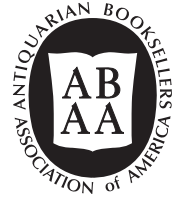




The A B A A NEWSLETTER



VOLUME SIXTEEN, NUMBER 3 ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

SUMMER 2005

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In Memoriam

Leona Rostenberg
New York, New York

Few longtime ABAA members needed to search their memories when they heard "Leona died." She was memorable and unique. Leona Rostenberg died in her 97th year on March 17, 2005, in New York City, where she lived for all of her life.

She was president of the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America, Inc., from 1972 to 1974 as well as active in its inception in 1949 along with her lifelong companion, Madeleine Stern. They both loved the ABAA, fondly fussing and fuming about the vagaries of the Board and the membership and the book business in general. On many occasions they bemoaned the closing of the Book Center at Rockefeller Center in the late 1980's, feeling that it provided an unparalleled venue for ABAA dealers and their books. I suspect Leona never forgave me for not reopening it 15 years ago.

She was born on December 28, 1908, graduated from New York University in 1930, and met Madeleine the same year, then a Barnard College freshman. After graduate studies at Columbia, her dissertation on the politics of 17th century printers was rejected. Leona gave up the idea of an academic career, working for Austrian book dealer Herbert Reichner, a trying experience but it provided her with five years of solid foundation in the antiquarian book business. In 1944, she opened her own business with a small stock of early printed books concerned with the history of printing. A year later,



Leona Rostenberg.

Madeleine left a tenured teaching position to join her, beginning a successful 60-year business in the antiquarian book world.

While Leona was ABAA president, the International League held their annual meeting in Japan. As a joke Madeleine gave her records (LP's) of Japanese language lessons. Leona took it seriously, and to the amusement and appreciation of their Japanese hosts and guests, gave her speech in Japanese.

Leona was a serious scholar and researcher and wrote five books: *English Publishers in the Graphic Arts, 1599 – 1700*; *Literary, Political, Scientific, Religious & Legal Publishing, Printing & Bookselling in England, 1551 – 1700 (2 volumes)*; *The Minority Press & The English Crown: A Study in Repression*,

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The Leaf Book Considered

by John Windle

This talk was given at the Newberry Library on May 20, 2005 as part of the Leaf Book Symposium arranged by the Caxton Club of Chicago and accompanied by an exhibition curated by Joel Silver and a catalogue of the exhibition, Disbound and Dispersed published by the Caxton Club and available from Oak Knoll Books. Speakers included Michael Thompson, Chicago attorney, president of the Caxton Club and leaf book collector; Sarah Harding, Associate Professor of Law and co-director Institute for Law and the Humanities at Chicago-Kent College of Law; Paul Gehl, Custodian, John M. Wing Foundation on the History of Printing at the Newberry Library; Max Yela, head of Special Collections at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee; and myself representing the leaf book publishing and dealing trades. It was attended by some 60 people and lasted three hours, followed by a reception at which much further discussion took place. I have edited my talk from the spoken text for publication in print form.

In 1940 the first check list of leaf books was compiled by Miles Standish Slocum; it recorded 20 titles. In 2005, John Chalmers recorded 84 leaf books before 1940 and about 150 since 1940 for a total of around 250 titles if I include a few Chalmers omitted. Although T.F. Dibdin's *Greek and Latin Classics* (4th edition, 1825) and the British and Foreign Bible Society's Catalogues in the 1850's predate it, Francis Fry's Bible leaf book

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ILAB Book Fairs

2005

October 28-30

Boston, MA (ABAA)
Hynes Convention Center

October 28-30

Sydney, Australia
(ANZAAB)
Masonic Center

November 4-5

London, England (ABA)
Old Chelsea Town Hall

January 27-29

Stuttgart, Germany (VDA)
Württembergischer
Kunstverein

February 17-19

Los Angeles, CA (ABAA)
Westin Century Plaza

For a calendar including non-ILAB book fairs, visit www.abaa.org

Letters to the Editor

From: Harold R. Nestler

Many thanks for your fine review of my book in the ABAA Newsletter Spring 2005.

I appreciate it very much.

I just hope that other dealers write down their memoirs. It is important to keep alive the history of the antiquarian book trade before the advent of mind-

numbing technology.

Just today I was reading that even some libraries have closed for lack of patrons – patrons who are supposedly intelligent beings, but who think the internet can supply all the knowledge they will ever need.

It is time to go to the Post Office and mail books to a couple of customers who are not afraid to buy books from catalogs.

THE ABAA PUBLICATION OF



ROGER E. STODDARD'S ADDRESS

**No More Mr. Nice Guy;
or How to Get Along When Roger's Not Around Anymore**

Delivered before the ABAA and ILAB guests
April 30, 2005, at the Grolier Club

Will Soon be Available in
A limited edition of 250 copies,
designed and printed by the Poltroon Press, Berkeley, California

**\$10.00 per copy. Orders are now being taken.
All proceeds go to the ABAA Benevolent Fund.**

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House Calls: Movie Mania II

by Arnold Herr

The Melrose Cannonball (July 1988)

“Here, attach this spring to your forehead.” Morty held up a coil spring from a long-dead Studebaker whose carcass littered the back of his book shop. We were constantly stumbling over parts of this car which were lying underfoot and heaped higgledy-piggledy all over the place. According to Morty, junk like this always came in handy when you least expected it. That’s why it was never thrown away.

“What the hell are ya talkin’ about?” I respectfully queried.

“Use this duct tape to hold it place.” He handed me the roll and the spring. “You’re going for a ride.”

I taped the spring to my forehead; it looked like a gigantic round tefillin.

Me: “Will I need to take some clean clothes.”

Morty: “It’s not that kind of a trip. Jack unearthed my old Zacchini circus cannon from the inner sanctum upstairs in the bargain basement.”

Me: “You mean the inner scrotum, don’t you?”

Morty: “It gave me a great idea.”

Me: “Saints preserve us.”

Morty: “You know how it takes forever

to get stuff to and from the warehouse across the street? With all the traffic out there on Melrose and having to go down to the corner to cross the road, it’s just a big waste of time.”

Me: “And finding the cannon gave you an idea.”

Morty: “We shoot the boxes of books out of the cannon and across the street. Simplicity itself.”

Me: “How do I fit into this picture?”

Morty: “You’re making the maiden voyage.”

Me: “Why not Bob? Why not Claude?”

Morty: “Claude’s too chunky. Bob has bad feet.”

Me: “What do his feet matter? He’ll probably die anyway.”

Morty: “You’ll fit easily into the barrel of the cannon; you’re slim-hipped.”

Me: “And small-brained, for an even better fit. Why the spring?”

Morty: “For the return trip. You’ll hit the facade of the building about five feet above the door. The g-forces will be up around 12 somewhere, but don’t worry, it’ll be duck soup. Just before you hit the stucco, you drop the box of books. Bob’ll be underneath and catch it. The spring hits the building - “BOING!” - you fly

back and you’re home free.”

A long pause -- a really long pause.

Morty: “Whaddya worried about? It’ll work fine. Claude’s done the math.

Me: Claude hasn’t learned yet how to make change. Show me in my job profile where it says I have to be a human cannonball.”

And then we were outside on the sidewalk. Claude was munching a candy bar; Jack was sipping a Mexican Edsel (V8 veggie juice and tequila). Bob was standing across the street at the warehouse door. I glanced at the Zacchini which seemed to be aimed higher than the building across the street.

Me: “Shouldn’t that be aimed a little lower? The way it is now, I’ll end up in Catalina.”

Morty: “Everything’ll be hunky-dory. You’ll see. Where’s your sense of adventure?”

Me: “Where’s yours? You’re slimmer-hipped than I am.”

Morty: “I’m allergic to muzzle velocity. Besides, you’re fully insured.”

Me: “Insured?”

Morty: “By Lloyds of Long Beach.”

Me: “I am not reassured. Who’s the guy with the cigarette leaning against the black van?”

Morty: “The county coroner.”

