



Aldus Society Notes

Autumn, 2004

Volume 5, No.1

Another Aldus Society Program Year Begins

Saturday, September 18th — The Aldus Society will begin its monthly programming on Saturday, September 18th, when book artist Donald Glaister will speak at the Canzani Center of the Columbus College of Art & Design (CCAD).

Donald Glaister (Cleveland, Ohio) is a professional book artist with 20 years of work centered on the exploration and use of unexpected materials, visual humor and spontaneous expression, while working within the classical realm of the European book form. He has taught binding and design privately and as Professor of Book Arts at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. His work is included in both private and institutional collections in North America and Europe.

Glaister will be speaking in conjunction with *In Flight*, an exhibit of fifty-one book works, artists' books, fine bindings and broadsides created by Guild of Book Workers (GBW) members. The books will be on view at the Aycock Gallery in the Canzani Center from September 13 to October 29, 2004. The exhibition is co-sponsored by the Aldus Society and the Midwest Chapter of the GBW. The show has been traveling to various cities around the country since the fall of 2003, and will continue to travel through 2005. Full color catalogs will be for sale at the gallery.

The opening reception at CCAD is scheduled for Saturday, September 18th from 6:30 to 9:00 pm, and will feature refreshments and the presentation by Donald Glaister.

Remember that this Aldus Society meeting is being held at CCAD, and not at our usual Thurber Center location. CCAD is located at Cleveland Avenue & East Gay Street, one block north of East Broad and in the area just behind the Columbus Museum of Art.

In conjunction with this event, there will be an open house from 2:00 to 4:00 pm at the OSU Rare Books and Manuscripts Department, where artist's books from the OSU collection will be on display. The Conservation Department, also in the Main Library, will be open as well.

Thursday, October 14th — The seventh chapter of the Aldus Society History of Text series is scheduled to continue with the Middle Eastern tradition. The program speaker has not yet been confirmed, however, and there may be a different topic for the evening. Check the Aldus Society web site for updates.

Thursday, November 11th — November will find us under the spell of the Irish when Desmond Kenny visits from Galway, Ireland.

Desmond Kenny, of the famous Kenny's Bookshop & Art Gallery in Galway, Ireland, will talk about the Irish and British book markets with emphasis on rare books and Irish writers. Kenny's was founded by Desmond's father and mother in the 1940s; their modest start has developed into an international concern that is still operated by the younger Kenny generations. The Kenny's website is:

<http://www.kennys.ie/>

December — December will once again find members of the Aldus Society gathered together at the annual Holiday Dinner to celebrate the wrap-up of another calendar year. Details will be available at a later date.



Regular meetings of
The Aldus Society
are held at 7:30 PM at:

**The Thurber Center
91 Jefferson Avenue
Columbus, Ohio**

☞ Socializing Begins One-Half Hour Before ☞

The Aldus Society

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Aldus Society Notes is published quarterly by the Communications Committee of The Aldus Society. If you have submissions or ideas for articles, please contact Ron Ravneberg at (614) 457-1153 or AldusSociety@aol.com.

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All You Have to Do is Ask: Redux

By Ron Ravneberg

In my last message I tried to reinforce the point that many of the world's bibliophilic and literary treasures are available to people who express an interest in seeing them. While it may sometimes seem that the really good stuff is locked up in institutional collections, it's important to remember that in many cases the items are locked up so they'll be there when you want to see them. All you have to do is ask.



I recently returned from a trip to Australia, and those who know me understand that I couldn't visit such distant shores without doing something related to Captain Cook. On this trip down under I visited the State Library of New South Wales (SLNSW) in Sydney to continue my research into the publication of the official account of Captain Cook's first voyage. My object was to examine and photograph nine 18th century letters written by noted London physician John Fothergill to Sir Joseph Banks. Although I had access to images of the letters on the internet, the poor quality of the electronic versions wasn't adequate for my needs; I needed to see the originals, and that could only happen in Sydney.

Armed with my previous research, a listing of the letters in question, and a letter of introduction from Joe Branin, Director of the Ohio State University Libraries, I showed up at the SLNSW on a Saturday to log my request. I was told that the person to whom I needed to speak wouldn't be back until Monday (my last day in the country) and that I should call back then.

