

The Florida Bibliophile

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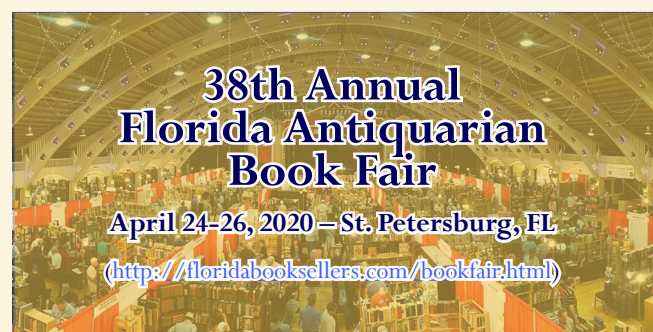
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Deadline for the April newsletter is Apr. 2, 2020.
See page 20 for details.

Membership in the Fellowship of American
Bibliophilic Societies is included with your
FBS membership. The FABS newsletter is now
electronic as well as in print. Access a PDF of
the Fall 2019 FABS Journal [here](#).



Mark Harris holds up a Spiderman comic book and explains grading systems and the value of sealed and graded comic books.



Florida Bibliophile Society
A community of book lovers

Minutes of the Florida Bibliophile Society Meeting, February 16, 2020

Gary Simons, FBS Secretary

President Jerry Morris opened the meeting reminding everyone that our March meeting would be an “open mike” event. He issued a “last call” for participants for the Prospective FBS Fellowship of American Bibliophilic societies (FABS) tour scheduled for this April. Lastly, Jerry reported on the successful February 8th FBS visit to Mike Slicker’s Lighthouse Books in Dade City.

The Four Ages of Modern Comics

Next, Jerry turned the meeting over to FBS member Shannon Schane, who introduced our speaker, her husband, Mark Harris. Mark’s life-long love of comic books began as early as age 8, when he visited his grandmother in the summer and went to the comic book section of the local drug store!



Young Mark proudly displays a birthday cake featuring Spider-man.

Building upon his wife’s introduction, Mark began with a self-described “embarrassing” picture of himself at age 9 or 10 holding a Spider-man birthday cake. He told us that the title of his talk, “The Complete History of Comics in 30 Minutes or Less,” was overly

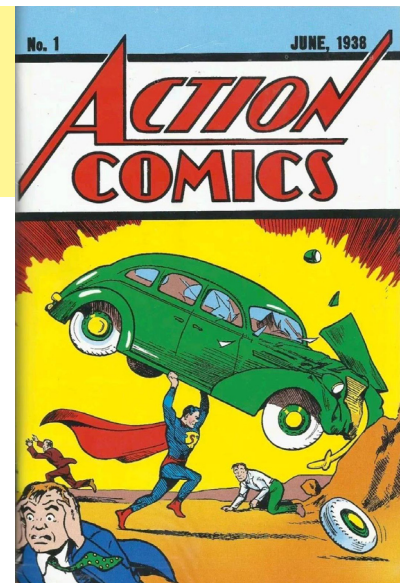
ambitious – it would take longer than that. But as an enthusiastic comic book collector of long standing, he would discuss some of the key turning points and developments in American superhero comic book history. That history is conventionally divided into a Golden Age (1938–1956/1960), a Silver Age (1956/1960–1970/1973), a Bronze Age (1970/1973–1984), and a Modern Age (or Dark Age) reaching to the present day.

The Golden Age began with the publication of *Action Comics* #1 in 1938 – it cost 10 cents. That comic book

was an anthology with thirteen pages devoted to Superman, a brainchild of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, who were paid \$130 for their intellectual rights. This began the rush of superhero comics. Just one year later, in 1939, Batman, created

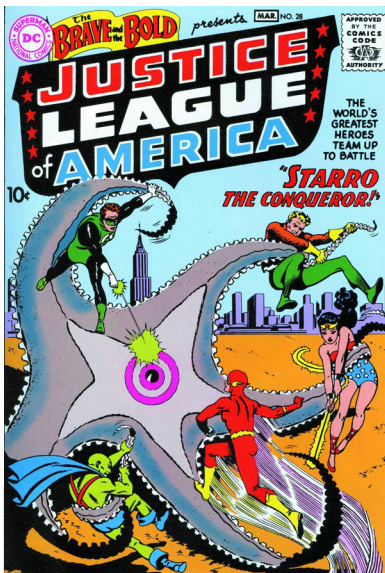
by Bob Kane and Bill Finger, was introduced in *Detective Comics* #27 (at his introduction, Batman lacked the yellow oval on his costume, which was introduced later for trademark purposes). Other superhero comic books followed quickly: *Marvel Comics* #1 (1939) introduced the Human Torch and Submariner; *DC Comics* (1940) introduced The Flash and Green Lantern; *All Star Comics* #3 (1940) debuted the first super team, the “Justice Society of America”; and the Nazi fighter Captain America was created by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby in 1941.

In the 1950s, comic books took a new turn, as EC Comics introduced horror comics (with stories like “Zombie Terror”). But these new comics produced a backlash as some blamed them for societal problems. In 1954, Senate hearings were held on the supposed failings of these comics, the alleged “seduction of the innocent.” As a result a Comics Code Authority, or



The archetypal superhero, Superman, was created in 1932 by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. The character first appeared in a short story, but Siegel and Shuster’s many efforts to publish a newspaper strip and then comic book were unsuccessful until Jack Leibowitz, publisher of *Detective Comics* (1937–2011, 2016–present), accepted a 13-page story for the first issue of *Action Comics* in April 1938. Reader response to Superman was very positive. The following year, *Detective Comics* itself would launch a character named Batman. The publisher of *Detective Comics* and *Action Comics*, National Applied Publications, began branding its comic with the initials “DC,” based on its flagship publication in 1940. DC later became the company name and one of the top players, along with Marvel Comics, in the multibillion-dollar comics and movie adaptation markets. Super, indeed.

February Minutes, continued



After World War II, superheroes in comics began to be replaced by crime, horror, and romance. In the mid-1950s, questions were raised about the influence of this literature on American youth and was used as an explanation for rising juvenile delinquency. Books were published; congressional hearings were held. In 1954, publishers implemented the Comics Code Authority to regulate comic content. In response, comics publishers returned to superheroes as their main theme. This revival of the Golden Age heroes was eventually called the Silver Age. In search of new stories and new ideas, writers and artists for the major comics companies created new heroes with exotic origins and powers, such as *The Incredible Hulk* and *the Silver Surfer*. In the shadow of the Cold War and the Vietnam War, superheroes teamed up to fight evil in comic books like *Justice League of America* and *the X-Men*.

CCA, was established whose stamp on a comic book guaranteed its “purity” and suitability – no sex, no dealing with adult themes such as divorce, etc. Consequently, fifteen comic book publishers went out of business.

The Silver Age saw the development of new combinations and more human superheroes. In 1960,

Brave and the Bold #28, by DC Comics, introduced a grouping familiar to contemporary movie goers, the “Justice League of America.” And in 1961, in *The Flash* #123, DC reintroduced some of its heroes and endowed plot lines with more complexity: there were now two Flashes, an alternative concept Earth II, and evil characters on Earth III.

