

The Florida Bibliophile

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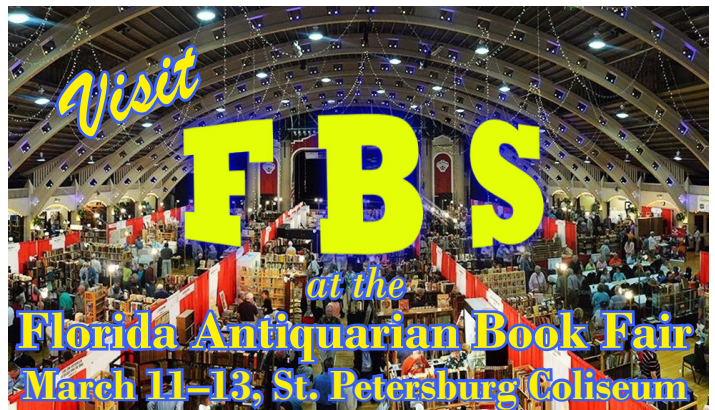
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BonSue Brandvik and the Belview Biltmore Hotel, the setting for her series *Spirits of the Belview Biltmore*.



Florida Bibliophile Society
A community of book lovers

Minutes of the February Meeting of the Florida Bibliophile Society

February 20, 2016, 1:30 p.m.
Macdonald-Kelce Library,
University of Tampa, Tampa, FL

On Sunday, February 20, 2016, fifteen members and guests of the Florida Bibliophile Society met at the University of Tampa's Macdonald-Kelce Library, in the shadow of Henry Plant's famous onion-domed Tampa Bay Hotel, to listen to old and new stories of another Plant hotel, the Belleview Biltmore in Belleair, Florida, just south of Clearwater. Author BonSue Brandvik talked about the history of the Belleview Biltmore and how it became the foundation and setting of four novels she has planned for her series, *Spirits of the Belleview Biltmore*, two of which have been published, *Pearls* and *Ripples*.

The presentation began at 1:45 p.m. when the Society's treasurer, Linda Morris, gave an introduction to our speaker. BonSue is mother-in-law to one of Linda's sons, and Linda spoke briefly about how she and BonSue had affected each other's lives. She also described a personal tour that BonSue had led for family members in the Belleview Biltmore, all the more significant now that the hotel is being demolished.

BonSue described Henry Plant's choice of the highest coastal bluff in Florida – 100 feet above sea level – as the site for a large resort hotel. In the 1890s, the site was truly in the middle of nowhere, but it was accessible by a stretch of rail that Plant had recently acquired. A spur of the railroad was extended to the front door of the hotel. The train carried visitors directly from New York City for decades. Plant built a series of hotels to attract visitors, and he was a pioneer of total package tourism, including shops and restaurants in the hotel and offering outings and events to his guests.

For the site's beautiful overview of Clearwater Bay and its barrier islands, Plant named the hotel Belleview. For the clean Gulf air, valued by visitors recovering from ailments such as tuberculosis, Plant gave the name Belleair to the small town he established nearby to support the hotel. Plant assembled a team of 300 men to build his Belleview



Photo: Florida Memory

The Belleview Hotel under construction, 1896

Hotel out of local woods, especially Southern loblolly pine. Construction began in 1895, and the hotel was opened for business on January 15, 1897.

For more than a century, the Belleview hosted many famous people such as presidents Barack Obama, George H. W. Bush, Jimmy Carter, and Gerald Ford, leaders such as former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and royalty such as the Duke of Windsor. Sports figures and industrialists such as Joe DiMaggio, Babe Ruth, Thomas Edison, and Henry Ford stayed at the hotel. Local celebrity and nationally known wrestling star Hulk Hogan and family were frequent guests at events at the hotel.

Over its lifetime, the hotel changed hands a number of times. It was inherited in 1899 by Plant's son, Morton, who extended the hotel and contributed significant funds to build a hospital in Clearwater, within walking distance of the Belleview. Morton died in 1918, and the following year, the Belleview was purchased by John Bowman, developer of the Biltmore chain of hotels – "Biltmore" reflecting the opulence of the Vanderbilt estate in North Carolina. The hotel became known as Belleview Biltmore. The stock market crash in 1929 and Bowman's death in 1931 left his hotel chain in bankruptcy; creditors took over. The following decades were hard on the hotel. It was converted to a barracks during World War II. It changed hands several times over the next years, each time acquiring additions but also presenting challenges to its owners. At its greatest extent, the hotel was the largest wooden structure in the world at 820,000 square feet, with miles of hallways, and acres of carpet. Painting the exterior required a thousand gallons of paint and a year-round crew (in

FBS February Minutes, continued

Photo: Florida Memory

The Tiffany Ballroom could seat 800. The ceiling was lined with 100 panels of Tiffany stained glass.

1975, more than 1,800 sheets of aluminum siding and 5.8 miles of aluminum window trim were installed to avoid this expense).

Upkeep of such a facility was expensive. And at the same time, tourism patterns and tastes were changing, severely reducing hotel revenues. In the 1990s, the Mido Corporation of Japan bought the hotel, but cultural differences and a local boycott forced them to sell it a few years later in the late 1900s. A Florida developer bought it in 2005 with plans to restore the hotel.

The hotel closed in 2009 for renovation – BonSue Brandvik was the last guest to check out of the hotel – but the collapsing real estate market cost the owners their financial backing for the project. A developer's plan to replace the hotel with condominiums was met with resistance by preservationists and local activists, but a series of lawsuits and other maneuvers eventually failed. Demolition began in 2015 and proceeded in two phases. In the first phase, parts of the hotel built after World War II, such as the tiki bar and the new lobby, were simply bulldozed. Parts of the hotel built before that war are valued for the construction materials and are disassembled in a process called deconstruction, yielding thousands of board feet of loblolly pine lumber, a wood so hard and suffused with hardened sap that termites cannot eat it. During this process, far less damage to the hotel's structure was found than the developer had claimed as one rationale for demolition. Bricks,

doors, windows, staircases, moldings, glass door knobs – even the 100 Tiffany panels from the ballroom – are also being salvaged. The developer has stated that these materials will be made available for purchase and incorporation into his new condos and townhome developments. The developer has also announced plans to save the original lobby section of the hotel and carriage porch, which he plans to incorporate into the design of a new 33-room boutique hotel on the Belleview property.

From the history of the hotel, Brandvik turned to how the life of the hotel and her own life became entwined, leading to her role as a preservationist and writing a series of books based on the hotel. Brandvik moved to Belleair in the 1970s. Her grandmother was a resident of nearby Riverview, southeast of Tampa. Living within walking distance of the Belleview Biltmore, Brandvik was a frequent visitor for various events or just to enjoy the beautiful grounds and interiors. She wandered the Promenade Corridor on the first floor, built wide enough so that women in hoop skirts could pass each other with ease and lined with historical photos of the hotel, its events, and visitors. She imagined the conversations that took place in the hotel's secretive speakeasy, which remained popular even after Prohibition.

Details of the decor and architecture fascinated her, and she imagined the people who had stayed in the hotel and what had gone on in this once exclusive getaway, temporary home for royalty and commoners alike. She wandered the rarely occupied and eventually closed fifth floor, as well as the subterranean passages that allowed workers to service the hotel almost invisibly – anticipating by many decades the underground service corridors of Disneyworld. On the lower levels, she imagined the daily operations of the massive laundry, the baked goods that must have emerged from the stone ovens, and the millions of drinks cooled by ice from an ice keep the size of a swimming pool. From top to bottom, she investigated, photographed, and dreamed. More than once she was discovered in the closed-off sections of the hotel and asked to leave.

Brandvik was inspired to write about the hotel when plans to renovate it were first announced. Her goal

FBS February Minutes, continued

was to accurately render the hotel as a background for novels that combined stories of past hotel visitors and visitors in the present. She conceived of novels in which spirits of women from the past assist modern women, and every novel begins with a troubled woman checking into the hotel. Thus the books touch multiple genres, including women's fiction, historical fiction, and paranormal time travel.

For the guiding spirit that connects women from the past with those in the present, Brandvik chose Margaret Loughman Plant, Henry Plant's second and much younger wife. How Plant met Margaret is not clear. Brandvik's research has turned up two stories, one in which Margaret was a servant in the home of his former in-laws and one in which she is the daughter of the "minor nobility of Ballyhoo, Ireland." By all accounts, Margaret was a forward-thinking woman who was well educated and strongly believed in creating opportunities for women. Her motto was "Intelligent women with allies can accomplish anything."

