

The Aldus Society

NEWSLETTER

Summer, 2003

Volume 4, No. 1

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE From Ronald L. Ravneberg

June 7, 2000 — It was my son's 17th birthday and I had spent the day at an all-day meeting at Kent State University. All in all, it was a typical early summer day for me until my wife Janet showed me an article she had seen in the *Columbus Dispatch* that morning about a new book club that had been formed in Columbus.

Not the kind of book club where people read books and discuss them, but a book club for people who appreciate the many facets of the book and other printed media. Not just new books; not just old books; but *text and image past, present, and future.*



I signed up and never looked back. Meetings of The Aldus Society have always been stimulating. The program topics have invariably taken me into areas I had never before visited, and those excursions have been wonderful. Making paper, James Thurber, selling rare books, calligraphy, Mark Twain, Slavic manuscripts, book conservation, picture-books... the list goes on. And every program made me think.

Initially, being around such an informed group seemed a bit intimidating. "Everyone else seems to know so much and I know so little." My first reaction was to sit quietly during the programs and then drift out at the end. But as time went by, I began to see the same faces from month to month and even put names to a few.

Soon I was joining in conversations, and listening to interesting people talking about interesting things. There was always something to think about, and that felt good. I still feel that others know so much more than I about most of the program

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Stuart Rose to Speak on Collecting Landmark Books of Western Civilization

The last meeting of the 2002-03 programming season will feature Dayton native Stuart Rose, who was originally scheduled to talk with us last fall, but due to unforeseen circumstances, was not able to speak. Rose has done what every serious book lover dreams of: he has established himself sufficiently well to be able to devote his entire time to book collecting.

Mr. Rose began collecting books in 1993. In less than a decade, he has built one of the most complete collections of landmark books of Western civilization, including the four folios of Shakespeare and many of the most important rare books of the Renaissance, including Aldine editions. Rose will share his vitality, wit, and expertise as one of the nation's best marketers and most important book collectors.

After graduating from Emory University in 1976, he worked at Bain & Company and then at Niederhoffer & Company. He purchased REX Television and Appliance Company, Inc. in 1980. He took REX public in 1984, and in 1986 became one of the youngest people to place a company on the New York Stock Exchange.

We are told that Mr. Rose's talks are liberally sprinkled with anecdotes, making him a welcome speaker for organizations such as ours.

A special thanks to the Caxton Club in Chicago for allowing us to publish parts of their news story on Mr. Rose (above) which appeared last year in the Caxtonian Newsletter.

Collecting Landmark Books of Western Civilization

DATE: Thursday, May 23rd

TIME: 7 p.m.

WHERE: Thurber Center, 91 Jefferson Avenue

The Aldus Society

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The Newsletter is published quarterly by the Communications Committee of The Aldus Society. If you have submissions or ideas for articles, please contact Genie or Jay Hoster, Newsletter Co-editors, 267-7774 (days) or at bookshigh@aol.com

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Oak Knoll Fest X

At the last program meeting an announcement was made that the Board was planning a trip for members to the Oak Knoll bookfest in New Castle, Delaware, scheduled for October 3-5. We have not had enough people sign up to warrant a chartered group trip, however individual Aldus members may still want to attend, and Marcia Preston, our program chairman, will be glad to share information about accommodations, etc. You can contact her at mapreston@columbus.rr.com.

The Oak Knoll fine press exhibition is the largest press fair in America, and it will host 40 private press printing masters coming from many countries as well as the U.S.A., displaying and selling their books. This offers a unique adventure for fine book lovers, collectors and those wanting to learn more about the book arts to converse with the proprietors of these presses and peruse their books.

Oak Knoll's website, www.oakknoll.com, gives information about this annual event, as well as information about their publications.

— Marcia Preston

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, Continued from Page 1
topics, but that no longer intimidates me. (In fact, there has been only one meeting where I have known more about the topic of discussion than the others in the room, and that was the time I was the speaker.)

