

The
Aldus
Society

Celebrating Books!

Aldus Society Notes

Fall 2026

Volume 26, No. 3

A Note from the President, Jack Salling



As the Aldus Society begins another season of programs, I find myself reflecting on the place of organizations like ours in a rapidly changing world.

We witness every day how the digital age is transforming the way people acquire and process information. The cover of the August issue of *The Atlantic* boldly declares, “The Age of Reading Is Over.” Coincidentally, our speaker for May of 2027, Walt Hunter, is a contributing editor for the magazine. We’ll have at least one question to ask him.

The headline is somewhat misleading. The author of the lead article argues that the age of the book is giving way to something different. There are more readers than ever before, but increasingly, the texts they read are no longer than an Instagram post. Attention often begins to wander after a few dozen words. (If that’s true, I’m already in trouble.) By contrast, the bestselling novel of 1975, James Clavell’s *Shōgun*, exceeded 300,000 words. Few books of that length are published today.

There’s little chance of turning the tide, nor should it be our goal. Like industrialization before it, the digital revolution is too large and too complex, and the Aldus Society is, after all, a small organization.

If you have ever looked through the FABS publications, however, you recognize that we are one of many. Located in communities across the nation, groups like ours offer an important function: collecting, preserving, and promoting books and print culture in all their forms.

For more than twenty-five years, Columbus, Ohio, has been enriched by our efforts. I’m pleased to report that the Aldus Society remains strong, with over a hundred members who support our events through their presence and

contributions. Thanks to Jolie Braun and the programming committee, we can look forward to speakers who represent a variety of backgrounds, united by their interest in books and book-related topics. These include the conservation of medieval manuscripts, the life and works of Jane Austen, and the editing and promotion of contemporary literature in translation.

The world of books will continue to change, but so will we, finding new ways to share and celebrate the printed word. Fellow members of Aldus, we can be proud of that.

Jack Salling

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).*

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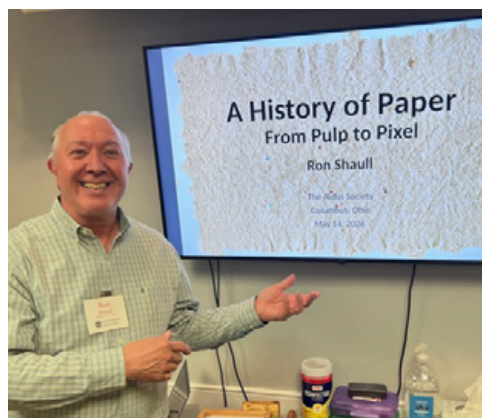


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May 14 Program Recap and Annual Meeting

This program featured **Ron Shaull**, a Central Ohio papermaker, paper artist, bookmaker and writer, presenting “A history of Paper, From Pulp to Pixel.”

The brief Annual Meeting took place prior to the program and consisted of an annual report and voting on the slate of 2026/27 trustees.

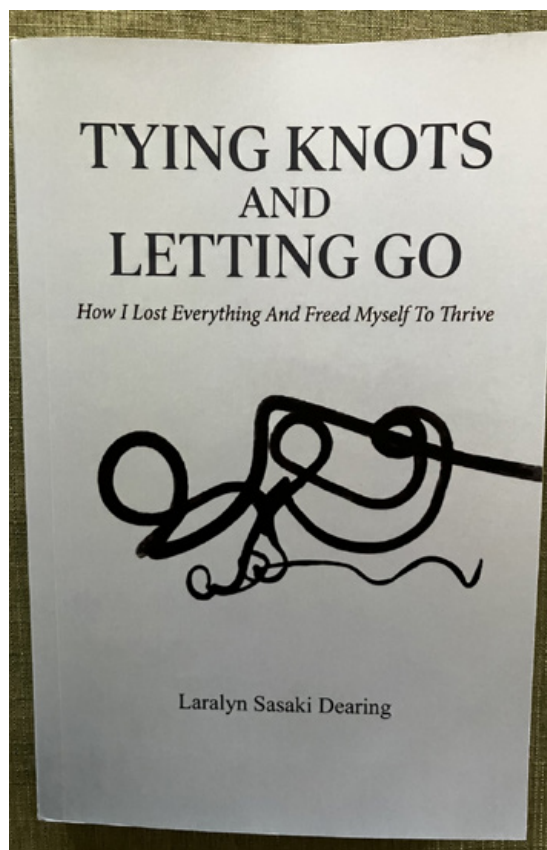


Another Author in Our Midst

Laralyn Sasaki Dearing, a long-time Aldus member, has written a personal finance memoir *Tying Knots and Letting Go*, which is available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and other bookstores.

Laralyn said in an email, “*Tying Knots and Letting Go: How I Lost Everything and Freed Myself to Thrive* tells my story of becoming a widow, staring down a six-figure debt and working to the other side of that challenge. The book includes 500 helpful hints, tips and tricks – called “knots” – to help the reader avoid, elude and escape their own financial traps.

“Beyond the facts, the book tracks my coming to terms with the mythical money monster, pivoting from surviving to thriving and becoming my own biggest cheerleader. Who knew it would take a grueling financial journey to become my own best friend? I hope readers will discover they can do the same.”



Monthly Meetups for Women Members of Aldus

By Nancy Campbell

Every month women members of the Aldus Society are invited to a meetup on the fourth* Saturday. It's fun to get to know other members and to see them not just at the monthly programs but again a few weeks later for a social gathering.

Bibliofellowship, which means enjoying the company of other people who like books, is an Aldus tradition. The women members meet at the MCL Cafeteria/Restaurant at the Kingsdale Shopping Center in Upper Arlington, where there is a wide-ranging menu.