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ABAA does Book Expo at Javits

by Ed Smith

Book Expo America was held June 3-5, 2005, at the Jacob Javits Exhibition Center in New York City. This was the second year the ABAA has had a booth at this huge book industry event where one can experience the entire scope of book publishing worldwide, all in one place, all at one time. This is the premier event for booksellers, retailers, librarians, educators, rights professionals, publishers and anyone involved in the world of books. The ABAA fits right in with this crowd, and enhances it.

The main speaker this year was comedian and actor/author Billy Crystal. Another attraction was the



Exhibitors get ready for another busy day.

“Real Time” guy, Bill Maher, who gave a talk on Saturday night. Both events had standing room only. Working the ABAA booth were Liane Wade, Susan Dixon, and Ed Smith (PR). Directories were prized by librarians, museum staff, and booksellers. Shirts and caps were sold along with DVD’s of BIBLIOMANIA. Bookmarks were also a hit. More than a dozen booksellers inquired about membership, and many people who stopped by the booth were familiar with the ABAA and were glad to see us at the show. Other attendees wanted directories in order to contact members for appraisals, and some even wanted to sell their collections. 2,000 exhibitors had booths on the main floor, and, one floor down, held more. 500 authors were signing at the show and included Mike Wallace,

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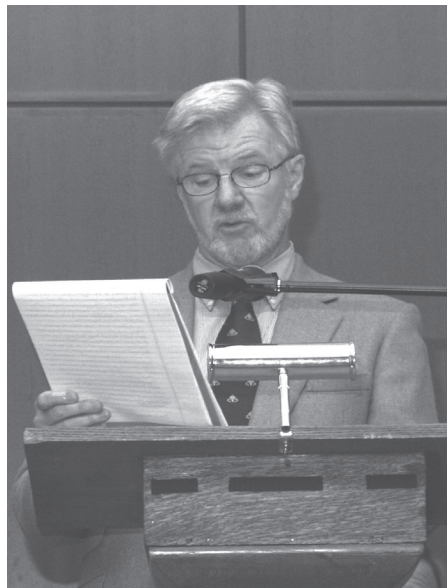
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is the first book to describe itself as a leaf book by mentioning on the title-page the leaves to be found as part of the publication, and this soon became standard for the genre. The first American leaf book was issued in 1897, the 7th leaf book overall. In 1924 the Book Club of California published its first leaf book, the *Hypnerotomachia*, and since then it has published more leaf books than any other publisher which is an important fact to recall when considering the economics of leaf books. Firstly, the Book Club of California did not, and still does not, have the same requirements of profitability that a commercial or small press publisher has, and to some extent this is also true of rare book dealers who are the next most prolific publishers of leaf books. In the San Francisco Bay area there has been a flourishing small press scene as well as a good number of rare book dealers for almost a century; both printers and dealers have largely been supported by wealthy collectors and institutions who have underwritten publication costs, thus enabling the printers to take on jobs that commercial printers would probably be unwilling to consider. Many of these presses also receive substantial commissions from the Book Club of California for books, sometimes more than one a year, and the Book Club of California's publishing program has become quite a large undertaking. As of May 2005, the Club has 14 books accepted and in various stages of production, with several more in the wings.

I have been a member of the Book Club since 1971, edited its Quarterly Newsletter for some years in the 1970's, and am currently on the Board of Directors, so I am familiar with its history and operation. From my first days in the book trade in London in the 1960's I knew David Magee and Warren Howell, and when I moved to San Francisco in 1971, I spent many happy hours with David and Dorothy Magee, while also working for Howell. Since David virtually single-handedly launched the Book Club's leaf

book program as well as his own leaf book publications, and since Warren Howell was also a publisher of leaf books as well as involved with the Book Club's publishing program, I can fairly claim to have learned the leaf book trade from the originators of it. And I might also add that it is largely a California industry. The Book Club, then, had access to excellent printers, and a subscriber base that virtually guaranteed that every book would sell out. It was a natural progression for the local rare book dealers, John Howell-Books, David Magee, Dawson's Book Shop, and more recently Bernard M. Rosenthal, Kenneth Karmiole, Zeitlin and Ver Brugge, Philip Pirages (just over



John Windle at the Newberry Library.

the California border in Oregon), and myself, finding ourselves with a fragment of an important or interesting book, to bring it to the attention of the Book Club, the Roxburghe Club, the Zamorano Club, the Sacramento Book Collector's Club, all of whom have published leaf books. If one of these clubs did not pick up the project, it was not much of a leap to publish it oneself since we know eminent scholars who write about such books like Christopher de Hamel or Paul Needham. We know the institutions and private collectors who buy such books, and we have frequent and usually friendly relations with the printers who typically will have printed our letterhead and business cards, even occasionally our catalogues.

At this point the economics become deceptively (and I use that word advisedly) simple and thus, perhaps unfortunately, tempting. Rather than discuss abstractly the theories of leaf book economics, I will instead provide concrete details about the two leaf books I have published, whether they could be regarded as financial successes or failures, and what I have learned from my own efforts and from prior experience with the efforts of others. My first project was conceived in 1994 when I was reading an auction catalogue of a sale in London that listed a Kelmscott Chaucer, published in 1896. It is by common consensus one of the greatest printed books in Western history and has, since the day of publication, always been extraordinarily expensive. What intrigued me about this copy was that it had been through a fire and a flood and had subsequently been largely neglected. The leaves had been soaked through, causing the red ink used by Morris as highlights in the borders and text to bleed through the pages so that the entire book had blotchy pink stains in the margins, text, and woodcut initials, borders and illustrations. The house estimate was low, about a tenth or less of what the book normally sold for. I had had a run of copies through my shop as happens sometimes in the book trade and had sold six copies in the prior two years including two to the same person (who gave them away). Having taken copies to all the major bookfairs, I had heard collectors tell me many times how they could never imagine affording a complete copy but if I ever came across a page or two they'd love to have a fragment. I had sold a double-page spread, on vellum no less, to a sophisticated New York collector and I felt confident that a leaf book would be successful. Since Philip Duschnes had published the only Kelmscott Chaucer leaf book in 1941 in an edition of 150 copies, I argued that if a reasonable number of leaves could be resurrected from this wreck of a book it would be well worth the effort of re-issuing it, especially since the Duschnes leaf book consisted almost entirely of unillustrated leaves and very rarely

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comes on the market. But my gamble was enormously risky; water damage, smoke damage, mud stains in the margins where the book had lain in the dirt, squeezed flat and glued crudely into a library buckram case, it was not a promising case but I went ahead and purchased the book for \$7,450. Everyone who had seen it thought I was mad and a dealer friend took the trouble to call me and tell me what a terrible mistake I had made.

The book arrived and I believed I was right. It was a disaster. I doubt if one person in a hundred would have imagined it would clean up but I decided to give it a shot. I detached a badly stained plain text leaf and sent it over to Karen Zukor, the doyenne of conservators in the Bay area, with the simple instructions that she could try anything at all to see if the leaf could be cleaned up. Karen called a few days later with the astonishing news that it had cleaned up just fine, the red bleed had washed right out, the smoke and mud damage came right off, the paper was of such good quality that it didn't need re-sizing, and that the red and black ink had not run or faded at all. I took the leaf and put it next to the same leaf in a complete copy; the match was perfect. With very mixed feelings, for I had never done this before, I took apart the whole book, making piles of double-page spreads, chapter openings with woodcuts and elaborate initials, pages with woodcuts, pages with woodcut borders, and plain text pages. Aside from those leaves that were irreparably damaged, I was left with 101 leaves with woodcut decorations and a large pile of plain leaves, all of which I had Karen wash. It was not too expensive and by the time she had finished I had spent another \$2,500.

Reviewing the literature around the Chaucer it was obvious that there was nothing left to say about it that had not already been definitively written by renowned scholars and historians of the book. I didn't want to reprint some article and so I hit upon the one subject that had never been broached before as far as

I knew – the commercial history of the Chaucer. I owned a copy of Quaritch's 1896 catalogue of the books he took to New York to sell to the great collectors of the day and it included a *Hypnerotomachia*, a Nuremberg Chronicle, a Shakespeare First Folio, and a King James Bible – thus I had a frozen moment in time when the Chaucer, published at 20 guineas, could be compared with the other books at Quaritch's listed prices. I then created a simple chart showing auction prices from 1966 to 1993 so one could see that the ratio of values between these five blue-chip landmarks of book making had essentially remained the same over a period of close to 30 years, as they had done in the sixty years prior to that allowing for the slow-down of the depression and the long lag in book price increases from World War II well into the 1960's. I wrote an essay illustrated with a selection of prices across the century, and commissioned Andrew Hoyem at the Arion Press to print it for me in an edition of a hundred copies with an illustrated leaf, plus some 300 folders with a plain text leaf. The production of this in a nicely made portfolio cost another \$6,750.

