



The **ABAA** *NEWSLETTER*



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ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

WINTER 2000



(L to R) Michael Lazare of Scarlet Letter Books & Prints, Pulitzer Prize winning biographer David McCullough, and Edward Bomsey of Edward N. Bomsey Autographs at the Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair.

23rd Annual Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair a Huge Success

by Ken Gloss

An unseasonably mild fall weekend helped usher in the Twenty-Third Annual International Antiquarian Book Fair at Boston's Hynes Convention Center, November 19-21, 1999. A large crowd of eager buyers kept dealers busy throughout the event, with several dealers reporting sales in excess of \$100,000. Many new collectors joined the large contingent of familiar faces at this year's fair. Among the shoppers in attendance on Sunday were the historians David McCullough and Richard and Doris Kearns Goodwin.

Overall, attitudes were extremely upbeat throughout the show. Jesse

Rossa, of Heritage Book Shop in Los Angeles, felt it was a great show with steady sales, besting last year's results. Pom Harrington from London reported buying some nice items at the show, and felt that transactions were particularly strong with other dealers this year. He specifically cited a high level of interest in the Winston Churchill items that he brought with him. In the children's book category, Helen Younger of Aleph-Bet Books, Valley Cottage, NY, proclaimed this year's show "the best we've ever done." A Boston Book Fair dealer for the past ten years, Helen observed that

The Database Race: An Account and Comparison of Two Cataloging Programs

by Dan Gregory

When I started working at Between the Covers a few years ago, one of my first projects was to put Tom's books on a database. Tom had been acquiring books for many years, gathering together many thousands of modern first editions and shelving them in alphabetical order as space allowed. But aside from the occasional visitor to his office, only a fraction of his stock was actively offered for sale—those comparatively few books that were featured in catalogs or brought to book fairs. These were, admittedly, often the best and most interesting items, but for every one book featured there were, quite literally, a hundred books which remained hidden on the shelves. Furthermore, catalogs alone were ill-suited to really managing a large stock, to keeping track of what was in inventory and what had sold. Tom didn't want a large shop in a high-traffic area, he couldn't bring all his books to book fairs, and attempting to list everything in catalogs was also not feasible. But in the mid-1990s an answer presented itself: the Internet. By 1996 Tom, who had already issued over fifty catalogs, was ready to make a substantial change to the way he handled his stock—he was ready to use a database.

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Letters to the Editor

From: Hugh Tolford

Your Fall 1999 issue of the ABAA Newsletter was superb—in fact, superb excellent. Well done!

From: Samuel J. Hessel

It is quite apparent that you, the Executive Committee, and the other Committees of the ABAA put in endless hours serving the organization and its members. Thank you.

The number and magnitude of recent events, including the consolidation of major internet book listing services and the upcoming schedule conflict between the ABAA and a major San Francisco book fair, raise concern that without a full-time Chief Operating Officer the ABAA will not continue to be an effective, coherent force. I realize this proposal is expensive and controversial, but it would have both tangible and intangible benefits.

Today, without significant input from our Association, others are making decisions about how, where, and at what price we should buy and sell books. These companies are staffed full-time by business people out to maximize their profits with no regard for book dealers or their clients. Their goals include monopolization of the electronic marketplace and creation of a moneymaking IPO-buyout scenario for themselves. They want to present us with no viable alternatives but to list OUR books with them or forgo meaningful, high-profile participation in what is clearly an important current and future source of revenue and clients. They can ONLY accomplish this if we individually and as an organization passively stand by, debate endlessly, and take no effective action.

The ABAA can either continue as a book fair organization and guild of dealers scrambling to react to the vagaries of the marketplace or transform itself into a true professional society with a well-defined agenda and resolute voice on matters of importance to our profession. To achieve this we need a full time Chief Operating Officer. The era is over in which an organization with several hundred members who cumulatively deal in

hundreds of millions of dollars worth of books can operate optimally with a purely volunteer, decentralized committee structure meeting intermittently. We have moved from a small group of dedicated dealers to a big business—witness the involvement of corporations, entrepreneurs, and venture capitalists in the e-commerce of collectible books.

Purely as examples, a Chief Operating Officer's responsibilities could include:

1. Creating a two to four year plan for the ABAA.
2. Developing a coherent program for putting the ABAA name before the new, large group of collectors entering the marketplace and reinforcing the importance of the ABAA to established bibliophiles.
3. Developing and/or negotiating for a highly visible, independent e-commerce presence in which dealers can communicate and develop relationships with clients and in which dealers set their own prices and terms of sale. Since others have discovered that listing our books is a valuable, bankable asset in the e-commerce world, there is no reason we should not pursue a similar goal.

4. Assuring that the schedule of ABAA book fairs and other events is published and coordinated to prevent significant conflicts deleterious to member and clients.

5. Developing strategies for recruiting and retaining members.

6. Developing a legislative agenda on issues critical to the ABAA such as monopolies in e-commerce.

The changes in our field and business in general at the end of the twentieth century require ever greater effort if we are to be masters of our own fate. To achieve that we need a full time Operating Officer. Our sister organization in the United Kingdom, the ABA, with far fewer members, has been recruiting an executive for several months.

We are at a critical juncture. I urge the ABAA to consider and act on this proposal.

The above letter was introduced at the last Board of Governors' Meeting in Boston, where it was discussed and referred to the Planning Committee for further consideration. —Ed.■

A contribution to the ABAA Benevolent Fund or to the Elisabeth Woodburn Memorial Fund is a meaningful way to honor the memory of a departed colleague. A contribution can also be a thoughtful celebration of an important event in the life of an antiquarian bookseller—a birthday, an anniversary, or a retirement.

The Antiquarian Booksellers' Benevolent Fund is a non-profit charity fund established by the ABAA in 1952 to benefit any antiquarian bookseller in time of personal need. The Elisabeth Woodburn Memorial Fund offers financial assistance for education and scholarly research relevant to the antiquarian book trade.