Each Aldus Society program is now an opportunity to be introduced to yet another topic I hadn't realized interested me. And the process will continue. The coming year will be full of interesting programming and activities. Other things we are considering include encore presentations of popular programs so those of you who missed them can get another chance, joint programs with the Friends of

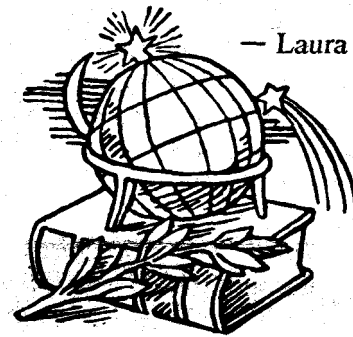
News About the Aldus Website

Who says a bibliophilic society can't be in touch with modern technology? The Aldus Society has a comprehensive, navigable website with information ranging from the background of the society and the history of the man for which it was named, to up-to-date details about programs and meetings.

Also included in the website are scanned images of each of the past newsletters; the names, roles, and e-mail addresses for the board members; helpful sources for finding information on conservation and book collecting in general; a list of the programs Aldus has sponsored in the past; and, of course, information on how to become a member.

The newest addition to the website is the "In the News" page, which contains links to entire articles originally published in the *Columbus Dispatch* relating to the founding and programming of the Aldus Society. The *Dispatch* generously granted copyright permission to the Aldus Society to post these articles.

Visit the site often as it is constantly growing and evolving! The address is www.aldussociety.com.



— Laura Masonbrink

the OSU Libraries, more programs with Cleveland's Rowfant Club (this year we host), field trips, show-and-tell sessions, expansion of the website and the newsletter ... you get the idea.

The Aldus Society has a special place in my life and continually reminds me that Descartes was right when he said *cogito, ergo sum*.

I think, therefore I am.

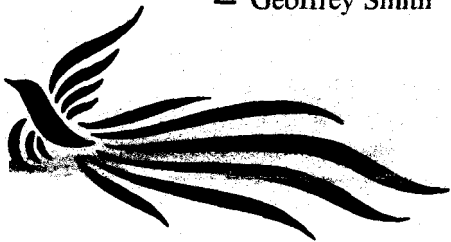
Overlooked Authors Born in Columbus Topic of September 18th Program

In conjunction with a book exhibition in the Philip Sills Gallery of the William Oxley Thompson Memorial Library at The Ohio State University, Charles C. Cole Jr. will speak on a selection of "Overlooked Authors Deserving Recognition, born in Columbus, Ohio, in the Nineteenth Century." He has researched and has written on thirty-four writers of fiction and nonfiction ranging from autobiography to women's studies. The program will be at 7 pm at The Thurber Center.

Cole is the Emeritus Director of the Ohio Humanities Council and is the author of *A Fragile Capital: Identity and the Early Years of Columbus, Ohio*, which was published in 2001. He is a historian, having written eight books and over thirty articles. He is a former Aldus board member and currently a board member of Friends of The Ohio State University Libraries. In May, 2001, he spoke to The Aldus Society on "The First Books Published in Columbus, Ohio."

For his September talk to Aldus, Cole will select summaries of the major volumes and briefly describe some of the authors' careers, including the first woman born in Columbus to become a poet; a writer of a children's book; a Walt Whitman biographer who salvaged George Catlin's native American paintings; William and Joseph Sullivant; and Wilbur H. Siebert, who wrote about the Underground Railroad.

— Geoffrey Smith



Mark your Calendar now for More 2003 Aldus Programs

October 16: Drew Jones - Anglo-Saxon Manuscript tradition, History of Text series

November 9: Barry Moser, Book Artist (details to be announced)

November 20 - Don Tritt on his collection of books about Switzerland

December - Holiday Dinner (details to be announced)

May 8th Tour of Children's Picturebooks at Columbus College of Art & Design

Sylvia and Kenneth Marantz have invited us to view their collection of children's picturebooks at Columbus College of Art and Design.

