



Aldus Society Notes

Winter 2024

Volume 24, No. 1

Annual Holiday Dinner and Auction

The Aldus Society Holiday Party was held Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at the Brookside Country Club. The evening included a buffet-style dinner, cash bar, and the popular silent auction. There were many interesting books and book-related (sort of) items to bid on, including another spectacular book-themed quilt by Margo Thacker, which, after a long bidding battle, went to Eric Johnson!



(Photos continued on page 2)

Aldus Society Meetings

*Regular meetings of the Aldus Society are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month between September and May. Meetings are held at **Thurber Center, 91 Jefferson Avenue, Columbus, Ohio** (unless otherwise announced). Socializing at 7:00 p.m. Free parking on Jefferson or behind Thurber House and at State Auto rear parking lot (between 11th St. and Washington).*

(Continued from page 1)

The Aldus Society

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Aldus Society Notes is published three times a year. For article ideas and submissions contact the Editorial Team, Harry Campbell, at hccampbell25@gmail.com or 614-284-0889.

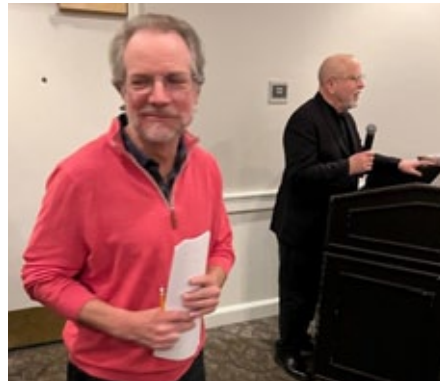
Newsletter deadlines are August 1st, December 1st, and April 1st.

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2023 Carol Logue Biblio-fellowship Award Recipient Tony Sanfilippo



The Aldus Society is so lucky to have connected with Tony when he joined us many years ago. If there is anyone who logically should be a member of our society, it is probably Tony. He has worked in publishing for nearly 20 years as the director of the OSU press, and about that long with the PSU press prior to coming to Columbus. He co-owned a bookstore associated with Penn State press. He is a published author, and he is currently a board member of the Ohio Humanities Council.

Tony had been a member of the Aldus Board of Trustees for many years as well as a long-standing member of the Program Committee. He recently handed over his role as our website manager to trustee Tom Metz. And, for many years, he has been our financial auditor. Tony has also been a program presenter, including participation as a panel member for the Bookselling program. We've enjoyed getting to know him over these years, and we owe him our thanks for all he has done to help keep the Aldus wheels turning.

Tony was not in attendance at the dinner, so the award presentation will be later. Congratulations Tony on the well-deserved 2023 Carol Logue Biblio-fellowship award.

Big Book Swap

In mid-August the Aldus Society held its first “Book Swap” at the Whetstone Library in Clintonville. It was a wonderful way for Aldines to get together in the summertime and trade for “new” (at least different) books without having to bid or buy as usual. Thanks to Jolie Braun and her crew for making this happen!



Program Recaps

September 14, 2023

Jonathan Veley on Mechanical Pencils

Aldines were delighted to hear one of the world's leading authorities on mechanical pencils – with thirteen books and over 1,000 articles on the subject – discuss their development and design and their use by generations of writers and artists.



October 10, 2023

Beating Book Bans: A Conversation with Author Ashley Hope Pérez

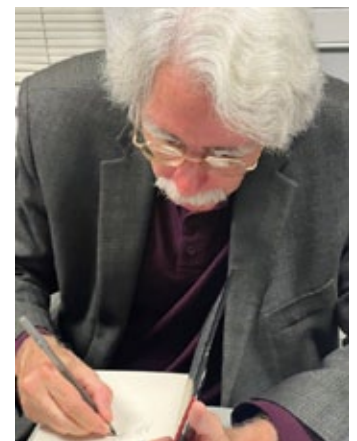
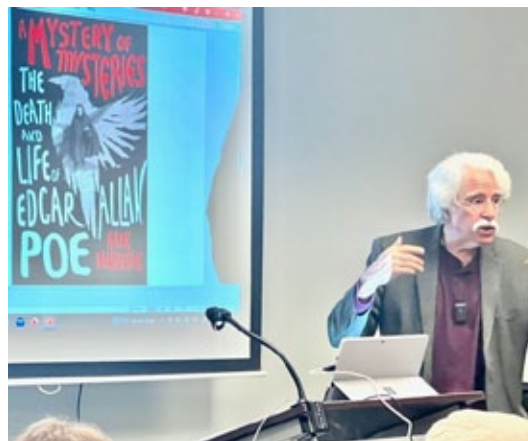
Independent bookseller Charlie Pugsley interviewed award-winning author Ashley Hope Pérez about her novel *Out of Darkness* and her experiences as one of the most frequently banned authors in the country. Aldus appreciated what she had to say about censorship, literary imagination, and how your efforts matter in the fight against book banning.