Direct your contributions and inquiries to:
Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America
20 West 44th Street
Fourth Floor
New York, NY 10036-6604

Greg Gibson's *Gone Boy* Raises Funds for ABAA

Greg Gibson of Ten Pound Island Book Company, Gloucester, MA, debuted his new book, *Gone Boy: A Walkabout* (Kodansha International, 1999) at the 23rd Annual Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair. The kind of memoir that should never have to be written, *Gone Boy* is a "detective story" about Gibson's search for the truth about the 1992 murder of his son, Galen, at Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington, MA. During the Boston Book Fair, Gibson sold out the eighty-five copies of *Gone Boy* he offered for sale. The profits from the sale were donated by Gibson to the ABAA Booksellers Benevolent Fund. Gibson, who would like to thank his colleagues for all the support he has received, has posted a web site about the book at www.goneboy.com. Copies of *Gone Boy* are currently available for sale through independent and on-line book sellers. (Reviewed on page 9.)



Gloss

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each year the show has managed to get "stronger and stronger."

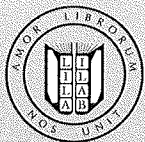
The sentiment all around was that the individuals on the Book Fair Committee played a major role in putting together such a strong show. Jim Presgraves of Bookworm & Silverfish, Wytheville, VA, who has exhibited at the Boston Book Fair every year since its inception, commended the committee for providing double booths, which he felt allowed for a very good selling opportunity. The people joining me on the committee this year, Greg Gibson, Doug Harding, Peter Stern, Priscilla Juvelis, Michael Ginsberg and Helen Kelly, each deserve recognition for their tireless efforts to ensure a highly successful event.

Adding to the excitement of this year's show were several peripheral events that helped complement the fair. Running parallel to the Boston Book Fair at the Hynes was the New England Antiquarian Print Fair, which featured twenty-four booths of rare works on paper from the Renaissance through the 1950s. Sophia Lane, business manager of the *Journal of the Print World*, the event's lead sponsor, was thrilled by the superior quality of material and the wide range of products being offered to "fit every budget." She was also delighted by the attendance all three days, noting that it was "extremely busy" on Saturday.

In addition, Bernice Bornstein Shows hosted the well-attended Antiquarian Book & Paper Show on Saturday and Sunday at the Auditorium Garage, across the street from the Hynes. Satur-

day also featured two auctions by Skinner's, held at the Heritage on the Garden, which included a 300-lot movie poster auction and a high quality books and manuscripts auction.

Due to the growth in popularity of the Boston Book Fair, the show will graduate to the larger World Trade Center on Boston's waterfront in the year 2000. Beyond the additional space, this new venue will allow for easier dealer load-in and load-out. Those coming from out-of-town will also be welcomed in comfort, thanks to a brand new hotel being built right across the street from the Center. The dates for the 24th Annual Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair will be October 13-15, 2000—the perfect time of year to experience a classic New England weekend of foliage, book swapping, and of course, great fun. ■



ILAB Book Fairs

2000

March 2-4

Amsterdam, The Netherlands (NVVA)
RAI Congress Centre

April 13-16

New York, NY (ABAA)
Park Avenue Armory

May 5-6

Copenhagen, Denmark (ABF)
Heligaandhuset

May 25-28

Paris, France (SLAM)
La Maison de la Mutualité

June 8-11

London, England (ABA)
Olympia Exhibition Centre

September 21-23

Edinburgh, Scotland (ILAB)
18th International Book Fair

October 13-15

Boston, MA (ABAA)
World Trade Center

October 20-22

Cologne, Germany (VDA)
Gürzenich

December 8-10

Helsinki, Finland
Snellmansgatan

2001

February 23-25

San Francisco, CA (ABAA)
Concourse Exhibition Center

May 17-20

Paris, France (SLAM)
La Maison de la Mutualité

2002

September 12-14

Copenhagen, Denmark (ILAB)
19th International Book Fair

ILAB Friendship Program to Continue in Edinburgh

Elizabeth Strong, who has been largely responsible for organizing the 35th Congress and 18th International Book Fair in Edinburgh from September 16-23, 2000, has informed us that the ILAB Friendship Program will continue.

The Friendship Program was conceived by the Verband Deutscher Antiquare at the Cologne Congress and Book Fair in 1992. It was designed to encourage relatively "young" (in experience) book-sellers from each national association to attend an ILAB Congress and Fair.

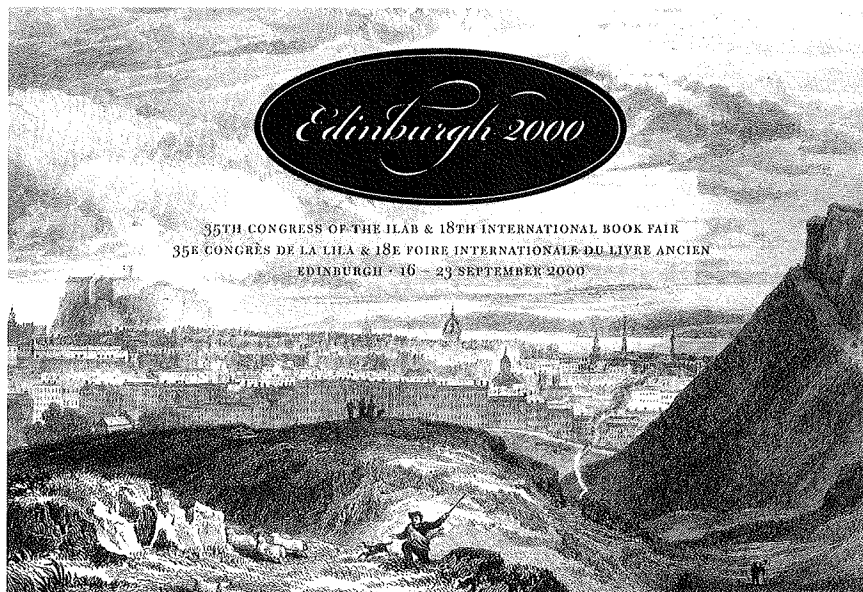
The Antiquarian Booksellers Association (ABA) will sponsor one delegate from each ILAB member association with fifty percent of the Edinburgh Congress fee; the balance of the fee will be picked up by the delegate's national association, including the ABAA.