We start by simply visiting and getting to know any new members who come, we eat lunch, and then we go around the table giving brief reports on what we have recently been reading. I write down the authors and titles, and Karen Robinson types up the list.

*The fourth Saturday is the day we aim for, but if it falls on a holiday weekend, we re-schedule for that month.

What these members are reading....

Ann Lowder

- *Foster* by Claire Keegan
- *Founding Gardeners: The Revolutionary Generation Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation* by Andrea Wulf

Sue Johnson

- *The Gales of November: The Untold Story of the Edmund Fitzgerald* by John U. Bacon

Karen Robinson

- *The Music Shop: A Novel* by Rachel Joyce
- *A Far-Flung Life* by M. L. Stedman
- *Rogue Male* by Geoffrey Household

Nancy Campbell

- *Ragtime: A Novel* by E. L. Doctorow

Louisa Celebrezze

- *Founding Mothers: Remembering the Ladies—Empowering Stories of Heroic Women Who Changed the Course of History* by Cokie Roberts

Leah Reibel

- *My Friends: A Novel* by Fredrik Backman



The number of members who attend varies from month to month, from six to 16. We had a great turn-out in May, with an interesting list of new and old titles.

Ellen Seibert

- *Daughters of the Bamboo Grove: From China to America, a True Story of Abduction, Adoption, and Separated Twins* by Barbara Demick

Lisa Zierten

- *On the Calculation of Volume (Books One to Four)* by Solvej Balle

Cathy Bennett

- *Buddenbrooks: The Decline of a Family* by Thomas Mann
- *M Train: A Memoir* by Patty Smith

Joanne Vickers

- *License to Kill: A Champagne Widows Novel* by Rebecca Rosenberg

Susan Houchin

- *The Laws of Love and Logic: A Novel* by Debra Curtis

Betty Baltes

- *The Sweetness of Forgetting* by Kristen Harmel

Miriam Mansour

- *Simply More: A Book for Anyone Who Has Been Told They're Too Much* by Cynthia Erivo
- *The Demon of Unrest: A Saga of Hubris, Heartbreak, and Heroism at the Dawn of the Civil War* by Eric Larson

An Ohio Example of Kelmscott-Inspired Ephemera

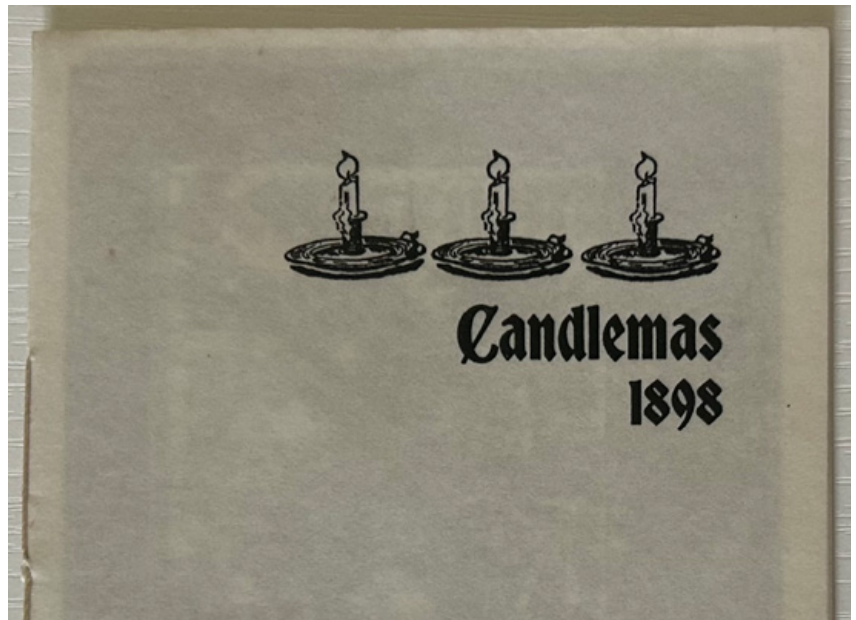
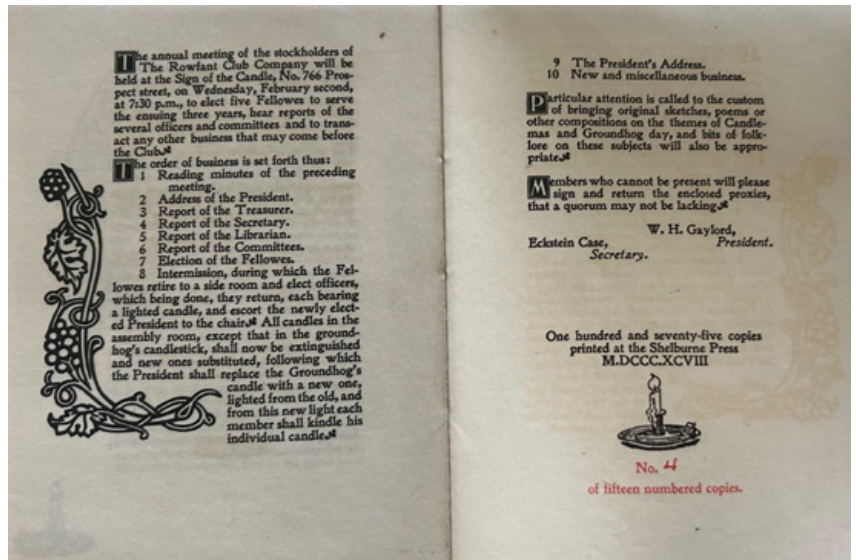
By Tom Bredehoff

Cleveland's Rowfant Club (1892-present) started as a gentlemen's bibliophily club, and it retains that character today. One of their purposes from the very beginning was the production of beautiful books, and their interest in beautifully printed works extended even to the printing of their own ephemeral publications. And they were, in their first few years, clearly proponents of the Arts & Crafts movement, especially as represented by the works of William Morris's Kelmscott Press.