To create this fictional world, Brandvik had to create a few rules for how the spirit world works. She described creating worlds as part of the pleasure of

writing fiction. In her books, there are two categories of those beyond the grave: spirits and ghosts. Both of these dwell between the world of the living and the "lighted path" that leads to the afterlife; in this way, Brandvik avoids tampering with readers' beliefs about the afterlife. Spirits can only access places in this world that they, their possessions, or things they have touched have been. Spirits are able to connect with certain living persons, but ghosts, which are created when a small part of a spirit splinters off as a spirit travels the lighted path, are unable to communicate properly. They are often tormented and unfriendly. Brandvik also outlined methods of communication between her spirit world and the living. For instance, most communication with spirits occurs when the living person is sleeping.

To further describe her process, Brandvik discussed the second book in her series, *Ripples*. The novel needed a protagonist from the past and a protagonist from the present. For the story from the past, she drew on the experiences of her grandmother, who had been severely injured in an automobile crash in the 1920s. As a result of the crash, her grandmother's face and leg were crushed. Thankfully, she suffered no brain damage, but with the limitations on



The Belleview Biltmore in recent years — high-rise townhomes wait patiently.

FBS February Minutes, concluded

reconstructive surgery almost a hundred years ago, she was left with significant scars. After a lengthy and determined period of recuperation, she designed a brace for her injured leg and returned to work in a sewing factory. She often talked to Brandvik about tricks of surviving the Great Depression, for example, heating the stove so that it would be too hot for the repo men to carry away.

For the story from the present, Brandvik drew on her brother. In an echo of her grandmother's experience, her brother had been in a serious motorcycle crash. He was not wearing a helmet and was severely injured – however, without brain damage. Following the accident, he was sedated for several weeks to prevent him from disturbing his delicate facial and throat reconstructions. He later described the horrible nightmares he had during this time, which he remembers vividly to this day. He was constantly attended by family, and Brandvik has her own vivid memories of sitting by his hospital bed during that time, wondering if he would ever fully recover.

Brandvik is in the process of writing the third book, *Redemption*, and a fourth book, *Nails*, has been outlined. *Redemption* will be set during World War II when the hotel was occupied by more than 3,000 soldiers. *Nails* will go further back to look at what it took to build the original hotel.

When Brandvik's first book *Pearls* was published, she immediately began to receive letters from people who claimed to have had paranormal experiences in the hotel. She received dozens of stories before noticing numerous cases in which unrelated people had experienced the same event, such as those that witnessed a Victorian couple dancing in the ballroom, the sensation of mysterious presence in the old lobby, or an encounter with a distinctly unfriendly presence on the fifth floor – the last was one that Brandvik experienced herself. She has collected 20 stories of ghost sightings or paranormal events that have been reported from multiple sources. Some of these stories are incorporated into her novels and they may become the primary topic of a future book.

Considering her depth of knowledge about the hotel and its history and her voluminous photo archive,

Brandvik was asked whether she had considered writing any nonfiction about the hotel. She said that she had, but time might not permit her to do so. After all, that she has outlines for than a dozen novels that she would like to get to once she finishes the *Spirits of the Belleview Biltmore* series.

Recorded by Charles Brown.

Additional Sources

"Henry B. Plant." Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_B._Plant, accessed February 28, 2016.

Florida's Finest Inns and Bed & Breakfasts, by Bruce Hunt. Pineapple Press, Sarasota, FL, 2009. Pp. 95-99. Accessed via Google Books, February 28, 2016.

For more information

For a wealth of historical information about the Belleview Biltmore Hotel and many photo albums, visit BonSue Brandvik's website, <http://bonniesuebrandvik.com>



Photo: BonSue Brandvik

A last look from the fifth floor of the Belleview Biltmore Hotel, 1897-2015.



The 1916 Easter Rising: Context and Images

Text: Charles M. Brown. Images: Maureen E. Mulvihill.

When someone uses the expression “beyond the Pale,” they refer to a line of fortifications in Ireland beyond which the English considered there was no religion, no civilization, no humanity ... it was just “the wild Irish.” From the time Henry VIII re-conquered Ireland (16thC), the Irish suffered the most vicious forms of colonialism and cultural erasure: forced labor, agricultural quotas, denial of civil rights, denial of their own language and books, and continuing insults over the centuries. In the 1840s, the subsistence crop for most Irish, the potato, was devastated when a blight swept through Europe. There was always plenty of food in fertile Ireland – beef, corn, wheat, oats, barley – enough to feed the people, but the commercial appeal of foreign markets was more important to the British Crown than the starving Irish. During those tragic years, the English shamefully exported food out of Ireland. As often said, *Nature gave Ireland the Potato Famine, England gave Ireland the Great Hunger*. Over ten years, one million Irish died — up to a quarter or more of the population. Many Irish resolved that there would be a rebellion and that the yoke of British rule would be cast off. It took 50 years, but in 1916, with World War I raging, the opportunity presented itself, and Irish independence was proclaimed on Easter Monday in front of the General Post Office. The British responded vigorously, and almost 500 people died before the rebellion failed, four days later. But the 1916 Rising proved politically constructive: In 1918, Sinn Fein was founded and swept the general election of that year, reducing Irish Moderates to a minority. Sinn Fein refused to attend Parliament in London, instead declaring the Irish Free State, forming a parliament in Dublin, and beginning the building of an independent nation. In 1919, the Irish Republican Army began its guerilla war against the British; two years later, the toll taken by the IRA drove the British to broker a truce. In 1922, The Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed. The Irish Free State (the southern counties) became the independent Republic of Ireland and a self-governing dominion of the newly reconstituted Commonwealth of Nations. But Ireland was partitioned after the Rising, and Northern Ireland remains to this day under British rule. Easter 1916 was a very Irish victory: bittersweet and bloody.



Two Irish children (foreground) consider the destruction of the General Post Office. A kinswoman of Maureen's, Anna Mulvihill, worked at the GPO.



During their last visit to Ireland, Maureen E. Mulvihill's parents sent her a copy of this postcard from Dublin City. It is treasured among her family memoirs.



The Siegerson Memorial, carved by poet, painter, and sculptor Dora Siegerson, stands in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin, along with other memorials and graves of many who died during the five days of the Easter Rising.



EASTER, 1916 ~ EASTER, 2016

Remembering the 1916 Easter Rising, Dublin

THE

FLORIDA BIBLIOPHILE SOCIETY, in solidarity with global events on the centenary of Dublin's 1916 Easter Rising, honors the memory of that historic day in Irish history, and the writings and political spirit it continues to inspire. While the 1916 Dublin Insurrection against British domination of Ireland failed, with the loss of many lives and the destruction of historic property & monuments, the Rising pointed the way for peace talks. Yet, one hundred years on, the talk continues... the bloodshed continues.



Easter, 1916

William Butler Yeats

I HAVE MET THEM at close of day
 Coming with vivid faces
 From counter or desk among grey
 Eighteenth-century houses.
 I have passed with a nod of the head
 Or polite meaningless words,
 Or had lingered awhile and said
 Polite meaningless words,
 And thought before I had done
 Of a mocking tale or gibe
 To please a companion
 Around the fire at the club,
 Being certain that they and I
 But lived where motley is worn:
 All changed, changed utterly:
 A terrible beauty is born.

 Wherever green is worn,
 A terrible beauty is born.

Contributed by Maureen E. Mulvihill, FBS member & former officer.

This page is dedicated to all FBS Irish-Americans, especially [Jack Walsh](#) (1925-2014)
 and collectors Arthur Walker and Michael Bryan.



Sarasota's John D. MacDonald Centenary Celebrations in Full Swing

by Cal and Nola Branche

As part of the John D. MacDonald Tribute to his 100th birthday a committee was formed in Sarasota, and I was invited to be on the committee. A number of events have been planned, including author panels, a Mystery Tour, and the big "bash" on July 23, 2016. Two of MacDonald's grandchildren will be attending on July 23rd.

I have provided audio and video material to be used at the Sarasota libraries. For example, audio tapes or JDM discussing writing are available for listening by patrons at their leisure.

In December I gave a slide presentation to the 100 plus Sarasota librarians, and on Jan. 22, 2016, the first event was held at Selby Library where I gave pretty much the same presentation. About 200 people attended. Four days later on the 26th, at Selby, Green Flash Salvage, of which I am President, gave Tim Dorsey the 7th John D. MacDonald Writing Award for Excellence in Florida Fiction. We counted 190 in attendance. I provided a slide show which gave some background on JDM and also on Dorsey.

My wife, Nola, and I have presented two programs so far out of the six we are scheduled to give at Sarasota libraries between January and June, 2016. The program consists of a 30 minute slide show on MacDonald, and our reading from the WW2 letters of Dorothy and John MacDonald. (The program is similar to what we did for FBS a year ago.)

I/We have been very pleased with the reaction to the program. There are fans of JDM who are pleased to be able to ask questions of someone who knows a good deal about JDM (that's not bragging—I am aware of how much I do not know, of course) and Nola has had several people come up to her and tell her how pleased they were with Nola's reading of the "Dorothy" letters. And there are now "new" fans of JDM that the slide show material tends to encourage.