On Monday when I called, Warwick Hirst, the Assistant Curator of Manuscripts and Original Materials, told me that the letters would be available to me that afternoon. When I arrived at the library, Mr. Hirst escorted me upstairs into the staff area and directed me to a table where the nine letters were waiting in a clamshell case accompanied by the customary pair of cotton gloves. I was told to take whatever time I needed and to simply ask for Mr. Hirst when I was finished. I was even granted permission to photograph the letters as long as I didn't use a flash.

Needless to say, the next couple of hours were a delight. The privilege of working with original materials associated with some of the key characters associated with Cook's voyages, Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Johnson, William Bligh and other notables was heady stuff for this kid who grew up in little old Lewiston, Idaho, a small town with a Carnegie Library and no bookstores. And all I did was ask.

When I was finished Mr. Hirst asked me if I was aware that Joseph Banks' original journal from Cook's first voyage was on display in the library. He then guided me to an exhibit area where the SLNSW was displaying portions of its Heritage Collection, a selection of the library's finest objects. The two volumes written by Banks (comparable in American terms to the handwritten notes of Columbus and Lewis & Clark combined) were wonderful in themselves, but they were only part of what was in the room. Incunabula (books printed before 1501), explorer's journals, illustrated books, early maps of Australia ... the room was full of world class publications and artifacts, and I was the only person present.

One item that caught my eye was a beautiful copy of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, a book considered to be one of the most beautifully illustrated of the incunabula. Produced in 1499 by Aldus Society namesake Aldus Manutius, the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* was written in an odd hybrid of Italian, Latin and Greek, by Francesco Colonna, a Dominican monk. It describes Poliphili's pursuit of his lover, Polia, through a fantastic, mythical world of art, gardens and architecture.

So why was this particular book of interest to me? Because it is a central character in a book I had just finished reading, *The Rule of Four* by Ian Caldwell and Dustin Thomason. If you wonder what would result if you combined *Catcher in the Rye*, *The Name of the Rose* and *The DaVinci Code*, you would end up with something like *The Rule of Four*. If it sounds interesting (it is), any bookstore should have it. All you have to do is ask.



The Aldus Society has just wrapped up its most ambitious program with July's Celebration of the Book, and now we're off on another year of bibliophilic adventure as we start our program year on September 18th as co-sponsors of the *In Flight* exhibit and Donald Glaister's presentation. The 2004-2005 program year will continue our small society's track record of providing a wide range of programs and activities for those who love books and other forms of the printed word. Want to help? All you have to do is ask.

The Aldus Society Celebrates the Book

This summer was a significant one for the Aldus Society. In what was our young organization's first major event, we teamed up with the Friends of the Ohio State University Libraries to host a two-day "Celebration of the Book" here in Columbus.

The event was held on Thursday and Friday, July 22-23 at the Wexner Center for the Arts and the Columbus College of Art & Design, and featured a number of people speaking on book-related topics.



Why This Book: What Makes a Book Collectible?

Between 75 and 100 people attended Thursday's activities, which began with a description of the factors that make a book collectible jointly presented by Geoff Smith (Head of Rare Books and Manuscripts at the Ohio State University Libraries) and Ron Ravneberg (Aldus Society).

Geoff and Ron took a book recently acquired for the Rare Books library at OSU and described some of the many facets that made the book a worth addition to the collection. The book in question was *Κομητογραφία* (Cometographia), a 17th century discourse on comets written by Increase Mather and published in Boston in 1683. Geoff and Ron then related the way the little volume wove itself into the themes of History of Astronomy, Early Americana, Religion, Politics & Art, Conservation & Restoration, and Library Development.



Κομητογραφία (Cometographia), a 1683 treatise on comets written by Increase Mather. The book has many stories to tell, including History of Astronomy, Early Americana, Religion, Politics & Art, Conservation & Restoration, and Library Development.



Collecting James Thurber

Jay Hoster (Aldus Society, Books on High) then described the joys of collecting James Thurber and shared numerous anecdotes and discoveries about Columbus' favorite son.