An early Rowfant booklet that I recently came across is the 1898 invitation sent to members for attendance at their annual Candlemas meeting, the high point of the Rowfant calendar. The opening pages are truly Kelmscott-like in their use of dense black woodcut borders and also in their use of type and typography. The body-type is almost certainly Jenson, modelled after Morris's "Golden" type. The opening, using the Chaucerian word "yclept" (with the sense "called") distinctly evokes Neo-Gothic Victorian medievalism. The whole print run for this invitation was only 175 copies; this particular example is one of just fifteen numbered copies. Although it is not stated in the colophon, a hand-written note on the envelope that accompanied this booklet indicates that this copy has been printed on vellum.

In this case, I am pretty sure that the vellum in question is vegetable vellum (often called Japan vellum at the time), although in this case surprisingly similar in appearance and texture to very fine calf vellum. Printing on one side allowed the sheets to be folded without requiring that they then be opened up or cut. I am fascinated by the decision to issue a piece of ephemera like an announcement or invitation in a limited, numbered edition, but the beauty of this example does suggest that from the start, this was intended to be a cherished collectible.

It has now become a rarity. WorldCat, if I have searched it correctly, records only one institutional holding for this item (at Brown University), with no note in the catalogue record of a numbered or vellum issue at all. Probably other copies do exist, but as one of only fifteen examples of this issue, it must be rare, and it's a fascinating piece of Ohio printing history.



Carlotta's Cigarette Holder, Blemie's Last Will and Testament, and Other Treasures in a Eugene O'Neill Collection

By Jay Hoster

Some years ago while visiting her father in Florida, Genie purchased a collection of Eugene O'Neill material. It consists of items which had belonged to Edith Kelley, Carlotta O'Neill's massage therapist.

Carlotta was O'Neill's third wife; O'Neill was her fourth husband. She had been an actress with the stage name of Carlotta Monterey, but her original name was the far more prosaic Hazel Neilson Thorsing. O'Neill biographers Arthur and Barbara Gelb have offered an unflinching portrait of Carlotta as "a former actress... better known for her sultry beauty than for her talent."



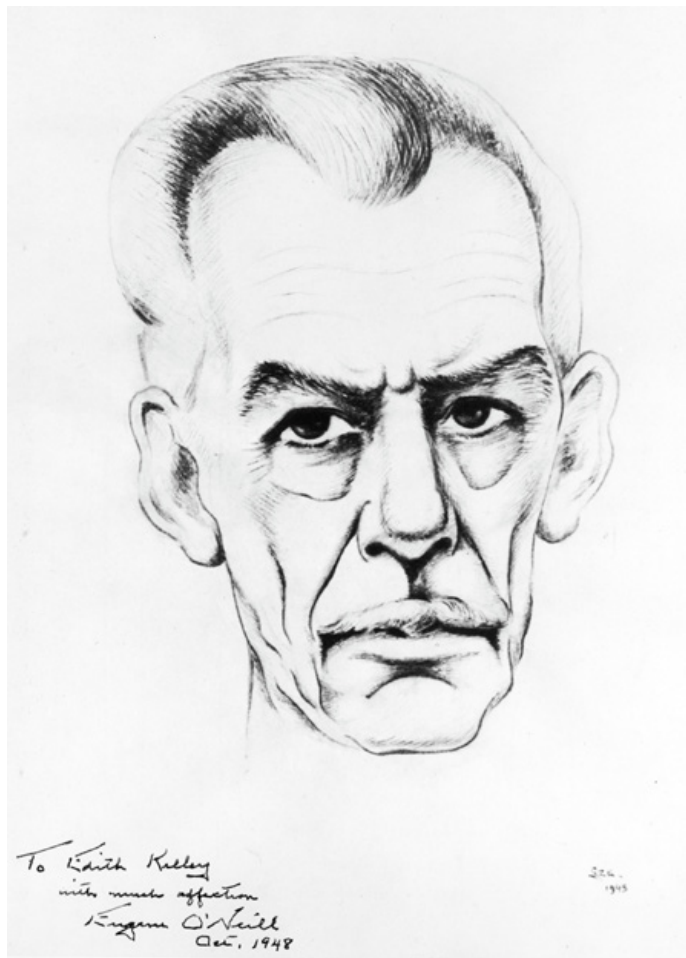
Carlotta on Stage

The O'Neills had a tempestuous relationship. At the risk of dipping into stereotypes, it may not be too far wrong to view the couple as a feisty Irishman and a temperamental actress. In later years, as O'Neill's health declined, Carlotta took on the role of caregiver, never an easy task given that her husband was hardly a model patient.

The difficulties she encountered in that position led Carlotta to write in her diary, "One day he loves me better than life itself!—the next he hates me!"

Kelley was not Carlotta's first massage therapist. O'Neill had been suspicious that Carlotta was having a sexual relationship with the original masseuse that Carlotta hired, so Kelley's professionalism impressed him. He expressed his gratitude with a signed photograph of a drawing by Mai-mai Sze that was used as the dust jacket portrait on *The Iceman Cometh* and *A Moon for the Misbegotten*.

O'Neill inscribed the photograph "To Edith Kelley with much affection, Eugene O'Neill, Oct 1948." Carlotta's sultriness is on view in a photograph of her that she inscribed to Kelley in the same month.