The feedback from the two libraries has been very favorable; each had about 50 in attendance.



Cal Branche listens with his audience to a video message from Maynard MacDonald, John's son, that opens Cal's presentation.

Nola and I were hired back in 2007 to help reorganize the 472 boxes comprising the John D. MacDonald Collection at the University of Florida Smathers Library. Included in the collection was a box of WW2 letters, totaling 373, which provided a window into the thoughts and feelings of two people separated by the war. We made copies of the letters and then digitized them so over time they will be preserved. We had to use magnifying glasses often since Dorothy wrote in such a way as to cram as much into what space she had as she could.

We both say that we learned more about JDM (and Dorothy) via the letters than we could have in any other way. And we sent all the letters to Maynard MacDonald, JDM's son, who lives in New Zealand. Maynard had delivered the box of letters to the library after the death of his mother, Dorothy, in 1989, but he had not ever read many of them, if any, so he was pleased.

"Cal, thanks. This is great - a family treasure. I am looking forward to creating a calm space, maybe not at home where it seems to be one damn thing after another, and then I will read them consecutively and take some notes as I go of feelings and memories that arise... .

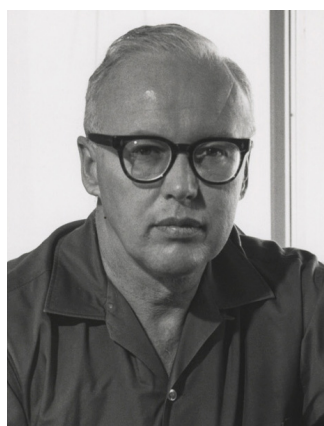
Maynard"

Letters from John D. MacDonald and Dorothy Prentiss MacDonald

Selected and introduced by Cal Branche

Among the contents of over 470 boxes of John D. MacDonald's papers were 373 letters exchanged between John and his wife Dorothy during a two-year period of the the Second World War. John was first in India and then in Ceylon. He was attached to the OSS, but he was not a spy. Dorothy wrote first, on May 12, 1943, and shortly thereafter, John sent his first letter. However, given the conditions of wartime, they did not enjoy regular postal delivery — John might get four letters at once, and then go weeks before getting another; the same was true for Dorothy. They were both good writers, but John's letters, of course, were heavily censored and may seem plainer in tone. Any details that would truly describe his war experience have been removed, and picking a letter to illustrate the war is not easy.

I have included the standard form we adopted to keep track of letters, dates, pages, etc.



Letter # 153: JDM- DPM
 Nov. 8, 1944
 From Whom: JDM
 From Where: Ceylon
 To Whom: DPM
 To Where: Utica, N.Y.
 Date Written: Nov. 8, 1944
 Date mailed: Nov. 9, 1944
 Numbered as: 153
 # Pages: 3
 Autograph/Typed: TLS
 Specify Other:
 Type:
 Envelope: Y

8 November

Dear Dordo,

I can now safely say that this is the nicest assignment I have had in the Army. I am my own CO and in charge of as nice a group of officers and enlisted men as you could want to meet. Instead of being in an isolated spot, I have a large flow of transients through here whom I have to feed, house, and keep entertained. Of course the only flaw in that is that my time is their time, particularly when they are brass. You could say then, that I have been on about fourteen hours duty for the last few weeks.

I think that I ought to tell you a bit about my room. I have a square room of medium size, with three windows. You enter at the top of a flight of stairs and the window opposite the door looks out to sea. There is no window in the wall on your left, but in the wall on your right is a window that looks up the beach. Near the door is the third window, providing a cross ventilation system that brings the breeze whipping in from the sea directly across my bed. In one corner is the piece of furniture which makes the room. An L shaped daybed of very modern design, built to fit into a corner, and covered with gay pillows. There is also a fine maple couch, a big easy chair, some modernistic lamps and a few old Burmese lacquer tables about the place. You see, it was furnished to provide a conference room where I can entertain in private conversation the boys to whom I have to talk. It makes a wonderful setup for me. The only real trouble is that I have it constantly full of people.

In as much as I no longer have any need for my woolens, I am sending them back to you in a large tin box. Also in the box is a little table for you and some odd things. I hope to get it off soon. When it arrives, cut the lock off. It is a cheap Indian lock and I have lost the key, so this is as good a way to dispose of it as any I know. I saved out some woolens, but not all.

Enclosed are some photographs taken up in Delhi at the apartment. You will probably recognize them as exceptionally poor pictures of me. I really don't look that bad. Also you will recognize Douglas. The servants in order, counting from me are Alli (No 2 boy), Kahn (No 1 boy), and Sonny (Chokra or

MacDonald Letters, continued

helper). The sashes on the uniforms are crimson. The bald headed gent is Col. Barroll. Others are Major Ken Peters and Col. John Armitage. In spite of our gay smiles that was not a happy group. Must quit for a while now.

Have just now received your 247 of the 26th. I imagine that that will be the last one you'll mail without knowing where I am. I have been a bit delinquent in correspondence lately, but merely due to the fact that my job entails certain social obligations which have kept me on the go after my normal working, or abnormal, working hours are over.

So sorry to hear about Bus, but glad that the end of him came as nicely as you state. I guess it must have been hard on all of you to watch the course of it. It all makes me think of the changes in people and circumstances and attitudes and states of mind that will have taken place before I return. I imagine that even if I arrived today, I would find sufficient changes so that there would be a fairly lengthy process of getting acquainted with everyone again.

Also received in the same mail a letter from Dorrie, the main point of interest being Bill's division meeting with stiff resistance. I am keeping my old fingers crossed, and I guess everybody in the family is doing the same thing. I would certainly hate to have anything happen to the guy. If he is around Aachen, maybe the best that could happen would be a nice clean wound that would take just long enough to heal so that they would have broken free into the German plains by the time he is returned to duty.

The most dismal part of this letter writing nowadays is that there is so damn little that I can tell you about. Maybe someday it will become possible to let you know the organization I am in. I hope so, because it isn't fair to you to be so much in the dark.

I suppose that you have read with interest the papers regarding the transfer of Uncle Joe. I imagine that the true story of that deal won't be written until well after the war is over. I wish that Uncle Joe could write it himself, as his prose style is certainly one of the best I have ever read. It is pure, clear naked effortless prose, very stark and amusing in its simplicity. I remember reading a radio that he sent out of Mitkyina to a very high ranking officer, in fact an officer wearing stars, which read as follows, "WHAT HAVEYOU BEEN DOING BESIDES SITTING ONYOUR ASS REPEAT ASS STOP." He is really a priceless guy and one of the most engaging. Everyone who has ever been intimately associated with him and was anything on the ball is strictly and definitely in love with the guy. Well, as everything turned out, the splitting up of the China from the India Burma theater has resulted in enough new rules and regulations so that I can figure myself lucky to get out when I did. If I had been a month late, it would probably have been blocked. Of course China, India, and Burma are all small time leagues and, as such, are full of small time politics. I don't know the behind-the-scenes stuff, and I probably won't until I get home and read a book about it.

MacDonald Letters, continued

I think that the best thing I can probably do for you is to get this darn letter off before I am interrupted again. It has hung around too long now as it is, and I am afraid that you will go letterless again for too long a period. It is nice to keep on receiving your mail often, and I'm just selfish enough to forget that I can't hope to get it unless I keep on writing it.

Probably the nicest thing about this here now job is the fact that there are people to talk to who are a bit above the mental equipment of a 13-year-old child. It is refreshing to find people who have more to say than the guys Bill met in the Yankee division. It makes me more than a bit homesick, since it reminds me of the Reids, Sammy et al.

Well, take care, and start praying that they now change the overseas time to eighteen months. They probably won't, I was only kidding.

All my love,

John



D-Day, June 6, 1944

Darling,

There isn't much left for me to say tonight. They've been saying it all day - King George, Gen. Eisenhower, Gen. Montgomery, the President, and hundreds of newsmen and commentators, and I've listened all day until my head is whirling, but I couldn't go to bed without saying Salaam, and telling you that we've been thinking of you all day. It's hard to say much else tho - one feels inadequate.

I've wondered when and how you first heard it, and if all the news came via BBC, and what your reactions are, now that it's here.

It didn't seem as if there was any end in view without this even started, but now, with such an auspicious start, it looks as if you might get home - before your child is a soldier, too. And that puts the crowning touch of hope and excitement on this day.

We first heard the neighbor's radio at 7 A.M., just screaming loud, and I was furious, because it had wakened me twice in the night, but at 8 when we got up and turned on our own, we felt different. It's been on all day, and there has been nothing but news and progress, and church or martial music all day. People have taken it very solemnly, very reverently and prayerfully, and I haven't heard a single word in bad taste (except Red Skelton's program tonight,) or noisy celebration or lacking in dignity.