November 9, 2023

Mark Dawidziak: The Death of Edgar Allan Poe

The Aldus audience was fascinated by the presentation by Mark Dawidziak on his new biography *Mystery of Mysteries: The Death and Life of Edgar Allan Poe*, which examines the renowned author's life through the prism of his mysterious death and its many possible causes, as well as a new theory that suggests the cause of Poe's death was haunting him all his life.



Book Sale for Christine Hayes

November 5, 2023



In honor of Christine Hayes’s tremendous life-long interest in teaching, reading, authoring, selling & writing about books, her close friends in The Aldus Society’s women’s book-discussion group, The Women Aldines, along with pre-sale logistics assistance from Scott Williams, hosted a one-time-only book sale of her large & multifarious collection.

Christine’s collection contained strong elements from her father’s (columnist Ben Hayes, a cousin of Woody) and mother’s book collections. Topics include literature, art, non-fiction, history, cookbooks, Ohio & California, Columbus & San Francisco, and just plain hard to classify niche topics!

All sales will support Christine’s continuing health care.



“Books are friends on a shelf.”

— Louisa Celebrezze, Aldus member

The Aldus Society Remembers Pat Groseck



Aldines recently said goodbye to one of our most welcoming, well-loved and active members (past president, trustee, Program Committee, etc.), after her sudden and unexpected death. It seems everyone who knew Pat had similar happy memories of her involvement in the Aldus Society. Here are a few words from President David Brightman, copied from his email announcement on October 9, 2023:

Besides serving as president, many of you will recall Pat's energetic work organizing the excellent International Heritage summer picnic, her work with Leah Kalasky promoting the Aldus 20th anniversary (largely derailed by the pandemic), and creating the women Aldines outdoor meet-ups during the pandemic.

But her most important role was perhaps not an official one. Pat's smile and gracious welcome made every newcomer feel welcome, so that our first Aldus meeting felt like a gathering of friends-to-be. Which it was.

Rest in peace, Pat. I hope these memories will be a comfort in this time of loss.

David Brightman
President, Aldus Society

Pat Groseck, 1946-2023

Obituary in *The Columbus Dispatch*



Patricia Groseck was born on November 1, 1946 in Philadelphia, one of three sisters to first generation Ukrainian parents. She attended Marshall U. in W. Virginia where she earned a BA in journalism. In the early 1970s, she moved to Columbus where she landed a job as assistant press secretary for Governor Gilligan. She went on to hold leadership positions at the Columbus Metropolitan Library, the Chamber of Commerce, and Columbus College of Art and Design. At the Ohio Statehouse, she helped bring history exhibitions and ice skating to the downtown landmark.

Pat lived in German Village when she first moved to Columbus where she built a community of lifelong friends. She was instrumental in the effort to preserve the area's original brick paved streets in the 1980s. She later moved to Summit Chase in Grandview Heights where she volunteered with the garden club and forged many friendships including with astronaut John Glenn.

Pat was loved for her hilarious stories, sharp wit, and for connecting with people through humor and kindness. She was instrumental in the founding of New Friends of Greater Columbus, a women's social organization that forges friendships between new residents and old.

Pat was involved in The Aldus Society, a book lovers group, and was a leader in Northwest Area Progressives, especially during the Obama campaign. She cared passionately about world events and eagerly strove to make life better for everyone.

A celebration of life was held on Sunday, Nov. 12 at 4pm at First Congregational Church at 444 E Broad St in Columbus. The family invites donations in Pat's memory to: Frontline Medical Ukraine Fund of The Columbus Foundation, or to The Columbus Metropolitan Library Foundation.

A Brief Early History of the Aldus Society

By Geoffrey D. Smith

November 2023

The initiative for creation of a Columbus book society originates with Bruce McKittrick, eminent rare book dealer from the Philadelphia area. On one of his periodic Midwest book-selling tours, Bruce stopped by the old Rare Book room in the pre-renovated Thompson Library. The peripatetic bookman was displaying his wares from a large leather portmanteau when he made mention of the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies' (FABS) recent affiliation of major book societies from across the nation. Bruce had been active in the founding and recruitment of FABS and inquired about Columbus area book societies similar in mission to the founding members of FABS such as the Grolier Club in New York City, the Caxton Club in Chicago, and the Rowfant Club in Cleveland. The absence of such a society was the impetus to form one, in no small part to be able to participate and share news, activities, and kinship with comparable groups.