Stan Lee (whose actual name is Stanley Lieber) revolutionized superhero comics. Working with

Jack Kirby in 1961, he created *Fantastic Four* #1, which humanized superheroes as characters with real problems and natural foibles, fighting and joking with each other. In 1962’s *Amazing Fantasy* #15, he introduced the phrase “with great power comes great responsibility,” which has become a defining aspect of Spider-man. Spider-man was a superhero, but readers could identify with him, as he had money problems and girlfriend problems, just as they did. And in 1966’s

Fantastic Four #52, Jack Kirby created the first black superhero, Black Panther.

In 1966, the ABC television network, wanting to copy NBC’s highly successful *Man from U.N.C.L.E.* television show, introduced the *Batman* TV show, with two half-hour episodes per week. The show was a runaway hit, but it also added a new element as TV made Batman campy.

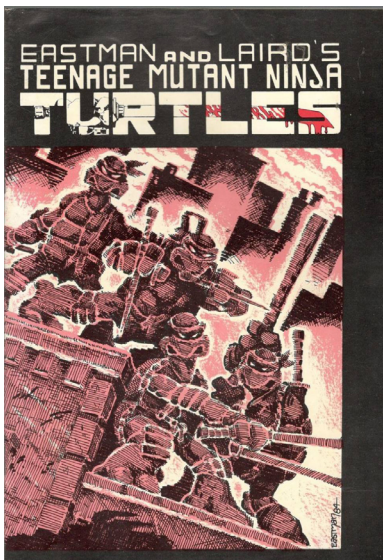
In the 1960s, comic book publishing had flourished amid the Cold War, the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, Women’s Liberation Movement, the War on Poverty, the sexual revolution, and an expanding drug culture. Themes from these major cultural events began to appear in comic books in the form of new characters and socially relevant storylines.

The Bronze Age had begun.

The year 1971 marked a major change in the comic book industry as the rules for CCA stamps were relaxed, allowing more adult themes to be introduced. That same year, *Green Lantern* and *Green Arrow* became socially aware, with a two-issue story that featured a sidekick heroin junkie. And in 1973, in *Amazing Spider-man* #121, the death of the innocent was introduced into comic book plot lines, as Gwen Stacy (Batman’s girlfriend) was killed



In 1971, DC’s *Green Lantern* and *Green Arrow* featured a two-issue story about a young man addicted to heroine. The cover declares that “DC attacks youth’s greatest problem — drugs!!” A cover character uses the word “junkie,” and drug paraphernalia are prominently displayed in the foreground. These elements would have been unimaginable a few years before. But in the Bronze Age of comics, many social issues such as drug use, racism, and poverty became story elements. *Green Lantern*, reflecting an era of rapid social change, was not the usual superhero who was always confident in what was right or wrong and what the correct response was. He was a more fully developed character created by writer Dennis O’Neill, who like other writers of the Bronze Age pushed toward more relatable characters and stories.

February Minutes, continued

In the 1970s, children who grew up on Silver and Bronze Age comics began to draw comics. By the early 1980s, a new generation of artists and writers were producing an expanding range of types of comic books. Independent publishers flourished, and comic book stores carried hundreds of titles, compared to the drugstore spinner racks of the 1960s. These factors gave rise to the Modern Age of comics. Fueled by the advent of the Star Wars merchandising empire in 1977, tie-ins between comics, movies, and toys created revenues unheard of for comics properties. The success of Star Wars stunned media producers and encouraged the making of *Superman* (1978) with the serious tone and high production values that viewers now expected. Very successful in its own right, *Superman* started a wave of superhero blockbusters that now earn billions a year.

1978, with the movie *Superman*, they leapt to the big screen. As a point of interest, Marlon Brando, with a fairly modest role as *Superman's* father, received 13 million dollars for his efforts; the main character, Christopher Reeve as *Superman*, received \$250,000! *Superman* was the second highest grossing movie of 1978 – clearly superheroes had become mainstream.

The Modern Age of comics began in the late 1970s/early 1980s as the marketing of comic books changed. Instead of distributing comics as

– the book's writer, Gerry Conway, actually received death threats in the mail!

The Silver Age ended with a warning: "no one is safe." The Bronze Age comics became darker, with more prominent minority and female superheroes.

New formats were also introduced. In 1974, Treasury Edition Comics produced a package of oversized reprints with new covers, providing a new vehicle for reading out-of-print earlier issues. The two major comics companies, DC and Marvel, joined forces by combining their top superheroes in *Superman vs. the Amazing Spider-man: The Battle of the Century*. In 1975, additional diversity was introduced into the X-Men with the character Wolverine.

Just as comic books had jumped to television, in

side products in drug and grocery stores, manufacturers now sold directly to comic book stores, giving higher discounts but not accepting returns. This fueled independent publishers, such as the developers of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

Mark then presented a timeline of comic book high points of the 1980s and early 1990s:

- 1984: Marvel reengineered its characters and their universe, creating marketing opportunities for Mattel action figures with the mini-series *Secret Wars*;
- 1985: DC coalesced its own universe greatly and created the 12-issue series "Crisis on Infinite Earths";
- 1986: the 12-issue *Watchmen* series introduced a very dark storyline based on an alternative history of the Vietnam War and Watergate;
- 1986: in *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, a disillusioned and retired Batman battled *Superman*;
- 1988: in *Batman* #426, the sidekick Robin was killed in response to a



Above: The X-Men #1 (1963).

The X-Men is an example of how the comic industry revived stale titles and exploited successful ones. After its creation in 1963, this title began to fall behind in sales. Marvel revived the title with new artists and writers. With better story arcs and new mutants, including fan favorites like *Wolverine*, by the early 1980s, X-Men was Marvel's top-selling title, with sales so strong that the "X-Men index" was used to measure sales of other comics. The X-Men became a staple of Marvel's lineup, spawning dozens of spinoff titles, alternative histories, reboots, animated features, hit movies, and video games.

Below: The X-Men #1 (1991).



February Minutes, continued

- telephone poll of readers;
- 1991: Marvel's *X-Men* #1, with four regular covers and one gatefold cover, sold 8.1 million copies, becoming the best-selling comic of all time;
 - 1992: *Batman: The Animated Series* on Fox 2; introduced Harley Quinn as Joker's girlfriend;
 - 1992: Image Comics (a new company formed by former Marvel Comics employees) developed a series of new characters, including Youngblood, Savage Dragon, and Spawn (which has since hit issue 300!);
 - 1993: *Superman* #75, "The Death of Superman," ran through six different titles and lasted almost a year, selling over 6 million copies.

In parallel with developments in comic books, the late 1980s and 1990s also saw the rise of graphic novels, such as *Watchmen*, *Sin City*, *Maus*, and *American Splendor*.

The Age of Speculation

Looking at more recent trends, Mark noted that the resale of comic books has become a big business. In 2020, for example, a search for Silver Age comics on eBay came back with 400,000 listings! Unfortunately, speculators, making purchases anticipating price growth, have become a significant factor in the world of comic books. In 1996, a speculative bubble burst, and comic book sales dropped precipitously, forcing a number of independent publishers out of business. A similar speculative bubble seems underway today. And publishers are now publishing the individual comic issues with several different covers – if one wants to be complete, one must purchase several copies.

Robert Overstreet (*Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*) brought some structure into the comic book marketplace with a ratings system (ranging from mint and near mint down to very good and good) that allowed collectors to assess the condition of the comic books they bought and sold. That rating system has, in turn, been replaced by a numerical grading system established by Certified Guaranty Company, which, for a fee, will evaluate and assign

a rating to a comic book and seal the book with its affixed rating in plastic. The downside, of course, is that the comic can no longer be read without breaking the seal and nullifying the rating!