It seemed like a good idea to spend part of the day with the family, so we invited them to dinner. Pop was busy with some officers from Rochester, and

Letter # 203 June 6, 1944
 From Whom: DPM-JDM
 From Where: Utica, N.Y.
 To Whom: JDM
 To Where: A.P.O. New York
 Date Written: June 6, 1944
 Date mailed: June 7, 1944
 Numbered as: # 203
 # Pages: 1
 Autograph/Typed: ALS
 Specify Other:
 Type: V-mail
 Envelope: Y
 No. 203

MacDonald Letters, continued

Margie playing golf, so we didn't know whether they could, until five o'clock. Margie and Nana came up for dinner and Dad came soon after. We listened to the radio all evening. Very few of the regular programs have been on, but there have been across the country programs summing up popular reaction. (Like New Year's Eve) question forums, and hours and hours of description and analysis of every detail. It's all very interesting.

I could use some mail - haven't had any since the glum letter and pictures of last week, and naturally I'm wondering how you are. We had our first rain for many days this afternoon, so tomorrow we'll drive out to see if the garden's well ???? . ????? I hope all this shortens your abroad by months.

Love, Dordo.

Letter # 205 June 8, 1944
 From Whom: DPM-JDM
 From Where: Utica, N.Y.
 To Whom: JDM
 To Where: A.P.O. New York
 Date Written: June 8, 1944
 Date mailed: June 9, 1944
 Numbered as: # 205
 # Pages: 3
 Autograph/Typed: ALS
 Specify Other:
 Type:
 Envelope: Y
 No. 205

Thursday, June 8, 1944

Dear John,

What a world! It is simply overwhelming - and even terrifying! - to stand in your own home under blue skies and green trees, and actually hear the war that's going on thousands of miles away at midnight around an Allied war-ship. A man with a microphone standing on a ship in the English Channel near France, describing the darkness, the lights, the men and ships and planes around him, while you hear German JU 88's and Messerschmitts flying low over the boat, hear flack and ack-ack and guns exploding, rockets, the gun crews yelling, a bomb exploding 150 feet astern, and actually hear the shots that brought one of the Jerries down, from a gun right next to the microphone - and did the man yell then! It's fantastic, and really out-of-this-world. I can't forget it.

Speaking of Invasion news - this morning I heard an interview with the wife of a 29-year-old paratrooper from Skaneateles, Capt. Frank Lilliman (I think), who was the first Allied soldier to set foot on French soil at the Invasion. His name was mentioned on national hookups all day, but what interested me is that he was the recruiting sergeant at Syracuse headquarters in 1940, and probably someone with whom you discussed your commission, if not actually the man who swore you into this Army. - If you and he could have seen ahead!

We took our kitchen-radio to Mrs. Jennings, of Piseco, (Florida and Fulton), who is at St. Luke's hospital recuperating from an operation - a stranger here except for Dr. Squier and the Prentisses. I'll miss it, but it didn't seem fair to have convenience take precedence over the pleasure she'll get from hearing what goes. Nothing is sacred - they just burst into any program at all at any time, with every tidbit of news.

After that we went out to the farm for a picnic supper and to plant the last of the corn. In spite of the dry weather things we planted only a week ago

MacDonald Letters, concluded

were poking through - it's so new to me that I'll never get over the surprised pleasure it gives. —Topsy's ghost still bothers us. There are still little holes she dug to lie on the cool moist earth last Tuesday-week when it was hot. A big collie came tonight, and we were glad to see him. At least it has done one thing for Penny; instead of poking dogs or kicking at them, as he did before his birthday, he is crazy about them. He's hugged every dog we've seen, on the golf course, in the country, in the streets, since Topsy died. Her eyes were more than human.

I left your camera in a phone booth Saturday ago. It has been advertised, to no avail. I'm very sorry because it was nice to have pictures of Pencil growing up. I'm sorry because it was your camera, too - and our friend, but you will want a better one after the War, and you won't miss pictures now, anyway.

We are now owners of a small, expensive, ungadged but efficient gas stove. I paid the last installment this week, thank goodness. I just took hot loaves of bread out of it, baked after we came from the country. I haven't baked any since Albany, 'til this week. Penny is getting fond of bread and sugar, too.

Sammy has escaped the draft once more. He has been invited to spend two weeks, expenses paid, deep-sea fishing off the coast of Virginia with Frank Miller. He will probably take one, then we will all go to Piseco. That will be something for Dordo — Piseco.

Considering that the other three are coming home, it seems quite logical that you refused the opportunity to do likewise. I hope that isn't the case, but if it is, that you still have time to reconsider, while the colonel is still there. I am positive that your troubles would change color unbelievably if you could leave them behind.

Remorse is bound to catch up with you eventually - don't add a lost opportunity to that.

In fact when it actually comes to bidding goodbye to the other two, you will probably feel pretty desolate and forsaken. If you can't come home, why don't you plan to take a few days leave at that time and go to the hills, or some other place, for a little change?

Your family haven't heard from you much lately. Dorrie wrote us an awfully nice letter. She is so hot she is about crazy, but likes where she lives, and sees Bill quite a lot. She isn't planning to get a job, it's too hot, so she can't stay indefinitely.

Love, Dordo.

Premier Antiquarian Book Fair in Pasadena

by William Chrisant

The Forty-ninth California International Antiquarian Book Fair was held February 12th through 14th. Held in the Pasadena Convention Center this year (it alternates from north to south California), it is the largest antiquarian book fair in the country. The convention center was large enough to allow fifteen-foot aisles and an arrangement of booths that allowed half of the dealers to enjoy corner locations. The weather was nothing less than ideal: warm but (unlike Florida) dry. The Sheraton is on the same campus as the convention center so the walk is less than a minute from the hotel to the fair. Drivers were also at hand to take visitors to the Huntington Library, and there were shuttles for those staying at slightly more distant lodgings.

The Fair is sponsored by the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America (ABAA) and the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers (ILAB) and allows only members to exhibit. Geographically, the dealers were of course dominated by the Americans, but there were about thirty from Britain, including the famous names in the trade, e.g., Maggs and Quattrich. Germans and Austrians made up the next largest block, followed by the French, but there were also Czechs, Russians, Dutch, Hungarians, Danes, and Italians.

Altogether, there were over two hundred of the best dealers in the world concentrated into one building. As such, it was an irresistible draw for collectors and institutions, many of whom flew in from all parts of the country just to shop. One of my customers was a woman who had flown in from Tulsa just to shop for suffragette material. When I said I was surprised she had travelled so far, she simply responded she'd never find that book in Oklahoma (and she was probably right).

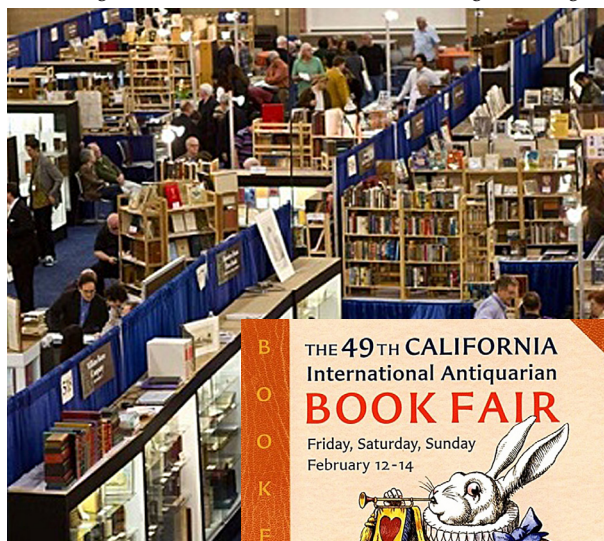
So too, the University of Virginia Library was there and happy to buy a signed copy of Dali's *Alice in Wonderland*. Alice at 150 was the theme of the fair and there was a very large exhibit of Alice books and ephemera in the convention lobby. There were also about a dozen book related exhibits including a working printing press.

All in all, a wonderful experience I hope to repeat

William Chrisant is an FBS member and owner of the Old Florida Book Shop in Ft. Lauderdale, FL.
<http://oldfloridabookshop.com/>

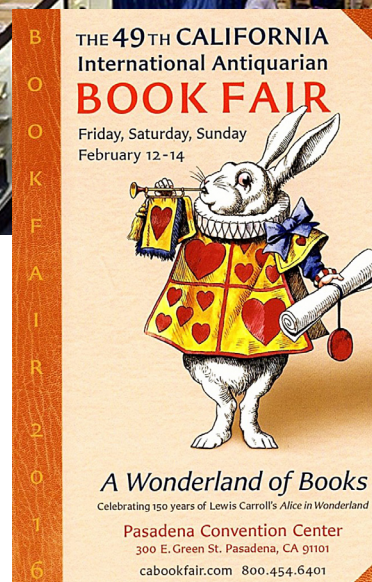


Entrance of the Pasadena Convention Center during the book fair.