I was now into the project for about \$18,000, not including my time, plus another \$2,000 or so in incidental costs such as mailing, advertising, etc. Based on auction prices and dealer prices for the Duschnes leaf book and a rough value per leaf of all the illustrated leaves divided into the retail price of the complete book, I reckoned that I could price my book on a sliding scale, with a premium price for the opening page double-spread of \$4,500, \$1,500 for the colophon leaf, \$675 for book and chapter openings, \$575 for better woodcut pages, \$500 for the regular woodcut pages, and \$175 for the text leaves with woodcut borders. I announced the publication as soon as I had the first copies in hand from Hoyem and immediately the two super de luxe copies and all the \$675 copies sold, with the \$575 copies selling out within a year along with about half of the \$500 copies and the \$175 copies. This added up to about \$50,000 in sales and left me with about \$30,000 in unsold copies, not including trade discounts or the plain

leaves in paper wrappers which I did not price. Thus I could count on a total profit of roughly \$60,000 before discounts. I decided that it would be fitting to donate the text leaves free of charge which I did by giving them as keepsakes to various book groups such as the Roxburghe-Zamorano joint meeting, the Colophon Club, etc., as well as to friends and customers who didn't want to buy the book. Amusingly, a well-known librarian who collects the history of paper asked me for an example and I gave him leaf a1, which is the first printed leaf of the Chaucer and bears nothing but the lower case letter 'a' at the foot of the leaf – perfect for his collection. The rest of the edition slowly kept selling, 3-5 copies a year mostly to dealers, and I finally declared it "out of print" in January 2005. A CPA might well argue that over that period of time I didn't make any money but we bookdealers have our own economics which defy comprehension; no less an authority than Nicolas Barker once declared that the rare book business was a version of the Indian rope trick that could not be explained or understood except by those who practice it. Louis Weinstein, arguably the most successful rare book dealer of my generation, used to tell the story of two rare book dealers who were marooned on a desert island. A year later they were both millionaires. Quibble or not, I think of it as one of the more profitable ventures I have undertaken thus far in the rare book business. What I learned from this was that a leaf book at a reasonable or at least justifiable price will sell 40-50 copies in about a year. After that it will keep selling slowly but may not sell out completely for a decade or more. This is not based just on my book, but, by comparing notes with several others who have published similar books, I established that our experiences were quite similar though the profit margins varied widely.

I was not invited here to debate the legal and ethical issues that creating leaf books raise as others here are expert in such matters, and attorney and collector Michael Thompson has written at length on the subject in the book that

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accompanies the Caxton Club exhibition *Disbound and Dispersed: the Leaf Book Considered*, though a few comments will be appended at the end of my essay. Like Thompson, I do not believe it's a black and white issue, and I do believe that the benefits as well as the drawbacks are well known and generally understood. What I believe I do bring to the discussion is some degree of openness and honesty about the financial aspects of breaking books. From Gabriel Wells, who first broke a Gutenberg Bible, to the present day, rare book dealers have broken books because it can be a profitable way of selling what is otherwise unsaleable. A dealer at the very top end like W. Graham Arader (who explained his methods at length in a profile in *The New Yorker* some years ago) is typically anticipating a gross return on his investment of somewhere between five and 10 times the investment over a period of about seven years. This sounds like a lot but when you do the math and deduct the very considerable carrying costs of such an operation anything less than a five-time mark-up will probably lose you money when adjusted for inflation, the cost of money, etc. Certainly, financial experts I have talked to have been quite frank that neither the book business as a whole nor breaking books specifically meet the criteria that a serious business investor would bring to bear when seeking a good return on an investment.

Arader and others following his lead have put together syndicates to buy, break, and sell color plate books, manuscripts, and atlases which have certainly returned more for the investment than the profit a dealer could expect to make selling the book complete and unbroken, with a very few exceptions. It is a highly capital-intensive form of business however, which explains the need for partnerships, syndicates etc., and I suspect most people in the book collecting and dealing worlds would not bother to put money into such a venture unless they either had more money than they knew how to in-

vest or they genuinely loved the business. There are better and safer places to put large sums of money, that will generate reasonable rates of return and preserve capital without as much risk. Whenever investing in a multiple, you are at risk for the market to become (however temporarily) oversupplied and your investment becoming illiquid at best and devalued at worst, possibly for several years with no return. The British Rail Pension Fund, to take just one well known example, lost money on all of its purchases in multiples such as rare books and prints, in fact on anything other than manuscripts, paintings, and unique books, despite using the most renowned experts and auction house advisors in the world. Although the far more modest world of leaf book manufacturing hardly merits mentioning in the same breath, it is nonetheless subject to the same market forces and its economics are essentially the same.

I would not be honest if I denied that when I risked my small amount of capital on my first leaf book it was for any reason other than that I saw a substantial potential for profit for relatively little risk. It is a well-known adage in the investment world that the best investment is in something you know, and the better you know it the safer your investment is. If I know anything it is the world of books; in retrospect, had I taken that same \$20,000 and invested in Microsoft, Nike, and Apple, all of whose products I used, understood, trusted and believed in, I would have had a far greater return over the same ten-year period. But hindsight is always 20/20 and at the time they seemed far riskier than a Kelmscott Chaucer, an investment in which I was quite sure I could manage to my benefit while controlling my own destiny. At the risk of seeming disingenuous, I must also say that the fact that this Chaucer had been deemed unsalvageable assuaged my feelings of unease at the point when I was cognizant of the fact that I could choose to return all the washed leaves to a binder and have a new book created. It would not be a Kelmscott Chaucer. It would be an assemblage of leaves bound up to look like one, and I decided to go ahead with the leaf book for the reasons already

touched on – bringing leaves to people who could never afford the book; saving an object that was otherwise unsalvageable; and, diminishing my own risk while maximizing my potential for profit and creating a small but steady cash flow, which is always a benefit in this business.

From the day I went ahead to the present, I have never been taken to task for breaking that Chaucer, and I have been thanked by many people who purchased and enjoyed owning a leaf, especially as many of the earlier buyers got to choose the very leaf or leaves they wanted. This, coupled with the reasonably successful return on my outlay, inspired me to do it again on a tiny scale. In 1998 I came across an ugly cloth volume of 13 of the 17 woodcuts by Blake for Thornton's *Virgil*. They had been given to Caroline Newton by her father A. Edward Newton, and were glued onto cheap paper, and were beginning to brown and suffer damage. I had owned copies of the complete book and, like the Chaucer, there were many Blake collectors who would have loved to own a single woodcut, were such a thing ever available. I purchased it for \$1,200, commissioned an essay by Bob Essick on the woodcuts, and went ahead and published 513 copies in 1999, the first de luxe copy with the fine, large woodcut for \$2,500 and the remaining 12 with an original woodcut at \$1250; the balance with just the essay was priced at \$30 a copy, less 40% to Oak Knoll who distributed 250 copies, netting me about \$4,500. The de luxe copies sold out at once for \$17,500; I sold about 100 of the remaining copies, I gave away 100 copies to book clubs as before, and I have about 50 copies left which sell 3-5 copies a year. After printing, illustrating, distributing, and advertising costs which ran proportionately about the same as the Chaucer, I have profit to date of about \$15,000. Although the "purists" again might object to taking an intact object, however imperfect, and destroying it, I weighed against that the pleasure the few buyers of the original woodcuts derived from their purchase, and the benefit to Blake scholarship at large derived from

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Essick's superb and highly lauded essay which otherwise would never have been printed and distributed at all. If this sounds a bit self-serving, so be it; even *The Book Collector*, my harshest critic, lauded Essick's essay though their reviewer couldn't resist knocking the gorgeous Japanese paper wrappers we used for the binding.

