

Aldus Society Notes

Winter 2006-2007

Volume 7, No. 2

Aldus Still Collects

January brought everyone together for another “Aldus Collects” program, where members share their collecting interests through brief presentations that highlight interesting items or experiences they have encountered as they pursued their passions. This installment’s participants included: Bob Bennett with stories about some of his more serendipitous finds over the years; Paul Christenson, who shared his interest in collecting Science Fiction; Christine Hayes, who obviously left her heart in San Francisco; Dave Reiff with tales and original letters from the Oregon Trail; Laralyn Sasaki with a variety of books about Hawaii; and Geoff Smith with some sage advice about collection building.

The event was moderated by George Bauman, who started off with some comments about his recent sojourn to Paris and his adventures at Shakespeare and Company (the subject of his “Bookstore-y” in the current issue of *Aldus Society Notes*.) Here’s the whole gang, except for Geoff Smith, who ducked out just before the camera appeared.



Aldus Calendar

February

- 3 (First Saturday)** — Kassie Rose will be sharing information on two of central Ohio’s celebrated authors, Mt. Gilead’s Dawn Powell and Mansfield’s Louis Bromfield.
- 8 (Regular Meeting)** — To honor Black History Month, Aldus Society member Charles Cole will speak on “The Literary Legacy of African-American Authors in Ohio before 1860.” Charles has presented before, and each time he brings to light some new facet of the history of Ohio.

March

- 3 (First Saturday)** — John Bennett will be introducing members to OSU’s Avant Writing Collections.
- 8 (Regular Meeting)** — “March madness” doesn’t necessarily just mean basketball. The Aldus Society version will feature Diana Britt Franklin speaking about her recent book, *The Good-Bye Door*. Nicknamed “the Blonde Borgia,” Anna Marie Hahn was a cold-blooded serial killer who preyed on the elderly in Cincinnati in the 1930s. When the State of Ohio strapped its first woman into the electric chair, Hahn became the nation’s first female serial killer to be executed in the chair. Ohio history, writing and research, and a good story ... all in one evening.

April

- 12 (Regular Meeting)** — April is the month for the ninth chapter of the Aldus Society History of Text & Image series. Professor Jim Unger, Chair of the Far Eastern Languages at the Ohio State University will be speaking on the early Japanese language and books.

May

- 10 (Regular Meeting)** — Our final regular program of the season is usually a special one, and this year should be no different. Details will be announced on the Aldus Society website when they become available.

Aldus Society Meetings

Regular meetings of the Aldus Society are held at 7:30 PM on the second Thursday of the month at

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

☞ Socializing Begins One-Half Hour Before ☞



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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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.

The Aldus Society

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 1150

Worthington, Ohio

43085-1150

Web Site

www.AldusSociety.com

Ron Ravneberg can be contacted at:

(614) 457-1153 or

RRavneberg@aol.com.

2006 – A Reader’s Year

Bill Evans

One of the things I value most about The Aldus Society is its diversity. Collectors, artists, printers, writers and, lest we forget, readers all gather to celebrate the thing we call the book. Sometimes our notion of “book” is challenged, as it was today in the latest of Geoff Smith’s First Saturday events. Bob Tauber led us through an incredible array of artist’s books and private press editions - books that represent the finest of the traditional book form and others whose very naming as books challenges many of us to pause, consider, perhaps rethink and maybe come to appreciate artistic innovation at work. Book or not, the works that Bob, Debra Fink Bachelder and Marcia Preston presented were truly amazing. If you have yet to find time for one of these First Saturday gatherings you are missing out on a very special benefit of Aldus Society membership.



Aldus membership has also given me a great opportunity to discover new authors. One of the questions I hear most often at our monthly meetings is “Read any good books lately?” Like many of you I read a lot and, although I am not an especially fast reader, I do make time every day to feed my addiction. My book collecting has almost always begun with reading an author and then finding I want to read more. Eventually, I want better copies, first editions, signed first editions, and, well, you know... That’s how I began my modest collections of James Boswell and Samuel Johnson (has anybody ever collected one and not the other?), Jeannette Winterson, Beat Poetry, Roddy Doyle, Julian Barnes, Nick Hornby, Diane Wakoski, et al.

2006 was a great reader’s year. I keep threatening to begin a reading diary so I can actually remember what I’ve read(!), but so far that resolution has met with the same fate as the one to catalogue my books. Radio and print reviews, book lists, book jacket blurbs, a chance book sighting – *Our Mutual Friend* – on the TV series *Lost*, the Thurber House “Evenings with Authors” series and most importantly, tips from friends all led me to some great reading. Books by Charles Dickens, Carlos Ruiz Zafon, Jack Matthews, Michael Dirda, Lord Dunsany, William Boyd and Pete Dexter stand out from dozens of others. With special thanks to Bill Rich for mentioning *A Christmas Carol* in our last newsletter, I decided to read that short novel on Christmas day – a real holiday treat. Marley might be dead, but the biting social commentary of Dickens is very much alive and unfortunately still relevant.



