



The Aldus Society

A Columbus Book Club

NEWSLETTER

Summer, 2000

Vol. 1, No.2

British Book Designer Will Present October 5th Program

The guest speaker for our October 5th program will be Graham Moss, who owns the Incline Press in Oldham, Lancashire, England. He will share his experiences as a book designer and printer, and a number of his books will be on display at this meeting for Aldus members to enjoy.

Prior to founding the press, Moss was a history teacher who had a professional interest in paper conservation, which then grew into a book-repair business.

In 1990, Moss acquired a small tabletop printing press to print labels for paper wrappers and spines. His backyard shed was transformed into a print shop; its entrance opened to Incline Road, providing a name for the Press. The logo of Incline Press is a candle, symbolizing an old-fashioned Bright Idea.

By 1993, Moss decided to leave teaching due to the success of his archival book repair and printing business. That year also marked the Press' first publishing project, a reprinting of Enid Marx's 1938 set of wood engravings for *Nursery Rhymes*. It was followed by a second book, Peter Carter's modern-day interpretation of Oliver Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*.

As with the books of most small presses, Moss' books are not available in retail book stores, but can be found at Internet sites and rare book stores. Subscribers to small press catalogs are rewarded with discounts and mailings of books, keepsakes and ephemera.

This will be an interesting and informative meeting, and Aldus members will have the chance to talk with Moss after his presentation. The program will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the Upper Arlington Public Library, 2800 Tremont Road.

Robert Slotta to Speak at September 7th Meeting of The Aldus Society

Robert Slotta, the highly-regarded Mark Twain collector and researcher, will be guest speaker at the September 7th program of The Aldus Society. This meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the Upper Arlington Public Library. The library is located at 2800 Tremont Road.

Slotta first started collecting and researching Mark Twain in the early 1980s. Soon thereafter, Columbus bookseller Ed Hoffman introduced him to noted Twain scholar and author Caroline Thomas Harnsberger. Ms. Harnsberger was a good friend of Mark Twain's daughter Clara Clemens, and aided Slotta in his Mark Twain scholarship.

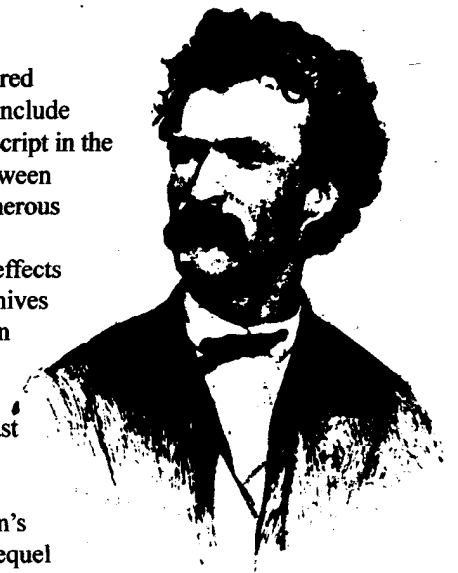
Slotta retired from the "normal business world" in 1991 to pursue a career dedicated entirely to rare Mark Twain memorabilia. This seemed insane to his family, and even more insane to some booksellers. However, nine years later he's still at it.

During the last nine years, Slotta has acquired some incredible Mark Twain items which include the earliest known Samuel Clemens manuscript in the world; the original marriage certificate between Samuel Clemens and Olivia Langdon; numerous books signed by Twain, including almost 100 books from Twain's library; personal effects including Mark Twain's rocking chair; archives of hundreds of handwritten letters by Twain and his family; fine first editions; the earliest known original printing of a Mark Twain fictional story; and the very last manuscript handwritten by Twain.

Slotta regards his 1995 discovery of Twain's unpublished working notes for the direct sequel to *Huckleberry Finn* as his greatest achievement to date.

At this program, Slotta, who calls himself a "Twain-iac", will share two letters which Twain wrote when visiting Columbus. He also will tell how he acquired many of his rare collectibles, and will bring some of the many items he has acquired over the years to this meeting.

This is a program you won't want to miss! Mark your calendar now:



The Aldus Society
A Columbus Book Club

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Because The Aldus Society will have a program on Mark Twain for its September program, it is important to remember that Mark Twain, in addition to being a writer of note, was weaned in the print shop of frontier America. For your edification, we reprint Twain's childhood memories of the print shop experience. The selection, "The Old-Fashioned Printer," is from *Mark Twain's Speeches*, edited by Twain's close personal and literary friend, William Dean Howells (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1910). Howells incidentally had been a typesetter and reporter for the *Ohio State Journal*. [Bracketed notations are editorial and not Twain's.]