Signed Eugene O'Neill Photo

The correspondence continued for some years. In 1960 Carlotta sent Kelley a photograph from a stage performance "to show I was...once an actress!" and another photograph from her acting career is inscribed

"To my dear Kelley. Souvenir of days long ago! Carlotta."

Carlotta was always dressed in the finest that *haute couture* could offer, and at a time when smoking was common, a cigarette holder would have been an essential item for a fashion-conscious woman, and included in the collection is Carlotta's personalized cigarette holder. And, as we will see, her concerns for shopping at only the finest establishments extended to a favorite dog.



Cigarette Holder

Long Day's Journey into Night, O'Neill's most autobiographical play, had a complicated publishing history. The searing portrait of family life that it presents caused O'Neill to call it "a play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood." Carlotta recalled that "when he started *Long Day's Journey*, it was a most strange experience to watch that man being tortured every day by his own writing. He would come out of his study at the end of a day gaunt and sometimes weeping. His eyes would be all red and he looked ten years older than when he went in in the morning."

Bennett Cerf of Random House had been O'Neill's publisher since *Ah, Wilderness!* in 1933, and O'Neill made him promise that the play would not be published until twenty-five years after his death, but he had also told Carlotta that *Long Day's Journey* was their "nest egg." She possessed the legal rights to the work, so when she needed money after O'Neill's death, she informed Cerf that she wanted the play to be published.



Carlotta

When Cerf stayed true to his promise and refused, Carlotta took the play to Yale University Press, where it has never been out of print. Carlotta's intentions may not have appeared to be very noble at the time, but the publication of *Long Day's Journey* in 1956 led to an O'Neill renaissance. One lesser-known offshoot of its publication is a keepsake that Yale printed, *The Last Will and Testament of Silverdene Emblem O'Neill*, which had been written in 1940. The colophon indicates that it was "printed for Carlotta Monterey O'Neill by her friends at the Yale University Press," and its appearance in the same month as *Long Day's Journey* would suggest that it was intended a thank-you to Carlotta for bringing the play to Yale.

This is a tribute to the O'Neills' favorite dog, a Dalmatian known as Blemie, written in the manner of the dog expressing his final wishes. O'Neill wrote it at Tao House in California, which is now a National Historic Site administered by the National Park Service.

The copy here was inscribed by Carlotta. Apparently mindful of earlier spellings that had gone awry, she wrote, "For my dearest Kelley (spelled with an E!)" and with the comment that "the 'Master' would have liked you to have it, too!" Paper-clipped to the verso of the front cover is a photograph of O'Neill and Blemie.



Eugene O'Neill with Blemie

At the conclusion of his *Last Will and Testament*, Blemie offered, "One last request, I earnestly make. I have heard my Mistress say, 'When Blemie dies we must never have another dog. I love him so much I could never love another one.' Now I would ask her, for love of me, to have another. It would be a poor tribute to my memory never to have a dog again. What I would like to feel is that, having once had me in the family, she cannot live without a dog! I have never had a narrow jealous spirit. I have always held that most dogs are good (and one cat, the black one I have permitted to share the living room rug during the evenings, whose affection I have tolerated in a kindly spirit, and in rare sentimental

moods, even reciprocated a trifle). Some dogs, of course, are better than others. Dalmatians, naturally, as everyone knows, are best. So I suggest a Dalmatian as my successor. He can hardly be as well-bred or as well-mannered or as distinguished and handsome as I was in my prime. My Master and Mistress must not ask the impossible. But he will do his best, I am sure, and even his inevitable defects will help by comparison to keep my memory green. To him I bequeath my collar and leash and my overcoat and raincoat, made to order in 1929 at Hermès in Paris. He can never wear them with the distinction I did, walking around the Place Vendôme, or later along Park Avenue, all eyes fixed on me in admiration; but again I am sure he will do his utmost not to appear a mere gauche provincial dog. Here on the ranch, he may prove himself

From the game show *Jeopardy!*:

“Ken, I’ll take Eugene O’Neill for a thousand dollars.”

A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN
PREMIERED HERE IN 1947.

“What is the Hartman Theatre in Columbus?”

quite worthy of comparison, in some respects. He will, I presume, come closer to jack rabbits than I have been able to in recent years. And, for all his faults, I hereby wish him the happiness I know will be his in my old home.

“One last word of farewell, Dear Master and Mistress. Whenever you visit my grave, say to yourselves with regret but also with happiness in your hearts at the remembrance of my long, happy life with you: ‘Here lies one who loved us and whom we loved.’ No matter how deep my sleep I shall hear you,

and not all the power of death can keep my spirit from wagging a grateful tail.”

Blemie’s gravesite has been preserved at Tao House. The O’Neills never did get another dog.

Shakespeare in Ohio: T.C. Mendenhall, Tallmadge, and Delia Bacon

By Harry Campbell

In the October 1923 issue of the *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society Quarterly* (Vol XXXII, p. 590-612) there appears the text of a lecture titled “The Town of Tallmadge—The Bacons and Shakespeare,” given by Thomas Corwin Mendenhall at the Society’s annual meeting, on the founding of the town of Tallmadge, Ohio, in the early 19th century. This was a time when that area was experiencing a great migration of post-Revolutionary pioneers moving west from New England along the southern edge of Lake Erie, an area formally known as the Connecticut Western Reserve, or colloquially, “New Connecticut.” Tallmadge—a wilderness settlement at the time—is today a suburb of Akron, just south of the Cleveland area.

In the year 1807, David Bacon, an intrepid Connecticut colonist and missionary, settled his struggling pioneer family in what eventually became Tallmadge, and by 1809 established a religious community there. He was a preacher, an idealist, and a dreamer, but he ultimately could not sustain his family in the newfound settlement and church community that he created (both of which eventually thrived and endure today), and four years later their resulting poverty and continuing hardships forced him and his family to return to their home in Hartford, Connecticut.