Finally, although reading goals can be helpful, I love to “wander.” Geoff Smith says he’s reading his way through Charles Dickens *chronologically!* My more modest goal is simply to finish the last twelve hundred pages of Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time* by spring (if I can find the time.) However, ... I always have time for a side trip.

Read any good books lately?

Bill

Barry Moser Supports OSU Library Renovation with Don Quixote Print



Artist and author, Barry Moser has generously donated his time and talent to create a special printed edition of his image of *Don Quixote* in support of the Thompson Library Renovation.

Moser, whom Nicholas Basbanes calls “the most important book illustrator working in America today,” was hosted by the Aldus Society and the Friends of the OSU Libraries when he was a featured speaker at our 2004 *Celebration of the Book* in Columbus. It was during his visit that Barry offered to authorize an edition to help with the renovation project.

The image, which has never before been the subject of a printed edition, was released at the end of 2005 to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the publication of the first part of *Don Quixote de la Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. The Talfourd P. Lynn Cervantes collection in OSU’s Rare Books and Manuscripts Library is one of the world’s most significant collections of publications by Cervantes, and includes a copy of the extremely rare first 1605 Madrid printing of *Don Quixote*.

Moser’s *Don Quixote* is printed on Mohawk Letterpress Superfine, off-white, eggshell finish 80# stock. The print size is approximately 12.5" x 19" and the centered image is approximately 8" x 12.5".

The print is be available in a signed and numbered edition of 100 prints at \$250 each. An additional 125 unsigned prints are available for \$150 each. Both versions are available exclusively through the Aldus Society and the Friends of the OSU Libraries. Proceeds from the prints will benefit the Thompson Library Renovation Campaign.

Several Aldus Society members have already added the print to their collections. If you are interested in acquiring one or more print(s), please contact the Aldus Society at (614) 457-1153 or at AldusSociety@aol.com. You can also contact Friends of the OSU Libraries office at (614) 292-3387.



Don Quixote de la Mancha and his faithful horse Rocinante, a limited edition print by Barry Moser, available exclusively through the Aldus Society and the Friends of the Ohio State University Libraries. All proceeds will benefit the renovation of OSU’s Thompson Library.



Bookstore-ies

George Cowmeadow Bauman

Bookstore-ing in Paris (Part 1):

Folio-sized adventures are bound to happen while booking in Paris, The City of Bookstores.



Whenever Linda and I plan a vacation – American or international, one of the first things I do is check out the possibilities to go bookstore-ing in the destination city. Not just booking. For me, that’s an important, but secondary goal.

My prize is visiting second-hand/antiquarian bookshops as well as the new-books bookstores – if they’re independently owned. I’ll concede a few visits to the local B&N&B chain superstores, but my limited time in another city is going to be spent in the locally owned shops.



Once in a bookstore, the books call to me. But I’m also there to observe all the details of the store’s ambience; I want to check out how the shop presents itself to customers – their displays, music, lighting, signage, fixtures, the sense of order/disorder, and, importantly, their staff and its sense of customer service.

And do they have proprietary mugs, T-shirts, and tote bags? I’ll take one of each.

After 40 years of running 14 different bookstores, I cast an experienced eye around me in bookstores, and can determine which are well-run and which linger by the grace of tax-exemption; which are comfortable to browse in and which have you heading for the door while your carry-in coffee is still warm.

This professional awareness enhances my enjoyment of being in a colleague’s enterprise. I sigh with the pleasure of a mini-Christmas each time I open the door to a new bookstore.

After browsing around, and if the moment and the light are right, I try to take a photograph of the bookseller and the shop, usually with their permission...and to their amusement.



Some cities and countries are better than others at satisfying bibliophilia, and I reveled in Paris’ reputation as one of the best cities for bookstore-ing.

There are hundreds of inviting *librairies* scattered about the city, welcoming readers and/or collectors, many with the curious sign, “entre libre”. We found a fool-proof method to find a few stores to visit: head in any direction and be

surprised at the number of bookstores – mostly second-hand/antiquarian – to be encountered, including some of the 300 picturesque *bouquinistes* (riverside booksellers) along the banks of the Seine River.

I planned to visit many bookslingers – both those housed inside restored centuries-old buildings, and the ones outside along the river. I have several vintage postcards of these al fresco bookdealers, and wanted to photograph them myself.

Especially I wanted to pilgrimage to one of the meccas of bookselling, the famous Shakespeare and Company, which Henry Miller called “a wonderland of books”. I ultimately wanted to meet the legendary 92-year-old owner, American-born, eccentric George Whitman.



Last September we rented an apartment on the Ile de la Cite, the island in the middle of the Seine, where civilization in Paris began in the first century, BC. To our south was the Latin Quarter; across the river to the north was the trendy Marais district. From its center location, most of historic Paris was within walking distance.

Our flat was one block from Notre Dame, whose flying buttresses could be seen from our window each evening as I worked at my laptop with the day’s journal notes and downloaded photographs.

