Town, both with a multitude of literary and historical associations. The full program of business, study, and entertainment will be staged in Edinburgh's most magnificent interiors. The ABA also looks forward to showing you some of the surrounding countryside.

Further information and application forms will be circulated in Autumn 1999.
Any interim inquiries should be addressed to:
The Administrators, Antiquarian Booksellers' Association
Sackville House, 40 Piccadilly, London W1V 9PA
PHONE: 0171-439-3118 FAX: 0171-439-3119
EMAIL: aba@antiquarian.com



for all the titles. When the call came from a catholic girls' school in Fall River, Massachusetts, to purchase books, Curt and Lynn took all the books—but only to get the shelving. Several ranges full of worthless books and pamphlets were subsequently destroyed. "To get rid of several ranges of books, we had to tear the bindings off before the paper recyclers would accept the paper, for which we received \$6-\$8 per carload. We eked out our existence in the paper mill for a year and a half."

In the winter of 1977-78, Curt and Lynn moved back to Michigan, first to Kalamazoo, then to Lawton, and finally to Decatur, where Curt had summered as a child at the home of his grandparents, where he had

been employed some fourteen years before, and where he had first learned about antiquarian books. Here Lynn and Curt found prosperity and happiness. They traveled some 50,000 miles a year by car, visiting librarians, searching for stock, and exhibiting and attending book fairs. Curt was a twenty-year member of the ABAA, and he served as chair of the Midwest Chapter. The Bohling Book Company will continue under Lynn's special guidance.

Mr. Bohling was cremated, with no services. Memorials may be made to: David Tate, Director, Van Buren District Library, 200 North Phelps Street, Decatur, MI 49045; phone 616-423-4771.

Rob Rulon-Miller ■

Recent Books by Members

● *Collecting Old Maps.* By **Francis J. Manasek.** Norwich, Vermont: Terra Nova Press, 1998. 8½x 11 inches, 328pp., printed on acid-free paper, hardbound, with dustjacket. \$65.

Reviewed by **Harry L. Stern**

Thirty years ago, there were only a few dozen reference books relating exclusively to antique maps. More appeared in the 1970s as the number of collectors increased and as amateur scholars began to fill in the gaps regarding their origin, production, and use. The explosive growth in cartographic reference works accelerated greatly in the 1980s and continues unabated to this day, especially for narrowly-defined, specialized topics.

It is, therefore, a pleasant surprise to find a new *general* work that can satisfy novice collectors, veteran dealers, and the general public with valuable insights and information on a wide array of subjects. As the author states, this is the first book to focus on what the collector should learn in pursuing the hobby of acquiring antique maps. Manasek addresses such varied topics as map projections, conser-

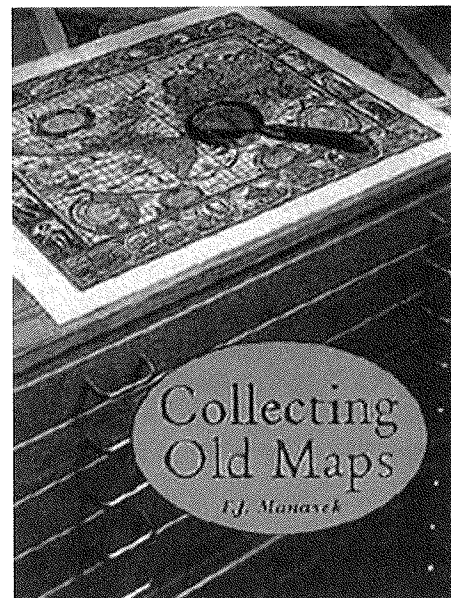
vation techniques, fakes, auctions, relations with dealers, appraisals, storage, prices, and market conditions.

One important point that is frequently overlooked by collectors buying from antique map dealers is that they can usually return purchases within ten days for a full refund if not satisfied. There is no recourse if the collector buys at auction and is not satisfied with the condition, or if a descriptive error has appeared in the auction catalogue.

Another point that the author emphasizes, and many of us in the antique map trade applaud, is that maps should be bought for pleasure and not for some future monetary appreciation. If you want to make an investment, see a stockbroker.

Additionally, one must comment on the fine illustrations throughout this book. Too many of the specialized books use visuals that are overly reduced or of inferior quality.