Above: Overview of a recent Pasadena book fair.

Right: Poster for the 49th California International Antiquarian Book Fair.



A visitor at the book fair peruses a book suitable for Wonderland.

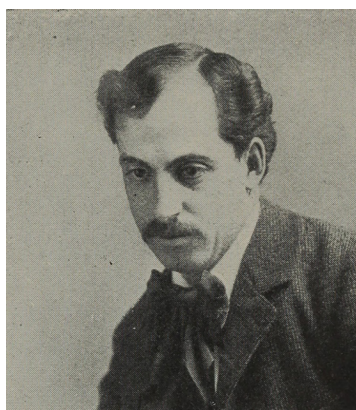


Gordon Pfeiffer Donates Will H. Bradley Collection

by Charles Brown and Lee Harrer



ordon Pfeiffer, a past president of the University of Delaware Library Associates, founder and past president of the Delaware Bibliophiles, and University of Delaware Class of 1956, has donated his extensive collection of American artist and illustrator Will H. Bradley (1868-1962) to the University of Delaware. Vice provost and May Morris University Librarian Susan Brynteson said, "Gordon Pfeiffer is a respected bibliophile, and his dedication to collecting Bradley is known throughout the antiquarian book world. The University of Delaware Library is honored to be the home of his Bradley collection."



William H. Bradley

Will H. Bradley began his career as a printer, giving him an opportunity to design borders and illustrations for a variety of publications. This was no accident; Bradley was looking to become an artist when he went into printing. He was influenced by the Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts movements, prominent in Europe during the early

years of his career. Influences of William Morris, Aubrey Beardsley, James McNeill Whistler, Alphonse Mucha, and others can be seen in his work. However, Bradley synthesized these influences with a bold new approach to type and an extensive knowledge of printing techniques to create a distinctive style and a new look for American graphics. Bradley's work was so desirable that he became the highest paid American artist of the early 20th century, remaining active and influential until his death in 1962.

In addition to the many publications that he contributed to, Bradley authored a number of books, including children's books. In fact, the lengthy list of Bradley works, spanning seven decades, presents a

Gordon A. Pfeiffer has been a member of FBS since the early 1990s. He was a featured speaker in the 1994-1995 FBS season.

[1] Nicholas A. Basbanes. *Among the Gently Mad: Strategies and Perspectives for the Book-Hunter in the 21st Century*. Henry Holt and Co. 2002.

challenge to any collector. Pfeiffer's collection draws extensively from Bradley's entire career, including books, periodicals, prints, ephemera, and artifacts.

Bradley as a subject particularly suits Pfeiffer, who is interested in a wide variety of ephemera and has spent many hours at flea markets, book and ephemera shows, and antique shops looking for items that interest him.

For example, he amassed a significant collection – over 1,000 pieces – of Delaware trade cards, forerunners to the modern business card, which he donated to the University of Delaware Library in 2014. Asked about the origins of his wide-ranging interests, Pfeiffer said, "As a boy I started as coin collector, but my mother was a librarian and I have always had books in my life...." [1]

Pfeiffer has also written about his interests. In 1991, he edited *An Anthology of Delaware Papermaking* (Bird & Bull Press; edition of 200). Delaware mills were a source of paper for some of America's finest printers and so figure importantly into the history of fine press production in America. In 2002, with Nathaniel Puffer, he published *The Delaware Bibliophiles, 1977-2002, A History & Anthology* (Delaware Bibliophiles, edition of 250), which treats subjects important to book and printing arts in Delaware, including Benjamin Franklin, who printed Delaware's first currency.

Pfeiffer's Bradley donation was celebrated at the University of Delaware Library by an exhibition and a presentation at the University of Delaware Morris Library. The exhibition, "Will H. Bradley, An American Artist: Selections from the Gordon A. Pfeiffer Collection," was on display during fall 2015. The collection contains so many items that only a selection could be exhibited in the available space. The presentation was held on Wednesday, September 30, 2015, and featured Pfeiffer and Dr. Paul Shaw, noted calligrapher and historian of graphic design. The University of Delaware Library has created an [online version of the exhibition](#).

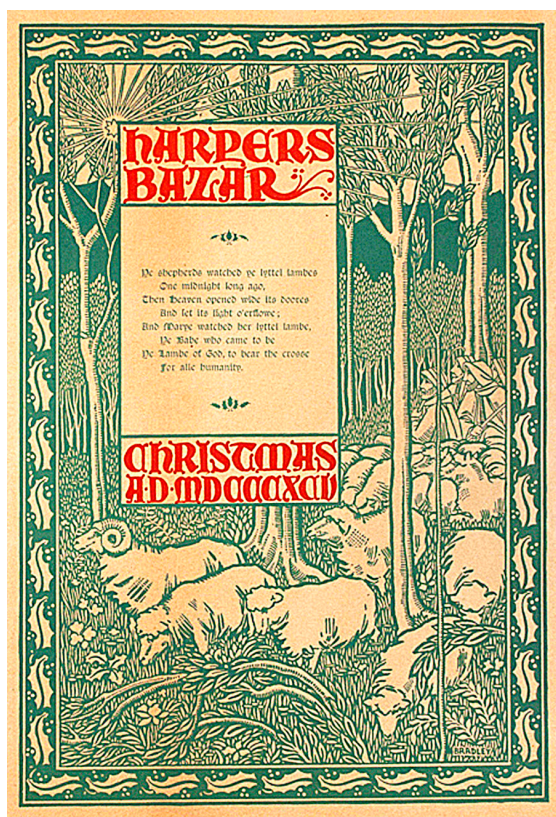


Gordon A. Pfeiffer

Gordon Pfeiffer Donates Will H. Bradley Collection, concluded

Top left: Bradley's bold 1894 cover for *The Chap-Book*, titled *The Twins*, is regarded as the first American Art Nouveau Poster. It draws on the style of Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898).

Bottom left: This cover for *Harper's Bazaar* in the 1890s recalls the composition of William Morris.



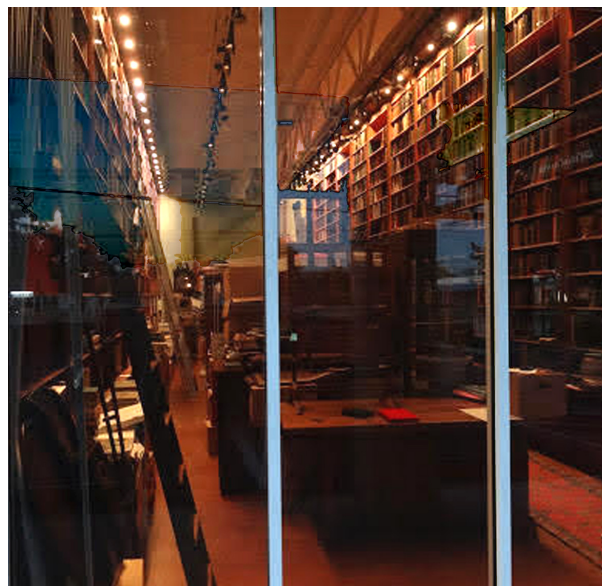
Top right: This poster for the Historical Musical Exhibition in 1902 draws on American print forms that Bradley reinterpreted. It will remind some readers of Maxfield Parrish, of whom Bradley was an admirer.



Bottom right: This poster for Victor Bicycles draws on the French style of Art Nouveau. Bradley produced a great number of both advertising and art posters, an art form that was in its ascendancy in the late 19th/early 20th centuries — a popularity that continues to this day.



This month, I interviewed the southernmost member of the Florida Bibliophile Society, William Chrisant, proprietor of [The Old Florida Book Shop](#). His bookstore is located in a strip mall on Griffin Road in Fort Lauderdale. The first time I peered through his store windows I... Here! You take a look!



FBS Member William Chrisant

interviewed by Jerry Morris

Jerry Morris: William, tell us a little bit about yourself, your family, your book business, and how you ended up in Florida.

William Chrisant: I was born in Akron, Ohio, received a degree in Ancient History & Classics from University of Akron, married along the way (to a librarian), and had a beautiful daughter who's now a veterinarian. While in grad school, my interests became so obscure that I found myself ordering books from Blackwell's in Oxford and Harrassovits in Wiesbaden for my studies. As I'd become expert in my field, I was able to adjudge pertinent books and began ordering titles in multiples, knowing the print runs were exceptionally small and anticipating future demands.



William Chrisant, then

Simultaneous to this, I attended a local auction which had advertised the sale of a science fiction collection. The auctioneer had separated the books into boxes, and the rules allowed the highest bidder to choose whichever box(es) he wanted. I won first choice, which netted me three boxes of Arkham & Fantasy Press editions, which quickly taught me (1) competition was modest (I outbid two "dealers" in the audience) and (2) I could further augment my modest stipend as a classics teaching assistant.