The Future of Comics

Mark thinks that marketing devices like the emphasis on variant covers or promoting cover art with high production values at the expense of story art and solid plot lines is a major mistake. He also believes that the frequent renumbering of comic book series – to get that all important "high value" issue #1 designation

– distorts the comic book record. Looking to the future, he predicts that at some point new comics will only be issued in digital format, that traditional comic book stores will only handle back issues, and that the current price bubble will continue until the current fad for superhero movies comes to an end.

Digital comics are already a serious force in the comics market. Desktop publishing and direct links to fans and buyers through the Internet has created a market already worth a half billion dollars a year. Many individual artists and writers as well as traditional and independent comics companies distribute through websites or services like comiXology, a cloud-based service that distributes digital comics from over 75 creators.

Mark received a well-earned and robust round of applause, as his collector's passion and his undoubted expertise had made for a most interesting presentation.



Watchmen, written by Alan Moore and drawn by Dave Gibbons, was published by DC Comics in 1986–1987 as a 12-comic series. It received both popular and critical praise and became a major seller for DC. It has been republished many times as a graphic novel, as a film (2009), as a television adaptation (2019), an animation, etc. It is widely regarded as one of the finest examples in the genre and as serious literature in the mold of Verne and Orwell. It helped establish graphic novels as an adult publishing medium.

FBS Day at Lighthouse Books

Photos: Ben Wiley

FBS member Mike Slicker and his bookstore, Lighthouse Books, was a requisite book collector's destination in St. Petersburg for 40 years. When Mike announced over a year ago that he would be selling his property and moving the shop, many booklovers – not usually lovers of change, especially where

their favorite bookstores are concerned – wondered whether the new shop would live up to the old.

But according to all reports, the new Lighthouse Books in Dade City is better than ever! It's spacious, new, and full of books! In February, Mike hosted a special FBS day at Lighthouse Books.



Mike welcomes FBS to the new Lighthouse Books!



Sarah helps Camilla buy a couple of books.



Sue browses low.



Camilla browses high.

FBS Day at Lighthouse Books, concluded



Mike prepares to serve Jude a cup of wine.



Irene found one.



Jerry and Gary's presence suggests the 18th or 19th century.



Happy campers: Ben and Ed.



Mike at the desk; Sarah stacks up purchases.



Camilla, Jude, and Irene display new treasures.

Barbara Remington, Illustrator, 1929–2020

Barbara Remington died on January 23, 2020, at age 90. The name may not be familiar, but she illustrated the covers of three of the most published books of the 20th century: Ballantine's three paperback volumes of J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Writing on Tor.com, Alan Brown reports that when it was first published in 1954–1955 in England and then the U.S., *The Lord of the Rings* was a modest success. In 1965, Ballantine Books released the first authorized U.S.



Barbara Remington

edition, and within a year, it was at the top of The *New York Times* Paperback Best Seller list. As paperbacks, these books were widely distributed, affordable for younger readers, and widely, fueling a “cultural phenomenon.” Remington’s imaginative and beautiful covers contributed strongly to the appeal and sales of the books. The three images

were combined into a single poster that “became ubiquitous in college dorm rooms around the nation.” *The Lord of the Rings* was not only a success in itself, it launched the modern fantasy market, which sold three million books in 2018 for an estimated \$300 million.

Remington described the rush to create the covers:

“Ballantine was in a hurry to get these books out right away. When they commissioned me to do the artwork, I didn’t have the chance to see either book, though I tried to get a copy through my friends. So I didn’t know what they were about. I tried finding people

that had read them, but the books were not readily available in the States, and so I had sketchy information at best.”

Tolkien reviewed the illustration and requested minor changes. But for these covers, the rest is history. Remington said later that after she had read the books, she was “in awe of Tolkien” but thought she might not have been able to illustrate them.

Remington was born in St. Paul, Minn. Her father was an artist. She worked as a freelance artist and illustrator, eventually living in New York’s East Village, where her home was open to artists, musicians, and poets, befriending people like the poets Allen Ginsberg and Lionel Ziprin.

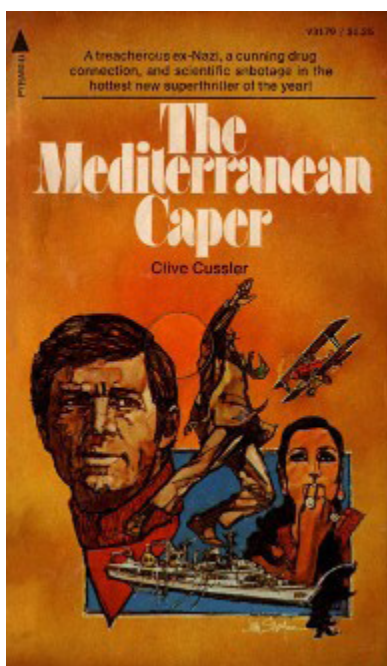
Her years as a freelance illustrator were not especially lucrative, but they were “great fun.” In addition to illustrated books, work for Alfred Hitchcock’s *Mystery Magazine* in the 1960s and for the popular children’s educational magazine *Highlights*, she designed costumes for the theater, did holiday store window displays for Tiffany, ushered at Carnegie Hall and once “worked on a yacht to go on free trips to Martha’s Vineyard.”

After decades in New York, Remington moved to Thompson, PA, where she became part of a northeastern Pennsylvania community of artists and writers.



Clive Cussler, Author and Adventurer, 1931–2020

The boundary between fact and fiction is not always clear, and the life of Clive Cussler is an example. As an author, Cussler was in the top ranks of success, with over 80 books published and 100 million copies in circulation. The character that featured in 25 of these books was Dirk Pitt, an ex-military undersea explorer – named for Cussler’s son – who was also an alter ego for Cussler, who between bouts of novel writing and publishing, was himself an avid adventurer, discovering and exploring dozens of shipwrecks.



Cussler began writing in 1965, and his first novel, *The Mediterranean Caper*, was published in 1973. In his debut, Dirk Pitt confronts an international drug smuggling ring in a James Bond-like contest that takes place in the Aegean Sea. It was an auspicious beginning, being nominated for the Mystery Writers of America Edgar award for “Best Paperback Original Novel of 1973.”

The Mediterranean

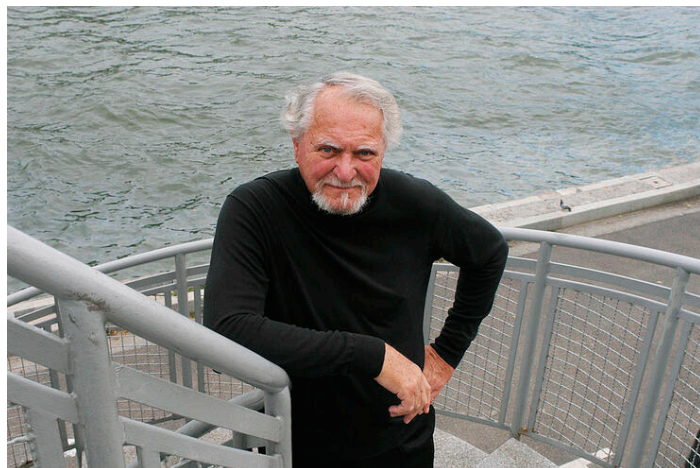
Caper was a commercial success, but it would be 1976’s *Raising the Titanic*, a Dirk Pitt adventure that tied into one of America’s favorite mysteries, that is regarded as Cussler’s breakthrough – his first book on the New York Times bestseller list.

