



Aldus Society Notes

Spring, 2004

Volume 4, No.4

Renowned Book Collector Paul Ruxin to Speak About Association Copies



At our last regular meeting of the program year, Paul Ruxin will present, "Other People's Books: Association Copies and Literary Detective Work." Mr. Ruxin has one of the most complete collections of the works of Samuel Johnson, James Boswell and their circle now in private hands. He is a member of the Governing

Committee of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., and of the Editorial Committee of the Yale Editions of the Private Papers of James Boswell. He also belongs to the Rowfant Club of Cleveland, the Grolier Club of New York, and the Caxton Club and Chicago Literary Club of Chicago, all of which are bibliophilic societies.

Association copies provide the collector with the pleasure of experiencing a physical connection with the past, be it a moment in time or a person or place, none of which could otherwise have been touched corporeally. More than that, however, they provide rich soil in which to dig for answers to open questions of interest to literary, and particularly bibliographic, farmers. Ruxin's talk will focus on three examples of books from the Boswells, father and son, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, and explore 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.



Paul Ruxin on Association Copies
Thursday, May 13th at 7:00PM

The Thurber Center
91 Jefferson Avenue
Columbus, Ohio

☞ Socialization Begins One-Half Hour Before ☞

Remember to Renew Your 2004 Aldus Society Membership

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

During our fifth year of existence, we will continue to bring a variety of quality programs on the book arts to the central Ohio community. We will also be co-hosting a two-day "Celebration of the Book" that will feature key speakers including book arts author Nicholas Basbanes and noted book designer and illustrator Barry Moser. As a member of Aldus you will retain your relationship with the national organization, the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies (FABS), of which the Aldus Society is an affiliate.

During the next year we will be compiling a membership directory, expanding our Aldus Society e-mail group, and distributing our newsletter electronically for those who would prefer to receive it as an e-mail attachment. If you wish to be included in any of those options, please indicate so when you renew. Then take a moment or two to fill out the Feedback Form on the back of the Membership Application and tell us what you like about the Aldus Society and what we could be doing better.

The Aldus Society has grown because current members encourage like-minded friends to join Aldus and we hope this pattern continues. So if you've already renewed, pass the enclosed membership form on to another.



Visit the Aldus Society web site for
up-to-date information on activities and
links to other book related organizations.

www.AldusSociety.com

The Aldus Society

TRUSTEES, 2003-04

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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 RRavneberg@aol.com.

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President's Message: All You Have to Do is Ask

By Ron Ravneberg

T.S. Eliot was wrong; April is not the cruelest month. At least not for me, that is. April is a most wonderful month, because April is my book month. Well, I suppose it's fair to say that they're all book months, but the period from my birthday in late March through the May meeting that ends the Aldus Society program year is my real book month. Take this year, for example.

On March 24th, Geoff Smith and I drove to Cleveland to attend a dinner meeting of the Rowfant Club and to hear Rowfant member Bob Jackson speak of his pursuits of famous illustrator Rockwell Kent. Not only does Jackson collect the works of Kent, but he also travels to the places Kent visited, whether it's Terra del Fuego or northern Greenland.

Two weeks later I found myself nearly sixty stories above the shore of Lake Michigan in Chicago at a luncheon with members of the Caxton Club, listening to Harvard University professor, Smithsonian astronomer and book collector Owen Gingerich describe his 30-year pursuit of all the known first and second edition copies of Nicholas Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus* ... Later that day I found myself chatting at length with Russell Maylone, Curator of Special Collections at the Northwestern University Library. We had the Special Collections Library to ourselves. Needless to say, it was great!

Two days later, fellow Aldus Society members Willkie Cirker, Dave Reiff and I spent the afternoon roaming around the Akron Antiquarian Book Fair, an event sponsored by our sister organization and FABS member club, the Northern Ohio Bibliophilic Society (NOBS).

The next week was bibliophilically intense. After attending a board meeting of the Friends of the Ohio State University Libraries, I was off to New York City to attend the FABS annual meeting held at the Grolier Club and the New York Antiquarian Book Fair. I even managed to take in a rare book auction at Swann Galleries during that hectic but energizing three-day trip to the Big Apple.