ABAA members interested in this opportunity must:

1. Be Full or Associate members of the ABAA for less than five years
2. Never have attended an ILAB Congress in the past
3. Submit a one-page letter stating reasons for wanting to attend the 35th Congress in Edinburgh to Liane Wade, ABAA, 20 West 44th Street, Fourth Floor, New York, NY 10036-6604.

The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2000. The Board of Governors will announce its selection for the ILAB Friendship Program at the ABAA Annual Meeting in April, 2000.

The recipient of the ILAB Friendship Program grant will be responsible for all travel and room and board expenses. In addition, the recipient will also be responsible for the application and expenses associated with the 18th International Book Fair, if he or she wishes to exhibit. ■



AN INVITATION TO THE 35TH ILAB CONGRESS

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.

Information and application forms will be circulated shortly.

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



Bibliography Bar

Everson's Psalter

Reprinted from Hoja Volante Number 202, the Quarterly of the Zamorano Club of Los Angeles.

by Muir Dawson

Interest in *Novum Psalterium PII XII*, printed by William Everson, continues to be strong with a record price of \$13,800 being reached for the printer's own copy at the Pacific Book Auction Galleries on March 19, 1998. Although the book is only a grouping of seventy-two printed pages on thirty-eight leaves of a planned 300-page volume, it is a beautiful specimen of handpress printing, the creation of which is a long story of idealism, religious fervor, craftsmanship, and ultimate disappointment on the part of the printer.

In the PBAG. catalogue, the description of the above-mentioned copy, sold as item #385, included portions of a conversation that Everson had with Peter Howard in 1966. (Catalogue 11, #118 of Serendipity Books, November 1966, has the full account.) In this conversation Everson has bitter words to describe how his Psalter finally was presented to the public in an edition of forty-eight copies, bound in magnificent full blue morocco.

His first complaint was that he contracted with Dawson's Book Shop to publish the fragment of the Psalter and them promptly lost all control over the project. There actually never was a contract. Everson was in a great rush to finish up this chapter of his life and begin his study for the priesthood. His great concern was to compensate Estelle Doheny for the money she had paid in advance for one or more copies of the Psalter. When Mrs. Doheny heard that Dawson's had the sheets for the Psalter, she asked if she could buy them and issue the fragment herself. She called on the telephone—the only time that I can remember this happening; all other dealings were through her secretary, Lucille Miller. Mrs. Doheny was a persuasive person, and we at Dawson's felt that she would give the Psalter a form that we could not possibly afford. Dawson's,

therefore, turned over the sheets to her for the sum that we had paid Everson. It was a small sum, but in 1954 there was no feeling that anyone would pay \$13,800 for a copy forty-four years later.

Everson's second complaint, stated in 1966, was that his preface to the Psalter was edited against his wishes. It is true that I did edit it—mostly by corrections of spelling and minor changes to make the text flow better. Everson's preface was overly long, was written in some haste, and did, in fact, need editing. However, the main thing that I did was to leave out parts of an article that had been printed shortly before in the *Quarterly News Letter* of the Book Club of California (Summer 1954). I wanted previously unpublished material for the preface, and republication of that section so soon after its initial appearance would have resulted in needless duplication. It turns out that the Summer 1954 Book Club article and another he had written for the Spring 1950 issue and the preface to the Psalter make a fine grouping. The three texts were included in the essays compiled for the book, *On Printing*, by William Everson, edited by Peter Rutledge Koch for The Book Club of California in 1992.

William Everson was a man of great talent and intensity. Only a man of his strength would have even dreamed of printing a 300-page folio on hand-made paper from hand-set type all by himself. He had lasting regrets at not finishing the work. He must also have had regrets at leaving the Psalter to study for the priesthood and then, as Brother Antoninus, in turn later to leave that endeavor.

The year 1966 seems to be a high point of his regrets when he made his feelings known to Peter Howard and participated in the oral history project for the Bancroft Library. Three years later Everson made his dramatic departure from the Dominican Order, which he had joined in 1951.

Later in his life Everson certainly mellowed concerning the editing of his text

for the Psalter preface. William Eshelman, his friend from the World War II conscientious objectors' camp at Waldport, Oregon, wrote to me in December, 1980. At that time Eshelman was President of Scarecrow Press and was planning a publication of all of Everson's forewords, epilogues, prefaces, and introductions, including the *unedited* version of the Psalter. I sent him a copy. Soon afterwards, when Everson had studied I, he wrote to Eshelman the following:

January 8, 1981

Dear Esh:

I am glad the original of the Psalter intro turned up. In reading it over I think for this edition [On Writing the Waterbirds and Other Presentations] the shortened version as it appeared in the book is more appropriate. Maybe I can get someone to do it [the original version] as a booklet...

Yrs,
Bill

Everson's last letter to me does not show the bitterness that surfaces in 1966, and I hope the softer opinion is closer to his overall feelings:

August 17, 1954

Dear Muir:

A letter from Lucille Miller last week indicated that Mrs. Doheny had purchased the edition from you entirely. Since I had not understood that from your last letter I re-read it and saw indeed that this is so. That means the book will not be issued under the Dawson imprint at all, I take it. I am writing to thank you for the check, which alas has been here a month, and to more or less indicate some resolution to our brief relationship. Thank you for your interest in my Psalter, and for the efforts you

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Dawson

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have made to help me see that it is properly completed, if only as a fragment.

*Sincerely yours,
Brother Antoninus, O.P.*

P.S. Tomorrow I go to the clerical novitiate in Ross, Marin County...

The Psalter fragment was issued with the date of 1955, the foreword by Robert O. Schad, the preface by Brother Antoninus, and all the preliminary material printed by Saul and Lillian Marks at the Plantin Press on Tovil hand-made paper, the

same paper used for the Psalms. Mrs. Doheny turned to R.R. Donnelley & Sons for the binding of full blue morocco with a blue cloth cover slip case. She gave away most of the copies, with the remainder being given away after her death in 1958. ■

Gregory

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The first step was choosing a program. We took a look at a few database programs, all developed by or in cooperation with booksellers, and settled on Interloc, a program which included an on-line interface for selling books on the Internet. We listed a few books on-line, with inconsequential results, and decided to put the Internet on the back burner. But it was clear that using a database to manage inventory and book information, even if we didn't offer books on-line, would be a prudent advance. At this point Tom's first thirty catalogs existed only in printed form—the original word processing files had been deleted. But Between the Cover catalog numbers 31 through 53 were still saved as WordPerfect documents. Here were 12,000 book descriptions that, if they could be imported into BookMaster III Professional 2.25, the database program which was bundled into the Interloc system, would get us off to a great start. No one wants to retype 12,000 book descriptions!