From there, Cussler produced bestsellers regularly. Though critical reception was mixed, reader reception was not – Cussler’s easy, exciting reading could be seen in bookstores and, notably, airport book stands everywhere.

In another case of fact meets fiction, Cussler created the fictional National Underwater and Marine Agency (NUMA) for his Dirk Pitt novels.

In the novels, NUMA is a government agency, but in 1979, Cussler founded a real NUMA,

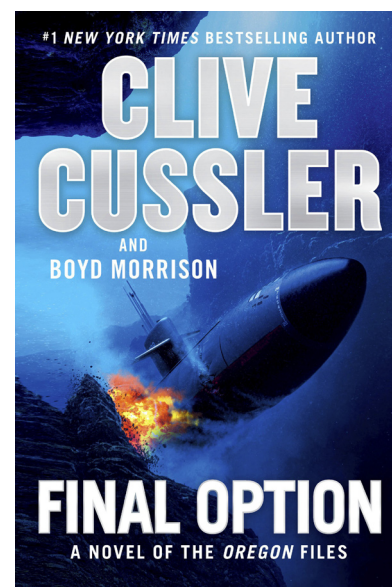
Sources: *New York Times*; NUMA; iheart.com



Clive Cussler at sea

a private nonprofit organization dedicated to “preserving our maritime heritage through the discovery, archaeological survey and conservation of shipwrecks’ artifacts.” Cussler was head of NUMA until his death. Shipwrecks investigated by NUMA include the Cunard steamship *Carpathia*, first to reach survivors of the lost *Titanic* on April 15, 1912, then itself sunk by German torpedoes off Ireland in 1918 and *Manassas*, the Confederacy’s first Civil War ironclad, sunk in battle in the Lower Mississippi in 1862, among many others. Cussler’s adventures with the real NUMA led to his first nonfiction book, *The Sea Hunters* (1996).

Cussler cowrote a number of books, principally with his son, Dirk Cussler, and with author Boyd Morrison. Cussler’s most recently published book was *Final Option* (Sept. 2019), cowritten with Morrison. Cussler and Morrison are scheduled to release the fifteenth novel in the *Oregon Files* series later in 2020.



The Billion-Dollar Book Swindle

Charles Ponzi gave his name to one of the most lucrative swindles in the **Big Book of Swindles**. Ponzi became famous for using the scheme in the 1920s, and since then, it has been used successfully in some very big swindles, most notably the largest fraud in U.S. history, committed by Bernie Madoff, currently in prison, serving a term “not to exceed 150 years.”

The Ponzi scheme is conceptually simple: The fraudster offers an investment with guaranteed and generous returns. As people invest, their money is used to pay previous investors under the pretense

that the investment earned the money. Madoff deceived many wealthy people. Eventually, the total amount of money in play exceeded \$18 billion, with 4,800 investors. Madoff operated the scheme for over 20 years.

Imagine building a similar scheme on rare books. The French rare book dealer Gérard Lhéritier did just that. In 1990, he founded Astrophil, a company

that would deal in rare books and manuscripts. In the following years, he achieved significant celebrity, buying valuable materials in spectacular style, making significant contributions to the National Library of France, creating a museum, and buying a \$40 million home in a very toney section of Paris. He gave lavish investor parties and amassed the largest private collection of rare books, manuscripts, and ephemera in the world.

Basically, Lhéritier bought truly valuable books and ephemera and then sold shares in them, convincing investors that the value of these objects would rise quite dependably and thus return dividends on their shares. Key to the operation was favorable appraisal, achieved with the help of “pliant experts” often giving appraisals at several times the expected value of the object. Lhéritier’s contracts with his investors strongly implied that after five years, they would receive their original investment plus 40%. When the time came to pay, Lhéritier often forstalled.

Approximately 18,000 people invested over \$1 billion with Lhéritier.

Remarkably, Lhéritier was able to keep the scheme and his lavish lifestyle going further than expected when in 2012 he won the EuroMillions jackpot, with a prize of €170 million. He invested €40 million in Astrophil to bolster its reputation.

Nevertheless, by 2014, investor complaints were mounting, and an investigation was begun. Lhéritier argued the technicalities of the contracts, but authorities saw the scheme as clearly fraudulent. Authorities also believe the sales of a number of items in the collection were illegal.

At this point, Lhéritier’s collection has been confiscated by authorities, and a series of auction to liquidate have already begun. Not all of Lhéritier’s investors have agreed with either the allegations against Lhéritier or the French government’s resolution of his crime, but the auctions will proceed. The estimated number of items is over 130,000.

Items like a Frida Kahlo letter, signed and twice kissed with red lipstick, fetched just over \$8,800. A page of scribbled calculations by Isaac Newton sold for about \$21,000. A 1953 handwritten speech by John F. Kennedy took in \$10,000. On average, the auction have earned about 14% of the valuations on which the shares were based, but over 40% of the items in auction so far have failed to sell.

One particularly valuable piece illustrates the situation. A 15th-century illuminated Book of Hours sold for €4.2 million in June last year, but it had been sold to Aristophil’s clients for €7 million. Astrophil bought the book in 2011 for €2.2 million.

Up to last April, the auction sales conducted by Claude Aguttes had collected €41.3 million in revenues, and, since the start of the criminal investigation, more than €140 million has been seized in cash and assets from the Lhéritier family and company. But this is still a small sum compared to the €850 million that Aristophil’s scheme collected over a dozen years.



Gérard Lhéritier



Markus Dohle: Bullish on the Future of the Book

In 2013, German media conglomerate Bertelsman and British publishing giant Pearson plc merged their respective well-known book publishing divisions Random House and Penguin. The merger was guided by Markus Dohle, who became CEO of the new Penguin Random House, a company with over 10,000 employees worldwide with 250 imprints and publishing houses and publishing over 15,000 new titles a year.

In October 2017, Dohle kicked off the Frankfurt Book Fair, the largest and oldest book fair in the world, with an address that he acknowledged would surprise many with its optimistic view of the state of the trade book publishing industry, saying that the global book business was experiencing perhaps the “best times” it has ever seen, certainly the best within the last 50 years.

Dohle based his argument on several factors, including the slow but steady growth of digital books in most countries over the last 15 years, the establishment of stable, widespread business models for both print and e-books, and a “renaissance of the printed book” that has had a “massively stabilizing effect” for bricks-and-mortar retail as well as the industry at large.

Dohle said that books are one of a very few categories of media that have actually seen growth since the proliferation of digital formats over a decade ago. He also described a “healthy coexistence” between print and e-books, with a split among those formats at 80% print and 20% digital – opposite the predictions of only a few years ago.

On the subject of the resurgence of print books, Dohle said that it is critical for the diversity of the book business and the health of the entire “book ecosystem.” It is also massively important for bricks-and-mortar retailers, who need to be preserved if publishers want to preserve the diversity of stories and narratives “in book form.” Later, he added that the bookshop is still the “most important place” for readers to discover new books and that publishers must “inform the

Sources: shelf-awareness.com; *Publishers Weekly*; *Designers and Books*

public that the print book is not dead.”

With books for children and young adults remaining the “fastest-growing category in most book markets” over the last decade, Dohle was optimistic that publishers will be able to turn younger generations into “lifelong readers.” In a similar vein, he pointed to the book industry being pushed by the “tail wind” of various

demographic changes around the world, including population growth and easier access to education in developing markets such as India and Brazil.