Jay's presentation covered Thurber's place in Columbus history, and focused on some of the fascinating characters and stories in and around Thurber's life, including floods, interesting relationships, politics, dogs, and that traditional Columbus activity of blowing up streetcars.

Jay concluded his presentation with a guided tour through "The Book," his not-so-pristine, but highly prized, copy of Thurber's *My Life and Hard Times*. Jay's copy is full of personal associations with Thurber and Columbus, including inscriptions, autographs, sketches, articles, pictures and other memorabilia.

It's his favorite Thurber item.



Jay Hoster standing in the shadow of his long-time collecting companion, James Thurber. (Photo courtesy of George Cowmeadow Bauman)



Conservation of Books and Paper

Harry Campbell (Special Collections Conservator at the Ohio State University) followed, a sharing his experiences working on the conservation of books and paper, and described many of the techniques he and his colleagues use to restore fragile publications to usable form.

In an updated version of his presentation to the Aldus Society in January 2003, Harry started with the birth of modern conservation techniques that grew out of the terrible 1966 floods in Florence, Italy which damaged and destroyed so many bibliographic treasures.

Using numerous "before and after" images, he then went on to describe some of the methods used to clean, restore, repair, rebind and house the books, drawings, and other printed items that are entrusted to him for his care.



Harry Campbell at work in the conservation area in the Thompson Library at OSU.

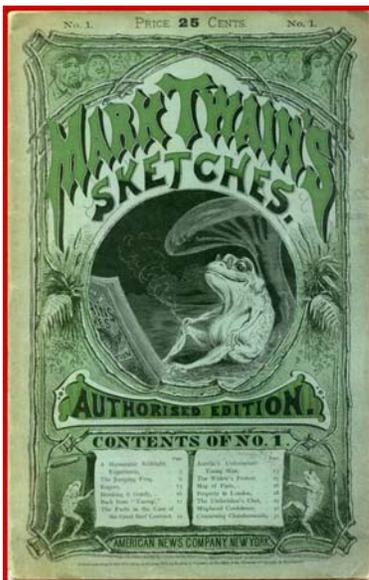


Adventures in Collecting Mark Twain

Robert Slotta (Admirable Books) is one of the most accomplished collectors of Mark Twain to be found anywhere. In an enthusiastic presentation he detailed his recent findings about some unethical dealings by Mark Twain's first publisher and his attempts to avoid paying royalties owed to Twain for his first major work, *The Jumping Frog*.

Celebration of the Book attendees were among the first to learn of the shady dealings of Twain's first publisher, C.H. Webb, and how he suppressed information about the success of *The Jumping Frog* and diverted Twain's royalties in order to bolster the flagging (virtually nonexistent?) sales of his own publications.

As Bob's findings become better known, they will no doubt raise an eyebrow or two among other Twain scholars and collectors who have heretofore relied on one or two bits of evidence now challenged by Slotta.



Mark Twain's first "authorized" edition of *The Jumping Frog*, published after he bought back the rights for his own book from C.H. Webb.



Books That Influenced My Life

The final speaker of Thursday afternoon was Robert Jackson (Rowfant Club, Grolier Club) who spoke about the books that influenced his collecting, and in turn helped shape his life.

A noted book collector, Jackson spoke less about his collections per se, than about why he collects what he does. In a series of personal anecdotes, Bob described the way in which his collecting behaviors have shaped the rest of his life, as he and his wife and fellow collector Donna have traveled the world to learn more about the subjects of their collections.

One of the Jacksons' collections surrounds the works of illustrator Rockwell Kent. As part of his effort to better understand Kent, Jackson has traveled from Tierra del Fuego to Greenland following in Kent's footsteps.



A breaching *Moby Dick*. One of the best-known Rockwell Kent book illustrations.



A Splendor of Letters: The Permanence of Books in an Impermanent World

Thursday evening began with a well-attended reception that was followed by the conference's first guest presentation by Nicholas Basbanes, author of *A Gentle Madness*, *Patience & Fortitude*, *Among the Gently Mad*, and *A Splendor of Letters*. An audience of over 200 showed up to hear Basbanes' anecdotal trek through the book and book collecting worlds. His humor-laden talk kept his audience fascinated for well over an hour.