Selling books was another matter. Back in the eighties, the only avenues open to those without stores was (1) selling to those with stores or (2) sell through Antiquarian Bookman (AB). AB was an extremely (to me) boring publication that listed all the books wanted by various dealers. There was no search engine so one had to plow through the entire booklet in the hopes of finding an ad for your particular title or at least a generic ad for the genre. I didn't find too much satisfaction in that venue and so opened my own little "store" in an antique shop's side room at a modest \$75 a month. This gave me instant access to customers as well as an introduction to the world of antiques. Things turned out well. I soon rented a much larger space in an old schoolhouse and mixed antiques with books. I was again greeted with success and opened a shop in the antiques district of Cleveland and then in Shaker Heights with a 5,000-sq.-ft. store in one of the wealthiest communities in America. In all my stores, I was miraculously blessed with the very best employees: honest, intelligent, and industrious.

At this point, I was approached by an Internet start-up auction house, which proposed buying my entire stock (albeit half in exchange for their stock) for auction. This was an agonizing decision inasmuch as the store was somewhat of an institution, but with the prodding of my new wife (who said I wasn't home enough) I accepted. This was the year 2000 and shortly before the Internet bubble burst so I saw \$500,000 of my payment for the store evaporate.

At this point my wife was offered a position in Philadelphia so (being now somewhat without

An Interview With William Chrisant, continued

portfolio) I left Cleveland for the glamor of the East Coast. Here, I opened a shop on Locust Street but spent most of my time attending auctions and enjoying the city. Once again my wife (who must be part Gypsy) decided to move; this time to Charlottesville, Virginia, as it was (at the time) deemed to be one of the best in the country for raising children (of which we now had two). After months of refusing to leave Philadelphia, I finally gave up my shop and moved some 20,000 books to Virginia. No sooner had I established a shop in that very bookish city, but my wife again decided to move. This time to Hollywood, Florida. Again, I demurred and once again closed my bookshop and moved to Florida, where I built yet another shop. After all the debilitating moves, I was restricted by what I could afford so I chose a storefront with high ceilings so I could take advantage of all the space I was renting. As such, I built bookcases 16 feet high and nearly 100 feet long. I also made them two feet deep so I could double-

(or even triple-) shelf the books.

JM: I've visited your book shop and was overwhelmed with all the genres of books you have to offer. What are your specialties?

WC: My specialties are my loves.

(1) Interesting illustrated books, fine bindings, fine paper, fine printing. Ideally, all of

these traits in one

volume, so say a hand-colored Grandville *Autre Monde* or Rowlandson's *Dr. Syntax* in an exquisite binding. (2) Signed pieces of historic consequence, so say a Jefferson, or Washington, or Franklin signed document. (3) Antique maps. Books in my book shop translate into the same, so lots of books on the arts and lots of history, with a large offering of bindings.

JM: What is the price range of your stock? And your antiquarian stock?



Inside the Old Florida Book Shop

WC: The shop's price range is typically \$20 to \$200, while my antiquarian stock goes from say \$200 on up to (typically) the mid five digits.

JM: On your website, oldfloridabookshop.com, you state "None of our store stock is (or has ever been) online." However, book lovers can search some of your antiquarian books on abaa.org and on your affiliate website, virginiabookshop.com. I have found a few gems in your store stock and wistfully passed up a few more. Are you trying to entice book lovers to come look at your store stock firsthand by not advertising it online?

WC: It's not so much an intentional enticement. It's just that I haven't had the time to catalog anything at the store. My days are occupied with non-shop Internet sales (to pay the shop rent) so I just haven't had time to put the store stock online.

JM: I noticed on one of my visits to your book shop that you have at least one ephemera drawer. What are your thoughts about ephemera?

WC: Ephemera is (in my opinion) the last frontier for booksellers. It's interesting to note that's the first question I'm usually asked by dealers who visit the shop. Competing in the traditional book market has been so polluted by ABE and the like that it's difficult for a legitimate dealer to compete with poorly (and/or misleadingly) described books online. As such everyone is looking for the unique piece (usually of ephemera) they can sell to a collector or institution. Even printed ephemera is surprisingly rare. Consider a *Vogue* magazine printed in the twenties at a run of a quarter



William Chrisant, now

An Interview With William Chrisant, concluded

million copies every two weeks (probably more than all best sellers combined) yet try to find just one copy.

JM: I know you do book fairs, especially the Florida ones. Which other book fairs do you regularly attend?

WC: I really don't attend many fairs. In many cases for me, it's a matter of ancillary benefits, e.g., a brother in Los Angeles, friends in Ohio, or the thrill of London or Budapest.

JM: Speaking of book fairs, how do you decide what stock to bring? Do you use a theme? Bring what's currently popular?

WC: I take (1) works relevant to the area, (2) books/ephemera of trendy interest, e.g., (today) China, and (3) things that interest me (regardless of their reception). In all cases, I travel light, taking just enough to have a presence.

JM: For years, Fort Lauderdale was home to the Fontenada Society, a group of book lovers who met at

the Broward County Main Library. Unfortunately, the Fontenada Society folded several years ago. Have you thought of starting a "Southern Chapter" of the Florida Bibliophile Society? Or even a new book society based in the Miami/Fort Lauderdale area? Do you want prospective members to contact you?

WC: I am desperate to reconstruct or resurrect a Fontenada type Society as a part of FBS. Florida is now the third largest state in America, but its bibliophilic ranking is sorrowful. There are, for example, currently 76 ABAA (American Antiquarian Booksellers' Association) members in New York State (now the fourth largest state); there are but 5 in all of Florida!!

I would enthusiastically encourage anyone in the south Florida area to contact either myself or the FBS to (re)vitalize the dormant South Florida book community.

JM: Thanks for the interview, William. Okay, all you book lovers in South Florida. William is waiting to hear from you! Just stop in The Old Florida Book Shop and talk to him. And while you're at it, take a look see at some of his books from the inside!

**Pat Conroy, 1946–2016**

"My wound is geography," begins the prologue of Pat Conroy's best known novel, *The Prince of Tides*. Born in South Carolina's Low Country, Conroy was raised in a

complex, abusive home in which he, as the oldest of seven, took some of the cruelest treatment from his Marine father. As a military family, they moved often, becoming more bonded and insular. When Conroy was fifteen, the family settled in Beaufort, SC. Conroy thrived on the stability, on his role on the high school basketball team, and on the literature he began to discover. He was encouraged to write. He said that writing was essential for him, a way of "naming the demon," but he did not find it therapeutic or healing. "None of it has given me pleasure," was his summation. Conroy was sent to The Citadel, where he majored in English and began to write seriously.

His novels, such as *The Water Is Wide*, *The Great Santini*, *The Lords of Discipline*, and *The Prince of Tides*, sometimes straddled the line between fiction and nonfiction, but each one explored a chapter in his life — his career as a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse on Daufuskie Island in *The Water Is Wide*, his home life with an abusive father in *The Great Santini*, and his memories of The Citadel in *The Lords of Discipline*. His work placed him among the most prominent and successful Southern writers; several of his books were made into successful movies. Conroy made the places and experiences of his tumultuous life vivid in his books and characters — often to horror of family members who found themselves laid bare in his books. Conroy said that he came from a line of great storytellers, and he grew up telling stories. He once told his editor that if there were ten words for something, he would use all ten, and her job was to take them out. What some found excessive in his prose, other found rich, deeply emotional, and reflective of their life experiences.



Harper Lee, 1926–2016

It has been said that everyone has at least one book in them. In Harper Lee's case, that one book was the timely and remarkable *To Kill A Mockingbird*, published in 1960, awarded the Pulitzer in 1961, filmed in 1962, and nominated for eight Academy Awards, winning three. Since that time, the book has remained a fixture on high school and college reading lists. Widely known, loved, and admired, the book and the film hold special places in American fiction and culture.

Lee never published another book. In the mid 1960s, she went to Kansas with her childhood friend Truman Capote to help him research the events that would become *In Cold Blood*. (Capote was the basis of the neighbor child Dill in *To Kill A Mockingbird*.) In the next two decades, Lee began and put aside three books.

To Kill a Mockingbird arrived at a pivotal moment in modern American history, a ten-year period beginning in 1954 with *Brown v. Board of Education*, which decided that separate was inherently unequal, initiating school desegregation, and leading up to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These were the formative years of the Civil Rights Movement, of Rosa Parks, Emmitt Till, the formation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and many other events. The Civil Rights movement continuously confronted obstacles and attacks — both legal and physical.

The story in Lee's novel is set 30 years before these events, in effect becoming an allegory of the fight for civil rights. The complex network of beliefs and attitudes in the white community were portrayed through the characters of the novel. The courage of Atticus, selected by the American Film Institute as the greatest American film hero of the 20th century, stood out all the more in the face of a culture in which even sympathetic whites were intimidated into silence and inaction. Blacks were portrayed as long-suffering and oppressed, maintaining a focus for readers and viewers on attitudes in the white community.