Arriving with no sleep during the previous 24 frustrating hours of transcontinental air travel (We’ll never fly Delta again.), we checked into a wonderful studio apartment – owned by an American in Paris. We were tempted to crash on the inviting queen-sized bed, but Paris was out there waiting for us. We wanted to avoid jetlag, and were eager to get out on the heralded streets of Paris, answering the siren-call of cafes, museums, and bookstores.



The weather was glorious – unusually warm and sunny. Great for photography. And walking to bookstores.

Nearby Notre Dame was an obvious first stop, because it is amazingly impressive, and because it was on the way to Shakespeare & Co. After paying homage to that magnificent cathedral which exudes religion and history and architectural awe equally, we crossed the Pont au Double to the Left Bank to find Shakespeare and Company, following in the footsteps of thousands of previous pilgrims to the 55-year-old shop.



As we reached the Left Bank we paused to get our bearings from the “Paris by Arrondissement” mapbook. We spied to our left a row of green book-boxes of

the famous *bouquinistes*, the colorful riverside bookdealers who have peddled secondhand books and other printed material along the Seine since the 16th century.

In 1557, they were labeled as thieves for selling forbidden Protestant pamphlets during the Wars of Religion.

They've been a constant and sometimes controversial presence along the river ever since. In 1721, a decree forbade the Seine booksellers from further trading on the banks of the river, pushed in part by the interests of the established Parisian bookstores. Soon the ban was ignored, and the somewhat disreputable bookhawkers returned and multiplied and declined and rebounded again through the centuries.

The French Revolution was beneficial to the *bouquinistes*, for entire libraries were seized from church and civic nobles and showed up as cheap books on the Seine.

In 1891, they received permission to permanently attach the boxes to the stone quayside walls.



Octave Uzanne writes in *THE BOOK-HUNTER IN PARIS* – his 1893 book on the history of the *bouquinistes*, “At the beginning of the 18th century the second-hand bookseller inundated Paris.”

Now there are regulations to control the *bouquinistes*. Each dealer must be open at least four days a week, and may have no more than four of the 4' x 8' boxes – six feet long, 14 inches high, and 2.5 feet deep, and painted a uniform forest green, and permanently attached to the stone quayside walls, under the protecting trees.

In the morning, the lid of the box is unlocked and lifted up to fold back and provide a backdrop to the four shelves of merchandise. Each evening the lid is lowered, padlocked, and barred, its contents secure.

Lately, due to the profitability of selling non-book material such as posters, prints and postcards, some bottom-liners expanded their offerings to the point where a law was passed – *égalité, fraternité, et réglementation!* – requiring the *bouquinistes* to present at least three boxes devoted to printed matter – books, posters, broadsides, periodicals.

This expansion into high-profit non-books echoes what's happened in most American bookstores, particularly the

new-books ones. They've been able to prolong their financial viability by adding all sorts of “book-knacks” – a great term coined by Jane Landwehr & Brian Saums, who owned the now-defunct Fireside Book Company in German Village.

Though the *bouquinistes* are now permitted to sell the once-forbidden souvenir material, no more than one box may display the same take-it-back-home mementos such as postcards -- including the infamous *risqué* kind, miniature Eiffel towers, coasters, and posters sold at ubiquitous stalls and shops located at every major and minor tourist-catching location. Blessedly, most *bouquinistes* just stick with printed matter.