David Bacon



**Historic Congregational Church
Tallmadge, Ohio**

The invited guest lecturer, T.C. Mendenhall, who was a native of Northeast Ohio, was, in the early 1870s, the first appointed of the original seven faculty members of the newly established Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College—now known as The Ohio State University. His self-educated areas of expertise included physics, meteorology, geology, and geodetics (Mendenhall Glacier in Alaska was named in his honor in 1891).

In keeping with the perplexing title of his lecture, the subject matter took a surprising turn. One of Bacon's several children was born in their Ohio wilderness log cabin in 1811. Her name was Delia. Later that year, they would make the long journey back to Old Connecticut where Delia grew up in Hartford, surrounded by caring family and friends who helped her develop a love of reading and learning. Some of her closest friends and neighbors were the Beecher family daughters, and she was taught in her early years by Catherine Beecher, older sister of Delia's close companion and classmate, Harriet (later to become Harriet Beecher Stowe—another Ohio connection). So, you may ask "who is Delia Bacon?" Well, we're getting there...but first, more Mendenhall.

As Mendenhall wound his historical and biographical remarks to a conclusion, he described a popular list of "My Ten Favorite Books" that had been publicized recently.

Shakespeare and the Bible appeared at the top of the list (with Mark Twain close behind). He observed that the "two most talked of and least read of all books" were "*the only books whose authorship was in doubt.*" Spoken like a true skeptic!

Among Mendenhall's other interests: Stylometry—he is known as the founder of the field of author profiling. (He left the university in 1878 but eventually returned to OSU as a Trustee from 1919 until his death in 1924.). In 1887 he published an article titled "Characteristic Curves of Composition" in *Science* magazine, comparing the writing of several authors, in which he suggested his new Stylometric system might be used to solve questions of disputed authorship, such as those that "exist in the plays of Shakespeare."

In 1901, Mendenhall was commissioned by a wealthy Baconian (a promoter of Francis Bacon as the true author of the Shakespeare works) to perform a stylometric experiment to compare the writings of Shakespeare with Francis Bacon (no relation to Delia), Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, and some others, to determine any similarities in their writing styles. He published his results in *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol.60, December 1901, in an article: "A Mechanical Solution of a Literary Problem." Those results were probably not what most people at the time would have expected. Of all Shakespeare's contemporaries, only one came close to his style: "Christopher Marlowe agrees with Shakespeare as well as Shakespeare agrees with himself," the article



T.C. Mendenhall

concluded. Too bad for Bacon and all the others. This interesting article is available online, showing the graphs used in the testing—really quite impressive. It made me take a closer look at Marlowe, and I have now read most of his known work. I agree with Mendenhall’s conclusion: I could be reading Shakespeare.

I must admit that I worked for many years as the book and paper conservator for the Ohio State University libraries, and daily passed by Mendenhall Lab on the famous Oval—a prominent location (as was the library), with buildings named after the founders. For all that time I had no idea of Mendenhall’s history, beyond his scientific record, especially his interest in the authorship of works attributed to Shakespeare—a subject long of interest to me. It was not until I read Elizabeth Winkler’s *Shakespeare Was a Woman and Other Heresies: How Doubting the Bard Became the Biggest Taboo in Literature* (Simon and Schuster, 2023) last year that I learned about Mendenhall’s skepticism and his experiments in stylometry.

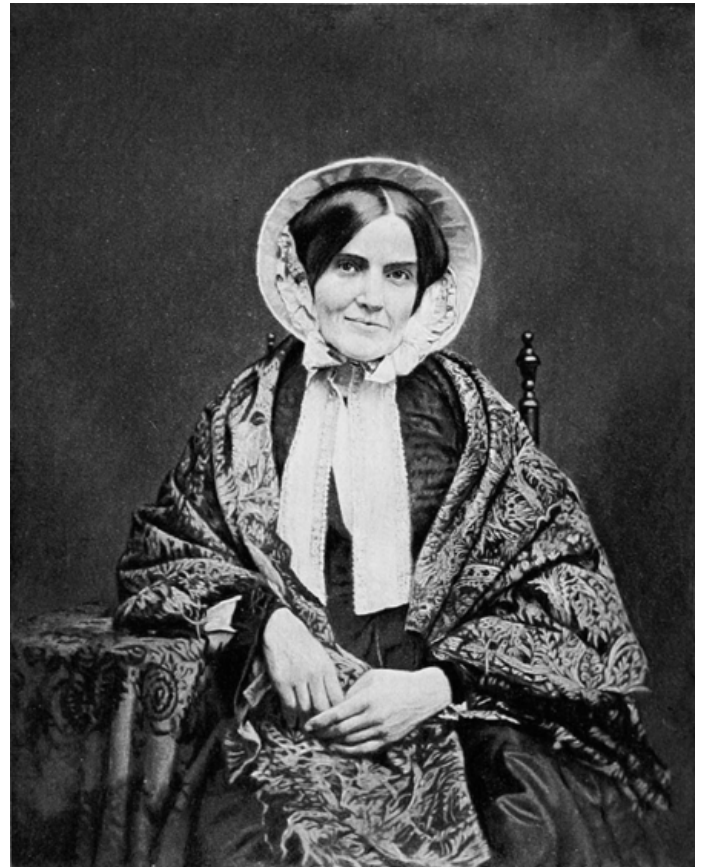


Mendenhall Laboratory Today

Back to the lecture. Mendenhall gradually transitioned from the story of David Bacon and Tallmadge to an extended discussion of the history of Shakespeare authorship doubts. By this point it was obvious he was building to a recitation of the accomplishments and authorship theory of Delia Bacon, which he described in these words: “a profound political philosophy is imbedded in the text or concealed beneath the surface of plays” by “a group of learned men about the court of Queen Elizabeth, including Francis Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh and others.” It is interesting to imagine his audience of archaeologists, historians, and other Ohioans who might have been expecting a purely historical and biographical telling of the early days of Ohio and one of its founders. In fact, half the lecture—eleven pages out of 22 of the printed transcription—are focused on the authorship controversy and pitiable story of the fraught conception and creation of Delia Bacon’s 1857 “magnum opus,” *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare, Unfolded*.