I took it upon myself to consult and communicate with local book enthusiasts about the establishment of what would become the Aldus Society. That core group included: Charles Cole, Ivan Gilbert, Jay and Genie Hoster, Nicholas Howe, Marcia Preston, Paul Watkins,

and myself and my wife Lois. We began meeting in early 1999 and launched our first program later that year. During those preliminary meetings we wrote by-laws, began scheduling programs, elected officers and, most importantly, began an area solicitation of local bibliophiles who might be interested in becoming members of this nascent society. The name, Aldus Society, was suggested by Paul Watkins, not only because of the prominence of Aldus Manutius in the history of early printed books, but also, Aldus would keep our name atop of many promotional lists. Charles Cole suggested establishing a set day and time so that Aldus Society programs would be reserved on members' calendars. For many reasons, the second Thursday of the month was decided upon. In the formative years, Aldus met at various venues, usually local libraries, but it was not long before a permanent meeting place was established, the Thurber Center at 91 Jefferson Avenue in Columbus.

The Aldus Society is nearing its silver anniversary. Leadership remains strong, membership steady and programming consistently good. Most importantly, Aldus has generated camaraderie among book lovers in central Ohio.

Columbus Paper Show

Sunday, January 7, 2024

The next Columbus Paper, Postcard and Book Show will be Sunday, Jan 7, 2024. Hours are 9 am to 4 pm and admission is \$6.00 per person. It is located in the Rhodes Building at the Ohio Expo Center/ State Fairgrounds, 717 E. 17th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio. There will be plenty of postcards, old paper items, photographs, magazines, military, advertising, and supplies. As always, there will be a couple silent auctions and some door prizes for free admission and for shopping. Please feel free to share this post with anyone you think might be interested in these shows.

“Aldus Collects” Is Back!

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Our annual fun night of “Aldus Collects” will return on January 11. Six Aldines have agreed to share with us their enthusiasm for a wide variety of topics.

- Paul Watkins will talk about “The Aphorisms of Mark Twain.”
- Christine Clover will present “The Fellowship of the Gifted - Italian Publishing in the 20th Century.”
- Jay Hoster will let us know about “Columbus’ Other Humorist, Donald Ogden Stewart.”
- Tom Thacker will discuss “I Leica Books (and Cameras)”, a great pun.
- Jolie is back as a presenter; this time she’ll talk about “H. H.’s Bregstone’s St. Louis” and present real photo postcards of early twentieth-century St. Louis by photographer Henry Hiram Bregstone.
- Mike Struble has an intriguing title for his talk, “E-bay, Insomnia, Franciscans, Oh God!”

We’ll know more about each of these subjects by the conclusion of “Aldus Collects.” George Cowmeadow will once again be the MC of our rodeo.

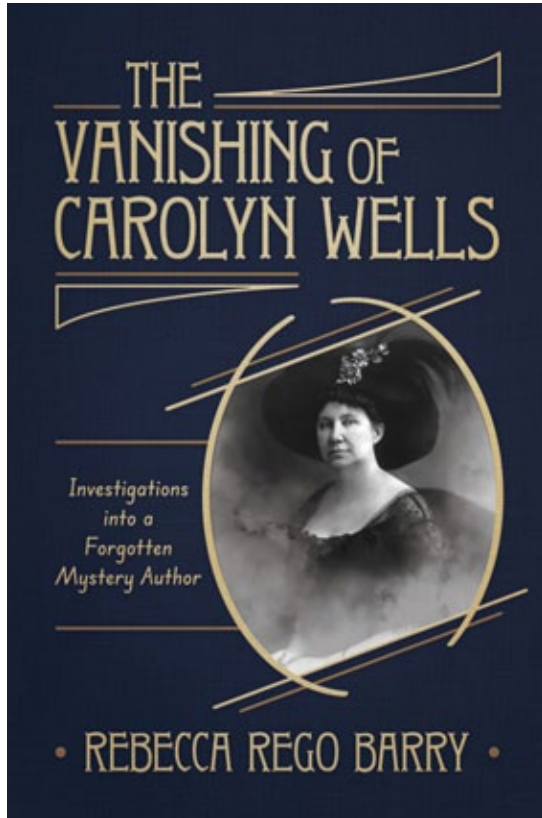
Save the Dates

Upcoming Saturday Spotlights

OSU Rare Books and Manuscripts Library

Reading Room, Thompson Library

From Jolie Braun



Virtual Event

February 15, 2:00-3:00pm

Rebecca Rego Barry on *The Vanishing of Carolyn Wells: Investigations into a Forgotten Mystery Writer*. Ms. Barry will discuss her new biography of Carolyn Wells, a mystery writer whose papers are housed at the Rare Books & Manuscripts Library. ***This will be a virtual presentation.***

February 24, 2024

Witchcraft and magic, curated by English professor David Brewer.