Lee had attended the University of Alabama in the late 1940s. She was well known there as the editor

of a satirical campus newspaper. She studied law, but left school one semester before finishing her degree to pursue writing.

In 1949, she moved to New York City. She worked as an airline reservation agent, but in her spare time, she wrote. Her frustration at being forced to write in her spare time must have been obvious; in December 1956, Lee's friends contributed to a gift of one year's salary so she could spend the year writing.

In 1957, Lee delivered a manuscript to her publisher. The book was assigned to editor Tay Hohoff, who immediately recognized Lee's gifts and the manuscript's needs. Hohoff and Lee worked back and forth over many drafts. Lee recalled that through this process, she gained a deeper understanding of writing and confidence. ¶



This Month's Writers and Contributors

Many thanks to those who contributed to this month's newsletter!

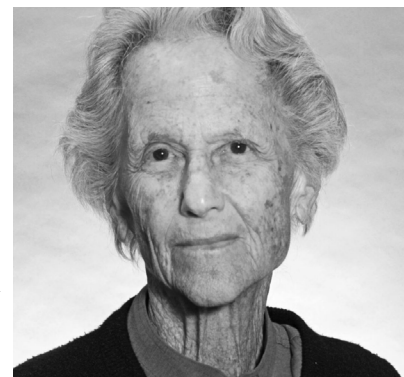
Cal Branche	Lee Harrer
Nola Branche	Jerry Morris
BonSue Brandvik	Maureen Mulvihill
William Chrisant	Carl Nudi

Have an idea for an article for *The Florida Bibliophile*? Contact Charles Brown, cmbrown@atlantic.net, to submit or for assistance in preparing your article. ¶

Elizabeth Eisenstein, 1923–2016

In “[Remembering Elizabeth Eisenstein](#),” writer and letterpress printer Alix Christie shares this remarkable idea: “Nowadays, panel after panel of historians rank the invention of printing as mankind’s most important invention since the wheel. But when Betty Eisenstein advanced that idea nearly thirty years ago, no one had thought of it before.” Her seminal work, “The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe,” (2 vol., Cambridge) appeared in 1979 and remains relevant today. She approached invention of printing as Marshall McLuhan had approached modern media, looking at how the appearance of new technology changed human culture. McLuhan, an influential communications theorist, had applied this idea to printing in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962). In McLuhan’s book, Eisenstein, an accomplished historian, saw a great idea wrapped in an implausible intellectual

process. Eisenstein took up the question of how the new technology of printing changed society and individuals. She found studies of the Medieval scribes and Renaissance writers, but little that focused on the watershed years after the introduction of printing. Just as the speed and ubiquity of electronic communication has changed the world of the last 20 years, Eisenstein showed printing’s transformational impact on the science, politics, and religion of the 15th century, creating many of the norms of the modern world. Her work, with its solid grounding in historical practice, has been very influential and is credited with creating the foundation for the many programs of study in books and print culture that exist in so many institutions today.



Umberto Eco, 1932–2016

Many came to know Umberto Eco through his bestselling 1980 mystery novel *The Name of the Rose*. Even more made his acquaintance when the book

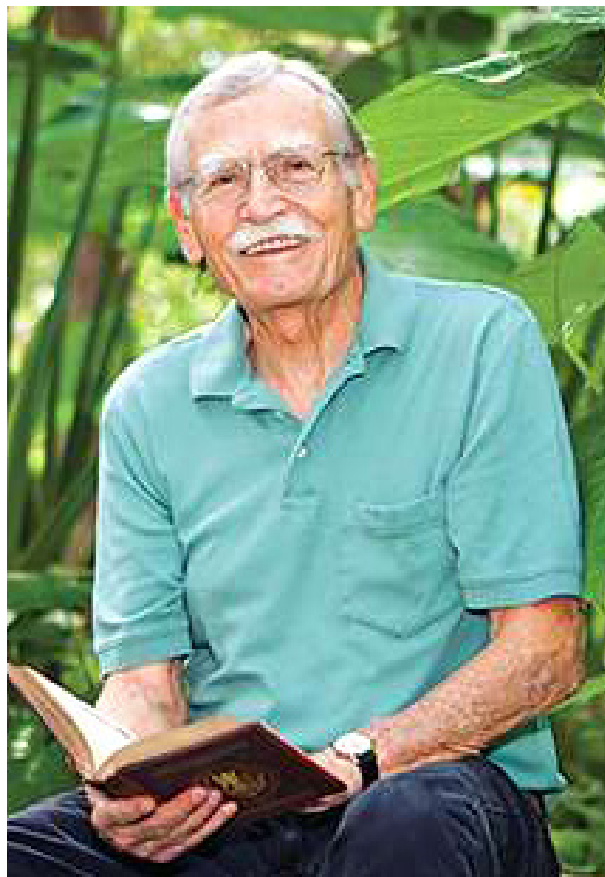
became a film in 1986. The book draws on Eco’s education in medieval philosophy in literature, but it also draws on the subject which received most of his professional attention, semiotics. Briefly, semiotics is the study of how signs acquire meaning. The answer may seem obvious if the sign is a word or a stop sign, but perhaps less obvious if we ask how the peace symbol acquired its meaning and its cultural significance, which continues 50 years after it first became common. The process of assigning meaning is fundamental to how language works. Eco’s contributions to semiotics over his 60-year career were significant, including the publication of 20 nonfiction books. Jonathan Kandell, writing in the

New York Times described Eco’s profession interest: “Mr. Eco sought to interpret cultures through their signs and symbols – words, religious icons, banners, clothing, musical scores, even cartoons.” Just as Eco drew on popular culture – *Casablanca*, *Superman*, *Peanuts* – as a subject of academic study, he also drew on his academic interests in creating his novels. University of Birmingham professor David Lodge that Eco was the first author to truly grasp the concept of postmodernism, making “difficult material accessible through playfulness or splicing together popular and high culture.”

Eco was an avid collector of books, and his personal library (divided between two homes) numbered around 50,000. He divided visitors to his library into two groups: those who immediately asked, “How many of these have you read?” (which made him cringe) and those that recognized his collection as a resource and reference tool that supported his academic and creative life.



Upcoming Events



March 2016

Peter Meinke, Poet Laureate of Florida

Sunday, March 20, 2016, 1:30 p.m.

Semionle Community Library
9200 113th St N, Seminole, FL

Public Event

Peter Meinke is in the second of a three-year term as Florida's Poet Laureate. Meinke has published two children's books, a monograph on the poet Howard Nemerov, and eight poetry chapbooks; a bilingual collection of poems, *Maples & Orange Trees*, was published in Russia in 2005. Peter will discuss his work and read some of his poems. In addition, he will have books for sale and will be available for signing.



April 2016

FBS Road Trip: Gainesville Friends of the Library Spring Book Sale, April 16-20, 2016

FBS members are planning a little getaway to north central Florida, drawn irresistibly to the 500,000 books and more on sale during the five days of the Alachua County Friends of the Library Book Sale. From the Collector's Corner, where the rare and unusual is on sale to books on every subject, vinyl records, dvds, VHS tapes, comics... there is something for everyone at this sale, the largest of its kind in Florida.

Gainesville is home to the University of Florida, the Harn Museum of Art, the Maguire Butterfly Center, the Florida State Museum of Natural History, the Hippodrome State Theatre, and more. As a college town, Gainesville has plenty of restaurants, from national chains to local establishments with cuisine from all over the world.



Florida Book Events Calendar

Know about any events of interest to book lovers? Send corrections and additions to Charles Brown, cmbrown@atlantic.net

LIBRARY BOOK SALES

For the numerous library book sales around the state, visit Florida Library Book Sales:
<http://www.booksalefinder.com/FL.html#X676>.