From what I have written it is probably evident that I am, though hesitantly and even a little defensively, proud of my two ventures into leaf book publishing. I honestly believe that they bring more to the world of scholarship and collecting than any damage caused by their creation. I don't see the world as black and white and I do believe, perhaps unfashionably in these days of moral extremism and purist certitude across our country (and, indeed, much of the world), that there is a large grey area between good and evil, whether in religious conflict or intellectual property discussions. I would generally argue that breaking any complete book is flat-out wrong and that removing an incomplete or damaged book from an early or significant binding is flat-out wrong, and unless I could see a truly compelling cause I very much doubt if I would create or support the creation of more leaf books. That is easy for me to say, you may observe, since I've had my turn and made a modest but decent profit taking it. But in the larger scheme of things it is my hope that future leaf books, for surely there will be some (see below), will be created in full cognizance of the ethical, legal, and financial challenges involved. By shedding the light of day on a hitherto dark and hush-hush area of the book and publishing trade it is my hope to help people make more informed and sensible choices that will enrich and not diminish the world of books to which we have all, in one way or another, devoted our lives. Not every leaf book is per se a bad thing, and nor is publishing leaf books a financial slam-dunk either. To identify the proper copy of a proper book for the proper treatment as a leaf book is

not as easy as it sounds and it is getting harder and harder as important books in any condition become more and more expensive. The days of buying a Kelm-scott Chaucer in any condition for \$7500 are over and yet only a few days ago (I write at the end of May) the Book Club of California purchased a copy of the first edition of *The Wizard of Oz* lacking all but two of the plates with the intention of



Panelists at the lecture: John Windle, Max Yela, Paul Gehl, and Sarah Harding.

creating a leaf book – the budget for the purchase was \$900, it sold for \$287.50 with commissions. I'm sure that a fine essay by Peter Hanff, and a lovely printing and binding job by one of our many local fine printers, will see the Club issue yet another distinguished, useful, and pleasurable book in its long history of leaf book publications.

The guide lines that seemed to be agreed on at the end of the symposium might be summed up as follows: a book could be considered as a candidate for breaking if (1) it is of no cultural or historical significance as an object per se in the copy under consideration, (2) that the assessment of (1) include but not be limited to an imperfect text, a binding of no value or intrinsic interest, and a lack of any association value, (3) that accompanying the leaf there will be text that enhances scholarship and connoisseurship of the book, (4) that affordable copies of such a text be made available a little or no cost to those unable to acquire the original due to scarcity or cost and, (5) that the provenance of the copy dismembered be disclosed and include a full account of its history, acquisition, and disassembly so that it retains historical integrity as an object even if it no longer

physically exists as a discrete object. (1)-(4) have often if not always been adhered to in most 20th-century leaf books, but curiously (5) has virtually never been included. These crippled orphans have little or no historical standing and, having been ignored and rejected by libraries and private collectors, their disassembly has seemed unworthy of comment. Perhaps too, the publishers don't wish to draw

attention to how unwanted the item they are now trying to make so desirable once was. That is ironical, but it seems right in the future for leaf book publishers to disclose the full history of the copy they are offering leaf by leaf.

I must end by

congratulating the Caxton Club on publishing such a distinguished volume so quickly and inexpensively, with essays by Christopher de Hamel, Michael Thompson, Daniel Mosser, Joel Silver (who also selected and mounted what will be a traveling exhibition), and a bibliography of almost 250 leaf books by John Chalmers that is now the only definitive text on the leaf book's long and interesting publishing history. The exhibition was organized by the Club's Exhibitions Committee, and chaired by Kim Coventry, an exhibitions consultant in Chicago. By not shirking the controversial issues surrounding leaf books, and publishing important scholars on both sides of the controversy, the Caxton Club has done a great service to the world of rare book collecting and, ironically, sparked a renewed interest in collecting leaf books.

The exhibition is open at the Newberry Library until July 16th. It will run from November 5th to December 31st at the San Francisco Public Library, from January 18, 2006, to March 19th at the Houghton Library at Harvard, and from April 3rd to May 26th at the Lilly Library at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. ■

Herr

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And then after the charge and wadding were packed into the cannon, I was stuffed into the barrel. A box of books was placed in my outstretched hands.

"Drop the box just before you hit the wall," Morty yelled.

"Bon voyage," said Claude.

"Clench your sphincter," advised Jack.

"Blow it out your barracks-bag," thought I.

Then someone lit the fuse and the concussion from the explosion behind me caused my eardrums to touch. I was aware of flame and smoke and noise. My butt was on fire. I thought: "Where's a snow cone when you need one?" As I arced south across Melrose, a flock of pigeons was winging west. So many pigeons. It's hard for me to detail exactly what happened when we collided, but I was very aware of feathers and beaks and guano and blood. I was conscious too of the whistling of air as I sailed through it. I looked down and saw cars and trucks below me; I saw a beautiful, braless brunette in a Mercedes convertible who was oblivious to my flight. Probably just as well she didn't look up and see me. I would have been hard pressed to look cool. I spat out a few feathers and glanced ahead and saw I was approaching the building right quick. I could see Bob waiting to catch the box; I dropped it. Almost immediately, I was knocked nearly senseless. The spring and I hit the front of the building. The spring compressed. So did I. For a fraction of a second, I think the spring and I had a combined height of four inches and a circumference of eighteen feet.

And then I began the return trip. I was traveling backwards and couldn't see where I was going. Not that it mattered; not that I cared. Someone once remarked that Morty had the ability to cloud men's minds; not so, he had the ability to scramble men's minds. What sensible person would allow himself to be fired out of a cannon? I had wanted to be a bookseller, not a projectile.

And as I flew backwards, time unwound....

April 1977:

Me: "How many more flights do we have to climb?"

I had stopped halfway between the 11th and 12th floors of a swanky old apartment building on Rossmore in Hollywood and stood gasping for breath. The elevators had crapped out and we had to hoof it up the stairs. Morty was lying on the floor of the landing below me. For a moment I thought he was dead. A nickel rolled out of his pocket and his hand reached out to catch it; I knew he was still alive.

Morty (wheezing): "She's up on 14."

Me: "Does this building have a 13th floor?"

Morty: "How the hell do I know! What does that have to do with anything?"

Me: "Some buildings don't."

Morty: "And some buildings have elevators that work."

Me: "I think we're halfway between 11 and 12. If there's no 13, we're only one and a half from 14."

Morty: "You're one and a half from 14; I'm still on 11. I think I'll die here on 11."

Me: "It's not that much farther; you can make it. Here, let me carry the dolly the rest of the way."

When we reached the 14th floor I remembered that Mae West lived in this building.

Morty: "Where?"

Me: "In the penthouse."

Morty: "Where's that?"

Me: "Another four or five flights up."

Morty: "To hell with her. If she wants to meet me, she's gonna have to walk down here. I ain't going up another flight of stairs."

A little grandmotherly babushka answered our ring.

Me: "Mrs. Przyslmnskwycz?"

Mrs. P: "Yes?"

Me: "Am I pronouncing your name correctly?"

Mrs. P: "Close enough."

Morty: "We're here about the books you're selling."

Mrs. P: "Yes, they belonged to my husband, the dead dentist."

Me: "May we see them?"

I wish we hadn't. Book club fiction,

old medical and dental textbooks, Readers' Digest condensed books, you get the picture.

Morty: "I hate to buy more of this crap..."

Me: "You have so much already."

Morty: "...but I've already climbed 14 stories..."

Me: "Thirteen. There's no 13th floor."

Morty: "...and I'm not leaving empty-handed."

Me: "I'm not carrying them down those stairs. I can see the car down below. How about we just throw them out the window? Y'know, instant antiques and all that."

Mrs. Przyslmnskwycz (tapping Morty on the arm): "What size are you?"

Morty: "I don't know. I don't get my clothing from stores."

Me: "Dumpsters. He gets them from dumpsters."

The doorbell rang. The Babushka answered it and Mae West walked in. (How did she know we were in the building?)

Mae: "Who are these two bozos? I saw them coming up the stairs."

Me: "Well, you've always said 'come up and see me sometime.'"