April 6, 2024

Daguerreotypes from the Rinehart Collection, curated by Art professor Kate Shannon.

Event page and registration info to come. Watch for Aldus email announcements.

The Pink Cloud

By C. Mehrl Bennett



Shakey but focused, they move together slowly and deliberately.

Their heads immersed in a pink cloud so that no facial expressions are visible to any of them. Does this condition encourage or discourage a person's inclination to exhibit facial expressions? This condition of blindness implies that the group, though focused and moving deliberately, does not see what they are heading for. Do they KNOW and do they CARE what they are heading for?

Today, upstairs together with our books, papers, and pencils, we are left with no instructions as to what needs to be done. What do we WANT to do? We discuss our plans and make decisions as if they are of the utmost importance. We execute these decisions as a group, rather than as individuals. The time comes when we must descend the staircase. We form a line and begin to hum loudly like bees leaving the hive. Who is listening? Why would they listen? What happens as a result?

These lines are mine.

Those lines are yours.

They are lies, truths, or beliefs formed at a moment's notice.

Read them and translate them into your own language.

Translated over & over, there will be glitches & Flarf.

Evidence in the form of black birds fly in the sky.

We float, bound together in a sea of words,

Amid which we seek our common truths,

Slowly and deliberately, even though

Blinded by PINK CLOUDS...

Epilogue: A week ago, we watched a movie entirely in Portuguese titled *The Pink Cloud*. A description from Wikipedia follows: *The Pink Cloud is a 2021 Brazilian science fiction thriller film written and directed by Iuli Gerbase in her directional debut. The setting of the story in the film has been compared to the COVID-19 pandemic, although written and directed earlier, in 2017 and 2019 respectively.*

I don't know Spanish or Portuguese, but totally empathize with the cast of two characters. In the movie, they pro-create together, so that at the end, when one parent commits suicide, there is again a cast of two left behind, parent and progeny.

We streamed this movie for free on KANOPY, for which anyone can sign up for by using their public library card.

Little Miracles

By Tricia Herban

This morning I jammed my printer. Now I have not had a good relationship with this printer over the years. And it must be noted that I have a habit that the machine may find very aggravating as, after I open the paper holder, it always asks me: “Did you load plain paper, letter?” And I always lie, “Yes,” when in fact, I print on the back of paper whenever I can. Is the machine so sentient that it would know??? Possibly. After all, it gets my messages through the air. I don’t know how—that’s a miracle. However, sometimes the internet or whatever the source of intercommunication between the computer (very friendly) and the printer (skeptical of messages at best) is—fails me. Usually, it fixes itself over time. In that instance, the miracle is that I find the patience to put up with it.

But this morning involved a more major adventure. I was innocently trying to print an article from the *New York Times*. I had the entire document up on the computer screen and had managed to delete all the ads. But then, somehow, a piece of paper got jammed in the printer. A new experience for me. I followed the directions and actually lifted the ink receptacle and pulled out the paper. But then it happened again. By then I thought I knew it all, so I just pulled the top up, gave a yank—what was that odd cracking sound? --and removed the paper. But, alas, the lid wouldn’t shut.

From here on, I think you can relate. I felt angry with myself. Powerless with the technology. And ready to go back to bed for the rest of my life. So, I procrastinated, doing several other things I would have preferred not to do. Relatively, it was more rewarding to write a few personal notes and a check to my son. Oh yes, my son. It was for him that I was printing the article. It is about teen age anxiety which neither he nor I have, but his daughter does.

Finally, I banged the lid in every way I could think of. No luck. Was it broken? A terrifying prospect. What kind would I buy to replace it? Who would have the new model in sync with my older computer? Oh dear. Oh DEAR. Finally, I summed up all my courage to conduct a thorough examination. I unplugged the machine and carried it to my brightly lit kitchen counter.

Something was either jammed or broken. Once again, I pinched the two round pop tab like pieces of plastic that lift the ink cartridge holder. Again, I repositioned it. Just as before, on my desk, the lid wouldn’t shut. But with no other option, I tried again, wiggling and pushing the plastic piece. It seemed to fit better. It sat farther forward and I thought that maybe it lay flatter. This time, the lid shut. I could scarcely believe it and my gratitude ran over.

