

The Aldus Society

A Columbus Book Club

NEWSLETTER

Autumn, 2000

Vol. 1, No. 3

President's Column by Geoffrey D. Smith

It was about one year ago that discussion began on the formation of a bibliophilic society for the book community of central Ohio. After some trepidation at launching such a venture, after some careful consideration of the mission for such a society, after some evanescent hubris at selection of such a prominent name for the group, and, after some wonderment as to why the name Aldus had not been chosen previously during the one hundred plus years of American bibliophilic societies, a membership drive was launched in March 2000 with a remarkable response.

Since then, The Aldus Society has sponsored four programs with a fifth scheduled for November and attendance has remained steady and impressive. The November 8th program, a talk by Bruce McKittrick on Renaissance continental libraries, will be the last of this calendar year, but the Society has already mapped out a program schedule for the winter and spring covering such topics as preservation, calligraphy and collecting.

March 2001 will officially mark the beginning of the second year of existence for The Aldus Society and it is hoped that certain goals might be projected for that very important second year. *First, that there will be a second year. No one that I know, and certainly not myself, is complacent about early success. The Aldus Society wants to continue to have the opportunity to promote the book arts, but it can only do so with the support of its membership.*

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Bruce McKittrick to Present November 8th Program

A rare book dealer based in Narberth, Pennsylvania, Bruce McKittrick specializes in books printed on the continent of Europe from the fourteenth to the end of the eighteenth century. He can recall exactly the moment when he decided on his life's work.

As a college student in the early 1970s he admits to missing a few classes, but one day he accompanied his girlfriend to one of her classes, which met in the Smith College rare book room. He sat down, looked around, and thought, "That's it. That's what I want to do." And he has never looked back.

Bruce will be speaking to the The Aldus Society at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 8, at the Worthington Public Library, 820 High St. in downtown Worthington.

Geoff Smith, president of The Aldus Society, says, "We're delighted to welcome Bruce to Central Ohio. He's in the tradition of great scholar-dealers. His catalogues are collectible items in themselves; he provides extensive commentary and bibliographic background on each item that is offered through his catalogues."

As a rare book dealer Bruce specializes in Continental printed books and manuscripts from the fourteenth century through the end of the eighteenth century.

One of the great figures of book collecting that Bruce will be focusing on is a seventeenth-century Frenchman named Gabriele Naudé. In 1627 Naudé, then in his twenties, published his advice on building a library.

Naudé assembled libraries for a series of patrons, including Henri de Mesme, the president of the High Judicial Court in Paris, and the mighty Cardinal Richelieu. Naudé's greatest labors, however, were performed on behalf of Cardinal Mazarin, for whom in a period of less than ten years Naudé acquired and organized some 40,000 printed books and a mass of valuable manuscripts.

Another figure that Bruce will focus on is Gabriel Martin, who issued his first book auction catalog in 1706 and through a series of nearly 150

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PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE (Continued from page 1)

Secondly, to guarantee growth, invigoration and renewal, the Society wants to involve more members in active participation of the organization, programming, promotion and all aspects of the Society's functions. The appointment of new trustees and officers will guarantee that the Aldus Society truly becomes the property of its membership.

Thirdly, despite the kind words about our programs to date, it would be useful to explore other forms of presentation, field trips to such places as the Dard Hunter museum in Chillicothe, meetings of smaller interest groups and much more. And, finally, we hope to attract greater numbers of young bibliophiles.

Thus we stand at the outset of a second year with some modest and attainable goals. We hope foremost that our members will support another year of book programming in Columbus.

The current newsletter will be the last of the year 2000 and, as we make the gradual approach to 2001, the Trustees of The Aldus Society wish the membership a joyous holiday season.

MCKITTRICK (Continued from page 1)

auctions over the next half century, created a system of book classification that came to be adopted by the French book trade.

Martin wasn't the first person to put out a book auction catalogue (the earliest surviving one is from 1599), but Martin's efforts demonstrated the value of old books and undoubtedly saved many volumes from the grasp of the rag pickers. (Books at that time were printed on rag paper, and in an early form of recycling, books and old clothing were sold to the paper mills.)

Bruce has played an active role in the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies (FABS), of which The Aldus Society is a member.