Dohle acknowledged that there are challenges, saying that the “true challenge at the core of the digital transition” is not about format but about the need for publishers “to reinvent” how they advertise and publicize new books, to establish “direct connections” to readers, and find ways to generate demand for books “directly and at scale.” With millions of titles, including new, used, and self-published books in all formats available online, Dohle said that both consumers and publishers are “drowning in titles.” And while it is more difficult now to get noticed, publishers can use their commitment to “quality in each product” as a way to be seen through the “deluge of new and often self-published titles.”

Given the “tense political situation” around the world today, Dohle asserted that words, language and culture, along with “diverse ideas and opinions,” have never been more important. He called on publishers and the book industry at large to fulfill their “social responsibility,” concluding: “If we succeed in this mission, we will succeed financially as well.”



Markus Dohle



THE COLETTE PROJECT SARASOTA

A First-Ever, City-Wide Homage
to France's Beloved Woman of Letters



Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette (Yonne, France, 1873–Paris, 1954)
By Jacques-Ferdinand Humbert, c1896. Oil on Canvas

THE COLETTE PROJECT SARASOTA celebrates the centennial of Colette's 1920 novel *Chéri* with an impressive multimedia program of events, organized and sponsored by a consortium of Sarasota entities: New College of Florida, Alliance Française de Sarasota, Selby Public Library, Goldstein Library (Ringling College of Art and Design), Florida Studio Theatre, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, and C'est la Vie restaurant (University Park).

One of the 'liberated women' of Paris's Left Bank, Colette established her literary genius in a series of novels (the *Claudine* books, 1900–03), as well as *Chéri* (1920) and *Gigi* (1944). Colette was nominated (1948) for the Nobel Prize in Literature, and beguiled contemporaries with her gifts in mime and acting. She had a talent for life, a talent for living.

The Colette Project Sarasota spans February–March, 2020. For a detailed list of current offerings, visit the Project's handsome [webpage](#). Hearty appreciation to event organizers and distinguished guest contributors.

Written and Designed by **Maureen E. Mulvihill**, FBS Member & 2012-2015 Vice President

The Mulvihill Collection of Early Women Writers is [featured](#), with photo, in *Fine Books & Collections* (2016). Her collection also includes books by 20th-century women writers, such as Virginia Woolf (Hogarth Press, jacket art by Vanessa Bell). Maureen's essay, "Dancing On Hot Bricks," on the last months (1941) of Virginia Woolf, ran in *Rapportage* magazine (Lancaster Literary Guild, Pa., vol. XII, 2010); [online hosting](#).

At the Ringling: Conversation with Oliver Everett – Treasures and Curiosities from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle

In March, the Ringling Museum of Art will welcome Oliver Everett, Librarian Emeritus of the Royal Library of Windsor Castle, where he served from 1985 to 2002. During his tenure, Mr. Everett wrote the official guidebook on Windsor Castle, taught courses on its history, and advised on a television programme on it. He helped with several books on the Royal Collection of art.

Everett served in the British Diplomatic Service, 1967–1978, including postings in India and Spain, Assistant Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales, 1978–1980, and Private Secretary to Diana, Princess of Wales, 1981–1983.

In 1985, he became Librarian at Windsor Castle, with responsibility for its fine collection, owned by the royal family in their official capacity, to be distinguished from books and other material that are considered their private collection in residences such as Sandringham House and Balmoral Castle.

Since retiring in 2002, Everett has lectured widely in Britain and abroad, including at the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Getty Museum, the National Gallery of Canada, and the University of Melbourne (AU).

Because the Royal Library is closed to the public, Everett's lecture is a special opportunity, replicating the tour experienced by the Queen's guests.

**Ringling Museum of Art
Chao Lecture Hall
March 12, 2020, 10:30 AM**

As the oldest and largest continuously occupied castle in the world, Windsor has been home to many monarchs, with a library rich in royal objects such as the shirt in which Charles I was executed or the 11-year-old Elizabeth's recount of her father's coronation in 1937. In addition, there is a collection of Queen Victoria's childhood literature, and material from the libraries of Queen Charlotte, Queen Mary and Victoria, Duchess of Kent at Frogmore House.

The library comprises three galleries adapted by William IV in the 1830s. Its Royal Trust sections contain most of the library's historic material and extensive reference material on history, biography, geography, and literature as well as the Royal Library's collection of scientific texts.

And of course, the library includes beautiful and rare books and manuscripts, drawings, and paintings. Artists include Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, Holbein, and Canaletto.

A few of the library's valuable works are shown on the next page.

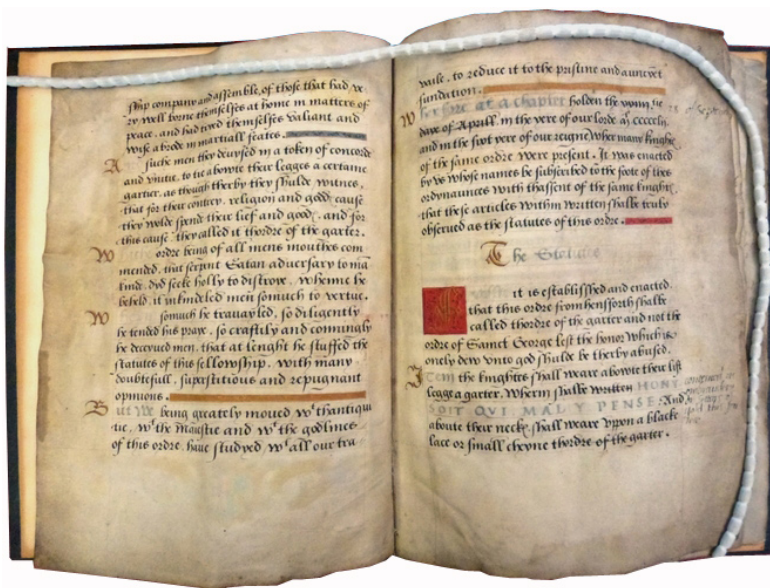


Treasures of Windsor, concluded

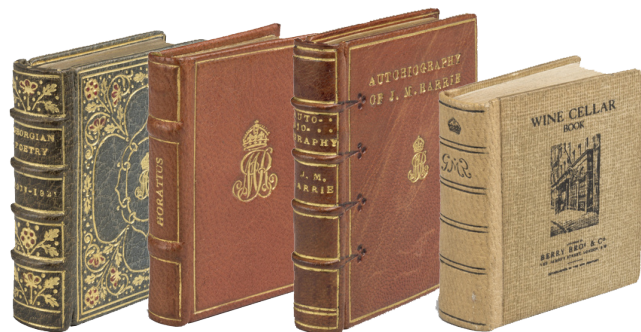
After the Doge, the Procurators of San Marco were the most important officials of the Venetian Republic, and were elected for life. Mocenigo's 'commissione' or list of duties carries at the front a depiction of Mocenigo receiving his charge from St Mark, the patron saint of Venice. This illumination may be by Benedetto Bordone (1460–1531), the leading Venetian miniaturist around 1500.



The Padshahnama ('Book of Emperors'; c. 1656) is a chronicle commissioned by Mughal Emperor Shah-Jahan as a celebration of his reign and dynasty. Written by the court historian Abd al-Hamid of Lahore, the text was to proclaim the political and ideological legitimacy of the Emperor's rule. This manuscript in the Royal Collection is unique, being the only contemporary illustrated imperial Padshahnama volume to survive. It contains only the first of the three volumes which make up the text. Its 45 illustrations include some of the finest Mughal paintings ever produced, executed by 14 court painters between 1630 and 1657.