The last week of April found me at a business conference in Detroit, but I even managed to put bookends on that event. My first night in Detroit I spent enjoying what is probably the most extensive Captain Cook, Captain Bligh and related item library in private hands. (If anybody ever asks you about the only document that contains the signatures of both William Bligh and Fletcher Christian ... I've held it!) On the last evening in "that state up north" I attended a fund-raising dinner in Ann Arbor jointly sponsored by the Book Club of Detroit and the Friends of the University of Michigan Library. Despite showing up in a maize and blue tie (a coincidence, I assure you), I was still the object of some gentle and kind-hearted ribbing before being asked to join the President of the Friends of the University of Michigan Library at a table in front. An excellent dinner and presentations by eight book collectors rounded out the evening.

When you add in the April and May Aldus Society programs and the glorious "Treasures of the Middle Ages" exhibit of illuminated manuscripts at the Josephinum, it all adds up to a fairly book-intensive six-week period. As I said, April is not the cruelest month.

So how did I get to attend all these events? Am I a book professional? Was it official Aldus Society business? Nope. With the exception of the FABS meeting, none of it was Aldus-related, *per se*. I simply asked.

As many of you may know, Aldus Society Past President Geoff Smith is also the Head of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at the Ohio State University. As a neophyte Aldus Society member, I once asked him what it would take for me to be able to spend an afternoon browsing through Hartmann Schedel's 1493 *Nuremberg Chronicle of the World*. Expecting some elaborate reason why a person without credentials wouldn't be able to have access to that rare and very valuable volume, I was surprised when he responded, "All you have to do is ask."

Aldus Society members receive the newsletter of the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies twice a year, and much of that excellent publication is filled with the upcoming activities of the book organizations that make up FABS (including the Rowfant Club, the Caxton Club, the Grolier Club, NOBS, the Book Club of Detroit, and the Aldus Society). In addition, many of the organizations have their own web sites that contain additional information regarding events, contact people and other activities. If some of it interests you, consider attending. All you have to do is ask.

There's a wonderful line in *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* that states,

"When all the Temple is prepared within,
Why nods the drowsy Worshiper outside?"

So it is with the Aldus Society. The opportunities for members are many and varied, and simply waiting for you to show up. All you have to do is ask.



Coming This Summer! Columbus Celebrates the Book

This Summer promises to be a significant one for the Aldus Society. We are teaming up with the Friends of the Ohio State University Libraries to host a two-day Celebration of the Book.

The event will be held July 22-23 at the Wexner Center for the Arts and the Columbus College of Art and Design, and will feature a number of people speaking on topics such as collecting Mark Twain and James Thurber, book and paper conservation, and the selection of important books for collecting.

There will be feature presentations, book signings, panel presentations, coordinated exhibits and a book appraisal clinic. And it's all free, except for a V.I.P. reception to which everyone is invited (but which requires a \$50 contribution).

Plans are still coming together and you'll be seeing and hearing more about this event in the coming weeks. But so far we're pleased to announce that three well-known book people will be helping us make this event a grand success — Nick Basbanes, Barry Moser and Bob Jackson.

Nicholas Basbanes — A native of Lowell, Massachusetts, Nicholas A. Basbanes graduated from Bates College in 1965, received a master of arts degree from Pennsylvania State University in 1968, and served as a naval officer aboard the aircraft carrier *Oriskany* in the Tonkin Gulf in 1969 and



1970. An award-winning investigative reporter during the early 1970s, Basbanes was literary editor of the Worcester *Sunday Telegram* from 1978 to 1991, and for eight years after that wrote a nationally syndicated column on books and authors. He is a former president of the Friends of the

Robert H. Goddard Library of Clark University, which has established a student book collecting competition in his honor.

Now in its eighth edition with more than 80,000 copies in print, his first book, *A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books* (Henry Holt), was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in nonfiction for 1995, and was named a New York Times Notable Book of the Year. The release in 2001 of a companion volume, *Patience & Fortitude: A Roving Chronicle of Book People, Book Places, and Book Culture* (HarperCollins) prompted the two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer and historian David McCullough to write that "Nicholas Basbanes has become our leading authority of books about books and this, his latest, is a jewel." Basbanes's third book, *Among the Gently Mad: Perspectives and Strategies for the Book-Hunter of the 21st Century*, was issued by Henry Holt in November 2002, and is available now in paperback. His fourth book, *A Splendor of Letters: The Permanence of Books in an Impermanent World*, was published by HarperCollins in November 2003.