The Worthington Public Library is located at 820 High Street in Worthington at the corner of Stafford, which is one block north of Dublin-Gramville Road; parking is available on Hartford Street, which runs parallel to High Street behind the library.

Mark Twain Honored by Robert Slotta

On September 7th, 66 literature lovers filled the Little Theater at the Upper Arlington Public Library to hear Mark Twain expert Robert T. Slotta talk about his obsession with collecting anything related to the famous humorist.

Paul Watkins, an Aldus trustee and fellow Twain collector, introduced several noted Twain collectors in the audience that night. Talking about collecting Mark Twain, Slotta mentioned that at one time the late Columbus book dealer Paul North had over 100 copies of the first edition of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* for sale. And many lovers of Twain's writings, collectors or not, enjoyed hearing about one of their favorite writers.

Although he ranged widely through Twain's life and literature, Slotta focused on the writer's visit to Columbus in 1885. Twain was in Columbus during a promotional tour for *Huckleberry Finn*, illustrating that author promotional tours did not originate with "The Today Show." Slotta showed a remarkable silent film, made by Thomas Edison, of Twain at his Connecticut home in 1909.

We learned that Twain considered the most significant achievement of his life to be not any of the wonderful, well-received bestsellers he wrote, nor the happiness he brought tens of thousands of people on his many lecture tours, but rather being the publisher of the memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant.

When asked why he collected Twain, Slotta replied, "For the enchantment of life itself due to Twain's richness and supply of laughter." He shared many examples of Twain's humorous comments, and left the audience chuckling and wanting more.

Some Twainiana from Slotta's extensive collection were on display for the audience to examine at the end of the program.

British Printer Graham Moss Addresses The Aldus Society

On an autumn night featuring damp weather that might have been imported from our guest's home region, Aldus Society members gave English printer/book designer Graham Moss a warm welcome. Moss is the founder and owner of the Incline Press in Oldham, England. He was accompanied by his partner and wife, Kathy Whalen, who also works full time at the press. They were in America to participate in the annual Oak Knoll Book Fest in New Castle, Delaware, a book festival not to be missed by any bibliophile.

Those in attendance were treated to a delightful visual program by Moss. He presented slides of both the Incline Press facilities and samples of the work being done at the press. Moss frequently interjected humorous comments and descriptions of the work he does.

"It's the work itself that determines how long the week is," Moss said. "There's no such thing as a five-day week at a private press." He described the detailed work that goes into selecting the paper, the ink, the covers, and the overall feel and appearance of each carefully crafted book that bears the Incline Press imprint.

Their most recent book is *A Is for Alphabet*, a stunningly beautiful production of hand-colored woodcuts by the graphic designer Enid Marx, whom Moss was fortunate to meet and work with late in her career.

A copy of one of the Incline Press' latest books, *Parvus*, written and illustrated by Sven Ljungberg, was awarded through a drawing held at the end of the evening.

Moss' generosity was also evidenced with his donation of a keepsake for each member in attendance — a hand-printed, handmade sheet of paper announcing the publication of an upcoming book from the press. The illustrations were exquisitely hand-colored.

For more information on the Incline Press, visit their website at www.inclinepress.com.

January 2001 Program Will Be on Preservation

Wes Boomgaarden, Preservation Officer at The Ohio State University Libraries (OSUL) — and member of The Aldus Society — will be the featured speaker at the Thursday, January 25th meeting of The Aldus Society (watch for upcoming details regarding time and place).

Since his arrival at OSUL in 1984, Wes has worked with his colleagues to develop one of the premier academic preservation and conservation departments in the nation. Over the years at Ohio State, Wes had led and collaborated on many preservation ventures that have resulted in the successful conservation and preservation of books and serials throughout University Libraries.

In the 1990s, Wes served as the Project Director for the CIC ("Big Ten") Coordinated Preservation Microfilming Project, an NEH-funded effort that has preserved over 60,000 volumes on film, and has conserved and rehoused 10,000 additional volumes. At Ohio State, this effort has concentrated on 19th-century history of botany monographs; on Ottoman Turk imprints; and on early twentieth-century fiction from the William Charvat American Literature Collection.

Most recently, Wes and his staff have worked closely with the Libraries' Special Collections curators to seek and realize the full conservation treatment of the Libraries' treasures. A good number of these rare item conservation treatments have been funded by the Emanuel Rudolph Endowment for Preservation, using the services of some of the nation's top conservators, a fine example of which is the 1493 Nuremberg Chronicle.