Statutes of the Order of the Garter corrected by Edward VI. c.1552; presumed to have been presented to Queen Victoria by the Grand Duke of Hesse, Christmas 1892.



These exquisitely bound books are all less than 1½ inches tall. These are four of many such books created for Queen Mary's magnificent dollhouse (1921–1924). From the left are shown Georgian Poetry, Horace's Carmina Sapphica, The Autobiography of J. M. Barrie (handwritten), and the Wine Cellar Book which documents the miniature wines in the house's miniature wine cellar.

Second Annual Florida Digital Humanities Consortium at the University of North Florida, March 2020

In March 2019, the University of North Florida hosted the inaugural Florida Digital Humanities Consortium. This month, UNF will host the second FLDH consortium at Flagler College in St. Augustine on March 27, 2020.

FLDH is a collective of institutions in Florida that seeks to promote an understanding of the humanities in light of digital technologies and research. Founded in 2014, FLDH provides a platform for studying and discussing digital tools, methods, and pedagogies as well as educating teachers, faculty, and the public about the multiple, interdisciplinary ways humanities research and computing impact our world. At the annual conference, FLDH members and guests meet to hear current research, discuss issues of interest, and set goals for future collaboration and digital humanities research.

The conference will last all day and include academic research and teaching presentations in the morning and early afternoon, followed by a THATCamp session and a plenary talk and dinner. THATCamp stands for “The Humanities and Technology Camp.” The THATCamp website describes the event as

an “unconference”: an open, inexpensive meeting where humanists and technologists of all skill levels learn and build together in sessions proposed on the spot. An unconference is to a conference what a seminar is to a lecture, what a party at your house is to a church wedding, what a pick-up game of Ultimate Frisbee is to an NBA game, what a jam band is to a symphony orchestra: it’s more informal and more participatory.

Consortium participants will include people in higher education, including students, faculty, and staff, but also from cultural institutions and other organizations doing work in the digital humanities.

FLDH members participate in projects that use the potential of media linked to traditional humanities research. The FLDH website lists 20 such projects that are either completed or ongoing. Here are a few examples:

Jazz in Florida (Univ. of South Florida) explores



the function of jazz in Florida from its emergence in the early 20th century until today. It includes historical narratives and legal accounts of the music and dancing scenes in the Tampa Bay area.

Sites that Speak: Mapping Performing Arts Spaces in Spanish Miami (Univ. of Miami) is a multimodal publication that focuses on the development of Spanish theater in Miami through the “re-search” of its performing spaces from 1959 to 1980.

The Vodou Archive: Curating and Sharing the Sources of Vodou Religion and Culture is a freely accessible multimedia digital library that uses audiovisual technologies to curate, elucidate and facilitate advanced search of the rich primary materials of a central Haitian and Haitian-American spiritual tradition in order to promote discovery and educate a broad public.

Zora Neale Hurston Digital Archive (UCF), launched 2006, provides (1) a repository of biographical, historical, critical, and other materials related to Hurston’s life and work and (2) teaching resources to help teachers and students more fully appreciate the cultural and literary richness of Hurston’s numerous writings. With time and funding, we hope to also develop a digital edition of Hurston’s writings.

To view other projects or learn more about the FLDH Consortium, visit the [FLDH website](#).

Comics @ UF: 17th UF Conference on Comics and Graphic Novels, “Comics in Community”

The UF Conference on Comics and Graphic Novels began in 2002 with “The Will Eisner Symposium,” which featured award-winning comics and graphic novel creator Will Eisner (1917–2005). Over the years, the conference has brought artists and scholars together to discuss issues on themes related to comics, graphic novels, animation, digital media, and visual culture. These interdisciplinary conferences examine a wide range of subjects: formal, historical, literary, sociological, and economic perspectives. They are often complemented by other events and activities which appeal to the wider community such as gallery exhibits, book signings, and all-ages workshops on drawing comics led by the visiting artists. All conference events are free and open to the public.

The 2020 conference is entitled “Comics in Community,” and it focuses on how comics have functioned to communicate within specific communities and about those communities. Beyond the publications themselves are the communities that these comics create in the form of gatherings and venues like zine fests, cartoonist unions, letter columns, comics shops, art scenes, and conferences that have shown the dynamic relationship between creators, organizers, sellers, and readers. Creators, scholars, and readers have used comics to develop new communities, explore utopian feeling, imagine alternative communities, and encourage queer theoretical modes.

At the same time, deep and abiding histories of racism, misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia have shown how “community” and identity in comics can be weaponized against marginalized people – an example is Comicsgate, a campaign in opposition to perceived “forced diversity” and progressivism in the content of North American superhero comic books and the kinds of creators who work in the industry. Cultural heritage sites, such as archives, develop their comics collections from community resources and collector communities, provoking questions about the legitimization and exclusion of different communities in and around comics.



How, then, is “community” in comics navigated, celebrated, weaponized, and canonized, and by whom? How has this conception changed over time, with the emergence of comics studies as an academic field, and within different eras of comics creation? How do geographies form, enable, and transform communities in comics, and how has this shaped comics history?

Organizers have called for papers with particular interest in queer communities and communities of color in comics; new and emerging communities, including new or regional comics conventions; practitioner and publisher communities; the erotic as a community site in comics; digital communities and sites; labor and community in comics, including unionization efforts; and refugee and prisoner comics. We also welcome contributions for a special panel on the work of the late Don Ault, whose overall impact on comics scholarship as a community, and the comics community at UF especially, are enduringly meaningful.

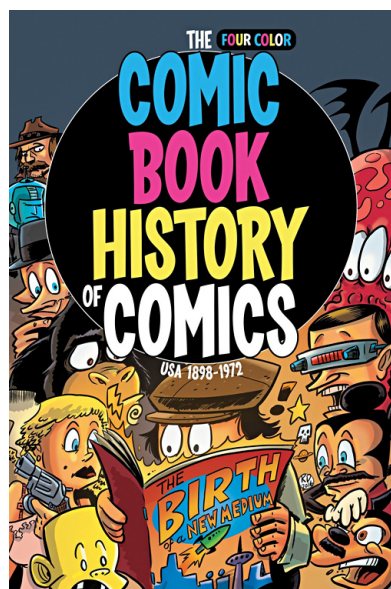
UF has built one of the premier programs for studying comics, animation, and other forms of visual rhetoric in North America, exemplified by UF Library’s ever-expanding special collection of comics, the online journal *ImageText*, the listserve COMIX-SCHOLARS-L, the annual comics conference, and vibrant opportunities for postgraduate study and teaching.



Books in Brief

Comic Book History of Comics: Birth of a Medium

Fred Van Lente and Ryan Dunlavey
IDW Publishing
144 pp., Aug. 2017



The *Comic Book History of Comics* presents the inspiring, infuriating, and utterly insane story of comics, graphic novels, and manga in comic book form.

Fred Van Lente and

Ryan Dunlavey begin at the beginning, with cave drawings and temple murals, to tell the story of visual narratives. Described as “irreverent but accurate,” this history of comics moves quickly to the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries to consider the contributions of legendary creators like Jack Kirby, R. Crumb, Harvey Kurtzman, Alan Moore, Stan Lee, Will Eisner, Fredric Wertham, Roy Lichtenstein, Art Spiegelman, Herge, Osamu Tezuka, and more!