When I have to deal with an inanimate object, I really

do panic. When something can’t talk to me – Where does it hurt? How is it broken? I can’t establish a relationship – I am really good at relationships! This ignorance gives me an overwhelming feeling of vulnerability, powerlessness and hopelessness. Back to bed under the covers I go. But today, it’s only lunch time and I have climbed out of bed and printed out the article. I can’t help it if you don’t believe in miracles, but I do!

head sand circles with the moths

gra mer haze , mem ry
steps inside word or
w rd , time’s backward
smoke c rcles in yr
hands , Orfeo’s head
in red music

poetry’s stone eddies
thru yr let ers’
water , inkless glyphs
in the dark afternoon

*Swimming thru Iván Argüelles’
“The Head of Orpheus”, October 2023*

John M. Bennett

12.15.23

***“Nothing is impossible. The
word itself says, ‘I’m possible!’”***

— Audrey Hepburn

Quotes of Note from *The Door-to-Door Bookstore*

By Carsten Henn, 2022

Compiled by George Cowmeadow Bauman

- “A person reading was in some special way protected, as if they were engaged in a sacred ritual.”
- “Reading a lot doesn’t make you an intellectual, any more than eating a lot makes you a gourmet.”
- “The raison d’etre of every bookshop is being asked, ‘Can you recommend a good book?’ ”
- “You’re a bookseller to your bones, aren’t you? Never ask me how I am, just recommend books to me.”
- “People trust you. That’s the most important thing for a bookseller.”
- “Even if gifted books were never read, they were still a loving gesture—and a compliment to the intellect and taste of the recipient.”
- “No matter how many books I read, there will always be more that I haven’t read. That’s the tragedy. Anyone who enjoys reading wants to read every good book there is.”
- “Emotional outbursts were a rare sight in bookshops.”
- “Even when an extraordinary book ends at precisely the right point, with precisely the right words, and anything further would only destroy that perfection, it still leaves us wanting more pages. That is the paradox of reading.”
- “The written word will always remain; sometimes there is simply no better form of expression. Print is the best preserving agent for thoughts and stories; it keeps them fresh for centuries.”

A Literary Jaunt... Visiting Moat Brae

By Donald Tunnicliff Rice



Courtesy Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust

I had a wonderful trip planned for the UK in early summer 2021—until nasty Mr. Covid disrupted everything. Delta Airlines wouldn’t give me my money back, of course, but they did allow me until the end of 2023 to use it on a new trip. So, this past October I flew out of Columbus for a fifteen-day visit with my son and his family in Kent. Typically I’ll spend five or

so days in the middle of such a trip traipsing about the British Isles, usually stopping over in sites with a literary connection. A popup ad from Biblio.com for A. E. Knox’s 1872 classic, *Autumns on the Spey*, caught my eye. But, not being much of a fly fisherman, I quickly lost interest in that idea; however, it did get me thinking about Scotland.

A few years ago in the Steep Street Coffee House in

Folkestone—where the walls are completely covered with shelves filled with books for sale—I happened on a 1929 Travellers’ Library edition of *The House with Green Shutters* by George Douglas [Brown] for a mere £1. Originally published in 1900, this is a significant novel in Scottish literature. Back in the day most Scottish popular fiction was written, as J. B. Priestly noted in the Introduction, “by members of what was known as ‘the Kailyard [Cabbage Patch] School.’ . . . These authors did not write fairy tales, nor did they necessarily ignore hard facts, but they did see life in small Lowland towns and villages through a kind of golden haze. They remembered what was laughable and what was pathetic, and left out the rest.” Then along came Brown describing small town life as it really could be—sordid, spiteful, and tragic—and forever after no serious Scottish writer would consider making it cute and cozy again.

It’s no secret that the novel’s village was based on Brown’s hometown of Ochiltree, Ayreshire (southwestern Scotland), and I’ve long thought it would be fun to visit the place. I could have a pub lunch and maybe even find Brown’s old house. Well, thank Heaven for Google Street View. Ochiltree is probably a pleasant place to live, but the lone pub has closed and the only other place I could find to eat was a chippy that didn’t open until 4:30. I could stop by the Green Shutters Pharmacy, I suppose, but that would seem to be the limit of interesting sites for anyone traveling by coach. I decided not to go there.

But all that planning was not lost. When I looked up Ochiltree on the map I discovered it was just a short distance from Kilmarnock, the birthplace of my great-grandmother Maggie McMillan and a town I’ve long wanted to get back to. Some years ago I spent a few days in Glasgow and one morning took the train south to Kilmarnock. While there I discovered a great local museum. A docent on duty, recognizing my American accent, asked me why I was there. When I told her about Maggie McMillan, she said her husband was also a McMillan. “They were well known,” she said, “as horse thieves.” That’s when I decided to return one day and perhaps engage in a bit of genealogical sleuthing.