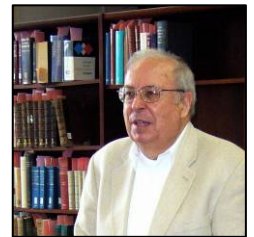


Book Hunting Notes

Bill Rich

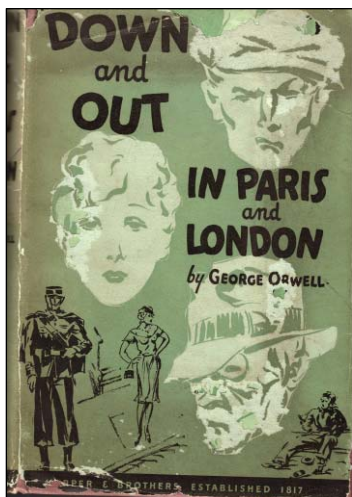
Collecting George Orwell

I was a high school student in the early 1950's when I first read George Orwell. Of course, the first of his books that I read was *1984*. This was only a few years after its publication in 1949. In those days, *1984* was not yet the standard school reading assignment it has since become. I sized upon the novel hoping it would be another example of the futuristic swashbucklers I was avidly reading at the time. The scales quickly fell from my eyes, but this classic dystopia made a lasting impression, becoming one of the life-forming books of my adolescent reading. This was during the height of the McCarthy era, and the book became celebrated among the anti-communist witch hunters. Later I learned of Orwell's socialist background, and of his history of fighting on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. Orwell died of tuberculosis in January of 1950. Had he lived a few years longer, and if he had been an American writer, he would likely have been subpoenaed before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Perhaps he might even have been blacklisted along with countless other intelligentsia, unless his authorship of *1984* and of *Animal Farm* would have brought some absolution. In any case, I was hooked, and owned some copy of every one of his books I could obtain by my early adulthood. Later, I learned of his extensive journalistic writings, the book reviews, the essays on politics, on English life and culture, on society in general. The publication of his *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters* in 4 vols. in 1968 was a milestone. Reading and re-reading these has always been a great pleasure. Orwell was a master of direct English prose style. For this engineer, who has often to wade through the writing jargon of innumerable technocrats, the essay *Politics and the English Language* has always hit home. It should be required reading for any aspiring engineering student (or for the aspiring journalist or lawyer).



Later in life, I have sought Orwell's writings in first editions. During his lifetime, he published ten books and two collections of essays. Many years after his death, other writings were collected and published, not only the 1968 *Collected Essays ...*, but, even later, his talks for the BBC during the Second World War were published in two books in 1985 as *The War Broadcasts* and *The War Commentaries*. While these collected works are easy enough to obtain (and well worthwhile), the earlier books, particularly those published before the beginning of the Second World War, are quite difficult. The first of his books was published in 1933. With books that are this recent, comparatively speaking, a standard book collecting convention must be noticed. This is the insistence on the presence of a dust jacket to make a truly "collectible" first edition. While jackets appeared on books even in the 19th century, such survivals are very rare. But for books published after 1920 or so, the presence of the jacket is *de rigueur*. A relatively common first of the early decades of the 20th century may bring something close to only a used book price, without the jacket. With the more prized books, the jacket will bring a huge increase in the price. For example, Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, 1929, sells for a few hundred dollars sans jacket, but a copy with the jacket in very good condition will cost the collector near \$2,500. So this flimsy, ephemeral piece of paper raises the price by about \$2,000, something like ten times the cost of the unjacketed book itself. Such is the mystery of our book collecting obsession, and so it is with Orwell first editions. But, observing the conventions, I try to find my firsts with the jackets.

The earliest Orwell book in my collection is actually his first published book, the scarce *Down and Out in Paris and London*. This was published by Gollanz in London and by Harper in New York, both in 1933. I count myself lucky to have finally found, after many years of looking, a copy of the Harper edition in dust jacket, as shown in the illustration. 1,750 copies were printed; few survive in the dust jacket. This example brings up another aspect of collecting "modern firsts": the

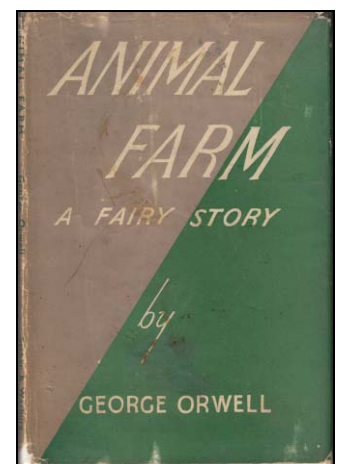
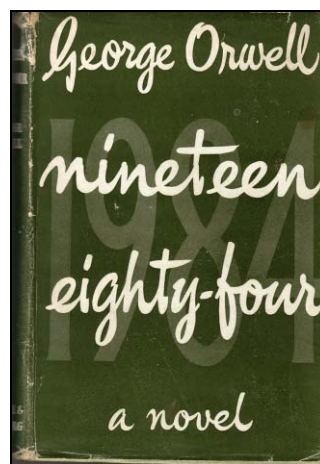


increasing prevalence of near-simultaneous publication of a book in both England and America. In such cases, the convention is to prefer the edition in the author's native country, in this case, the London edition. This "follow the flag" convention holds even if the non-native edition has a slight precedence. Only if there is a significant difference in publication date (months, perhaps?) is grudging preference given

to the earlier, transatlantic copy. Here, both editions are 1933, and the London has the edge – but I have never seen a London copy in the dust jacket. Besides being a mere book collecting filip, the dust jacket in this American edition,

worn though it is, serves a useful purpose in the history of an important book. Its rear fold-in flap gives the typical publisher's biographical blurb, but one undoubtedly written as the 30-year-old Orwell wished to present himself to the world: "George Orwell was born in India in 1903 and was educated in Eton from 1917 to 1921 ... He served with the Indian Imperial Police for five years but resigned in 1928 chiefly because he disliked putting people in prison for doing the same things which he should have done in their circumstances. ... He became interested in the lives of destitute people and began to make expeditions among tramps. ... Later on when he was genuinely hard up he was glad to know the ropes in the world of the destitute". Destitute indeed – the accounts of his work as a dishwasher, or "plongeur", in an up-scale Paris restaurant, or of his stint as a patient in a hospital charity ward, require some fortitude and a strong stomach on the part of the reader.