For a database of books to be of any use, the bibliographic information has to be segmented into appropriate fields: author, title, place and date of publication, and so on. Naturally a computer program doesn't inherently know, as a reader of modern literature would, that John Fowles is an author but *Daniel Martin* is a title, or that 1977 is a date but 125 is a price. As far as the computer is concerned, it's all zeros and ones combined to represent alpha-numeric characters. The challenge was to take paragraphs of potentially indistinguishable text and "tell" the database program which parts

were authors, which parts were titles, and so on. Fortunately, most of Tom's catalog descriptions followed a very consistent format. For example, the author was always listed in bold type, last name first with a comma, and followed by a period. The title was listed in italics, a colon always followed the place of publication, and the price always came last. These and other consistencies allowed me to create MS Word macros, mini programs within the popular word processing application, which separated the different parts of Tom's book descriptions. These distinct elements could then be imported to BookMaster. But names with initials, such as the dreaded W.E.B. Du Bois, or sub-titles with a period in them, required an additional level of human supervision. It took about a week, allowing for the interruption here and there of actual business, to get the first 12,000 book descriptions into BookMaster.

Tom put up a good fight, but progress got the better of him, and in a very short time he was acclimated to typing descriptions directly into the database, instead of WordPerfect. As a specialist dealer he often sold titles he had offered in the past—BookMaster made copying old descriptions very easy. Though Tom might purchase a library of several hundred books, only selected items would end up in any given catalog. In BookMaster he could easily look at a large list of books and arbitrarily choose a "hit list" or sub-set that would comprise the next catalog. When we were ready to print a catalog, BookMaster allowed us to export the hit list into a format, which could be easily modified in a word processing program. A few months later, when we were ready to try the Internet again, BookMaster allowed us to keep reasonable track of

which books were available and which had sold. And finally, BookMaster had one other particularly good feature—it required virtually no RAM memory to run on a computer. Dinosaur machines from (gasp) the previous decade—those curious devices with their five and a quarter inch disk drives that had been collecting dust at home or in the office—could be dragged out on a moment's notice and used for cataloging.

But as useful as BookMaster was for us, it was not without its drawbacks. The length of book descriptions was limited to approximately 200 words, verbose publisher names such as "The Institute for Social and Religious Research" had to be abbreviated, and titles couldn't run on too long. For most books these limitations were not an issue—creating a catalog that included the exceptions always required a bit of extra work, but it was a minor inconvenience. Another problem was editing our book descriptions. Frequently typos or corrections were not found until a draft of the catalog had been printed. The quickest remedy was to make the corrections in the catalog document and print a final version. With a word processor this took very little time. But doing this left the mistakes in the database. Since BookMaster was a DOS-based program, cutting and pasting the improved descriptions was not an option—each correction had to be made directly in the database, comparatively slowly and one entry at a time.

These were minor annoyances for which the remedy was merely a little patience and extra work. But the problems we began to experience as our database grew in size, reaching 30,000 records and upwards, were more than mere foibles. BookMaster does not sup-

port networking—only one person can enter or edit book information at a time. Using multiple computers we were able to have several people working simultaneously on entering new acquisitions, entering back stock, and editing, but merging these various versions of the information into one master database required very tricky maneuvering, or data could easily be lost. Though I merged the data many times, it never became routine—I was always apprehensive that, for lack of caffeine or some other reason, I would make a critical mistake. Backing up the various versions of the database prior to merging, and the simple process of moving the data from one computer to another became increasingly difficult because BookMaster saved the data in an inordinately expansive fashion. At one time I ran a test and created a catalog of everything in our database, both available books and sold books, and found that it was a 12-Mb text document. The very same information in BookMaster took over 80 megabytes of storage space! It was clear that at the rate we were going, we soon would not be able to save the database on a solitary zip disk. Would there be a newer, Windows-compatible version of BookMaster, that would remedy these problems? The answer was a resolute no: the Interloc company went off in other directions, and their Windows follow-up to BookMaster was exclusively for selling books on-line—it had none of the features necessary for creating catalogs. I began to look for a new program.

Other booksellers who used BookMaster had told me horror-stories of losing critical information, but for almost three years we experienced no significant problems. Every once in a while five title fields in a row, or ten consecutive descriptions, or something along these lines would mysteriously go blank. Nothing to be happy about, but all things considered, BookMaster remained a very functional program, one that we were very used to using. Then one day it hit us. Three hundred books—author, title, description, everything—disappeared. Gone from the transfer disk, gone from the original hard drive version. I tried several “recovery” utilities, but nothing

worked. Even more frustrating, it happened right before my eyes. One minute they were there; the next minute they were gone. Computer experts will tell you that the machines never make the mistakes, people do. But I was actually quite alert that particular morning; to this day I swear that every keystroke I performed was identical to the steps I had methodically taken on dozens of previous occasions. Regardless of the source of the problem, the result was quite sobering. I became zealous in backing up data, and my search for a new program intensified.

No matter what your profession is or computer needs are, the chances of finding a ready-made program that does exactly what you need it to do are very remote; more realistically they are nonexistent. If you have very specific needs and really want a program tailored to them, you have to conscribe a “tech” person to write or modify the program for you. In popular films this is accomplished by kidnapping the inventor’s daughter and threatening her life with a demented snarl. In reality, you ask your sister or son-in-law or friend to do it for you in their spare time, and to be ready for lots of debugging, questions, and handholding. If they do a good job the two of you might try to sell the program, but these semi-professional applications rarely have the uniformity or support a retail program really requires (you may be able to call your sister in for a quick fix, but your customers can not do so quite as easily).