I’d also noticed on the map that the city of Dumfries was an easy day-trip away from Kilmarnock. My aborted 2021 trip had included a stay in Dumfries so that I might visit Moat Brea, The National Centre for Children’s Literature and Storytelling. The Centre, which opened in 2019, first came to my attention in September of that year while attending The Arthur Ransome Society (TARS) Literary Weekend. A featured speaker was the Centre’s director, Simon Davidson, an affable, burly young man who, I’m sure, could acquit himself honorably at a caber toss. His speaking to us was the result of the Centre’s agreeing to become the new home of the TARS Library. This is an ever-growing collection of more than 1,000 books written by Ransome, read by Ransome, written *about* Ransome, or in some other way connected with the man. Many volumes

in the last category are, appropriately enough, examples of children’s literature. The collection would be shelved in the Centre’s attic, and a local woman had volunteered to serve as librarian. Perfect.

The first thing to know about Moat Brea—a Greek revival villa built in 1823—is that in 2009 it was a dump. Davidson told us there were “drug addicts in the garden, there was graffiti on the walls, and the roof had come in. . . . It was three days from being bulldozed.” At the last minute, a successful effort was made by the Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust to raise £75,000 to buy the house before it was leveled. And what, you might ask, was the impetus?

It all started years earlier when J. M. Barrie, future playwright of *Peter Pan* (and, not so incidentally, a member in good standing of the Kailyard School) was a student at Dumfries Academy. While there (1873 to 1878) he became good friends with fellow students, Hal and Stewart Gordon. The Gordon family lived in Moat Brea, and the boys often played in the house and wooded garden overlooking the River Nift. Years later Barrie recalled:

“When the shades of night began to fall, certain young mathematicians shed their triangles, crept up walls and down trees, and became pirates in a sort of Odyssey that was long afterwards to become the play of Peter Pan. For our escapades in a certain Dumfries garden, which is enchanted land to me, were certainly the genesis of that nefarious work. We . . . were buccaneers and I kept the log-book of our depredations, an eerie journal, without a triangle in it to mar the beauty of its page. That log-book I trust is no longer extant, though I should like one last look at it, to see if Captain Hook is in it.”



Some of the first floor is furnished as it would have been when J. M. Barrie visited as a boy.

Courtesy Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust

Many people agreed that the house and garden in which Peter Pan was conceived was indeed an “enchanted land,” and shouldn’t be razed; yet, there were those who felt that this wasn’t a sufficient justification to spend the £millions it would take to properly save

it. Thus, The National Centre for Children’s Literature and Storytelling was born. I don’t mean to suggest that the Trust was a cause looking for a purpose—or vice versa. The proposed Centre is absolutely in keeping with the Trust’s vision which includes “the belief that reading and storytelling improve the life quality of children and young people of all abilities and backgrounds by giving them a better understanding of the world and its many cultures, developing their literacy skills, helping them to communicate better, and increasing their capacity for imagination, creativity and invention.”

The building had other constituencies as well. Originally built for a prominent solicitor, it was

London. That left me with a bad feeling about Moat Brea, until I learned that they too had been hard hit by Covid and were forced to take some drastic actions. Anyway, spiteful behavior doesn’t pay, so when I learned it was once again a thriving enterprise I put it back on my to-do list and was glad I did.

I took the train down from Kilmarnock, a scenic hour’s journey as you pass from the central lowlands into the southern uplands, both of which contain more square miles of green hills and dales than you’ve ever seen before. Mont Brae was an easy ten-minute walk from the station. I’d seen photos of the interior so I had a fair idea of what to expect.



Three rooms decorated with scenes from children’s literature.

designed by an equally prominent architect and has local historical significance. There’s also an ownership connection with “Scotland’s Einstein,” James Clerk Maxwell. In 1914, it became the Moat Brae Nursing Home where independent surgeons performed minor operations. As such it went through many iterations for the next eighty-seven years, gradually deteriorating until the Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust came on the scene.

After a successful fund-raising campaign and a well-thought-out plan to spend all those pounds sterling, the Centre opened on June 1, 2019 to great acclaim as an international tourist attraction and a welcome social and economic benefit to the area—to say nothing of successfully dedicating itself to the task of ensuring “that Scotland’s children and young people are given the time, the space, and the resources to encourage reading for pleasure and the skill to write and tell their own stories.” Top that off with its being the location of the TARS library, and you can see why I wanted to go there and how disappointed I had been to have that opportunity taken from me. I’ll do it next trip, I told myself, not realizing there was another disappointment in the offing.