Mae: "I didn't expect anyone to take me up on it."

Morty: "No one will if the elevator is always on the fritz."

Mae: "You guys look kinda hinky to me."

Morty: "We look more exhausted than hinky."

Mrs. P: "I was going to show them the wardrobe left behind by my husband, the dead dentist."

Me: "You want to sell your husband's wardrobe?"

Mrs. P: "My husband - Herbie, the dead dentist - was such a smart dresser."

One side of hallway leading from the living room to the bedrooms was a long clothing closet with sliding doors. Mrs. P slid open a door and pulled out a sleeve, offering it to Morty."

Mrs. P: "Feel the material."

Morty: "Nice."

Mrs. P: "It's gabardine."

Morty: "Uh...how tall was your husband?"

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Herr

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Mrs. P: "My husband, the dead dentist?"

Morty: "Yeah, that one."

Mrs. P: "He was 6' 6" and weighed 300 pounds."

Me: "Morty over here is 5' 7" and weighs 135 lbs. How do you think he'd look wearing one of these suits?"

Mrs. P: "He'll look fine; he'll grow into them."

Morty: "I'm 54 years old. I stopped growing in 1936."

Mae: "Did you feel the material?"

Morty: "Yeah."

Mae: "Feel it again."

Me (to Mae): "Are you on her payroll?"

Mrs. P: "Did you notice all these shoes? They belonged to my husband..."

All: "...the dead dentist."

So, in addition to buying all those crummy books, Morty bought the entire wardrobe belonging to Herbie, the dead dentist and peeled off \$400.00 from the roll of about \$25,000.00 or so he always carries with him. You never know what you might buy and so many people these days won't accept a check.

Then the fun began: we tossed all the schlock out the window. The clothing went first and the books followed. It was kinda fun throwing stuff out like that and watching it all drop. Clothing, books, TV set, stereo, inflatable Judy-doll, Babushka. We had really gotten into the swing of it.

Me: "Wait a minute. Did one of us toss out the Babushka?"

Morty: "You mean Mrs. Przyslmnskycz? Am I pronouncing it right?"

Me: "Close enough."

Morty: "And where's Mae West?"

We both stopped to look at the lawn and pavement below, but neither of us could spot the bodies of two old ladies down there...

But let me jump ahead for a moment to a point later that same day as Morty trimmed 38 inches from the legs of a pair of trousers from Herbie, the dead dentist. After stapling up the cuffs, Morty was

left with a pair of pants with a 3" inseam. But since the crotch of the trousers hung down to his ankles, Morty was pleased with the fit.

Morty: "I can carry an awful lot in the pockets of these pants: my four wallets, flashlights, cash, keys..."

Jack: "...an 11th edition of the Britannica..."

And now back to our story in progress: to our great relief, the old gals were not thrown from the windows; they were in the kitchen of the widow of Herbie, the dead dentist, preparing to sit down to a snack of cold, gray gruel. They offered us some.

Morty: "I love gruel."

It looked like bad poi. I declined.

Morty joined them. I went downstairs and to pack up the car.

A cop was starting to write a ticket for the litter surrounding Morty's car when I arrived.

Me: "What's up?"

Cop: "You own this stuff?"

Me: "No, but I work for the crazy old gent who does."

Cop: "Well, he's in violation of the city's litter laws and his car is in a no parking zone."

Me: "He also has no sense of decency, he pays lousy, and he's got rotten taste in clothes."

Cop (picking up a jacket large enough to cover his motorcycle): "This doesn't look too bad..."

Me: "Are you open to a bribe?"

Cop: "What is this?"

Me: "Gabardine."

Cop (flipping shut his ticket book and tucking the jacket under his arm): "Have a nice day, sir."

August 1983

It was hot in Los Angeles. It was hotter in the house on Orange Grove Avenue. My aloha shirt stuck to me like that insipid Disneyland tune "It's a small world after all..." Looking at the old man sitting on the couch with the string of saliva stretching to the puddle on the floor between his flip-flops, did nothing to improve my cranky mood. The old guy seemed to have a glaze over his eyes as stared out the window. Morty looked at

the dame with the orange-colored Harpo Marx fright wig. She had introduced herself as Ethel.

Morty: "Who's he?"

Ethel: "That's my cousin Milton."

Morty: "On the phone you said he was dead."

Ethel: "Well, nearly dead. Look at him."

Me: "You sure you have the authority to sell his stuff?"

Ethel: "Of course I do. Don't I, Milton?"

She lifted Milton's chin, breaking the strand of saliva. She made his head nod in affirmation.

Morty: "That's good enough for me."

Ethel: "Take a look around. Everything in the house is for sale. Can I get you guys a cold beer?"

Tops were popped. Thirsts were slaked. Books were perused. Glass doorknobs were coveted. Decorative plates over wall switches were fingered and removed. Half-used cans of Ajax cleanser were yanked out from under sinks. Every roll of paper towels and toilet paper in the house was tossed into boxes. Every last roll.

Morty (to me): "Ethel's out in the garage. Go see if the old man has any loose change in his pockets."

Me: "Morty, do your own mugging."

I don't know if he went through Milton's pockets and I don't wanna know. I grabbed a crowbar and started prying bookcases from the walls. I had been wondering about a slot cut into the back panel of one of the cases and my curiosity was satisfied when I got the bookcase pulled far enough from the wall. I could see the reason for the hole: Cousin Milton had been tossing his used double-edged razor blades back there. There were hundreds, maybe thousands of them. There were enough blades to rebuild the USS Oklahoma. Gillette, Schick, Wilkinson - Milton had used them all. I was studying them when Morty appeared behind me.

Morty: "Wow! Razor blades. Bag 'em up."

Me: "You're kidding. They're old. They're used. They're rusty. They're diseased. You can't possibly want them."

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Morty: ““Course I do. There’s always one more shave left in a blade!”

I used the tip of the crowbar to break them up; many of them were rusted and fused together. I used a dustpan to shovel them into several bags. My mood improved slightly picturing Morty spending a pleasant evening at home separating the blades and stropping them by rubbing them around the inside of a drinking glass. It’s the simple pleasures that make life worth living....

I was loading our haul into the station wagon. Morty came out of the house carrying the toilet seat.

Me: “You took their toilet seat? I can’t believe you’d do a thing like that!”

Morty: “What’s the big deal? Neither of them live here anymore.”

Me: “We’re taking their doorknobs, their toilet paper. We’ve removed all the light bulbs. And I don’t even want to know if you’ve been ferreting through cousin Milton’s pockets...”

Morty smiled evilly and jingled the coins in his pocket.

Me: “Y’know, I just flashed back to what you told me when you were interviewing me for this job and I asked you what kind of experience would be appropriate for this line of work.”

Morty: “And I said...”

Me: “Graverobbing.”

November 1988

Morty: “Whaddya think of Mickey Tsimmis?”

Me: “I don’t know any Mickey Tsimmis. Who is he?”

Morty: “Me. I’m thinking of changing my name.”

Me: “What’s wrong with Morty Plonk?”

Morty: “It lacks gravitas. I need a name with more authority to it. Go ahead and put a title in front of it.”

Me: “Like Governor Morty Plonk?”

Morty: “Right. It doesn’t have any weight to it. Now try Governor Mickey Tsimmis.”

Me: “How about Governor Eustace P.

Snickerton? That has a certain weight to it. Governor Eustace P. Snickerton requests the pleasure of your company at his bris.”

Morty: “You think this is a joke.”

Me: “Where’s this conversation going, Morty?”

Morty: “Call me Mickey. I think a person should be able to change his name when his persona undergoes a change. I’ve used other names before, ya know.”

Me: “I didn’t know.”

Morty: “I’ve been known as Sid Schmaltz, Ramsey Throckmorton, Nordhoff N. Sepulveda, Barnsdall Parke, Norm de Porn and until today, Morty Plonk.”

Me: “And now it’ll be Mickey Tsimmis, Schlockmonger to the Stars!”

Morty: “Yeaaaah!”

Recently

I was seated at my computer at my shop on Fairfax Avenue one Saturday afternoon. Fred the book scout was stuffing his nose with nickels, and my sister was behind the counter muttering to herself about there being no jury in the land that would convict her of homicide if she iced Fred. A wide-eyed guy in a bad suit charged into the store.