Mark Twain's Address at the Typothetae Dinner Given at Delmonico's, January 18, 1886, Commemorating the Birthday of Benjamin Franklin

Mr. Clemens responded to the toast "The Composer" as follows:

The chairman's historical reminiscences of Gutenberg have caused me to fall into reminiscences, for I myself am something of an antiquity. All things change in the procession of years, and it may be that I am among strangers. It may be that the printer of today is not the printer of thirty-five years ago.

I was no stranger to him. I knew him well. I built his fire for him in the winter mornings; I brought his water from the village pump; I swept out his office; I picked up his type from under his stand; and, if he were there to see, I put the good type in his case and the broken ones among the "hell matter" [broken type]; and if he wasn't there to see, I dumped it all with the "pi" [mixed type, usually broken] on the imposing-stone – for that was the furtive fashion of the cub, and I was a cub. I wetted down the paper Saturdays, I turned it Sundays – for this was a country weekly; I rolled, I washed the rollers, I washed the forms, I folded the papers, I carried them around at dawn Thursday mornings....

Every man on the town list helped edit the thing – that is, he gave orders as to how it was to be edited; dictated his opinions, marked out its course for it, and every time the boss failed to connect he stopped his paper. We were just infested with critics, and we tried to satisfy them all over. We had one subscriber who paid cash, and he was more trouble than all the rest. He bought us once a year, body and soul, for two dollars. He used to modify our politics every which way, and he made us change our religion four times in five years. If we ever tried to reason with him, he would threaten to stop his paper, and, of course, that meant bankruptcy and destruction.

That man used to write articles a column and a half long, leaded long primer [ten point type], and sign them "Junius," or "Veritas," or "Vox Populi," or some other high-sounding rot; and then, after it was set up, he would come in and say he had changed his mind – which was a gilded figure of speech, because he hadn't any – and order it to be left out. We couldn't afford "bogus" [boiler plate items other than news] in that office, so we always took the leads out, altered the signature, credited the article to the rival paper in the next village, and put it in.

Well, we did have one or two kinds of "bogus." Whenever there was a barbecue, or a circus, or a baptizing, we knocked off for half a day, and then to make up for short matter we would "turn over ads" – turn over the whole page and duplicate it. The other "bogus" was deep philosophical stuff, which we judged nobody every read; so we kept a galley of it standing, and kept on slapping the same old batches of it in, every now and then, till it got dangerous. Also, in the early days of the telegraph we used to economize on the news.

We picked out the items that were pointless and barren of information and stood them on a galley, and changed the dates and localities, and used them over and over again till the public interest in them was worn to the bone. We marked the ads, but we seldom paid any attention to the marks afterward; so the life of a "td" [today] ad and a "tf" [till forbid] ad was equally eternal. I have seen a "td" notice of a sheriff's sale still booming serenely along two years after the sale was over, the sheriff dead, and the whole circumstance become ancient history. Most of the yearly ads were patent-medicine stereotypes, and we used to fence with them.

I can see that printing-office of prehistoric times yet, with its horse bills on the walls, its "d" boxes [type box in the printer's tray, located below the k box, q. v.] clogged with tallow, because we always stood the candle in the "k" box nights, its towel, which was not considered soiled until it could stand alone, and other signs and symbols that marked the establishment of that kind in the Mississippi Valley; and I can see, also, the tramping "jour" [journeyman], who flitted by in the summer and tarried a day, with his wallet stuffed with one shirt and a hatful of handbills; for if he couldn't get any type to set he would do a temperance lecture.

His way of life was simple, his needs not complex; all he wanted was plate and bed and money enough to get drunk on, and he was satisfied. But it may be, as I have said, that I am among strangers, and sing the glories of a forgotten age to unfamiliar ears, so I will "make even" [justify the end line of type] and stop.

Logan Elm Press Meeting Well-Attended

It was the proverbial dark and stormy night on June 14th, but sixty eager bibliophiles made their way to the Library at The Ohio State University to hear Bob Tauber tell about the Logan Elm Press and Paper Mill which was in operation at the university from 1979 to 1994.

Tauber told how, as Director, he found funding to start the Press as a teaching laboratory for the book arts, and he traced its progress through the years when extraordinarily fine books were produced, often printed on paper made by hand.

These books received national acclaim. *Inangaro: The Legend of the Coconut* was included in a traveling exhibit throughout the U.S.A., and Tauber related how the book was made. Four editions of the story were created by four different artist/designer teams; the four individual books were then laid in a tiered drop-back linen box with a real coconut set into the front cover.

The Letter of Columbus was also a tour de force of hand bookmaking from its binding of paper made from raw flax to the colorful illustrations printed directly from zinc plates hand-inked by the artist. These books have been acquired by collectors as well as by some of the finest libraries here and in Europe.