Although her massive—and dense—book had few readers (unfortunately still true) and received brutal

reviews in the English press, as Mendenhall observed, it “startled some people into thinking as they had never thought before.” (It was also THE book that launched the modern Shakespeare authorship controversy to which Mendenhall and many other American scholars were drawn.) He also noted that “Delia Bacon had hit the bull’s-eye of the controversy when she flung into the teeth of Thomas Carlyle [her friend and Shakespeare true believer] the assertion that no one could know the meaning of the plays of Shakespeare who believed ‘that booby’ wrote them.”

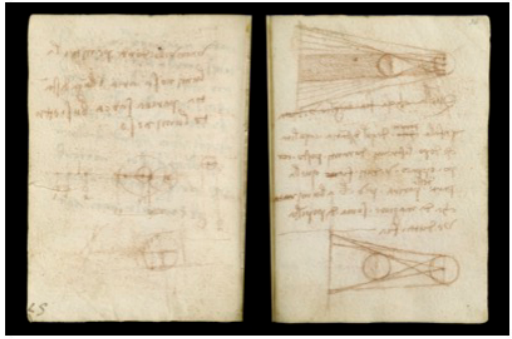


Delia Bacon

As Mendenhall nears the conclusion of his lecture, he states “This is neither the time nor place for a discussion of the merits of the Shakespeare controversy.” He then suggests that Ms. Bacon had the right idea in the sense that the controversy should not be about Shakespeare-Bacon or Shakespeare-Marlowe, but that it is primarily the case about William Shaksper of Stratford-on-Avon, and whether he could actually have written “the greatest dramatic compositions to be found in any language.” Then, in addition to Ms. Bacon’s admonition to Carlyle, he cites the words of eight or ten formidable intellects—“those whose opinions will command attention”—in support of Delia Bacon’s “advocacy of what she conceived to be the truth.” Most of these were from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, although one citation dates from 1645. It’s important to note that even by

1923, when he gave this talk, he was able to wrap up his litany of skepticism with the statement that “Citations of similar views might be extended almost indefinitely, but these are enough for my purpose.” Bravely, T.C. Mendenhall closes with these words:

“No belief or doctrine, other than a few religious dogmas, has ever rooted itself more deeply in the human mind than this faith in Shakespeare as the author...His tomb has become a shrine, at which all nations worship and an invisible monument of huge dimensions has been erected to his memory. But some of those who, in recent years have contributed most generously to its building, are now ready to acknowledge the weakness of its foundation. Should it ever fall, and there are many who believe that it must fall in the not distant future, it will not be forgotten that the first assault upon it was made by Delia Bacon, born in a log cabin the Town of Tallmadge.”



The Aldus Society Presents

The Secret Life of Notebooks: How Writers, Artists, & Scientists Think on Paper

by Jillian Hess

Thursday, September 10, 7:30
Thurber Center
91 Jefferson Ave · Columbus, OH



New York Times Book Review of *Famous Men* by Julie Buntin

Review by Lauren Christensen

Aldus member Steve Habash forwarded this *New York Times* review of his daughter-in-law's newest novel. Julie and her husband Gabe are both Aldus members, are both writers and both teach in the English Department at the University of Michigan.

FAMOUS MEN, by Julie Buntin
Random House, 2026

She's 23, He's 62. They're Each Hungry for Something the Other Has.

Julie Buntin's novel "Famous Men" complicates an old story with questions of ambition and consent.

"Do you ever think this isn't good for you?" the renowned novelist Ezra Blazer asks his girlfriend, Alice, an aspiring writer 45 years his junior, in Lisa Halliday's

novel, "Asymmetry." "On the contrary," Alice replies. "I think it's very good for me."

"I could have slapped him," Jill Ciment wrote six decades after her mentor and future husband kissed her for the first time, "but what 17-year-old is prepared to slap a 47-year-old man she had fantasized about for the previous six months?"

"What I'm trying to say is I understood what I was allowing to happen," Wilhelmina Miles narrates in Julie Buntin's second novel, "Famous Men," moments before she follows the much older Nathaniel Fellow up to his apartment. In other words: It's more complicated than it looks.

Is it ever, though? Reading Buntin's magnificent, absorbing portrait of the ensuing, yearslong relationship between this "great American writer" and his naïve, debt-laden employee feels like holding one of those lenticular 3-D baseball cards in your hand. From one angle the narrative invites murky, shades-of-gray interpretations of victimhood and consent, shame and ambition; but tilt the book a few degrees and the image of this age-chasm relationship is as black-and-white as they come.

Here are the facts: Nathaniel is 62; Will, barely 23. He is a Pulitzer-winning author of poetry, novels, screenplays, a memoir with a movie adaptation; she is a community college transfer student who's just arrived in New York via a 34-hour bus ride from Greening, Mich. He's from the same small town, and attended the nearby Rosendale Academy, an artsy prep school with a "shocking" tuition. She went to public school; her mother is Rosendale's cook.