Orwell published a half dozen books in the 30's, novels, social commentary, an account of his experiences in the Spanish Civil War, and increasing journalism, commentary, criticism. In the Second World War, he worked for the BBC, and had regular columns in literary and social journals. However, it was only at the end of his life that his lasting fame was established with *Animal Farm* in 1945 and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in 1949. Neither is particularly easy to acquire these days. Shown below are the first London editions of both. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* has an interesting "point", which again hinges on that pesky dust jacket. The first printing had dust jackets with the background in red and in green. Various poobahs have established that the red probably has priority, and this is, accordingly, the most desirable for the collector – the copy shown here is in the green, alas.



The most interesting Orwell book I have is one I can't read – it's in Russian. I don't usually collect entire books in languages I can't read – which basically restricts me to English! The only two exceptions are my copy of Petrarch's Italian poems, in an illustrated 1581 Venetian edition, and my Russian edition of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. This is the first legal publication of this long-banned book in the Soviet Union. It was published in the Russian literary magazine *Novy Mir* (New World), in three serial numbers of the magazine in Moscow

in 1989. This publication was one of the early fruits of the Soviet liberalization during Gorbachev's presidency. Before this, the only Russian editions were printed outside the Soviet Union, or were "samizdat", typed or photocopied editions circulated without official approval of the Soviet authorities. Reproduced is the title of the first number, and, beside it, from the second page, are the famous three slogans of Big Brother's Party:

War Is Peace
Freedom Is Slavery
Ignorance Is Strength



In writing these notes, I recall that these particular copies in my Orwell collection have been gathered in from an unusually wide range around the world. Perhaps this reflects the universality and relevance of the author. A few concluding remarks on where they were acquired:

The Russian *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was found in Minsk, and is a gift from my friend and colleague, Prof. Igor Adamovich. During the long years of the Cold War, I had maintained to my Russian friends that there would be two key events that would signal the war's definite end: the opening of the Berlin Wall, and the legal publication of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in Moscow. Both happened in 1989. Shortly thereafter, when it first became possible, Igor came from Russia to work with me at Ohio State. When his young family joined him here, they brought with them the *Novy Mir 1984* edition, as a present for his book-collecting colleague. The Adamovichs emigrated, and Igor and I have worked together ever since. We often look back on the events of 15 years ago, when an opportunity for personal freedom came to many. If ever a book was an intensified object, it is these copies of *Novy Mir* with a gift inscription from Igor – one of the personal high spots in my collection.

The London firsts of both *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are fruits of book hunting trips to England. The *Animal Farm* was found in one of the many book shops along Charing Cross Road in London – in Henry Pordes shop, to be exact. I recall that I saw a similar copy that same day at a more upscale dealer a few blocks farther west. Book hunting in places where the quarry is rather thick on the ground (English books in the West End of London, for example)

does not *always* mean having to pay top prices. The *Nineteen Eighty-Four* comes from slightly farther afield. This was found in the west of England, in the famous George Bayntun shop in Bath. Bayntun's is known for its bindery, "Bayntun-Riviere". Riviere was one of the great English binderies in the 19th and early 20th centuries; in 1939, it merged with Bayntun, and fine bindings are made by Bayntun-Riviere in Bath to this day. Indeed, a good number of the modern fine bindings on, especially, English books, as purveyed from many an upscale bookstore catering to the carriage trade in London, New York, San Francisco, etc., will be found to carry the discrete ticket of this famous binder. However, my copy was in the original cloth binding, with dust jacket, in "as issued" condition – and this is the preferred state for modern books, no matter how glorious a rebound book may appear. Indeed, Bayntun's offered in a recent catalog a copy of the *Nineteen Eighty-Four* first, newly rebound in their bindery in "full dark green morocco, spine with five raised bands, lettered in gilt, marbled endleaves, all edges gilt." Nevertheless, the asking price was a fraction of what a fine copy in the original dust jacket currently goes for – despite all the glory of the morocco binding. This is in accord with my own inclinations – it seems somehow more appropriate to have a modern book in the dust jacket, and to reserve the leather and gilt rebind for replacement of worn out bindings on books of earlier centuries. Other collectors disagree, and fine contemporary bindings on important modern books are prized – but I hope few first printings in good original condition are sacrificed to provide this.

Finally, the *Down and Out in Paris and London* was obtained as a result of an Internet search, and comes from the farthest-north book shop I have ever dealt with. This is Pingo Books, in Fairbanks, Alaska. In recent years, I have maintained rather casual web searches for books I have found especially difficult to locate; "Bookfinder.com" is one super search engine that is especially effective. Such a search led me to Pingo Books and *Down and Out* For a while, they had a cute website. It announced that Pingo Books is "a centrally located bookstore" – between Tokyo (4,000 miles away) and London (5,000 miles) (!). I learned that a "pingo" is a little hillock in the tundra raised by freeze and thaw cycles in the arctic. And a long phone conversation with Pingo's owner, Ray Bonnell, assuaged my curiosity as to the key point – how did this long-sought and scarce book get to Fairbanks, within 100 miles of the Arctic Circle? Turns out this was a book in the library of a major Chicago collector, who, at one time, was supposed to have had as many as 100,000 books. When he died in 1970, the books went to his daughter in Fairbanks. She in turn donated them to the University of Alaska (in Fairbanks), which institution surplused what was not within their needs. For whatever reason, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, dust jacket and all, was one of these, was sold to Pingo Books, and subsequently acquired by a certain highly grunted Columbus collector.