Although Basbanes' talk was ostensibly about the permanence of books in an impermanent world, Nick never seemed to get around to either his original topic or his prepared notes. Nobody in the room, other than possibly Basbanes himself, seemed to mind in the least.



Featured speaker Nicholas Basbanes (right) with Aldus Society President Ron Ravneberg. (Photo courtesy of George Cowmeadow Bauman)



The Future of the Book

Approximately 100 people were on hand for one of the high points of the gathering, Friday morning's panel discussion on "The Future of the Book." Panel members included Joseph Branin (Director of the Ohio State University Libraries), Robert Jackson, Barry Moser, and Nicholas Basbanes. The panel was moderated by Ron Ravneberg.

Representing the multiple perspectives of librarians, book collectors, book designers and authors, the panel members carried on an interactive discussion with each other and the audience on topics that included the balance of printing and digital information, consolidation of the publishing industry, government control of information, encouragement of independent booksellers and presses, and books on demand. Final consensus? The book as we know it is here to stay.



(Left to Right) Joe Branin, Bob Jackson, Barry Moser and Nick Basbanes share their thoughts about the future of the book during one of the most popular events of the Celebration of the Book. (Photo courtesy of Amy Edwards Taylor)



The Renovation of OSU's Thompson Library

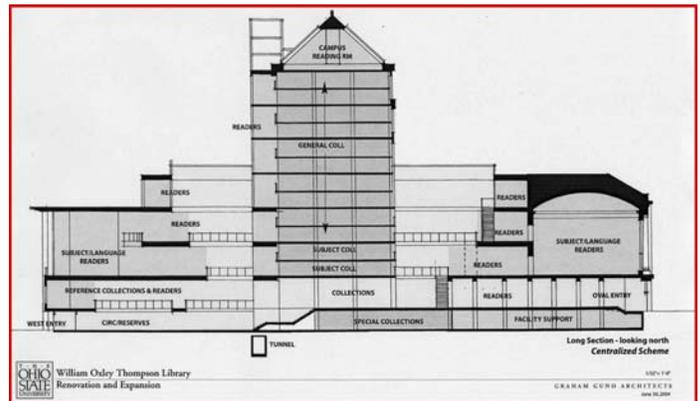
Following the panel discussion, Joseph Branin (Director of the Ohio State University Libraries) described the \$100 million renovation of the Thompson Library at the Ohio State

University. Branin summarized the history of the building, and described the plans for the "new" library, which is scheduled for completion in 2008.

Joe's well-illustrated tour of the project detailed the architectural history of the Thompson Library, looked at other library renovations from around the country, and presented the current plans (and challenges) for the Thompson Library's total renovation.

One of the major headaches – what does one do with millions of books while the library building is closed down? In other words, how does one keep a library open while the library is closed?

OSU has a plan for how to accomplish the task, but the next few years promise to be "interesting" to say the least.



Cross-section of the proposed renovation of the Thompson Library at OSU. The \$100 million dollar project is scheduled to get underway in 2005 and be completed in 2008.

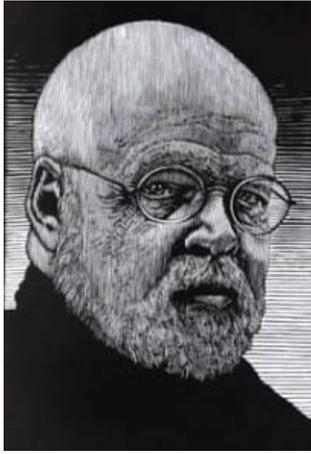


Tanakh and Testament: A Reprobate Tinkers with Holy Writ

In the conference's second guest presentation and final event, noted book designer and illustrator Barry Moser described his personal challenge of designing, illustrating and producing the Pennyroyal Caxton edition of the King James Bible.

Barry's presentation was the most formal of the conference and was a fitting final movement to what was a series of varied book events. In a darkened room, he described a number of the specific illustrations that became part of his edition of the Bible. The room was silent as Moser shared his motivation and rationale for selecting each illustration to include, determining the subject and tone of each, and executing the finished image. Some of his images were quite strong and challenged many of the conventions of more traditional illustrations of holy scripture.