W-EG: “I need to buy some fish.”

Me: “This is a bookshop. We don’t sell fish.”

My sister (pointing to the lettering on my front window): “Yep, we’re still a bookshop.”

W-EG: “But I need to buy some fish. It’s urgent.”

My sister: “There are three or four fish markets here in the neighborhood. Why don’t you try one of them.”

W-EG: “I did. They’re all closed.”

Me: “Well, it’s Saturday - shabbos.”

W-EG: “But the owners are all Koreans.”

My sister: “And all their customers are Jewish, so there’s no point in them opening on Saturday.”

W-EG: “I really need some fish.”

Me: “I have can of tuna in the back room.”

W-EG: “How much you want for it?”

Me: “A buck.”

W-EG: “I can get a can of tuna at

Ralph’s for 72 cents!”

My sister: “So go to Ralph’s.”

W-EG: “I will! And I’ll never buy fish in this shop again!”

The Big Belch of 1938

I had been hearing rumors for years that Mickey Tsimmis owned a sound recording of the Big Belch of 1938. Some even claimed he had recorded it himself. He would never admit to it, but the story was that he had been playing with a relative’s wire recorder one hot summer day on the roof of his apartment building on West 93rd St. Near as anyone can figure, it was the first and probably the only moment since the beginning of the Depression in 1929 that everyone in the entire United States had had a decent meal and they all belched at the same time. Mickey had been stuffing himself with soft, salted pretzels and was feeling a bit queasy, but hell, that counts as a meal. Anyway, he had been muckin’ around with the recorder singing verses of 99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall and Roll Me Over in the Clover, when he felt the gas rising in his gorge. He pointed the microphone away from his face just in case he might emit a bit more than hot air. He belched.... and at that very moment so did 111.8 million other people from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Great Lakes to the Mexican border. It was a Wagnerian thunderclap, stentorian and rumbling and deep. A hint of garlic and onion permeated the air over America at that moment. Salsa too. Mickey wiped the dribble from his lips and scanned the Manhattan skyline. He backed up the wire and replayed it. His first word was “Huh!” He glanced at the buildings across the street and saw people leaning out their windows looking up and down, wondering what had just happened. People on the sidewalks were looking up; Mickey was looking down, and while he respooled and pocketed the wire recording, he realized that what he and everyone else had just heard, was the Burp of a Nation.

January 1989 -Megalopolis Bookshop

Mickey: “Are you wearing clean shorts?”

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Me: "What?"

Mickey: "Mine are fulla holes."

Me: "Huh?"

Mickey: "I'm probably gonna have to romance Mrs. P. Talbot-Carson while we're out at her place looking at her books."

Me: "Well, you can't have my shorts. That's disgusting."

Mickey (looking down the front his trousers): "So're these."

Me: "Look, she's already seen you in your skivvies, like when you change your clothes behind the counter and you think once you're back there you've assumed the cloak of invisibility and no one can see you. Remember when you mooned Pinky Lee?"

Mickey (smiling): "I didn't know anybody could scream like that..."

Mickey Tsimmis (formerly known as Morty Plonk, Ramsey Throckmorton, Charles Atlas, Percy Duckbutter, and the Shadow) and I were helping fellow employee Jack load empty boxes into his station wagon before heading to Pasadena to look at the book collection of Mrs. P. Talbot-Carson. Most of the books had belonged to her late husband: hunting, fishing, guns, etc. The esoterica dealing with bondage and leather garments were hers. She urged us to bring lots of empty boxes; she was eager to sell. She also had the hots for Mickey. Mickey had the hots for granola bars.

Mickey: "Well, she has this thing for me and I figured if things got a little outta control and I lost my clothes over there, at least I'd be wearing presentable underwear."

Me: "Have you no shame Mickey? We're going to someone's home on a book call and you expect to end up in the sack with her?"

Mickey: "You know what she's like. You've seen her reach into my pockets."

Me: "She was either looking for a stick of Doublemint or needed to borrow a coupla grand."

Just then fellow-employee Jack came running into the store having just finished

his 37th Camel of the day, giving us a heads-up that the fire inspectors were on their way to the store and Mickey didn't want to face them because he knew they would write up a huge list of violations for the clogged aisles, blocked rear exit and missing fire extinguishers. They already knew to look for him hiding in the foot well of his desk, so we rolled him up in a carpet. We could get jobs working for the Mafia I thought; there's gotta be more room for advancement and job security there than there is working for Mickey. I figured the inspectors knew he was inside, because one of them kept kicking the carpet while another rested his foot on the bulge and put all his weight on it. Jack and Paul and I then lifted it and carried it outside to Mickey's station wagon making sure we dropped it a couple of times. Once the inspectors left, I fired up the Ford wagon and Jack hopped into the shotgun seat. He flicked his 38th Camel of the day out the window and coughed up a lung. We hauled tuchis over to Mrs. P. Talbot-Carson's house in Pasadena. I figured we'd probably get the collection; Mrs. PT-C really, really liked dealing with Mickey. In fact several people had suggested the two of them hook up. Everyone who knew them thought Mrs. PT-C was a terrific catch for Mickey: "she was lonely, she was widowed, she had \$\$\$ and she had a great pad. She wasn't bad-looking either. And Mickey had...well, lemme see, Mickey had...uh...a mattress...a stuffed horse...parts 154 to 217 of Jimmy Hoffa, and...uh...well, we bring to our relationships what we can."

But Mickey maintained he was too set in his ways to change at this late date. "What's to change?", we had asked. You just improve your wardrobe a notch or two and you give up sleeping on a lumpy mattress stuffed with \$3,000,000 in small unmarked bills.

Then I remembered Mickey was still rolled up in the carpet in the back of the car.

Me (yelling over my shoulder): "Ya sure ya don't want us to stop and unroll you?"

Mickey: "Keep going! I don't wanna be late."

Me: "I just don't want you to suffo-

cate."

Mickey: "It's OK, I can breathe through my butt."

We pulled into Mrs. P. Talbot-Carson's circular driveway and Jack and I yanked the carpet from the back of the car and carried it a little ways up the grassy slope. We then held the edge of the carpet and let Mickey roll out. And roll and roll and roll. Right into the koi pond for a refreshing ablution. Mrs. P. Talbot-Carson must have heard the car or the splash, because she opened the door to her modest 42-room bungalow as Mickey climbed out of the pond and a carp leaped from the collar of his shirt. She dabbed him with some of the toilet paper she unspooled from the roll she carried in the pocket of her gown. (I've noticed that many of the people we associated with at Mickey's bookstore carried rolls of toilet paper with them. What did they know that I didn't?)

Inside the mansion, Mickey - because he swallowed one or two koi while in the pond - complained about being nauseated. Jack urged him not to toss his cookies on the floor; it would be unforgiveable. Mickey brushed it aside by saying that if he did, the fish would come up with the white wine he had drunk earlier in the day.

Jack and I stepped outside to roll up the carpet and stow it in the car-along with one or two carp.

When we got back, Mrs. PT-C had Mickey lying prone on the couch removing algae from his hair and feeding him grapes. Something about Mickey's wet look musta really got Mrs. P. Talbot-Carson's mojo workin' - she had a Spike Jones tune on the phonograph to set the mood.

Mickey (to Jack & me): "Why don't you guys go look at the books and come back in about an hour or two with an offer."

Yeah, sure. Jack hotwired the ignition on Mickey's car and we headed for the Mexican border.

Coming soon: *Bookscouting in Tijuana*. ■

Letter from the President

by John Crichton

The Officers and Board of Governors have been busy this year working towards several important goals that should benefit all the members as well as the Association as a whole.