Not long ago I heard about a program, which sounded promising. BookTrakker Pro performed many of the functions of BookMaster (many of which we never used), but it was built for Windows, operated over a network, and automated managing an on-line inventory on multiple search services. Most importantly, BookTrakker is a new and actively supported program—if I have a problem I can make a phone call. The 29-Mb program doesn’t come on disk or CD-ROM, you have to download a trial version from the manufacturer’s web site, <http://www.ubix.com>. The download wizard, a utility which is supposed to keep things running smoothly in the event your connection

gets interrupted, didn’t work, but on the third attempt I managed to get the entire program. Installation was very easy, with few options to confuse the new user. Once the program was running the two critical questions were 1) how easily could I transfer our BookMaster information into the new program, and 2) how easily could I make the program perform the functions I needed it to perform specifically for our business?

The new program is designed to import information from various other databases, including BookMaster, so this should have gone very smoothly. As it happens, when we list an author in our printed catalogs the author’s last name is in all-caps. We like the way this looks. We’re used to this. We didn’t want to change this. BookTrakker switched all 38,000 author fields to mixed-case twice before I figured out how to turn this auto-editing feature off. It took a little more experimenting on a few other features before the database was transferred satisfactorily. Nevertheless, given the size and complexity of the data, I considered it a reasonably trouble-free conversion. (If I had really wanted to, I could always have called or emailed the manufacturer for help).

The developers of BookTrakker faced the same challenge that all programmers face—that of trying to create a product that satisfies the broadest consumer base possible. In our trade the broadest consumer base is defined as the general used book dealer selling books on-line. The number of catalog and shop-based used and rare book dealers is on the decline—the large percentage of the business is now transacted over the Internet. BookTrakker has many features designed to make life easier for the used bookseller, including AutoFill for speedy input: if you’ve had the book once before, entering a new copy goes very quickly because the program “guesses” what you’re trying to type as you type it. But specialist dealers will often have had the same title not once, but a dozen times before, particularly if they’ve been in business for several years. BookTrakker

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Gregory

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will fill in the information, but it will use the first description it comes to, which is invariably the oldest and usually the least desirable description to copy. Consequently, we turned the AutoFill off. Instead we search for the previous description which appears closest to what the new description should be, and copy that instead. This takes a little longer to do in the new program than it did in BookMaster, but as we get used to the new program we should get a little quicker at it.

Typing in new descriptions in BookTrakker is very straightforward—the program will jump quickly to the fields you choose to use. Furthermore, because it is a Windows program, descriptions from another source, or descriptions which have been edited in another program, can easily be copied into BookTrakker. Furthermore, the length of the fields seems more than adequate to accommodate any dealer's needs. Happily, I haven't lost any data in the short time we've been using the program—it automatically creates a backup in the event of a problem. Our database in the new program currently takes up approximately 30 megabytes of hard disk space, certainly an improvement over the old program. Networking the program was much easier than I expected, and BookTrakker operates smoothly with multiple users. The program does exhibit minor, as yet untested incompatibilities with other software. For example, on my computer (but curiously not on our other office computers) once I start entering data into a field my cursor disappears and will only reappear when I press tab or minimize then maximize the program. Annoying, but the type of glitch you get used to very quickly.

Creating a hit list, for our purposes choosing which titles will be included in a catalog, is more of a problem. The program can perform all manner of searches, but getting it to actually find what you are looking for can take a bit of experimentation. (A search for books in *Between the Covers* catalog 55, for example, should

have been simple, but instead it took some trial and error before I happened upon a successful combination of options.) Looking at a list of the last 300 books entered and choosing 200 of them to be part of a catalog is rather laborious in BookTrakker—you have to switch from the list view to the detail view, from the detail view to the edit mode, type or paste the appropriate catalog number into the correct field, save the changes, switch back to the list view, and start again. Our old program allowed us to simply look at the list, arrow down through the books, and hit enter for all those we wanted to select.

The program does have several innovative features. For example, BookTrakker has a TWAIN-compliant image option—if you are typing a book description and you have a scanner, you can quickly acquire an image of the book, which will be linked to the book's description. The image could easily be made ready for the Internet, though getting it ready to be printed in a catalog would take additional steps. Similarly, it is easy to find and type accented letters, something rather difficult to do in BookMaster. The new program also keeps track of changes to the status of each book, and at the press of a single button it will transmit these updates to any and all on-line services one chooses.


As with any program, BookTrakker has room for improvements. For example, text in a description must be all in regular type. Thus, catalogers who would like to italicize the title in a sentence such as "The book is a follow-up to Faulkner's first collection of stories, *These 13*" or bold the word "only" in "The **only** inscribed first edition offered in the last 50 years" have to make these changes in a word processor (this was a limitation in our old program as well, but current software, such as Microsoft's Excel, can accommodate regular and bold or italicized text in the same field). The program has many options which are not entirely clear, and the on-screen help, which is extensive, doesn't assume the user is an idiot, which it should (hence the success of the popular how-to book series). There are any number of other issues one might take with the program, but on the whole

the developers have done a reasonably good job of anticipating various needs.

There is, however, one serious problem with BookTrakker that any potential customer should know about—speed. Because I work with graphics quite a bit I have the newest and fastest computer in the office. It was on this machine that I tested BookTrakker to determine whether we should switch over to using it. Once I determined that I could in fact get it to do what I needed it to do to help us sell books, I put the program on Tom's computer. Tom is using a Pentium 233 with 64 megabytes of RAM and a 6-gigabyte hard drive. As computers go, this is old, but not uncommonly old—perhaps a woolly mammoth, but not a dinosaur. Nevertheless, the program runs exceedingly slowly on Tom's computer. It takes approximately forty-five seconds to find a book and the same amount of time to save a description once it has been typed. This may not sound like terribly long, but after you've straightened your desk to perfection and filed your finger and then toe nails down to the cuticles the torpid performance is fairly annoying. A newer CPU, more RAM, and, more importantly, a faster hard drive (larger drives are usually faster) make a considerable difference. On the plus side, the program in its full network version only costs \$250 (plus the price of a new computer).