The collection is in the basement of the Canzani Center, which can be reached either by outside stairs to the left of the main entrance or by going down the stairs inside the main entrance. Guests are welcome.

DATE: Thursday, May 8th

TIME: 6 p.m.

PLACE: Canzani Center at CCAD

For more information, call Marcia Preston at 451-8264.

Art of Picturebook Topic of March Meeting

On March 13, members of The Aldus Society gathered at our new meeting place at Thurber Center to listen to Kenneth and Sylvia Marantz tell about their collection of children's picturebooks and to see examples of the many kinds of books which they have collected while reviewing books for a number of library journals and publications. They shared several dozen wonderfully illustrated books from their collection to an appreciative audience, then answered questions about illustrators and other related topics.

No, there isn't a typo in our review above. Ken pointed out that he favors "picturebook" spelled as a single word to differentiate books for children, as opposed to illustrated volumes intended for adults. Thus far, however, the two leading lexicographers on opposite sides of the Atlantic don't agree on that spelling; but then, for that matter, they're unable to agree with each other.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* argues for "picture-book" and cites Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* ("[he] bought the boy plenty of picture-books, and crammed his nursery with toys"). Merriam-Webster, on the other hand, holds out for "picture book" as a noun, dating it from 1847, and admitting "picture-book" only as an adjective. With the respect of his peers and other professionals in the field, Ken has changed the way children's picturebooks are studied — and, in the future, how they're spelled.

The Marantzes donated over 15,000 books from their collection of picturebooks to CCAD, where they are now housed. An index of the authors can be viewed on CCAD's website, or appointments can be made with them or with the Marantzes for viewing the collection (*see above*).

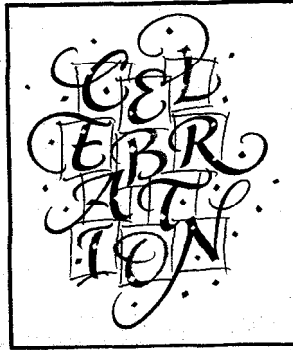
— Jay Hoster

Calligraphy Guild to Host National Conference

From July 19-23, The Calligraphy Guild of Columbus will be hosting the 23rd Lettering Arts Conference which will be held on the campus of Ohio Wesleyan University.

Events that Aldus members might enjoy during this week of activities include the Scribe Store, which will include calligraphic originals, limited editions, posters, greeting cards, handmade books, jewelry, T-shirts and numerous other goodies created by conference participants. It will be set up in the Campus Center.

There will be a faculty exhibit at the Campus Center. The Richard M. Ross Museum will have exhibits in their newly renovated gallery, including a retrospective exhibit of works by Friedrich Neugebauer; Illuminated Manuscripts assembled by Charles E. Puckett, some of which will be available for purchase; and an exhibit



which spotlights examples from the Zaner Bloser School of Penmanship, which was originally headquartered in Columbus.

There will be an exhibit which takes visitors through American Greetings Corporation and the development of this Ohio-based greeting card company at Wehrle Gallery; a Tribute to Leana Fay; a participants' exhibit in the Beeghly Library; and a Guild banner display in the Campus Center Atrium.

There will also be evening lectures and numerous classes offered. The deadline for registering for the wide range of classes was April 30, although a limited number of classes *might* still be open. You can leave a voice mail message to have any questions about the exhibitions, evening lectures or classes answered by calling 614/470-3107.

Manuscripts from St. Gall Explored At April Program

In the tradition of the dark and story nighttime programs which have become a part of Aldus Society tradition, Anna Grotans presented her talk on "The St. Gall School and Scriptorium in the Early Middle Ages" to a somewhat damp, but thoroughly appreciative audience.