Hoster on Thurber

Jay Hoster

The Thurber Prize for American Humor for 2006 was awarded on November 6th at the Algonquin Hotel in New York.

The winner was Alan Zweibel for *The Other Shulman*. Zweibel is a former *Saturday Night Live* writer who had a hand in creating two of the show's most memorable characters, Roseanne Roseannadana and Miss Emily Litella.

James Thurber gave the title *The Middle-aged Man on the Flying Trapeze* to one of his collections of *New Yorker* essays. An alternative to Zweibel's title could be *The Middle-Aged Man in the New York Marathon* as he tracks his protagonist mile by mile, a total of twenty-six hilarious chapters laden with flashbacks and ruminations.

I was at the Algonquin, with my copy of Thurber's *My Life and Hard Times* at the ready.

As many Aldus people know, the favorite book in my Thurber collection isn't a first edition, isn't pristine, and wears that most woeful of descriptions in the taxonomy of book collecting—*ex-library*—as if it were a badge of honor.

The book was in a lending library in Columbus that was run by Bill Fountaine, who made some inspired decisions with it. He had Thurber inscribe the book to him in 1948 and included signatures from Thurber's wife Helen and his brothers Robert and William. He also had Mame Thurber sign beneath her printed name on the dedication page. I've since added the signatures of Rosemary, Thurber's daughter, and her son and daughter. That's a total of four generations of Thurbers, and the front free endpaper is starting to resemble one of those old family Bibles.

Fountaine also tipped in a newspaper clipping of Thurber's trip to Columbus and added two photographs that were taken by Robert, of a wild-eyed Muggs, subject of the chapter "The Dog That Bit People," and the ancient Reo featured in "The Car We Had to Push."

There's a word for adding illustrated material to a book—*grangerize*—named for James Granger, the eighteenth-century author of *A Biographical History of England from Egbert the Great to the Revolution*. It's defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "to illustrate (a book) by the addition of prints, engravings, etc., especially such as have been cut out of other books."

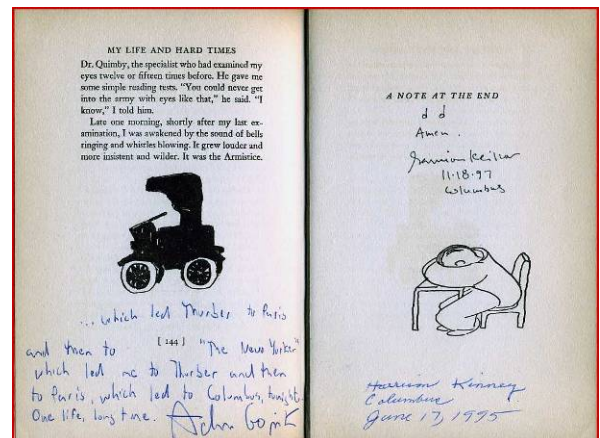
I've done some grangerizing of my own. In "The Day the Dam Broke" I added two real photo postcards of the 1913 flood and I also included a postcard from the fall of that year that offers a view of the football game between Ohio State and Case. Thurber was a freshman at the time and there's a chance that he was present, watching from the stands (there were actually empty seats that day at Ohio Field) but it's far more likely that he was ensconced in the library reading Henry James. Ohio State, by the way, defeated Case by the score of 18 to 0. Jim Tressel and Andy

Geiger signed that page during a visit to the Thompson Library at Ohio State to support the library renovation drive.



I've had a number of authors sign the book and it's gratifying to see the effort that they give to the task. P. J. O'Rourke, for example, chose the page with the illustration for "The Night the Ghost Got In," which has a ghostly apparition gleefully scaring the bejabbers out of a Thurber brother. O'Rourke, a native of Toledo, wrote, "The genius of Thurber was that the insanity he described is *normal* for Ohioans."

Garrison Keillor came through with flying colors. With a lengthy line of people waiting to get books signed, he patiently thumbed through the book while I explained the grangerizing and inscribing process. He came to the title of the epilogue—"A Note at the End"—and playfully added two half notes with the inscription "Amen."