The manufacturers of BookTrakker are aware of the performance issue and are actively looking for ways to improve the speed. Similarly, other features of the program are evolving as more dealers use it and, consequently, bring their insight to it. No one likes to feel like a guinea pig (unless you're incarcerated and looking to significantly reduce your sentence), but any software application that is not being updated in this day and age is a program whose manufacturer either went belly-up or was bought-out by the competition. BookTrakker, though clearly evolving, is a sufficiently finished program that booksellers with a fast computer who are looking for a new database program should certainly download the trial version. Will we still be using it three years from now? Who knows, but if it lasts us that long I'll be happy. ■

Recent Books by Members

 **Gone Boy. A Walkabout. By Gregory Gibson.** New York, [et al.]: Kodansha International, 1999. 8vo, cloth over boards, dust jacket. 269 pages. ISBN 1-56836-292-7. \$24.

Reviewed by Rob Rulon-Miller

On December 14, 1992, Galen Gibson, the 18-year-old son of ABAA member Gregory Gibson, was fatally wounded by a fellow student, Wayne Lo, in a psychotic act of random violence on the "sleepy campus" of Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Two were killed and four were left wounded. In an attempt to understand how this tragedy unfolded, how *everyone's* blood was left on the proverbial floor, Gibson goes travelling down the boulevard of his and his family's torment. In the months and years that follow he rides through the bureaucracy of police departments and insurance companies, courses with gun dealers and gun collectors, and pulls up short at the dead end of state and local governments. During this "walkabout," Gibson finds his limits are not just the rules and regulations of commerce and government. Time and time again the limits Gibson faces are within: Mr. Gibson—not so much against the demons of the world—but Mr. Gibson against the demons he discovers in himself. No *Gentle Madness* this. Gibson, understandably enough, goes rather berserk and brings to the table all his anger, rage, drunkenness, as if seeking some perverse measure of parity with Wayne Lo's crime.

The book opens with a not unrelated anecdote of the great Boston Celtic forward, Kevin McHale, who, because he was unable to purchase shotgun shells on a hunting weekend in Massachusetts, set in motion a string of political and legislative events that liberalized Massachusetts gun laws. These laws made it possible for Galen's assailant to legally purchase an automatic assault weapon, specifically a Chinese-made SKS Type 56 Carbine. But this fact is not an apology for the events that unravel. Gibson is very pre-

cise on whom he places blame, and McHale is not one.

The officials of Simon's Rock College, notably the recalcitrant dean, Bernie Rogers, don't come off so clean. Although Gibson is nearly off his rails, he aches to understand what happened, and why. The walkabout becomes his catharsis. The officials at Simon's Rock had adequate forewarning that Wayne Lo had both a gun and ammo, and college security was actually alerted to the possibility of a shooting forty-five minutes before the first shots were fired, plenty of time to keep the tragedy from unfolding. He confronts the college administration and instead of sympathy gets "a rehearsed public relations statement." The college's refusal to take even an iota of blame infuriates Gibson to the point where he files a civil suit against Simon's Rock, one only settled after nearly seven years of legal wrangling.

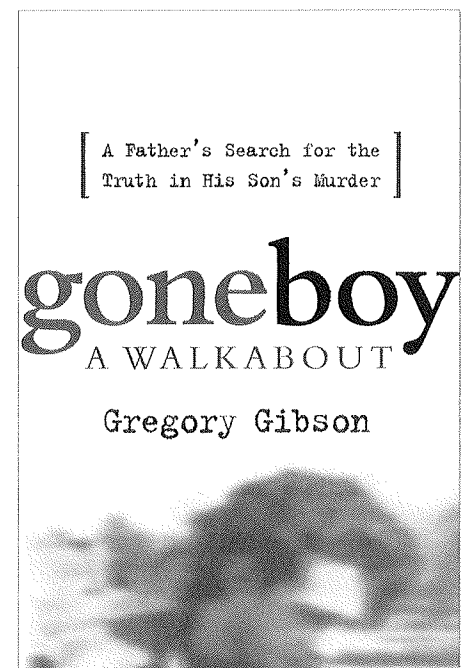
But imagine Gibson, the day after the news breaks nationally about his son's murder, greeting sympathizers, opening his front door to the nether world of confusion and grief, and remembering "nothing more vividly than the courage of those visitors...all awkward and pained and stupid, knowing that no matter what food or offers of help they brought, there was really nothing they could do but sit with us." Imagine, also, his wife Annie's and his trip to see the dean of the college, to hear the dean's account of the faculty's prior knowledge of the UPS delivery of Wayne Lo's ammunition, on the very day of the shootings, and the "genteel horror" they felt at hearing the dean's calm dismissal of the event as unforeseeable. "The atmosphere of those first days was remarkable. The air had a particular pearlish luminescence. Space had a palpable texture...suddenly we were right up close to the place where birth and death have their origins...That place is at the core of this world, after all the superficial covering has been ripped away...."

These sentiments come to us straight from Gibson's broken heart. Angry and heartbroken, Gibson plods on. He seeks

out Wayne Lo's friends to better know his son's murderer. He looks up Galen's friends (variously scattered along the northeast corridor) to learn more about the day of the shootings, about his life at Simon's Rock, about anything that might bear on the crime and its aftermath. He finds other Simon's Rock faculty and staff, eats with them, has coffee. He tracks down the defense psychiatrists and interviews them, filling in the blanks left over from their courtroom testimonies. He visits the gun shop where Wayne Lo purchased his gun, meets and talks at length with the owner. He even gets invited into the home of the previous owner of the rifle, a right-wing collector of guns. All these contacts provide bits and pieces to the puzzle that Gibson seems bent on solving.

At his lowest, Gibson wants a gun himself and is actually on the verge of purchasing the same type of SKS used to kill his son, which he will secret inside a ceiling panel in his shed. We can imagine him breaking it down, under cover of darkness, with a bottle of bourbon; then, half-crazed, building it back up again in the modified form that was used to kill

continued on next page



Recent Books

continued from previous page

Galen. (This happens anyway, except it was the murder weapon itself and all done under police supervision.)