In addition to his books about books, Basbanes has written for numerous newspapers, magazines, and journals, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Smithsonian*, *Civilization*, and *New England Quarterly* among them, and lectures widely on book-related subjects. With his wife, Constance Basbanes, he writes a monthly review of children's books for Literary Features Syndicate, which they established in 1993. They are the parents of two daughters, Barbara and Nicole, and live in North Grafton, Massachusetts.

Barry Moser — Barry Moser is the consummate artist with experience as a designer, printmaker, painter, illustrator, printer, author, teacher and lecturer. Born in Tennessee, he was schooled at Auburn University, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and then did graduate work at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. His works are represented in many prestigious collections including the Metropolitan Museum, the British Museum, Harvard, Princeton and the Library of Congress.



Mr. Moser's body of work includes almost 200 titles which he has illustrated or designed, including Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* which won the National Book Award for Design and Illustration in 1983. In 1991 he won the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for his collaboration with Cynthia Rylant - *Appalachia, the Voices of Sleeping Birds*. Other Kaleidoscope alumnae with whom he has worked include Patricia MacLachlan and Virginia Hamilton.

Barry is an associate of the National Academy of Design and serves on the faculty of the Rhode Island School of Design. He frequently lectures and acts as a visiting artist at universities and institutions across the country. He lives in a contemporary house he designed and built that overlooks the Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts.

Bob Jackson — Robert H. Jackson is a past President of the Rowfant Club of Cleveland and was a founder of the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies (FABS). He is also a close friend of the Aldus Society and was the speaker at our group's inaugural meeting just four short years ago.



A knowledgeable and focused book collector, Bob has applied great energy and delicate taste in the development of two major book and manuscript collections: Victorian literature; and Beat Generation literature, which features an exceptionally fine William Burroughs collection.

Bob regularly gives literary and rare book talks and has participated in rare book exhibitions at the Grolier Club, San Francisco DeYoung Museum, Walker Museum, Whitney Museum, Rowfant Club, Cleveland Museum of Art and the Norman Rockwell Museum.



The Aldus Society

A Celebration of the Book

July 22-23, 2004

Schedule of Events



Friends of the
OSU Libraries

Thursday, July 22nd

- 9:30AM – 5:00PM Exhibits Open**
- 12:30PM – 12:45PM Welcome**
- 12:45PM – 4:30PM Presentations**
- **Collecting James Thurber**
Jay Hoster (The Aldus Society)
 - **Conservation of Books and Paper**
Harry Campbell (The Ohio State University)
 - **Collecting Mark Twain**
Robert Slotta (The Aldus Society)
 - **Why This Book: What Makes Some Books Collectible?**
Geoff Smith (Head, Rare Books & Manuscripts The Ohio State University)
Ron Ravneberg (The Aldus Society)
- 5:30PM – 7:00PM V.I.P. Reception**
\$50/Person (includes 3 Drink Tickets) – Cash Bar, Hor d'oeuvres
- 7:30PM – 8:30PM Guest Presentation – Nicholas A. Basbanes**
Refreshments to Follow **A Splendor of Letters: The Permanence of Books in an Impermanent World**



Friday, July 23rd

- 9:30AM – 5:00PM Exhibits Open**
- 8:30AM – 10:00AM Continental Breakfast**
- Book Signing**
Nicholas Basbanes & Barry Moser
- Book Appraisal Clinic**
Visitors are encouraged to bring in one or two items from their personal collections for examination by local booksellers, who will provide verbal appraisals and lend their expert guidance – Jay & Genie Hoster (Books on High), George Bauman (Acorn Bookshop)
- 10:00AM – 11:30AM Panel Presentation (Topic TBA)**
Nicholas Basbanes, Barry Moser, Bob Jackson, others (TBA)
- 11:30AM – 12:00PM Presentation – The Renovation of the Ohio State University Library**
Joseph Branin (Director of Libraries, The Ohio State University)
- 12:00PM – 1:30PM Guest Presentation – Barry Moser**
Tanakh and Testament: A Reprobate Tinkers with Holy Writ
- 1:30PM Closing Remarks**



All events are open to the public. All events except the V.I.P Reception are free. Thursday's V.I.P Reception and the Feature Presentation by Nicholas Basbanes will be held at the Columbus College of Art and Design. All other events (except exhibits) will be held at the Wexner Center for the Arts.

Additional in-kind contributions and promotional support provided by:
Columbus College of Art and Design, Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University Libraries, Ohioana Library, Columbus Metropolitan Library, Books on High, Acorn Bookshop