In a dramatic and thought-provoking presentation, Moser conveyed his conviction that "illustrating the Bible is a daunting effort, a struggle with my arrogance, a cup of the unknown."



Barry Moser: A self portrait.



Breakfast, Book Signings & Appraisals

Friday's Celebration activities also included a continental breakfast, book signings and an appraisal clinic. Featured speakers Nicholas Basbanes and Barry Moser were on hand to sign copies of their recent publications for conference attendees. Across the room, Columbus booksellers George Cowmeadow Bauman (Acorn Bookshop) and Jay and Genie Hoster (Books on High) conducted a book appraisal clinic. Drawing upon online resources, published auction records and years of personal experience, they provided verbal appraisals of selected books brought by conference attendees.

Attendees of the "Celebration of the Book" were treated to a delightful two days of book events, and many said they were looking forward to the next such gathering, which the Aldus Society and the Friends of the Ohio State University Libraries are already discussing.



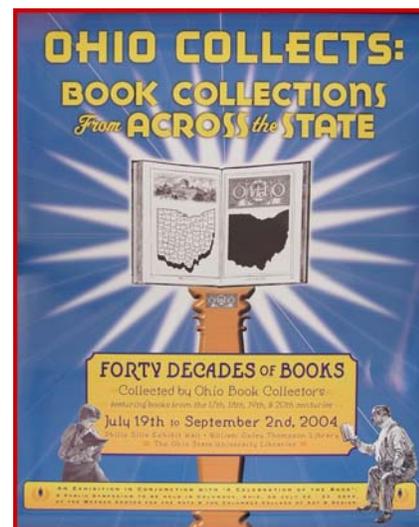
OSU Library Features Ohio Book Collectors

In coordination with the Celebration of the Book, the Thompson Library at the Ohio State University hosted an "Ohio Collects" exhibit from July 11th to September 2nd with representative samples from the collections of selected Ohio book collectors. During the conference, the Rare Books Library at OSU also had selected books by Barry Moser on display, including original engraving blocks from his most recent book illustration project, *Wee Winnie Witch's Skinny: An Original African American Scare Tale*, by Virginia Hamilton.

The exhibit featured highlights and representative samples from the collections of 16 Ohio collectors and one library.

- Roger Baughman had on display several beautiful examples of his collecting passion, pages from illuminated manuscripts.

- George Bauman is a bookseller and has a love of books about bookselling, several of which he made available for display.
- Ivan Gilbert loves movable and "pop-up" books, and he shared some of his favorites.
- Christine Hayes displayed Ben Hayes' collection of books and ephemera on Columbus and Ohio.
- Jay Hoster offered some of his books about James Thurber (and one beer bottle from the Hoster brewery).
- Bob Jackson displayed numerous items related to W.H. Ainsworth's *The Tower of London*, including manuscript portions, printer's documents, a first edition in parts and a regular bound first edition.
- John King shared miscellaneous books in English and Latin printed before 1638.
- Jack Matthews displayed rare books which appear in his recent book *Reading Matter*.
- Michael Packer has traveled the world watching birds and he shared several books about birds and birding.
- Marcia Preston displayed several of the beautiful private press books she has collected from the United States and England.
- Bill Radloff contributed early aviation books and autographs, mainly from the World War I era.
- Bob Slotta followed up on his presentation with a number of key letters and books related to his collecting of Mark Twain.
- Ron Ravneberg included several books related to the voyages of Captain Cook, including the printer's copy used in preparation of one 1773 account.
- Bill Rich included samples from two centuries of first English or American printings of several famous novels.
- The Wagnalls Library (Lithopolis, Ohio) contributed books regarding Esperanto, an interest of its founder.
- Paul Watkins followed a Mark Twain theme with a twist, showing some of his British paperback editions of Mark Twain.
- Bob Wing exhibited some of his books on astronomy printed from 1669 to 1972.



Ohio Collects – The poster prepared for the exhibit of some of the holdings of Ohio book collectors.