FLORIDA BOOK EVENTS

2 0 1 6

M A R C H

March 5, 2016, 8:15 am to 1:30 pm

BookMania! Jensen Beach

(www.libraryfoundationmc.org/BookMania-2015-.html)

March 5, 2016 - 6 pm

Literary Feast, Fort Lauderdale (est. 1989)

(www.bplfoundation.org/literary-feast)

March 11-13, 2016

Florida Antiquarian Book Fair (est. 1981)

(floridabooksellers.com/bookfair.html)

March 19, 2016

Southwest Florida Reading Festival

(www.readfest.org/)

March 25, 2016

Tampa Writers Conference, Tampa, FL

(floridawritingworkshops.com/)

March 26, 2016

Fort Lauderdale Conference for Writers,

Ft. Lauderdale, FL

(floridawritingworkshops.com/)

A P R I L

[no 2016 date yet]

Children's BookFest, Fort Lauderdale, FL

April 1-30, 2016

O, Miami Poetry Festival, Miami, Florida

(<http://www.omiami.org/>)

April 8, 2016

Ocala Storytelling Festival, Arola

April 8-10, 2016

University of Florida Conference on Comics and Graphic Novels, Gainesville, FL (est. 2002)

(www.english.ufl.edu/comics/conference.shtml)

April 8-10, 2016

Word of South Festival, Tallahassee, Florida

(<http://www.wordofsouthfestival.com/>)

April 16, 2016

Tampa-Hillsborough Storytelling Festival, Tampa (est. 1980)

(tampastory.org/category/2016-festival/)

April 16-20, 2016

Friends of the Library Book Sale, Gainesville (est. 1954)

(folaclld.org/)

M A Y

May 20-22, 2016

Jacksonville Friends of the Library Warehouse Book Sale

(fjpl.info/?page_id=240)

J U N E

June 15-19, 2016

Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies 2016 Rare Book and Manuscript Tour, Host: The Book Club of California, San Francisco, CA

(<http://www.fabsocieties.org/meeting.html>)

J U L Y

July 1-4, 2016

Florida Supercon, Miami, Florida
(<http://floridasupercon.com/>)

July 23, 2016

John D. MacDonald Centenary Birthday Celebration

(www.jdmhomepage.org)

Florida Book Events Calendar, concluded

A U G U S T

August 7-9, 2016

Tampa Bay Comic Con, Tampa, FL
(<http://www.tampabaycomiccon.com/>)

S E P T E M B E R

September 23-25, 2016

Valencia College's Winter Park Writers Festival
(winterparkwritersfestival.weebly.com/)

September 24, 2016

Tallahassee Writers Conference & Book Fair, Tallahassee, Florida
(<https://twa.wildapricot.org/>)

September 26, 2016

Florida Heritage Book Festival and Writers Conference, St. Augustine, Florida
(fhbookfest.com/)

O C T O B E R

[no 2016 date yet]

36th Annual Berrin Family Jewish Book Festival & Women's Day Luncheon, Miami, FL

Florida Writer's Conference
(floridawriters.net/conferences/florida-writers-conference/)

Jewish Book Festival, Jacksonville, FL

WasabiCon, Jacksonville, FL
(<http://www.wasabicon.com/>)

October 8 – December 3, 2015

35th Annual Berrin Family Jewish Book Festival & Women's Day Luncheon, Miami, FL
(<http://www.alperjcc.org/artsculture/book-festival/>)

October 22-26, 2016

Friends of the Library Book Sale, Gainesville (est. 1954)
(folaclid.org/)

N O V E M B E R

[no 2016 date yet]

Festival of Reading, St. Petersburg
(www.tampabay.com/expos/festival-of-reading/index.page)

November 5-8, 2016

Sanibel Island Writers Conference
(www.fgcu.edu/siwc/)

November 15-22, 2016

Miami Book Fair
(miamibookfair.com/)

D E C E M B E R

[no 2016 date yet]

INK Miami
(www.inkartfair.com/about.html)

2 0 1 7

J A N U A R Y

(no events found)

F E B R U A R Y

(no 2017 date yet)

Amelia Island Book Festival, Fernandina Beach, FL
(<http://www.ameliaislandbookfestival.org/>)

Charlotte Harbor Book Festival, Punta Gorda, FL
(<http://charlotteharborbookfestival.weebly.com/>)



Florida Bibliophile Society, 2015-2016 Season



September 20 • Kick-off meeting – New officers were introduced; the year's events were presented; organizational issues were discussed.

October 18 • Florence M. Turcotte, Literary Manuscripts Archivist and curator, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Papers, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville, spoke about Rawlings life and the topic of her forthcoming book, *Rawlings and the moonshine culture* she found when she moved to Florida in 1928.

November 15 • Patti Wilson Byars spoke about her book *Separate Fountains*, which tells about growing up in the 1940s and 1950s in Jonesboro, Georgia. *Separate Fountains* is a compelling picture of life in a small southern town wrestling with the post-war period, with its traditions, and with the Ku Klux Klan. (Seminole Community Library, Seminole FL)

November 23 • Rebecca Rego Barry joined members of the Florida Bibliophile Society for dinner and a pre-release book signing. Barry is editor of *Fine Books & Collections* magazine. Her book, *Rare Books Uncovered: True Stories of Fantastic Finds in Unlikely Places*, was published by Voyageur Press on December 1, 2015. It has been likened to "Antiques Roadshow," but devoted entirely to antiquarian books and manuscripts. Barry interviewed more than fifty collectors, booksellers, librarians, and other "finders" about their best book find. Among her interviewees, FBS's own Jerry Morris. A special keepsake was given to all attendees.

December 20 • FBS Holiday Party. The holiday gala you don't want to miss! At the home of Joan Sackheim. Details are elsewhere in this newsletter.

January 17 • Friedrich "Fritz" Thiel's distinguished academic career in German literature has garnered many honors both in the U.S. and Germany. Thiel is the author of many works and an avid book collector. Thiel will speak about the Dutch language and its relationship to German and English vocabularies. This presentation was well received at the Rowfant Club of Cleveland.

February 21 • BonSue Brandvik is an author and preservationist whose life has become entwined with the historic Belleview Biltmore Hotel. Its structure is mostly gone, but the hotel lives on in Brandvik's work, in which guests of the hotel face the challenges of their lives with the help of guests from the past. (Kelce-MacDonald Library, University of Tampa)

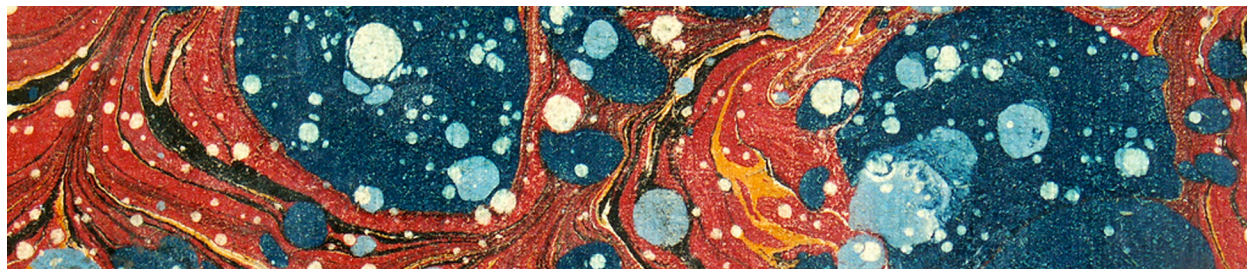
March 20 • Peter Meinke is in the second of a three-year term as Florida's Poet Laureate. Meinke has published two children's books, a monograph on poet Howard Nemerov, and eight poetry chapbooks; a bilingual collection of poems, *Maples & Orange Trees*, was published in Russia in 2005. Meinke will discuss his work and read some of his poems. Also, he will have books for sale and will be available for signing.

April 15-17 • FBS members and guests will have an "away" event, traveling to Gainesville for its semiannual **Friends of the Library Book Sale**, the largest of its kind in Florida, offering over 500,000 books in every imaginable category. Most books on the main floor are priced at \$4.00 and less. In the, "Collector's Corner," rarer and more collectible books are offered.

May 15 • Annual Florida Bibliophile Society Banquet. Our guest speaker will be Colette Bancroft, Book Editor of the *Tampa Bay Times*. (Tampa Bay History Center)



Endpaper • So Many Books, So Little Time!



One of the great pleasures of bibliophilia is the endless discovery. New authors, new meanings found in old authors, new subjects, new formats, new illustrators: the list could go on and on – there are new delights around every corner. And of course, I mean every corner of my house. A bookseller friend of mine once told me that you buy books until you have no more room and then you open a book store. I admit to a bit of a shelving crisis, but how can that be allowed to stop the discovering? It would be wrong!

While the death of Umberto Eco represents the loss of truly remarkable intellect, something I discovered while researching the brief piece on Eco in this month's newsletter heartened me: I learned about the value of an unread book. I had long suspected this value, but another comrade-in-arms is always welcome. And to have this point of view from such a high authority – priceless!

Nassim Nicholas Taleb, author of *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, cites Eco's library – he

refers to it as an antilibrary, a collection of books one has not read, books which have expectations of their owner, books that offer new fields of knowledge, new words, new eloquence... a collection that reflects a certain kind of mind:

"The library should contain as much of what you do not know as your financial means, mortgage rates, and the currently tight real-estate market allows you to put there. You will accumulate more knowledge and more books as you grow older, and the growing number of unread books on the shelves will look at you menacingly. Indeed, the more you know, the larger the rows of unread books."

These are especially valuable insights on the eve of the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair, during which bibliophiles will practice what Eco excelled at and what Taleb preaches. My advice to you: Be fearless!

See you at the book ~~store~~ fair! — Charles



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The Florida Bibliophile Society

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