Jocelyn Sakal Froese, writing for Fanbase Press, described the book as “structurally sound, with excellent pacing, and is clear and easy to follow in terms of both narrative and organization of content.”

In addition to his *New York Times* bestsellers, **Fred Van Lente's** books has received numerous awards and nominations, including a Harvey Award nomination for Best Series, an American Library Association Best Graphic Novel for Teens, and others. The comic series *Cowboys & Aliens* became a feature film.

Van Lente is founder, along with artist **Ryan Dunlavey**, of Evil Twin Comics, which publishes the partners' nonfiction books.

Sources: Amazon; Fanbase Press; Wikipedia

Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art

Scott McCloud
William Morrow
224 pp., Apr. 1993

Understanding Comics is a wide-ranging exploration of the definition, history, vocabulary, and methods of the medium of comics. In the form of a comic itself, it is an engaging and ingenious effort to formalize the study of comics.

Praised throughout the cartoon industry by such luminaries as Art Spiegelman, Matt Groening, and Will Eisner, Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* is a seminal examination of comics art: its rich history, surprising technical components, and major cultural significance. Explore the secret world between the panels, through the lines, and within the hidden symbols of a powerful but misunderstood art form.

McCloud explores how comics work and – though they can be a simple entertainment – how they rely on the intelligence and engagement of the reader. In that way, McCloud is also concerned with the potential of the comics form. And the years since its first publication have seen a startling development of the medium into an art form as serious as any other.

Scott McCloud has been writing, drawing, and examining comics since 1984. Winner of the Eisner and Harvey awards, his works have been translated into more than sixteen languages. Frank Miller (*Sin City*; 300) called him “just about the smartest guy in comics.” His online comics and inventions can be found at scottmcccloud.com.

Sources: Amazon; Wikipedia

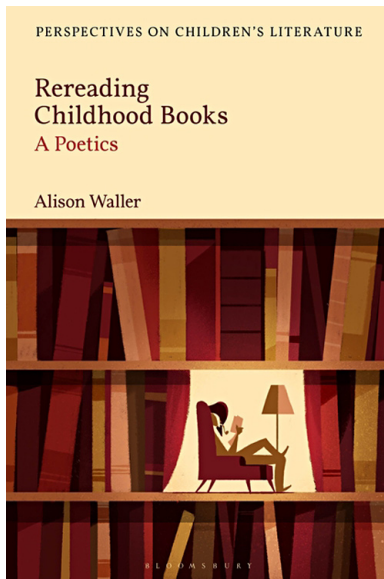


*Books in Brief, continued***Rereading Childhood Books: A Poetics**

Alison Waller

Bloomsbury Academic

248 pp., Feb. 2019



Many adult readers can remember favorite books from their childhood – often the books that set them on a path of lifetime reading.

Beyond a title, we may recall a favorite edition, a cover, a special reading place and time... the experience of childhood reading may be one adults try to recapture throughout their lives.

Childhood books

play a special role in reading histories, providing touchstones for our future tastes and shaping our ongoing identities. Bringing the latest work in Memory Studies to bear on writers' memoirs, autobiographical accounts of reading, and interviews with readers, *Rereading Childhood Books* explores how adults remember, revisit, and sometimes forget, these significant books.

Waller asks what it means to return to familiar works by well-known authors such as Lewis Carroll, C.S. Lewis, and Enid Blyton, as well as popular and ephemeral material not often considered as canonical. Waller develops a poetics of rereading and presents a new model for understanding lifelong reading. As such she reconceives the history of children's literature through the shared and individual experiences of the readers who carry these books with them throughout their lives.

Alison Waller is Senior Lecturer at the University of Roehampton, UK. She is author of *Constructions of Adolescence in Fantastic Realism* (2009).



Sources: Bloomsbury, Project Muse

The Dictionary Wars: The American Fight over the English Language

Peter Martin

Princeton University Press

368 pp., May 2019

The Dictionary Wars recounts the patriotic fervor in the early American republic to produce a definitive national dictionary to rival Samuel Johnson's 1755 *Dictionary of the English Language*. But this cultural declaration of independence soon became a battle among lexicographers, authors, scholars, and publishers, vying for dictionary supremacy and shattering the dream of a unified American language as they wrestled over whose English was truly American and whether the difference should be indulged.

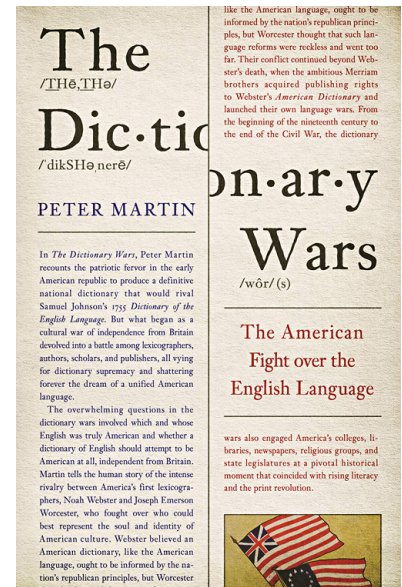
Martin tells the story of the intense rivalry between America's first lexicographers, Noah Webster and Joseph Emerson Worcester. Webster believed America's dictionary, like its language, should be informed by the nation's republican principles, but Worcester found such language reforms reckless. After Webster's death, the ambitious Merriam brothers acquired rights to Webster's American Dictionary and launched their own language wars.

Delving into the personal stories and national debates that arose from the conflicts surrounding America's first dictionaries, *The Dictionary Wars* examines the linguistic struggles that underpinned the founding and growth of a nation.

Peter Martin is an American scholar of English literature. He has been a professor at Miami University, the College of William & Mary, and Principia College. For several years, he was a historian for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

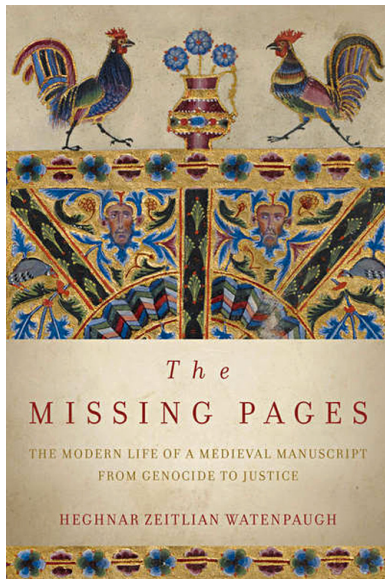


Sources: Amazon



*Books in Brief, concluded***The Missing Pages: The Modern Life of a Medieval Manuscript, from Genocide to Justice**

H. Z. Watenpaugh
Stanford University Press
436 pp., Feb. 2018



In 2010, the world's wealthiest art institution, the J. Paul Getty Museum, was sued by the Armenian Church for return of eight pages from the Zeytun Gospels, a manuscript illuminated by the great medieval Armenian artist Toros Roslin. Safe for centuries in a remote church, the revered manuscript followed

the diaspora of the Armenian genocide. Passed from hand to hand during the confusion of World War I, it was cleaved in two. Decades later, the manuscript found its way to the Republic of Armenia, while its missing eight pages came to the Getty.

The Missing Pages is the biography of a manuscript that is at once art, sacred object, and cultural heritage, mirroring the story of its scattered community as Armenians have struggled to redefine themselves after genocide and in the absence of a homeland. Watenpaugh follows the manuscript through seven centuries, from medieval Armenia to the killing fields of 1915 Anatolia, the refugee camps of Aleppo, Ellis Island, and Soviet Armenia, and ultimately to a Los Angeles courtroom.