On January 25th Wes' presentation will be entitled "When the Only Tool You Have is a Hammer ... Everything Tends to Look Like a Nail; or, Finding the Right Conservation Solution for Important Library Collections." We hope that you will be able to attend this informative and entertaining program.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR MORE BOOK EVENTS:

November 1-3 – OSU Friends of the Library Book Sale
Please call 614/292-3387 for details

November 2 – An Evening with Robert Bly presented by The Thurber House
7:30 p.m. at Canzani Center, Columbus College of Art and Design
Call 464-1032 for ticket information

November 14 – Thurber House Fall Publication Event
Author Charles C. Cole Jr. : *A Fragile Capital – Identity and the Early Years of Columbus, Ohio* (Charles is an Aldus trustee and our club Historian)
Author Henry L. Hunker: *Columbus, Ohio: A Personal Geography*
Both will speak at 7:30 p.m. at Thurber Center
Call 464-1032 for details

FABS Spring Tour and Symposium in Cleveland

If you have read your newsletter from the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies (FABS), you will have seen the article about the upcoming Cleveland Tour and Symposium, May 31 - June 3, 2001.

This is going to be a terrific event for booklovers, a chance to visit with bibliophiles from around the country, and attend a number of outstanding programs customized just for FABS. Among the events will be:

- Trip to see the Bruce Ferrini Illuminated Manuscripts collection
- Reception at Western Reserve Historical Society
- Private Libraries of Jon Lindseth, Robert Jackson, and Hugo Alpert
- Lunch at Mountain Glen Farm
- Special viewing of the Cleveland Museum of Art's Special Manuscript and Rare Book Collection
- Reception and dinner at the Rowfant Club
- Symposium: Raring to Go — Book Collecting in the 21st Century
- Lunch at the Cleveland Museum of Art's Sculpture Garden
- The John G. White Collection at the Cleveland Public Library
- Dinner at the Gwinn Mansion
- Visit to the Holden Arboretum and Library in Mentor, Ohio

For more details, see page 5 in your Fall 2000 FABS Newsletter. Hotel reservations are due no later than January 10th, so if you are planning to attend and stay at the official FABS hotel — the Glidden House Hotel, be sure to send in your reservation soon.

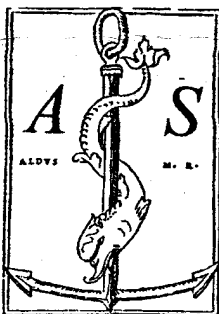
The Sense and Nonsense of Collecting

Man is by nature a collector. For myself, I began with postage stamps and white rats, passing therefrom to cigarette pictures and then to books. People collect the oddest things. It does not seem strange to me that a person should collect old bottles, but I once read of a singular collection in which bottles were used where the contents and not the bottles themselves were the main thing. No, it was not wine. The owner was a collector of rivers, keeping a sample of the water of each in a bottle properly labeled. Probably he had them arranged alphabetically from the Amazon to the Zambesi. The person who viewed the collection said that after seeing the dirty water in the bottle marked "Tiber," he understood why Horatius should be regarded as a hero for leaping into the stream.

Although it is difficult to understand the lure of some forms of collecting, it is small wonder that the army of book collectors is increasing by leaps and bounds. For, as Henry Savage says, it would be difficult to find a more enjoyable and profitable means of employing one's energies than in collecting books. "Who touches this book touches a man," says Walt Whitman of his *Leaves of Grass*.

*from Morocco Bound, Adrift Among Books
by Edwin Valentine Mitchell*

Not a Member Yet? Copy or Clip this Form and Return it TODAY!



The Aldus Society
A Columbus Book Club

"May you find yourself always
in the company of good books
and kindred spirits."

— Colleen Sell

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: _____

STREET: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ e-mail: _____

Special Interests or Meeting Ideas:

Yearly Dues:

- \$25 - Individual
- \$40 - Family
- \$50 - Patron
- \$100 - Founder
- \$10 - Student

We welcome the names and addresses of anyone you think would like to join our organization.

Return this form with your check to the Aldus Society, Box 1150, Worthington, Ohio 43085-1150