Their power imbalance is consecrated in Nathaniel's elite M.F.A. classroom, where Will is not even his student but his personal, off-the-books assistant, auditing his workshop against university policy.

Nathaniel "hates context in fiction," and tells his students to cut everything but "the good stuff." Buntin herself proves not just how important but how good back story can be: laying the foundation of Will's scant self-regard, her desperate striving for the approval of men, so that by the time we get to the affair its details are almost beside the point. Here is how a young woman's humiliation, fear and silent rage can confuse her very sense of what she wants.

Will is, after all, the one who's sought him out. Stumbling as a teenager on his early poetry in Rosendale's student magazine, she feels "Nathaniel's 14-year-old soul calling out to mine." Her first fantasy is that he is her father, whose identity her mother has never disclosed. Years later she moves to New York to pursue her second fantasy: that this man will like her poems, and help her become a writer.

You know what happens next; the beauty in this novel is in how Buntin tells it. Like her debut, "Marlena," about an intense, substance-fueled friendship between teenagers in northern Michigan, this is a wickedly precise rendering of a young, self-destructive heroine worshiping at the altar of a false idol — and narrated in hindsight, from her later, more perspicacious vantage.

Will's flight to the city is equally a flight away from Greening, where she has never shaken her reputation as "the biggest slut in the history of the school," after an older boy's house party where she may or may not have been roofied and raped.

After that, "shame was with me always," Buntin writes, animating this ambient, shifting presence that hovered over Will's lonely coming-of-age.

It is in this state that Nathaniel finds her, on her first night in New York, and immediately his libidinal yearnings overtake her literary ones. Their "arrangement": She can have his spare bedroom, his credit card and his crumbs of literary wisdom; in return she will do everything he asks of her: photocopying, sleeping in his bed, fixing a loose curtain rod, organizing his pantry, reading erotic book passages out loud and dissociating while he masturbates on the couch beside her.

The sex in this novel is not remotely sexy, but blunt, awkward, unsettling. He is smaller and more fragile than she is; there are wrong angles and kisses with teeth; she wonders where to put her hands. Before their first time, "I felt no excitement, but no dread either — instead, the kind of dull satisfaction of inevitability." After their second encounter, "I was looking for a way to make it OK, or to make myself OK with it."

Is this what desire sounds like? Or even consent? Will is too embarrassed to tell anyone the truth about her "job" — not her mother, whom she's ghosting to the point of estrangement; not Nathaniel's rich and talented class "favorites" who become something like her friends. Honesty, agency, ambition, respect: These are things the ironically named Will simply can't afford. There's a reason "Nathaniel loved girls from the sticks, girls with something to prove."

Because of course there have been others; but his eventual #MeToo dethroning brings Will neither comfort nor catharsis. There is life for her beyond Nathaniel, but here's the problem with power imbalances: Where she is "barely a chapter" in his story, he'll end up touching nearly every corner of hers — even those he won't be around to see.

Aldus Society Programs for 2026-2027

All Programs Take Place at Thurber Center and Begin at 7:00 pm

September 10, 2026

Jillian Hess discusses the pleasures and paradoxes of taking notes in the digital age. A professor of English at CUNY and viral blogger, Hess has spent decades studying how literary giants gathered information and made sense of the world around them. She is the author of *How Romantics and Victorians Organized Information: Commonplace Books, Scrapbooks, and Albums* (Oxford University Press, 2022).



October 8, 2026

Grant Sabatier recounts his astounding journey from humble salaryman, to entrepreneurial phenomenon, to best-selling author, to his ultimate goal — owner of our indie fave, Clintonville Books! Sabatier is the author of international bestsellers *Financial Freedom* (Penguin Random House, 2020) and *Inner Entrepreneur* (Penguin Random House, 2022).

November 12, 2026

Ashlyn Opreescu discusses her work conserving the fragile pages of rare Medieval manuscripts, where she uses her highly technical expertise to balance the competing demands of preserving these priceless treasures while also making them available to students, researchers, and the public. Opreescu is a Book and Paper Senior Conservator at Ohio State's University Libraries.

January 14, 2027

Aldus Collects!

Our annual audience favorite. The magnificent George Bauman hosts book collectors from amongst the Aldus membership. Surprises are guaranteed.

February 11, 2027

Elizabeth Bond discusses the startling parallels between “participatory knowledge” shared in newspapers during the tumultuous years of Revolutionary France and the never-ending disputation on social media during our own age of polarization. Bond is an associate professor of history at Ohio State and the author of *The Writing Public: Participatory Knowledge Production in Enlightenment and Revolutionary France* (Cornell University Press, 2021).

March 11, 2027

Jennifer Weinbrecht is the owner of Geauga County's not-so-hidden treasure, Jane Austen Books. JAB was founded in 1986 and enjoys a national reputation that shows no sign of fading. Weinbrecht operates the store with daughters Beth Dean and Amy Patterson. Their presence is felt far beyond Ohio by serving as a national resource for Austen material and through their participation in the Jane Austen Society of North America.

April 8, 2027

Gary Lovely, a local eminence in the independent bookstore scene (Prologue Books, Two Dollar Radio Headquarters, Abraham Associates). Columbus enjoys an astonishing richness of independent booksellers (check out our map!) and nobody knows the scene better than Gary. Gary is a board member of the Great Lakes Independent Booksellers Association and has written about books for the *New York Times*, Literary Hub, BuzzFeed Books, and *Columbus Monthly*. Gary's talk will focus on working with literature in translation.