Foremost was the successful conclusion of the job search for an Executive Co-Director to work with Liane Wade, which resulted in the ABAA hiring Susan Dixon. Susan has brought us a lot of experience and energy and has had noticeable results – the most obvious being the recently redesigned website, which Susan superintended from start to finish. This, in addition to the database enhancements, is the first phase in getting greater participation by our members in the ABAA.org database. The Association has done its part by supplying a professional-looking website, supported by a good database; now its ultimate success depends on better participation by the membership. With electronic sales gradually (and in some cases dramatically) increasing for booksellers, our database together with ILAB should be one of the most attractive destinations for on-line searches for rare and antiquarian books, but participation by ABAA members is essential to this success. In the coming months members who are not currently participating in the ABAA database will be approached in an attempt to sign them up. As of this writing there are 205 members participating in the ABAA/ILAB database, out of a potential 450.

About this time a year ago, Rob Rulon-Miller, the treasurer, and I began to work with the Association's accountant to do a thorough review of the budget and how it's compiled. As a result Rob produced one of the most complete and accurate budgets the ABAA has had in some years. In accuracy, however, there is also truth, and the figures give cause for concern. The Association has declining income from membership and book fairs, and we are operating in a deficit. Fortunately previous boards had the foresight to save over \$100,000 in better times, and we are using some of those funds to offset the deficit. (These funds are not

connected to our legal contingency fund.) There are plans in place for eliminating the deficit over the next two years, but success of this depends on steady income from dues and increasing income from book fairs. We are financially sound, and with this new budget we have a clear and correct picture of where we are, but there is work to be done.

The By-Laws Committee under David Lesser has been busy. In conjunction with the Membership Committee they wrote the proposal for the change in the emeritus membership category, which would essentially revert the emeritus membership to the way it had originally been constructed. It was changed about ten years ago after complaints that it was too restrictive. The ballots are due in for that on July 1, 2005, and the Board is unanimously behind the measure. If it fails, however, the By-Laws Committee will revisit the subject, taking into account many of the recommendations by various members on the discussion list and elsewhere.

Another issue the By-Laws Committee will be examining is the possibility of revising the by-laws to reduce the size of the Board of Governors. This has been discussed before, but never formally proposed, and I think a thorough discussion of it is long overdue. As currently constituted, the Board of Governors has 12 Governors and four Officers, and many think it would be better for the Association if we had eight Governors and four officers. It would be more efficient, and we would not expend volunteers as quickly, thus saving some potential Governors for other Boards. Anyone who has served on an ABAA Nominating Committee might consider the last point the most persuasive for such a change, and almost everyone who has served on the Board itself would agree that it is too large and cumbersome. A first draft of a proposal may be forthcoming this Fall, and the Board certainly welcomes any exchange of ideas about this on the discussion list and elsewhere between now and then.

The arrival in the mail in late May of

the ballot on the emeritus issue caused a great deal of debate on the discussion list on other ABAA issues (the internet committee, finances, counsel, personnel, the competence and intentions of those charged with running the Association, etc.), and I will repeat here some of my remarks to the online discussion list: These matters have been carefully debated and previously considered by the Board of Governors on many occasions, and they will continue to be because they are on-going concerns for the vitality of the Association. The Board of Governors and Officers want your opinions and comments, and please be assured that just because they are not responded to in the fashion requested on the discussion list does not mean they're ignored. For those of you who think you're not getting the information you've asked for about internet budget details, or anything else regarding the ABAA, I encourage you to call your chapter representative or an officer. I personally invite any member of the Association to call me anytime they have an ABAA issue to discuss, or if they want more information about something they do not think is being sufficiently addressed on the discussion list, or elsewhere. Members are also encouraged to attend the annual meeting of the ABAA at which all the Governors and committee chairs are present and where we discuss just these issues.

The ABAA discussion list is valuable as a forum for the exchange of ideas, news, and goodwill, but the list has its limitations as a place where the Association can examine its contracts and

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Steve Weissman and Roger Stoddard after Roger's address at the Grolier Club benefiting the Benevolent Fund.

Crichton

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relationships with vendors, counsel, personnel, and discussion of budget details. Some of these matters have aspects to them which require the same degree of confidentiality as do membership applications and ethics complaints. Others are not as restricted, but nonetheless common

sense tells us not to discuss current or pending contracts in an open manner like this. One of our responsibilities as Officers and Governors is to exercise good judgment on behalf of the Association, and we will try to continue to do so, even if criticized for it.

Other important issues the Board and Officers will be taking up in the coming months are the requirements for apply-

ing for membership, the membership applications, sponsors, fees, etc., in an effort to encourage more applications – particularly by young booksellers. The Membership Committee has certainly obtained a lot of useful recommendations from comments made on the discussion list and elsewhere, and we will be looking forward to their recommendations to the Board by the Boston Book Fair. ■

Nominating Committee Announcement

by Ken Lopez

The Nominating Committee is in the process of putting together a slate of candidates for this year's elections to the ABAA Board of Governors.

This year all four Officers' positions are up for election-President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. There are also three other Board members' terms

ending in 2006, two of which need to be filled-one from Northern California and one at-large Governor. The third position ending in 2006 is the MAC position, currently held by John Spencer who has been working intensively on the upcoming ILAB Congress and who, because he became a Governor mid-term, is eligible to continue as MAC's representative to

the Board for a full term.

The Nominating Committee includes members from every ABAA chapter. Recommendations of candidates can be made to any committee member, but making a recommendation to one's own chapter's representative is probably the most efficient approach. ■

Snapshots: New York

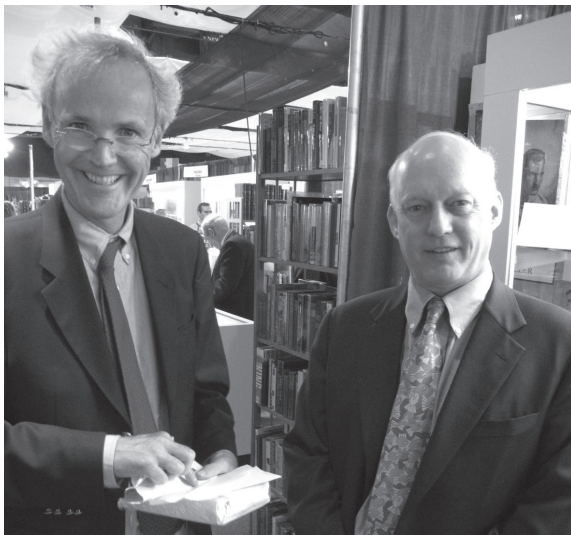


Photo by Ed Smith

Stuart Bennett and John Crichton.



A young boy learns about dragonflies at the New York Book Fair.

Smith

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John Irving, Charlie Rose, Michael Cunningham, Umberto Eco, Nick Hornby, and Jim Dale, the Grammy-winning voice of the Harry Potter audio books. The ABAA also had a listing in the Official Directory and Buyer's Guide. The

first batch of this nearly 800-page directory of the show was gone setup day with a fresh load delivered on Saturday. Many authors stopped by the ABAA booth, and when they found out we represented an organization of rare booksellers, they felt right at home, having their first book in hand, hoping to get recognized, hoping that one day it would be on the ABAA

website, much sought after by all.

The ABAA needs to be represented at this premier book event, promoting our organization. Next year the show will be in Washington D.C. at the Convention Center May 19-21, 2006, and we are already looking forward to it and planning several special events to be held in the ABAA booth. ■

Books & Food: Cooperstown

Editor's note: This will be an occasional feature when space and time permit.

Submissions are encouraged.

by Susan Dixon

Cooperstown is a charming village situated on Lake Otsego in Upstate New York. The lake, also known as Glimmerglass, feeds the Susquehanna River, which is beloved by kayakers, fishermen, and other weekend warriors. Known more for being the location of the birthplace of baseball, the Hall of Fame, and the fantastic Glimmerglass Opera, it offers much more. I spent several weekends in Cooperstown last summer and discovered what a great book community it is and what good food one can eat there, but more on that later. ABAA member Willis Monie has a shop right on Main Street filled with general antiquarian books and, unsurprisingly, a great selection of books about baseball. Fellow member Ed Brodzinsky of Atelier books in nearby Schenevus sells books mainly about architecture and design, by appointment. Eleven years ago, Will and Ed launched the Cooperstown Book Fair at the Clark Sports Center, located less than a mile from Main Street, sponsored by NY State Historical Association. It takes place the last Saturday June and features about 60 booksellers. When in town, one can also buy new and recent publications from

Augur's Books, also on Main Street, or at the Book Nook, just a few steps away. There are a few other used and antiquarian book dealers a stone's throw away in the Catskills and environs.