Earlier this year I read in *Signals*, the TARS newsletter, that the Library had been forced out of Moat Brea but, fortunately, had found a new home in the village of Houghton, around fifty miles southwest of

The Trust has created a delightful place for families to visit, and there were many doing so when I popped in. Inside the house I passed from room to room and floor to floor where various settings from popular kids’ novels were recreated as places to play-act or to simply sit and read. In the café, situated in a new addition to the house, I enjoyed a pot of tea and a baked treat. Afterwards, while wandering



A story-telling chair. (Note the loudspeaker.)



A two-tiered banister accommodates both large and small children.

through the garden overlooking the river, a screaming swarm of kids swept past me. As I walked on, I discovered they'd been heading for an abstract pirate ship that encouraged yelling and clambering over.



A snug reading spot.

The group was big enough and varied enough to make me think they were mostly strangers who had coalesced, as kids will do under safe circumstances. I made a small purchase in the gift shop before leaving. All-in-all, it was a pleasant three-hour visit which I can recommend to others.



Children have no trouble reimagining an abstract assemblage of a pirate ship as the real thing. Courtesy Peter Pan Moat Brae Trust.

Sidebar: Wendy's Name

Until Barrie wrote about Peter Pan, there was never a single person named Wendy. Really. As Barrie was casting about for a name for the Darling girl he remembered a child acquaintance who was unable to pronounce her Rs, and referred to him as her fweind. This eventually evolved into the nickname, Fwendy-Wendy. He adopted the last half as the name of the girl, and today all the Wendys in the world are ultimately named for that fictional character.



Peter Pan surveys the garden.

I was quite taken with Dumfries. It's a nice well-kept city with many local attractions. There's no need to rent a car and learn how to drive on the wrong side of the street. Even though it has a population of only 33,000—about the size of Marion, Ohio—it has excellent local and intercity bus service. And you can travel there directly by rail from Glasgow or, if you want, from Euston Station in London with just one change at Carlisle. I'd like to spend three or four days there at some time in the future.

Sidebar: Reading *Peter Pan*

I realized at one point that I'd never read *Peter Pan*. As with so many people, my understanding of the story came from the Disney animated movie in 1953. Modern children will be informed by the Disney 2023 version retitled *Peter Pan and Wendy*, which I'm sure I'll like when I finally see it. So I borrowed a library copy of the book on my return. It's a strange mixture of silliness and violence and would never be newly published today in its original form. There are a number of troubling things, including the aforesaid violence. Five-year-old Michael, the youngest Darling boy, actually murders one of the pirates and is proud of it; and the inappropriateness doesn't stop there. There's also the demeaning treatment of the "redskins"; and girls and woman will probably object to Wendy's willingness, after her return, to fly back to Neverland for a week every year to give Peter's house a spring cleaning—and then has her daughter do the same, and eventually her granddaughter. Stuff like that. I'm not sure most modern parents would feel entirely comfortable reading this book to their children.

Suckin' Air

A Bookstore-y from the Acorn Bookshop Archives (2004)

By George Cowmeadow Bauman

The first two Saturday-morning customers came in before Biblio-Cat and I were officially open, ignoring the CLOSED sign on the door, though I had left it unlocked while I was carrying boxes of just-purchased books in from my bookvan, and the lights were on...

Each man was at Acorn in response to my Want List calls—a college guy to pick up a copy of David Wallace's *Infinite Jest*, while the other guy was a collector of Dick and Jane books, but only the ones from the 60s.

That pretty much pegs his age around 45-50. About 10 years younger than me, for I was taught from the D&Js in the 50s. Those iconic illustrations still appeal to many people; the books don't come in often, and when they do, their condition is usually less than desirable. Maybe the collectors compare the books we learned from to those which are used by their elementary school grandchildren today.

Most of the Dick and Jane collectors are re-visiting their own elementary school days when lives were as simple for many folks as the sentences in the readers: "Here comes Spot. There goes Puff."

After I opened the store officially, both men headed down to our book-filled basement, looking through boxes of books in their area of interest—the younger man drooling over the pulp science fiction books from a recent housebuy, the older reader wanting to lasso hardback western fiction.

After years of selling few such hardcover westerns—many of which are not significantly more complex than those Dick and Janes the older guy coveted – we had recently pulled boxes of the westerns off the shelves a week earlier and stored them in the basement, where they began to sell! Same thing happened when we pulled and stored espionage books—sold more in a month from the basement than we did in a year when they were shelved upstairs.