Grotans enthusiastically shared the history of the Abbey of St. Gall founded in Switzerland in 612AD. Its library houses over 2000 manuscripts and handwritten books dating before 1000AD. During the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries the Abbey was a cultural center housing a school, monastery and library.

Grotans' presentation included floor plans, maps and pictures of pages from many of the manuscripts which she was able to study over the past ten years that she has visited and worked at St. Gall. Thousands of manuscripts were produced in the abbey's scriptorium, a majority of which are still preserved in the abbey's library. Many manuscripts written there were produced by visiting monks for their own monasteries as well. Over the door of the library is a motto written in German; translated it reads "apothecary of the soul."

The most prominently produced books from the scriptorium were liturgical books including illuminated and copied manuscripts, which were used during mass. Scientific, medical and text books were produced here by the scribes as well.

To the German-speaking students, Latin was a foreign language. There were no grammar books at that time, so translations, called glosses, can often be found between lines or in margins of books from this era.

An interesting note is that most dictionaries at this time were organized by subject rather than by alphabetizing words as we do now. For instance, a dictionary would be produced with the theme "parts of the body."

Grotans showed images of curses which were written in some of the books to discourage theft. Other books had what looked like scribbling on the front fly leaves. Because of the shortage of paper, fly leaves were used by students to practice penmanship, or perhaps to write graffiti. Occasionally students would write poems or practice the alphabet on the blank pages.

She also told about palimpsests, which were pages that had been erased and then reused. Under ultraviolet lights, original (erased) texts can oftentimes be read.

The monastery's founder, St. Gallus, originally came to Switzerland as part of St. Columbanus' missionary retinue. The abbey has withstood many threats, including the incursion of the Huns which threatened it between 924 and 933. During this time, most of the valuable books were moved to Reichneau. And in 937 a fire set by a pupil burned much of the school, although the library survived. Several important surviving documents include "Antiphonale Missarum," *Antiphonarium Sti. Gregorii* and a copy of St. Benedictus Rule. The monastery was also home to several historically important monks, one of whom was Notiker, who is given credit for writing a biography of Charlemagne as well as the partial creation and promotion of the sequence in musical notation.

Grotans noted that the Monastery of St. Gall has been designated a UNSECO Heritage Site.



The New York Antiquarian Book Fair: A Rookie's Review

Sitting here in my den only two days after the President's Day Storm, it's hard to believe that spring is nearly upon us. But it is. Soon we will no longer complain about shoveling snow and will use that energy complaining about how the lawnmower won't start.

But for bibliophiles, spring means the New York Antiquarian Book Fair, the granddaddy of American book fairs.

Last April (2002), my wife Janet and I decided to go to New York City to celebrate our wedding anniversary. And it just so happened (a complete coincidence, I assure you) that the New York Antiquarian Book Fair was being held that very same weekend. It was time for me to join the ranks of the initiated and do the New York Fair (oh, yeah ... and the anniversary stuff too).

So it was off to New York City on Thursday morning.

My book activities began that afternoon when I attended the Annual Meeting of FABS (Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies), of which the Aldus Society is a member. Geoff Smith was there as the formal Aldus Society representative, and I showed up as a fly on the wall. The Grolier Club, America's oldest and largest society for bibliophiles and enthusiasts in the graphic arts, hosted the meeting in their six-story neo-Georgian town-house on East 60th Street in Midtown Manhattan. Pretty classy stuff.

The meeting itself was ... well ... a meeting, with the usual assortment of minutes, budgets and other meeting stuff. There was little incentive for dragging out the business, however, as all in attendance were eager to wrap up and head over to the opening Preview session of the New York Antiquarian Book Fair.

I recognized several people around the table, including Larry Siegler and Bob Jackson of Cleveland's Rowfant Club and Bruce McKittrick of Bruce McKittrick Rare Books and the Philobiblon Club. (Both Jackson and McKittrick have been speakers for the Aldus Society.)