Now about the food...If you happen to be in town for breakfast, mingle with the locals at the Cooperstown Diner on Main Street. A true greasy spoon, they serve up honest grub like eggs, bacon and omelets, but the gooey cinnamon bun French toast is the real winner. The service is friendly and though it is small, the tables turn quickly. You'll get lots of bang for the buck here.

Just off Main is the Hoffman Lane Bistro serving new American fare without pretense. This is one of Cooperstown's most elegant restaurants and the atmosphere embodies simple sophistication. For dinner, ask to be seated in the upstairs loft away from the noise of the bar. Tuna au poivre with wasabe mashed potatoes and hangar steak with a red wine reduction are highlights of the menu. They often feature risotto as a special that is quite good too. The wine list is unexciting, yet has reasonably priced selections.

Still a favorite dinner stop is about 12 or so miles out of town in Cherry Valley. The Rose and Kettle is located in a lovely old house on Main Street dating from the 1800's. There are two main dining rooms that probably served as the parlor and

dining room originally, and a small bar. The dark-stained wood trim and tables, paired with ivory candlelight, elicit a romantic spookiness. The service is very friendly and many of their ingredients are supplied by local farms and food purveyors. Much of the fare is organic. On a recent visit, I shared a salad of local field greens, blue cheese and roasted shallot vinaigrette, and then had grilled salmon served medium rare atop a bed of creamy polenta. They also serve a nicely prepared chicken, and even some simple, but good pasta. Wines by the glass are interesting and include Rieslings and Rhone wines. Their beer choices often surprise and include a selection of Belgian brews like the refreshing Saison du Pont farmhouse ale.

If you are heading out of town, or coming into town around lunch time, not to be missed is Brook's Barbecue. It's been around since the early 1900's and some of the wait staff appear to have been there since then too. Roll up your sleeves and dig into the moist and juicy BBQ chicken, and sticky Kansas City ribs with corn on the cob. Although you may be tempted, the pie is a bit disappointing. All of the beverages are G-rated; the only bar here is the bar-b-cue.

The contact information and addresses for most of the places mentioned in the article can be found at cooperstownchamber.org. ■

COLORADO ANTIQUARIAN BOOK SEMINAR RETURNS FOR 27TH YEAR

Now in its 27th year, the Colorado Antiquarian Book Seminar provides an opportunity for specialist dealers, librarians, and collectors to share their experience and expertise with other booksellers, librarians, and collectors, in a comprehensive survey of the rare, used, out-of-print, and antiquarian book market. Over the years a good number of ABAA members and their employees have attended, and in total the Seminar has graduated close to 2500 booksellers, librarians, and collectors.

This year the seminar will take place August 7 –12, on the campus of beautiful Colorado College, Colorado Springs. The fee for the Seminar is \$995 and includes all instructional materials. For more information and registration, please visit www.bookseminars.com or contact the Seminar coordinator, Kathy Lindeman, at klindeman@coloradocollege.edu. The 2005 Seminar should provide an intensive opportunity to meet and network with others of like interest.

The Elisabeth Woodburn Memorial Fund of the ABAA is offering two scholarships of \$1000 each for the Colorado Antiquarian Book Seminar. This fund is available for a variety of educational purposes of which the Colorado Antiquarian Book Seminar is one. Competition for the Woodburn scholarships is open to all. The Book Club of California is also offering five scholarships to the Seminar. All scholarships will be administered by the trustees of the ABAA Benevolent Fund. To apply, please submit a letter stressing desire and need, 500 words or less, to ABAA Headquarters, 20 West 44th St., N.Y., NY 10036-6604, or by email to Susan Dixon, at sdixon@abaa.org. A letter in support of the applicant may accompany the entry statement, but it is not required. All applications must be postmarked no later than July 1, 2005. Successful candidates will be notified by phone, fax or email.

In Memoriam

**Doris Harris
Los Angeles, CA**

Emeritus member of the ABAA Doris Harris died on April 30th of a cerebral hemorrhage, at the age of eighty-seven. In addition to being the first woman elected to the Zamorano Club, Doris was a former chair of the Southern California Chapter.

Doris was born in Pennsylvania and studied in Wyoming and at UCLA.

She married advertising executive Charles Hamilton and resided in New York City. It was there that she came

across an antique dealer displaying a handwritten letter concerning President William Henry Harrison. She purchased that letter and a small collection of others and soon after with her husband started Charles Hamilton Autograph Galleries, one of the first in the city.

She divorced in 1962 and moved to Southern California, recreating her business there. Doris later moved to Hollywood and Wilshire Boulevards. She retired in 1999.

As a dealer in the sometimes confusing world of autographs, she was always known for her great integrity. She was also a lovely person, always ready to help young collectors and young deal-

ers who called on her. Doris continued to attend many book functions. She was most recently among those at the memorial service for Muir Dawson, and the celebration of Dawson's Book Shop's 100th anniversary.

There will be a memorial service for Doris which will be announced to the membership when plans are finalized. The Southern California Chapter has sent a donation in remembrance of Doris to the ABAA Benevolent Fund. We invite her other friends and colleagues to do the same. ■

Carol Sandberg contributed to this article.

In Memoriam

continued from front page

1558 – 1625; The Library of Robert Hooke: The Scientific Book Trade of Restoration England; Bibliately: The History of Books on Postage Stamps.

In 1973, Columbia University reversed their decision 30 years earlier, and awarded her a Ph.D.

She and Madeleine traveled frequently

to Europe searching for books, and collaborated on six books about their lives and the book business.

Giving full justice to the richness of her life isn't possible in this space, but one can sense the abundance of her spirit in a friend's memories about her life and Madeleine's, finding it natural to think of them as an inseparable pair: "What a blessing it is that the two of you found each other so long ago and shared the decades of your lives with such fullness and

joy. How inspiring it is that you dedicated your lives to each other, to scholarship, and to widening the horizons for women. Whether in the world of antiquarian books, historical or literary publications, or the affairs of a global community, together you welcomed every adventure, confronted every challenge, and conquered every barrier. Your life appeared to be a joyful adventure in which you dared to be undaunted." ■

Liane Thomas Wade

ABAA Benevolent Fund & Woodburn Fund

A contribution to the ABAA Benevolent Fund or to the Elisabeth Woodburn Memorial Fund. 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. It is also a meaningful way to honor the memory of a departed colleague.

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



New Members

The ABAA *Newsletter* is pleased to welcome the following new associate members who were accepted at the Board of Governors Meeting in April:

Bruce Barnett, The Book Block, Lake Forest, IL.

Lisa Baskin, Cumberland Rare Books, Northampton, MA.

Membership Updates

Bauman Rare Books has a new address: 1608 Walnut Street, 19th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

Brick Row Bookshop has a new web site: www.brickrow.com.

First Folio has a new fax number: (731) 642-3029.

Priscilla Juvelis, Inc. has a new address, phone and fax: 11 Goose Fair, Kennebunkport, ME 04046. Phone: (207)967-0909. Fax: (207)967-4466.

Edward T. Pollack has a new address: 3 Mayfair Court, Mashpee, MA 02649.

Gerard A.J. Stodolski, Inc. has a new address, phone, and fax number: 5 Chickadee Court, Bedford, New Hampshire 03110. Phone: (603)488-1775. Fax: (603)488-1780.

Vagabond Books has a new address: 14177 West Sunset Boulevard, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272.

Waverley Books has a new web site: www.waverlybooks.com.

The deadline for submissions to the next *Newsletter* is

September 12, 2005

Send your contributions to:

**ABAA Newsletter
20 West 44th Street
New York, NY 10036
FAX: 212.944.8293**

**EMAIL: rulon@rulon.com
sdixon@abaa.org**



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www.abaa.org

EDITOR: Robert Rulon-Miller

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Susan Dixon,

Liane Thomas Wade

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Send submissions and letters to:

ABAA Newsletter
20 West 44th Street
New York, NY 10036 USA

PHONE: 212 944-8291

FAX: 212 944-8293

EMAIL: rulon@rulon.com
sdixon@abaa.org

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