May 13, 2027

Walt Hunter closes the season on a high note by discussing his work as poetry and fiction editor for *The Atlantic*. *The Atlantic* was founded in the dark days of pre-Civil War America with a mission to attend the unfinished project of the nation, and from the beginning it featured poetry of “rousing optimism, clear-eyed realism, and moving lyricism.” Walt Hunter is a professor of twentieth and twenty-first century literature at Case Western Reserve University. He is the editor of *The Singing Word: 168 Years of Poetry from The Atlantic* (Atlantic Editions, 2025).

Unscramble That Book!

1. SGLLIEK _____
2. THE HONUD OF HET LIASRLBESKEV _____
3. DMALIAT _____
4. OT LLIK A MINICODRKGB _____
5. RSONBNIO SRECUO _____
6. SRETEAUR LAISDN _____
7. OLREVI SITTW _____
8. RGTEA EEIPOTXNCAST _____
9. AKCLB TUEBAY _____
10. HET ELGUNJ KOBO _____
11. HET AIRZDW OF ZO _____
12. ARYM PONPISP _____
13. RICSUOU OGREGE _____
14. IPPPI IGTCNOOSNGLSK _____
15. HGOIDGTON RM TMO _____
16. ERWSIATPH WDON _____
17. ETH DRYIA OF A PIWMY DKI _____
18. ETH OBOK IHFTE _____
19. OCRLDDSWI _____
20. A TAHCRSMSI ACOLR _____

Word Search

The Odyssey

M G R K E E Y P I B C J Y R F A A K K X Y S P K
 S M Z P J Y F Q U T Q I J J N T P F I O U B A O
 I W U X B C Q F S C P W O N V P V E I H A S L B
 R S C V B X R E U U Q E J C Z F B L C D X L Y W
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 K A R R I T L L D Z X K O J E S O J Y U B T L M
 C S N U C E B T Y B R Y N N U F R C A O Z S R E
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 A P A L A O C P R M S R Z H U A Z K I Y I M M E
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 A A H G T A E W H C L K S H R R D L S S F H H J
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 E P N J K X N H C P B J K A X J O I U U X N G F
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 N T Q A Q C X E U Y B T U U V L U G T M O M Z C
 O I A X U Z S T L S L X S U H H B O Q T J U S B
 N A E N O H P E S R E P O L Y P H E M U S S H V
 L X F G E G L L A E R T E S J M U X U Y U Z O G

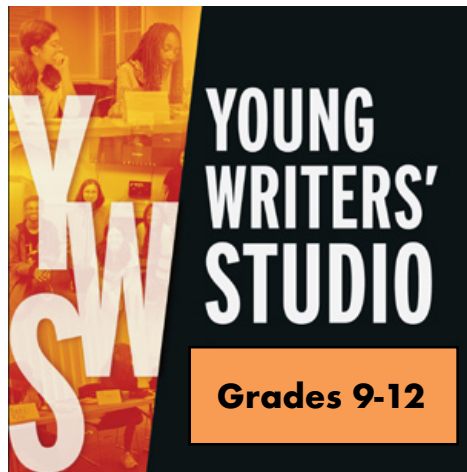
Amphinomus
 Eurymachus
 Telemachus
 Persephone
 Eurylochus
 Polyphemus
 Charybdis
 Perimedes
 Agamemnon
 Penelope
 Eurynome
 Antinous
 Lampetia
 Tiresias
 Poseidon
 Odysseus
 Alcinous
 Eumaeus
 Laertes
 Calypso
 Hermes
 Scylla
 Sirens
 Cronus
 Athena
 Apollo
 Circe
 Homer
 Zeus



Fall 2026 Programs at Thurber House



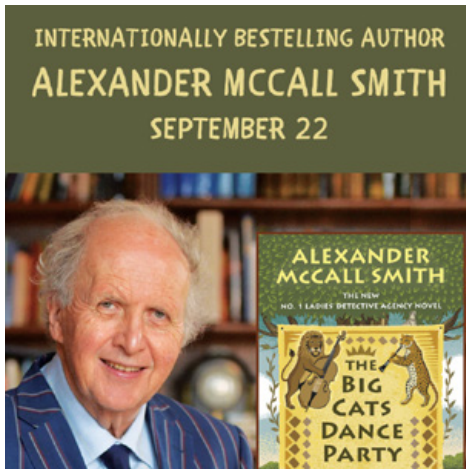
Adult Writing Workshops
(In-Person and Virtual Options)



Young Writers' Studio
(Grades 9-12)



Pen and Tell It! Workshops
(Grades 2-8)



September 22: Bestselling Author
Alexander McCall Smith



October 10: Family-Friendly
Halloween



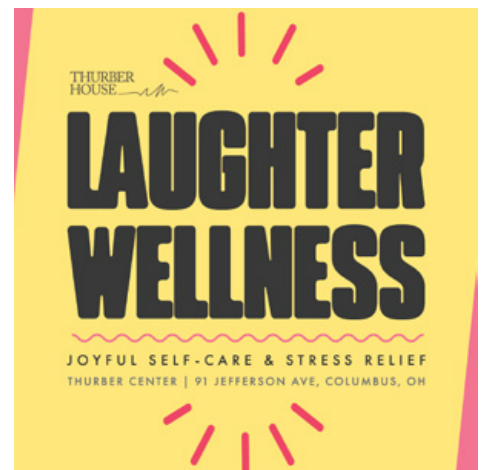
October 10: Adult Halloween
Murder Mystery and Book Bar



October 29: Film Screening with
New Yorker Cartoonist Liza
Donnelly and Sara Thurber Sauers



November 12: Singer-Songwriter
Eric Gnezda with Special Guests
Sally Fingerett and Arkadiy Gips



Laughter Wellness
(Joyful Self-Care and Stress Relief)

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Aldus
Society

Celebrating Books!