As the meeting was breaking up, John Crichton of San Francisco's Brick Row Book Shop and the Book Club of California, offered me a complimentary admission ticket good for all four days of the Book Fair. It was a nice gesture, as the going price for such a ticket price was normally \$35.

After the FABS meeting, there was still a bit of time before the 5:00PM Preview opening and it was far too hot to roam the streets (the temperature was in the 90s), so Geoff and I asked the doorman at the Grolier Club if he could recommend a quiet spot where two wearied travelers could cool their heels over a glass of wine. To our surprise and delight, he suggested we simply go upstairs to the members' lounge and make ourselves at home. We soon found ourselves ensconced in a wonderful room surrounded by an exhibit related to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. There were letters, posters, artifacts and more editions of the book than I would have ever guessed existed. It was as if we'd been dropped in a museum ... and we had it to ourselves.

When the Preview time approached we decided to hoof it over to the Park Avenue Armory at Park Avenue & 67th Street, where the Antiquarian Book Fair was being held. Although the Armory isn't air conditioned and was very warm inside, when we arrived there was already a long line of people waiting to get in (these are serious bibliophiles).

Having read Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone's description of the New York Antiquarian Book Fair in their delightful book, *Used and Rare: Travels in the Book World*, I had some idea of what to expect.

"These dealers brought with them strange and wonderful old maps and vellum books and pictures of ships. There were dealers who specialized in everything from Napoleonic history to alchemy to arts and crafts to dance to rarities to Egyptology to Dr. Seuss to medieval illuminated manuscripts. They had fore-edge paintings, gastronomy, and golf; horticulture, incunabula (books printed before 1501), and landscape architecture. ...

Everywhere we looked, there were signed copies, presentation copies, and copies with long, personal letters enclosed. And then there were the fine sets and private presses and limited editions and exhibition bindings. There were books embossed in gold and books embossed in silver and books with jewels on them."

They were right on all counts. But the Goldstones also described the stuffy attitude of the dealers in such a way that when I entered Armory I half expected to be treated with an aloofness fueled by my obvious inability to afford most of what was on display. (Let's see, do I want the \$290,000 copy of Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica* or should I settle for the \$195,000 copy?) No kidding!

However, I soon discovered that with very few exceptions the dealers were warm (no pun intended), friendly and more than willing to let an interested (yet financially unqualified) prospect like me sample their wares. It was like going to a famous museum and being able to handle the stuff. In the course of my several visits over the next three days, I came face to face with numerous books I had previously only read about ... in other books. But these were the real thing, and there is no privilege like being able to stand in the presence of the original.

Naturally, I didn't buy anything. But that didn't matter. Merely having had the opportunity to see, appreciate and handle some of the wonderful books was enough.

So will I go back? Well, let's see. This year's Book Fair is April 10-13, and my wife will be gone that very same week visiting her mother in Florida (a complete coincidence, I assure you). And there are all those frequent flyer miles gathering dust ...

You figure it out.

Oh, yeah ... the anniversary stuff. I didn't spend all my time booking. That weekend Janet and I visited our daughter who was interning at *Book Magazine*, took in museums, saw a Broadway show, did some of the sights and ended it all with a dinner and carriage ride in Central Park. So I wasn't in too much trouble (another complete coincidence, I assure you).

Ronald P. Rausberg

Postscript on the 2003 Book Fair

Well, it's now late April, and I'm having trouble getting my lawnmower to start. But I did get back to New York. (Isn't that what frequent flyer miles are for?) This year I bought twice as much as last (i.e., still nothing). However, I took the opportunity to do some other book activities while in New York. On one morning I toured the New York Public Library, and the next day went to view some antiquarian tomes that were coming up for auction at Swann's Gallery. The rest of my time was spent browsing at the Book Fair, where I did see one item that would be nice to have — a signed copy of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation priced at a cool million bucks! But I couldn't complete the deal; guess I had left the checkbook in my other suit.