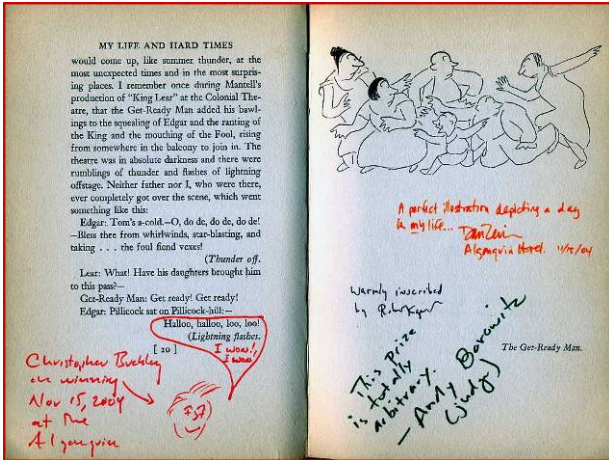
When the Thurber Prize was instituted in 1997 I decided that I wanted each of the winners to sign my book. One of the more memorable occasions was when the staff of *The Onion*, a satirical newspaper, won the prize. I devised the stratagem of asking them to render their versions of the inscriptions you see in high school yearbooks. Editor Robert Siegel contributed the inscription "Jay—Your so crazy! Never forget Mrs. Swendemann 6th period. What a loser!"

My favorite of the inscriptions was actually created by David Citino, who was then president of Thurber House's board of trustees. He wrote: "Jay: You ran with the in-crowd and I was a nerd, but I want you to know that my face cleared up—finally." He also inscribed six lines from his poem "A Letter to Thurber" on another page. Many people have great

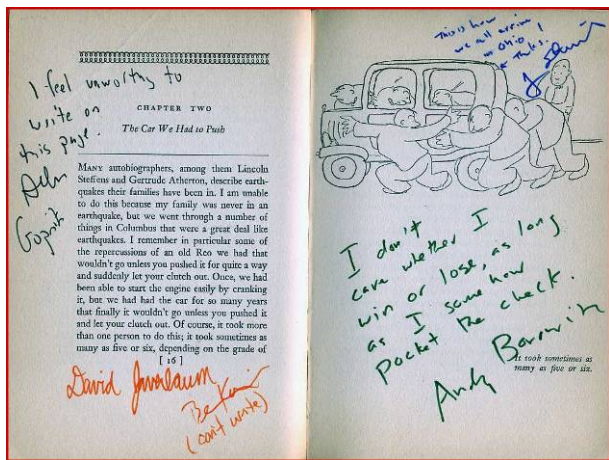
memories of David, and I'm glad that he's a part of my book.

The Thurber Prize is now an annual award with three finalists appearing at the Algonquin event. There's a cocktail reception prior to the award ceremony, and with the availability of free drinks, most of the finalists are readily accessible.

Christopher Buckley won the prize in 2004. At the reception he proved to very personable but stubbornly refused to sign until after the winner was announced. I caught up with him following the award ceremony. He drew a caricature of himself with the inscription "I won! I won!" enclosed within a cartoonist's balloon along with a portion of the book's printed text.



My best-laid plans went awry in 2005 when Jon Stewart of *The Daily Show* didn't show up. His two co-authors, David Javerbaum and Ben Karlin, accepted the prize and signed my book but told me that they couldn't come up with anything funny on the spot. Andy Borowitz, creator of *The Borowitz Report*, was one of the finalists, writing, "I don't care whether I win or lose, as long as I somehow pocket the check." Firoozeh Dumas, a finalist for *Funny in Farsi*, commented, "I think the judges miscounted. I'm demanding a recount."



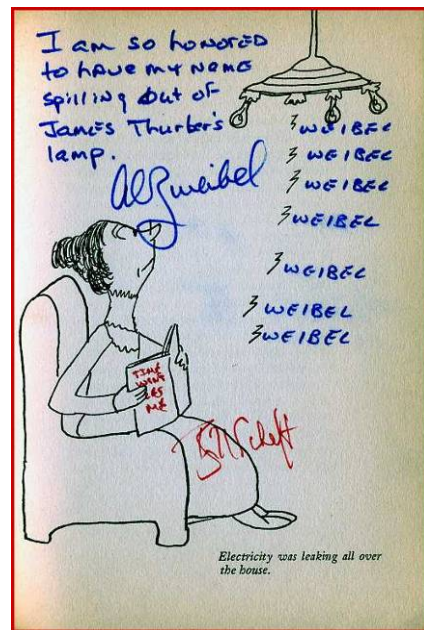
With Paul Watkins' help, I was able to track down Stewart at a reception hosted by Thurber House when he visited Columbus.

For the 2006 award, I chose the page featuring the grandmother in Thurber's account, who "lived the latter years of her life in the horrible suspicion that electricity was dripping invisibly all over the house." Thurber's cartoon shows a woman holding a book staring warily at the empty socket of a light fixture on the ceiling, from which small bolts of electricity are descending.

Zweibel saw those bolts as being in the shape of the letter "Z" and added "weibel" to each of them, along with the inscription, "I am so honored to have my name spilling out of James Thurber's lamp."

His wife, seeing the gusto with which her husband was inscribing the page with Thurber's errant electricity, asked me if I had purposely chosen that image.

I should have replied in a casual, offhanded manner, *Well, of course*. Instead I admitted that it hadn't occurred to me to connect the bolts of electricity in the Thurber drawing with the first letter of a finalist's last name. It worked out fine nonetheless.