Go figure.

When the gray-haired gent came up to the counter carrying eight shoot-'em-ups and a handful of OSU football programs, wearing a red—oops, excuse me, scarlet—OSU sweatshirt stretched over the burly chest of an ex-athlete, I commented that I knew where he'd be at

9 pm that night—watching the 3-0 Buckeyes in Illinois on TV.

As I rang up his \$162 sale, he entertained me with his response. "I hope to be watching it, but we've got a sick hound that we're nursing back to health. When the doc said he saw a mass near its heart on the x-ray, I told him that if it was the big C, to put her down right then, 'cause we'd already gone through the \$6000 chemo treatment for one dog that didn't make it, though the lab had claimed it was non-life-threatening 'Consolidated Pneumonia.' So, we've got this one at home and spending lots of time boiling and feeding her rice and ground beef so she won't toss the food and the meds we bury in it."

I wasn't sure how that would keep him from watching the football game. He obviously wasn't a true citizen of the Buckeye Nation—a wild-eyed OSU fanatic who would not let family—human or otherwise—interfere with the obsession of loyalty to the Bucks.

At that moment, my cat Biblio chose to walk by us and hopped up on the counter and rubbed his face on the customer's books. As I stroked the Siamese fur and received a purr, I told the dog owner that I understood how we'd do just about anything for them when they get sick.

"Yeah, I know. We've got three speed-bumps," he dead-panned.

I just let him have his way with the story, staying quiet. I sensed that he'd been down this conversational road more than once, sticking dog-gedly around to make his point.

"We've got Bassets, and all they're good for is to eat and sleep and poop. They don't play. If you throw a ball for them, they'll retrieve it once, but if you throw it again, they look at you like you're the dummy, wondering why—if you wanted the ball back—would you throw it away again?!"

"Have a good day," I laughingly offered as he opened the door.

He saluted me from the bill of his Cleveland Browns cap, and said, "As long as I'm still suckin' air, it's a good day!"

"The dog has seldom been successful in pulling man up to its level of sagacity, but man has frequently dragged the dog down to his."

— James Thurber

Upcoming Programs

Thursday, January 11th, 2024:

Aldus Collects

Thursday, February 8th, 2024:

Sarah Neville, OSU English professor and author of *Early Modern Herbals and the Book Trade: English Stationers and the Commodification of Botany*, will discuss the book trade in Tudor and Stuart England and reasons behind the success of the printed herbal.



Thursday, April 11th, 2024:

Betty Weibel, author of *The Ohio Literary Trail*, which locates over 70 literary sites across Ohio. Weibel will discuss her experiences in tracking down the writers from Ohio who helped shape culture and literature worldwide.

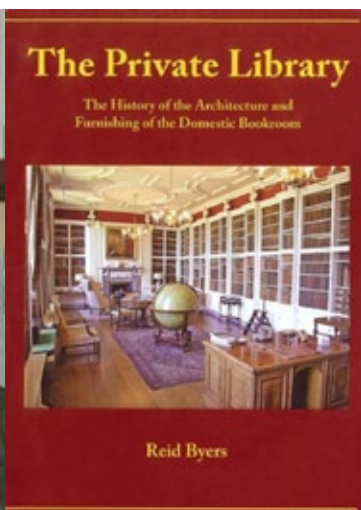
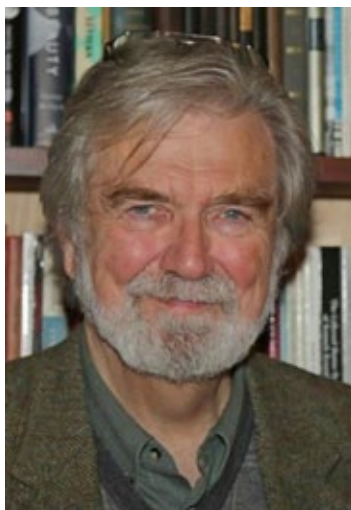


Thursday, March 14th, 2024:

Reid Byers, author of *The Private Library*, examines the historical influences that have shaped the architecture of the private library, and the furnishings, amenities, and delightful anachronisms that make the mortal room into what Borges so famously called Paradise.

Thursday, May 9th, 2024:

Madison Good from OSU Library Special Collections presents the bookbindings of Margaret Armstrong, one of the most celebrated and recognized women in binding design from the late 19th century, who inspired a generation of younger women with her style and industrious output.



“You cannot help but learn more as you take the world into your hands. Take it up reverently, for it is an old piece of clay, with millions of thumbprints on it.”

— John Updike