But Gibson never quite loses it. Shameless about his shortcomings, he manages to engage all the furies. He cavorts with them, gobbles them up, spits them out. Every event, every minute step that leads up to the crime, the crime itself, and the pitiful aftermath all get put in a social or historical context, and with each encounter he comes up with a value he can use, a lesson learned with which to move ahead. So he's always there with an insight into the motives of the gun lobby, a descriptive analysis of proceedings in a courtroom, or a time line of the history of munitions—always keeping in touch with the bulwarks of history.

He fails only in his attempt to get to Wayne Lo himself (in prison for life at Norfolk, Massachusetts) but he does meet, finally and touchingly, with Lo's parents, immigrants from Taiwan who had settled in Billings, Montana, where they had started a restaurant. In this final chapter, Gibson is finally assuaged. Distance in time together with the knowledge gained from his walkabout seem at last to have mollified his grief. After their final meal with the Los, Gibson writes: "We drove home through Rockport, comparing our impressions of Mr. And Mrs. Lo and what they'd had to say. A mile or so out of town the road angled up and opened to a view of the ocean. I looked out at the Atlantic, misty and gray, and it struck me suddenly that whatever had taken our boy from us was far crueler in taking the Los' boy from them and leaving his animate body behind. It was not Galen, always so much with us, but this other, stolen...creature who truly was the *Gone Boy*."

The author tells me this is a bookseller's memoir, but that cuts it short. Not one in a thousand booksellers knows what Gibson knows now, nor likely ever will. True, there are references to books, to auctions, to an occasional colleague—a lot of the travel was mixed with scout-

ing, after all—but the trade is little more than a device used to bring both Mr. Gibson and the reader back from the anti-universe of bungling bureaucrats, oily lawyers, and wackos bearing assault rifles into the "normal" work-a-day world, if such a thing can be said to exist anymore. The book business keeps him sane and reminds us over and over again that we are reading a truly unique book rather than the scattered notes of a monster.

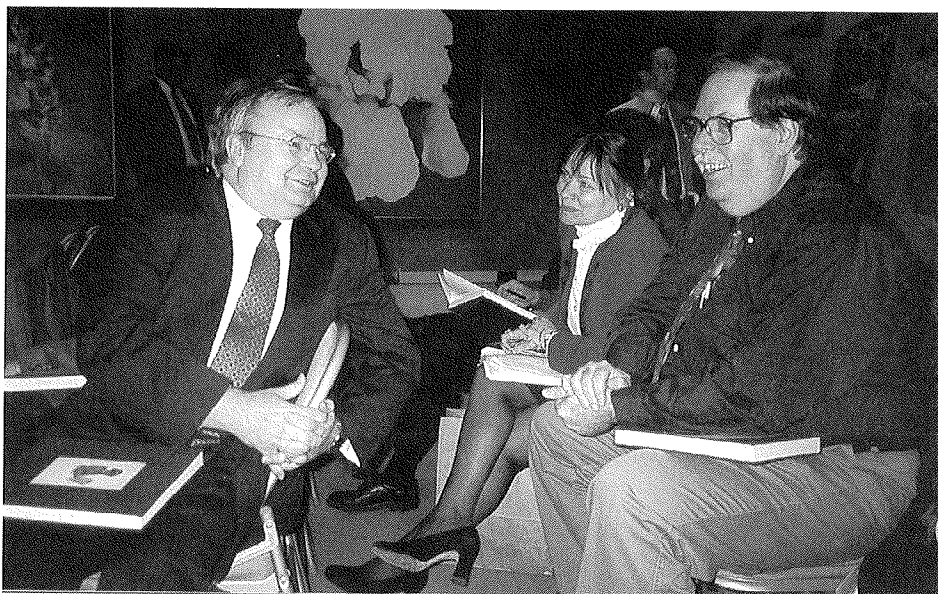
Gone Boy could easily have been maudlin in the hands of a lesser observer, or a less skilled writer, and throughout I felt as if being a bookseller held Gibson in good stead. The shadow of his trade glides silently over this book, softens its tone, keeps the perspective honest; and, in spite of all the rage on both sides of the equation, it is remarkably gentle and compassionate. I can't help but notice how deftly Gibson organizes his story, placing the events in context, all neatly laid out, catalogue-style—a descriptive blast of text often brilliantly punctuated with didactic afterburners. Gibson's fine research is very much in evidence in *Gone Boy*, and his command of scholarship serves him well in organizing the many threads he brings to bear on the text.

Gone Boy is a wrenching, sad, sleuth-like recreation of the events and personalities of the crime, of the murderer's madness, and the author's psychological

adventure into his own soul. It was, in Gibson's words, "at once a terrible blow and the greatest teaching the world had to offer." And a great teaching for us as well.


***Book Collecting 2000: A Comprehensive Guide.* By Allen and Patricia Ahearn.** New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2000. 8vo, paper-covered boards, dust jacket. 536 pages. ISBN 0-399-14574-5. \$45.

Includes chapters on Book Collecting, What to Collect, Sources for Books, Knowledgeable Buying, and Suggestions and Using This Guide, with subsections on Books as Objects, Economics, Investment, Proofs and Advance Review Copies, Paperback or Paperwraps, Literary Prize Winners, High Spots in Literature, The Internet, Catalogs, Specialist Dealers, Auctions, Bibliographies, Pricing, Dust-Jackets, Condition, and a glossary. These (mostly) useful sections are overshadowed by what now must be a proprietary "First Book List" that takes up nearly two-thirds of the volume, a listing of authors and their first books, with estimates of their values in 1986, 1995, and 2000. The section on Bargaining with Dealers is long overdue, and one can hope that every collector in the country will read it.



(L to R) Roland Folter (H. P. Kraus), along with Cynthia Buffington and David Szewczyk (Philadelphia Rare Books & Manuscripts), at Sotheby's in New York for The Frank T. Siebert Library Sale.

Book Reviews


 **A Descriptive Bibliography of the Primary Sources of Charles Bukowski.** By Aaron Krumhansl. Santa Rosa, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1999. 8vo, cloth. 204 pages. Trade edition: \$50; deluxe cloth with unpublished broadside poem: \$75.

Charles Bukowski: A Comprehensive Price-Guide and Checklist 1944-1999. By Al Fogel. Surfside, FL: Glen Daniels, 1999. Wraps, perfect bound. 192 pages. Trade edition: \$19.95; signed edition: \$35.