The ceremony was held the night before election day, and Kinky Friedman, a finalist for *Texas Hold 'Em: How I Was Born in a Manger, Died in the Saddle, and Came Back as a Horny Toad*, was on the ballot for governor of Texas. He was a no-show.

Bill Scheft, the other finalist, was not at the reception but he did make it to the ceremony. He's a former monologue writer for David Letterman and

the word is that his former boss was there as well. I have to admit that I didn't see Letterman. At that point I had a case of Laurinaitis—if you follow Ohio State football, you'll understand that as a hawk-like visage and the thought *no way does this guy get by me*—and indeed Scheft didn't get by me. He graciously wrote the title of his book, *Time Won't Let Me*, on the cover of the book in the Thurber cartoon.

Someday I'll catch up with Kinky Friedman, but considering that he turned down Thurber House's hospitality, he'll have to buy the drinks if he wants to sign my book.



Touching Treasures: A First Saturday Review

As most members know, our First Saturday programs are becoming more popular with each session. First Saturday events are informal hands-on sessions, wherein members are invited to the OSU Rare Books and Manuscripts Library to view and discuss several books selected from the OSU collection, and are designed to provide attendees with an opportunity to explore books in relative depth with commentary by a subject specialist.

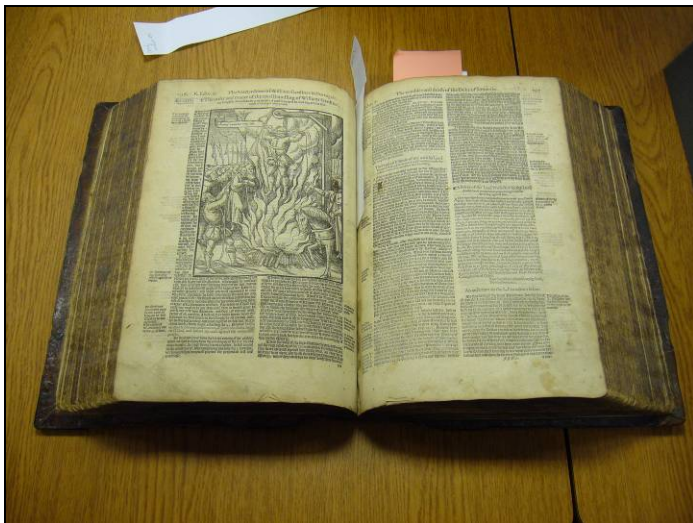
One recent session included a review of the acquisitions made by OSU at the 2006 New York Antiquarian Book Fair, publications that ranged from an early work by Galileo to two first edition Jane Austen “triple-deckers.” Another gathering focused on facsimiles, and the final program of 2006 investigated “gunk in the gutters,” and gave attendees a look at materials found deep in the gutters of some of the treasures of the library, ranging from written documents to food-stuffs.

January introduced us to Artists Books (no apostrophe), and February will cover Ohio authors Dawn Powell and Louis Bromfield. March will take us into OSU’s Avant Writing Collection.

The events are held at the OSU Rare Book and Manuscripts Library’s temporary location at 2700 Kenny Road. The events begin at 10:00 am. For directions, go to <http://library.osu.edu/sites/rarebooks/location.php>

A 1563 first edition copy of John Foxe’s *“The Actes and Monuments ... , commonly known as the Book of Martyrs”*, a 1482 Ptolemy *Cosmographia* facsimile, unpublished drawings by James Thurber that tend toward the risqué, the occasional leaf from a Tyndale Bible, ... you name it. That’s the type of treasure that routinely shows up at First Saturday sessions. And it’s all there to be seen, discussed, examined and appreciated. How lucky we are.

Scenes from recent First Saturday sessions follow.





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The Aldus Society

P.O. Box 1150

Worthington, Ohio 43085-1150

WWW.ALDUSOCIETY.COM

Another Holiday Dinner Success

The 2006 Holiday Dinner found over 50 Aldus Society members and guests at *La Scala* for an evening of fun and friendship.

At this year's event we held our first silent book auction to benefit Aldus Society programming. We had a number of books of interest to book lovers, including several signed books from Jack Matthews, and the bidding was brisk. We collected a total of \$818 for our program coffers, which was quite respectable for a first event of this type.

The evening was so successful that we've decided to return to *La Scala* for 2007. Mark your calendars for next December 3rd and plan on bringing some books to donate and some money to buy others ... and an appetite!



Mark Twain Prints

We still have two of the wonderful photographic prints of Mark Twain that were so generously donated to the Aldus Society by member Robert Slotta of Admirable Books. The 8x10 black and white matted prints are available for \$35 each, and 100% of the proceeds will be divided between the Aldus Society and the Friends of the Ohio State University Libraries. If you'd like one of these prints, be sure to ask at a regular Aldus Society meeting, or contact Ron Ravneberg at either (614) 457-1153 or RRavneberg@aol.com.