Past 2004 Programs

Here's a recap for those of you who weren't able to attend some of this year's earlier meetings of the Aldus Society:

January: Lucy Caswell, curator of the Cartoon Research Library at The Ohio State University presented a talk titled "Comics 100: The History of American Comic Strips." Established in 1977, the Cartoon Research Library is currently the largest and most comprehensive academic research facility documenting printed cartoon art in the United States.

February: Aldus trustee Bill Rich presented a talk on First American editions of nineteenth century British authors. He touched on the topic of pirated editions, which in many cases, were first American editions. His finds have included a 1787 two-volume set of Milton's *Paradise Lost* published in Philadelphia, which was the first separate publication of this work in America.

March: The March program featured a "Show and Tell" format, with several Aldus members bringing samples from their collections or interesting book-related items to share with attendees of the meeting. Enthusiasm abounded as each speaker tried to describe his or her collecting passion in such a short time.

April: Daniel Frank, Assistant Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at the Ohio State University, presented the sixth chapter of the Aldus Society History of Text & Image series when he spoke on early Hebrew manuscripts.

May: Paul Ruxin, member both the Rowfant and Caxton Clubs, and the creator of one of the most complete collections of the works of Johnson, Boswell and their circle now in private hands, gave a talk entitled, "Other People's Books: Association Copies and Literary Detective Work" in which he focused on three examples of books from the Boswells, father and son, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, and explored how the evidence of their ownership not only puts in our hands what was literally in theirs, but also how it sheds light on unresolved literary disputes.

July: This past summer, the Aldus Society and the Friends of the Ohio State University Libraries co-sponsored a two-day "Celebration of the Book." Key speakers included Nicholas Basbanes, author of several books on books and book collecting; well-known book artist and designer Barry Moser; and Robert Jackson, member of the Rowfant Club and officer of FABS. There were also book signings, panel discussions, other presentations, and special exhibits that highlighted the works of book collectors from throughout Ohio. (See the other articles in the current newsletter for additional details about this event.)



Remember to Renew Your Aldus Society Membership

If you haven't yet renewed your Aldus Society membership for 2004, now is the time to do so.

During the coming year we will continue to bring a variety of quality programs on the book arts to the central Ohio community. As a member of Aldus you will also retain your relationship with the national organization, the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies (FABS), of which the Aldus Society is an affiliate.

The Aldus Society has grown because current members encourage like-minded friends to join Aldus and we hope this pattern continues.

A downloadable membership form is available at the Aldus Society web site, or you can call Ron Ravneberg at (614) 457-1153 to get a copy mailed to you.



Newsletter and Meeting Contributors Wanted

Newsletter: If you have ideas or contributions for *Aldus Society Notes*, please let us know. We're looking for articles, columns, opinions or anything else that would be of interest to Aldus Society members. Just call Ron Ravneberg at 457-1153 or e-mail him at RRavneberg@aol.com.

Meeting: Each regular meeting of the Aldus Society features a short (no more than 10 minute) "Show & Tell" segment where one society member shares special items or book-related experiences. If you would like to do a brief "Show & Tell" presentation at a future meeting, please contact Bill Rich at (614) 433-7448 (H), 292-6309 (W) or e-mail him at rich.2@osu.org.



Visit the Aldus Society web site for up-to-date information about our programs and activities, in-depth articles about many of our speakers, and links to other book related organizations.

www.AldusSociety.com





The Aldus Society

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Afterword: Celebration of the Book Moments



Ohio Collects: Some of Bob Slotta's Mark Twain books and artifacts.



Larry Siegler (Rowfant Club) and Christine Hayes (Aldus Society) talking books at the Celebration of the Book V.I.P. Reception. (Photo courtesy of George Cowmeadow Bauman)



Paul Watkins (Aldus Society) in a moment of relaxation. "Looks like the Celebration of the Book will be a success after all!" (Photo courtesy of George Cowmeadow Bauman)



Nicholas Basbanes and Marcia Preston (Aldus Society) at the end of a long day. (Photo courtesy of George Cowmeadow Bauman)



Ohio Collects: Ohio book collections on display in OSU's Thompson Library.