Reviewed by David Gregor

Two new bibliographical works on the writings of the poet and social maverick Charles Bukowski have been published, and both provide valuable reference information on one of the most influential writers of the last fifty years.

From the Black Sparrow Press comes *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Primary Publications of Charles Bukowski* by Aaron Krumhansl, a welcome and long overdue update to Sanford Dorbin's ground breaking work published in 1969. Since the release of the Dorbin bibliography, several works have been published that attempt to keep abreast of the prodigious output of Charles Bukowski, including the 1969 critical and bibliographical study by Hugh Fox, the 1983 bibliographic price guide by David Barker, and *A Comprehensive Checklist (1946-1982)* by Al Fogel (see below). All have been worthy productions and over the years each has added to our knowledge of the published works of Bukowski. Now, Krumhansl picks up where Dorbin left off thirty years ago and successfully brings up to date Bukowski's prodigious output. Krumhansl describes 159 of the poet's "primary" books, chapbooks, broadsides, and, in a few instances, those magazine appearances he believes to be of historical significance.

 Krumhansl has successfully employed the bibliographic methods Donald Gallup and Jeffrey Miller used in their respective works on T.S. Eliot and Paul Bowles, including, in the chronological

arrangement of entries, facsimile title-pages or cover transcriptions, binding sizes in inches and centimeters, publication prices, binding descriptions, number of copies printed, colophon descriptions, and notes giving additional pertinent information.

Krumhansl has improved upon the Dorbin bibliography (which only catalogued a total of thirty A and B items) by including a ninety-page center section where the covers and title pages of many of Bukowski's books, chapbooks, and less common ephemeral pieces are photographically reproduced in black and white. He has also added, where available, a breakdown of the number of publisher's, printer's, binder's, and file copies for many Black Sparrow titles, as well as much information about the writer's books published after Dorbin's work in 1969. But, in at least two instances, Krumhansl has not included information like the original price of two early important chapbooks, *The Genius of the Crowd* and *All the Assholes in the World and Mine*, which is readily available in Dorbin's bibliography. Regardless of these minor shortcomings, Krumhansl has done an excellent job of documenting the primary works of one of the most collected modern writers and provides those booksellers dealing Bukowski material a valuable and much needed resource tool.

Also just released is *Charles Bukowski: A Comprehensive Price-Guide and Checklist 1944-1999* by longtime Bukowski collector Al Fogel. This is an updated, enhanced version of Fogel's 1982 Bukowski checklist, and includes current prices and entries documenting over 1200 primary and secondary items: books, booklets, chapbooks, broadsides, recordings, ephemera, and pirated and unauthorized editions, as well as magazine and newspaper appearances that have not been reprinted. It is with the secondary works that Fogel's *Checklist* stands apart from the Krumhansl's *Bibliography*. Knowledge of the primary items has never

really been a stumbling block with Bukowski dealers or collectors; the tripstones have always been the magazine appearances, posters, bootlegged recordings, underground merchandise, and small press publications where Bukowski works first appeared. It's one thing to hear that these items exist, but it's another to know for certain that they do—and in what publication they appear.

Fogel has arranged his *Checklist* into four categories for easy reference: Books, Periodicals, Recordings, and Ephemera. The entries encompass Bukowski's first magazine appearance in 1944 through the most recent posthumous collection in 1999. In addition to the standard bibliographic information, Fogel has noted any limitations to the items and their current retail values; and he includes photographs of some of the rarest and most expensive items. The heart of Fogel's research is the listing of the more than 1000 magazine appearances by Bukowski—he even references some of Bukowski's original artwork. Fogel's *Price-Guide and Checklist* is a much needed addition to the Bukowski reference shelf and clearly the most comprehensive in scope.

Available from Glenn Daniels Publishing, P.O. Box 545886, Surfside, FL 33154; phone 305-868-9099. ■



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from all of its readers.
Send your contributions to:**

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400 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55102**

**Fax: 651-290-0646
Email: rulon@winternet.com**

New Members

The ABAA Newsletter welcomes the following new members accepted at the last Board of Governors' meeting in November, 1999, in Boston:

James E. Arsenault, HC 33 Box 230, Old Stage Road, Arrowsic, ME 04530; phone: 207-443-1510; email: jararbks@zwi.net

Hosea Thomas Baskin, Cumberland Rare Books, 46 Franklin Street, Northampton,

MA 01060; phone 413-587-0655; fax 413-585-0969; email baskin@crocker.com

Roger Friedman, One Mystic Circle, Tuxedo Park, NY 10987; phone and fax 914-351-5067; email rf@warwick.net

Seth Todd Kaller, Kaller's America Shoppe & Gallery, POB 173, Allenhurst, NJ 07711; phone 212-760-1776; fax 212-760-1775; email skaller@mindspring.com ■

Membership Updates

Marilyn Braiterman has an email correction: marilyn@braitermanbooks.com

Jutta Buck has a new address: 28 Old Conklin Hill Rd., Stanfordville, NY 12581

Carpe Diem Fine Books has a new address, phone, and fax: 502 Pierce Street, Monterey, CA 93940-2621; phone 831-643-2754; fax 831-648-1704

Erie Book Store has a new email address: eriebook@velocity.net

Garnett Books now has email: garnettbooks@mindspring.com

Gordon Gibson now has a website: www.viconet.com/~dggibson

William F. Hale has a new address: PO

Box 3831, Washington, DC 20007

Susan Heller has an email correction: hellersu@oh.verio.com

Elizabeth Phillips has a new address, phone, fax, and email: 27 Grand Ave., Nyack, NY 10960; phone 914-358-1117; fax 914-358-1087; email ephilbooks@aol.com

Ed Smith has a new address and phone: PO Box 4785, Rolling Bay, WA 98061; phone 206-780-8168

Russ Todd has a new address and phone: 10925 West Sequoia Drive, Sun City, AZ 85373; phone 623-875-5729

WellRead Books has an area code change: 631-261-7373 ■



Oscar Graham and Kevin MacDonnell at the 23rd Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair.

The deadline for submissions to the next Newsletter is

April 24, 2000

Send your contributions to:
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