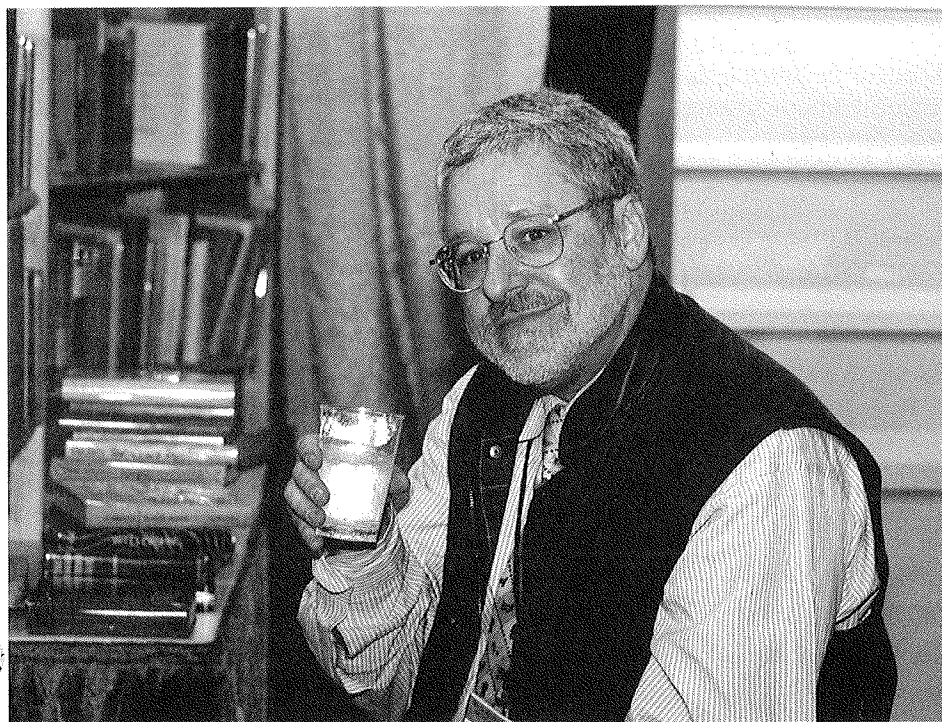
And finally, it is a joy to peruse a reference work that is readable, in plain simple English and laid back in style with a sense of humor. It could not have been easy for a scholarly authority on antique maps like



Frank Manasek to infuse a serious subject with this light-hearted tone.

This work is a must buy for book dealers as well as map enthusiasts.

Collecting Old Maps is available for \$65 plus shipping from map dealers, museum and library bookshops, and independent and virtual bookshops, or direct from G. B. Manasek, Inc., PO Box 1204, Norwich, VT 05055-1204. ■



Got milk? Peter Stern relaxing at the Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair.

New Members

The ABAA *Newsletter* welcomes the following new members accepted at the Board of Governors meeting in November 1998:

Geoffrey Baere, Trevian Bookshop, 30 N. Broadway, Nyack, NY 10960; phone: 914-348-3474; email: trevian@qed.net

Penelope Daly, WellRead Books, 76 Burt Ave., Northport, NY 11768; phone: 516-261-7373; email: wreadbooks@aol.com

Stephen Eric Blackmer, Chanticleer Books, 526 Broadway, Sonoma, CA 95476; phone: 707-996-5364; fax: 707-996-2376; email: chantbks@vom.com

James R. Bryant, carpe diem books, 1160 Snowberry Court, Sunnyvale, CA 94087; phone: 408-739-2479; fax: 408-739-3164; email: carpediem@ix.netcom.com ■

Membership Updates

Because of the large number of updates submitted this quarter, we are here printing only updates to member addresses and phone numbers. For an updated list of member email and internet addresses, please go to the ABAA website at www.abaa-booknet.com

Robert R. Allen has a new area code: tel: 626-794-4210; fax: 626-794-2680

Anchor & Dolphin Books is now **Hinck & Wall**, POB 32266, Washington, DC 20007; tel: 202-965-3785; fax: 202-965-2785; email: hinckandwall@mindspring.com