During the talk Tauber introduced Aldus members Sid Chafetz, Kenneth Marantz, Nancy Clatworthy and Ann Woods, each of whom had been involved in an important way with the Press.

After Tauber's entertaining talk and a revealing video, members enjoyed a rare opportunity to peruse the books created at the Press.

MORE BOOK EVENTS:

August 19 – Cincinnati Book Fair

10 am - 4 pm – Business Club of Montgomery
7777 Sycamore-Montgomery Rd., Cincinnati, OH

September 10 – Columbus Book & Paper Show

10 am - 4 pm – Vets Memorial Hall
300 W. Broad St., Columbus, OH

October 1 – Michigan Antiquarian Book & Paper Show

9:30 am - 5 pm – Lansing Center
333 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI

November 1-3 – OSU Friends of the Library Book Sale

Please call 614/292-3387 for details

Rare Books Topic for November Meeting

Bruce McKittrick, owner of McKittrick Rare Books in Narberth, Pennsylvania, will be our guest speaker at the November 8th program of The Aldus Society. His specialty is continental books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although Mr. McKittrick jokingly refers to his presentations as sounding like a dog reading Shakespeare, he is, in fact, a book scholar with a keen interest in the print history of customs, manners, education and science and technology of the periods and areas that he specializes in.

His tales of the book trade and his insights on the future of the book market should be of interest to all who collect and treasure books. Details about the place and time of Bruce McKittrick's appearance will be forthcoming in the months ahead, but keep your calendars clear for the evening of Wednesday, November 8th, the day after election day.

President's Message From Geoffrey D. Smith

As a new organization, The Aldus Society is still defining itself and, though it seems particularly urgent to come to some sense of purpose in its nascent stages, perhaps The Aldus Society will always be in a state of self-definition as the larger culture around us causes us to reassess our goals and values. I would hope, however, whatever social and political changes occur in the future that The Aldus Society will remain first and foremost an organization that exists for its members and derives its direction from that active and articulate membership.

That is to say, The Aldus Society is an inner driven group. Its programs and activities derive from the diverse interests of a large group whose common bond is an intense appreciation of text and image. The focus of The Aldus Society is unique to itself, its membership, and is not determined primarily by external trends and influences such as best seller lists, award winners, television talk shows and other fabricated measures of public taste. Not to deride popular culture, for without it we would not have Shakespeare or Dickens, Truffaut or Scorsese, Gershwin, Astaire or Charles Schultz.

But as an independent group, we have the privilege of enjoying our culture more on our own terms from contexts other than the mass marketplace. The Aldus Society is neither buying nor selling textual or iconographic commodities; rather, it examines the unique assembly of private collections of all sorts, it explores the creative process of the assembly of words and images into objects of beauty, it follows the transfer of knowledge through multiple media, and much more.

Erasmus, the great Dutch humanist, referred to the Aldine Press and its attendant salon as a university without walls. As a namesake of that great printer and press, we should continue that esteemed tradition. In all cases The Aldus Society should depend upon its members to decide for themselves what aspects of text and image they want to experience and learn about. To that end, ideas for programming and events are encouraged from all members and active participation on society committees is equally encouraged. This is your society.

Robert Jackson Speaks at Inaugural Program

Robert Jackson of the Rowfant Club in Cleveland was the speaker for the inaugural program of The Aldus Society on May 16, 2000, at the Upper Arlington Public Library. Mr. Jackson extended salutations from the Rowfant Club to its fledgling, intrastate relative, The Aldus Society. In addition, he had wise words as to the importance of programming for the perpetuation of a bibliophilic society and encouraging words for Aldus Society participation in the Spring 2001 program of the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Society, which will be held in Cleveland.

The heart of Mr. Jackson's comments, his discussion of his personal collection of Victorian books in-parts, enhanced with colored slides, left the audience of over forty members highly impressed with the extent and condition of the collection as well as the sound methodology leading to its establishment. A lively reception followed at the home of Dan and Marcia Preston.

RIGHT: A terrific time was had by everyone who attended The Aldus Society's First Annual Summer Picnic.

DON'T FORGET:
Bob Slotta on Mark Twain
Thursday, September 7th

First Aldus Summer Picnic A Feast of Food and Friends

If you missed the summer picnic, you missed a treat! Members gathered with their families at the home of our president Geoffrey Smith to feast on wonderful dishes that everyone brought to share. The weather was perfect and the company even more so.

Members have expressed an interest in establishing a more formal holiday tradition as well. We are currently looking into a restaurant venue for this event and tickets would be purchased in advance. A program may also be planned for this event. Please call Marcia Preston, Program Chair (451-8264) with your ideas or comments.



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