Antipodean Books has a new address: 29 Garrison Landing, Garrison, NY 10524

Messrs. Berkelouw has a new area code: tel: 323-466-3321; fax: 323-460-2922

The Book Chest/Chessid has a new address and phones: 2166 Broadway, 7A, New York, NY 10024; tel: 212-501-8846; fax: 212-580-6077

The Book Sail has a new zipcode: 92867

The Captain's Bookshelf has a new area code: tel: 828-253-6631; fax: 828-253-4917

Barry Cassidy has a fax: 916-456-3908

Colebrook Book Barn now has a fax: 860-379-5998

Dawson's Book Shop has a new area code: tel: 323-469-2186; fax: 323-469-9553

The Erie Book Store has a new address, phone, and fax: Lovell Place, 137 East 13th Street, Erie, PA 16503; tel: 814-480-5671; fax: 814-480-5675

Barbara Farnsworth has an address correction: POB 9, 407 Rte. 128, West Cornwall, CT 06796

Franklin Gilliam :: Rare Books has a new fax: 804-979-2689

Daryl & Joan Hill Books is now **The Literary Lion**

J. D. Holmes has a new fax: 425-771-5651

Houle Rare Books has a new area code: tel: 323-937-5858; fax: 323-937-0091

J. & J. House Books has a new fax: 610-444-2355

Joslin Hall Rare Books has a new area

code: tel: 978-371-3101; fax: 978-371-6445

Leif Laudamus has a new address and tel: 534 Cumberland Avenue, Portland, ME 04101; tel: 207-772-9182

Barry R. Levin has a fax: 310-899-9404

Lighthouse Books has a new area code: tel: 727-822-3278

Manning's Books & Prints has a fax: 650-355-1851

Paul Melzer has a fax: 909-792-7218

J. T. Monckton has a new address: 964 Greenbay Road, Winnetka, IL 60093

Monroe Books has a new area code: tel: 559-224-7000

Morrison Books has a new fax: 503-295-6947

Old Monterey Book Co. has a new area code: tel: 831-372-3111; fax: 831-372-5537

Olde Port Book Shop has a new area code: tel: 978-462-0100

Simon Ottenberg has a fax: 206-720-0332

Charles Parkhurst has a new address: PO Box 10850, Prescott, AZ 86304-0850

Diane Peterson has a fax: 650-322-2525

Diana J. Rendell has a zipcode correction: 02468

Kenneth W. Rendell has a zipcode correction in Massachusetts: 02482

L & T Respass Books has a fax: 804-293-4448

Robert H. Rubin has a new zipcode: 02446-0002

Scientia Books has a new zipcode: 02174

Ed Smith has a new address and phones: 20 Paget Road, Madison, WI 53704; tel: 608-241-3707; fax: 608-241-3459

Patterson Smith has a new area code: tel: 973-744-3291; fax: 973-744-4501

Christophe Stickel has a new area code: tel: 831-656-0111; fax: 831-656-0112

Cecil Wahle has a new area code: tel: 831-625-0941

Weiser Antiquarian Books has a new address and fax: PO Box 2050, York Beach,

ME 03910-2050; fax: 207-351-3300

Sam Weller has a fax: 801-595-0051

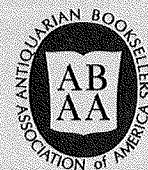
West Side Book Shop has a new area code: tel: 734-995-1891

Western Hemisphere has a new area code: tel: 781-344-8200; fax: 781-344-8739

Wolf's Head Books has a new fax: 904-824-2212

The deadline for submissions to the next Newsletter is

April 26, 1999



The ABAA Newsletter

(ISSN 1070-7000X)

is published quarterly under the auspices of the Publications Committee of The Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America

20 West 44th Street, Fourth Floor
New York, NY 10036-6604.

PHONE: 212-944-8291

FAX: 212-944-8293

EMAIL: abaa@panix.com
www.abaa-booknet.com

EDITOR: Robert Rulon-Miller
ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Priscilla Juvelis,
Tracy E. Smith & Liane Wade

Annual postpaid subscriptions are \$20.00 domestic; \$25.00 Canada and Mexico; and \$32.00 overseas.

COPYRIGHT 1999 by The Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America

Send submissions and letters to:

ABAA Newsletter
400 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55102-2662 USA
PHONE: (651) 290-0700
FAX: (651) 290-0646
EMAIL: rulon@winternet.com