Heghnar Z. Watenpaugh is Professor of Art History at UC Davis. Award-winning author of *The Image of an Ottoman City: Architecture in Aleppo* (2004), her writing has also appeared in the *Huffington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

Toward a Global Middle Ages: Encountering the World through Illuminated Manuscripts

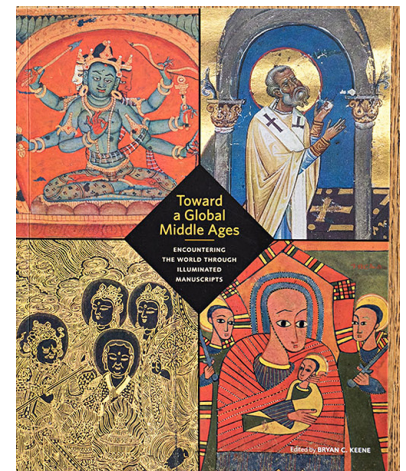
Bryan C. Keene
J. Paul Getty Museum
296 pp., Sept. 2018

Toward a Global Middle Ages is the first examination of decorated books produced across the globe during the period traditionally known as medieval. Through essays and case studies by an international team of authors, this book expands the historiography, chronology, and geography of manuscript studies to embrace a diversity of objects, individuals, narratives, and materials from Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the Americas – an approach that both engages with and contributes to the emerging field of scholarly inquiry known as the Global Middle Ages.

Illuminated manuscripts and illustrated or decorated books – like today's museums – preserve a rich array of information about how premodern peoples conceived of and perceived the world, its many cultures, and everyone's place in it. Often a Eurocentric field of study, manuscripts are prisms through which we can glimpse the interconnected global history of humanity.

Featuring 160 color illustrations, this wide-ranging and provocative collection is intended for all who are interested in engaging in a dialogue about how books and other textual objects contributed to world-making strategies from about 400 to 1600.

Bryan C. Keene is associate curator of manuscripts at the Getty Museum, coauthor of *Sacred Landscapes: Nature in Renaissance Manuscripts*, and author of *Gardens of the Renaissance*.






School yard mural in Tyumen by Russian art group Color of the City.



This Month's Writers and Contributors

Many thanks to those who contributed words, pictures, and ideas to this month's newsletter!

David Hall
Jerry Morris
Linda Morris
Maureen E. Mulvihill
Carl Mario Nudi
Gary Simons
Ben Wiley
Barry Zack, SAC


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. 

Join FBS!

If you love books, take your interest to the next level by joining a group of dedicated book lovers (i.e., bibliophiles). You will meet serious collectors, dealers, scholars, and readers, and you will discover a lively, enjoyable group. You will find contact emails on the last page of this newsletter.




Membership is \$50 per year. You can find a membership form on our website. It will give you the address to which to send your filled-out form and payment.

Joining FBS also makes you a member of our national organization, the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies. 

Write for Your Newsletter!



Your input and content are needed. FBS is about participation, about discoveries, about passionate interests, and sometimes the deliciously obscure. Why not write about it!? 

Upcoming Events

March 2020



FBS Open Mic

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

March 15, 2020, 1:30 pm

In addition to being avid book collectors and readers, many FBS members are also writers in many media. Join us as FBS members present stories and poems – and maybe a song or two!

Please contact Jerry Morris (moibibliomaniac@gmail.com) to add your name to the schedule.

April 2020



Lola Haskins, Poet

Macdonald-Kelce Library
University of Tampa
401 W. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa, FL

April 19, 2020, 1:30 pm

Returning to FBS for National Poetry Month is award-winning Florida poet Lola Haskins, featuring poems from her latest collection, *Asylum: Improvisations on John Clare*.

In 1841, the English poet John Clare broke out of the asylum in High Beach, Essex, and walked almost 100 miles to his home village of Helpston. Lola Haskins has taken Clare's circumstance and journey as a framework for the poems in her latest collection, *Asylum Improvisations on John Clare*, published in 2019 in the prestigious University of Pittsburgh Poetry Series. In addition to new poems, *Asylum* collects poems that Haskins has written throughout her career that had not yet found a home. Altogether, the new collection retraces both John Clare's journey and Haskins's own, or as she might say, her series of journeys.



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 and library-operated bookstores, visit

Florida Library Book Sales:

<http://www.booksalefinder.com/FL.html>

MARCH

March 7

Southwest Florida Reading Festival

The Largest One-Day Reading Festival in Florida
Fort Myers, FL (www.readfest.org/)

March 20–21

Palm Beach Book Festival

West Palm Beach, FL (<http://www.palmbeachbookfestival.com/>)

March 20–21

9th Annual Venice Book Fair and Writers Festival

Venice, FL (<http://venicebookfair.com/>)

March 27, 10:30 AM

Ringling Literati Book Club, Sarasota, FL

Book of the month: *Bluebeard: A Novel* by Kurt Vonnegut

March 27–29

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

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

March 28

BookMania! (est. 1994)

Jensen Beach, FL (<https://www.libraryfoundationmc.org/programs-/bookmania-festival/>)

APRIL

April 16, 6 PM, and April 17, 10:30 AM

Ringling Literati Book Club, Sarasota, FL

Book of the month: *Stealing the Mystic Lamb: The True Story of the World's Most Coveted Masterpiece* by Noah Charney

April 24–26

39th annual Florida Antiquarian Book Fair

St. Petersburg, FL (<http://floridabooksellers.com/bookfair.html>)

April 25, 10 AM–4 PM

Tampa-Hillsborough Storytelling Festival

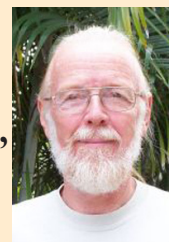
Tampa (est. 1980) (tampastory.org/)

SARASOTA AUTHORS CONNECTION

presents

Dennis Blanchard

“Writing for Magazines”



Many authors fail to use a powerful weapon to promote their books:

Magazines. Writing for magazines is a double-edged sword: they can be used to get the word out about your books and, simultaneously provide extra income. Many magazines pay for the articles they publish. Dennis has published a number of magazine articles, learning what to do to get published and, more importantly, what NOT to do.

Tuesday, March 31, 6 PM

Fruitville Library

100 Coburn Rd., Sarasota, FL

April 25–26

Oxford Exchange Book Fair

420 West Kennedy Blvd.

Tampa, FL

April 25: Independent Bookstore Day

April 26: Junior Reader Day

(<https://oxfordexchange.com/pages/oe-book-fair>)

April 25–29

Friends of the Library Book Sale

Gainesville (est. 1954) (folacl.org/)

MAY

May 14, 6 PM, and May 15, 10:30 AM

Ringling Literati Book Club, Sarasota, FL

Book of the month: *Oil and Marble: A Novel of Leonardo and Michelangelo* by Stephanie Storey

JUNE–JULY

July 4–7

[date not announced]

Paradise City Comic Con

Miami, FL (<http://paradisecitycomiccon.com/>)



Florida Bibliophile Society, 2019–2020 Season



David Hall

September 15 • FBS Members: Treasures We Found during the Summer Break. FBS members shared about recent acquisitions and brought books for a fascinating afternoon of show and tell.

October 27 • Mary Kay Watson: Tangled Shakespeare. Mary Kay recently published a book of imaginative illustrations to accompany *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. She presented her book, discussed her process, and supplied materials for a brief workshop introducing the audience to Zentangle drawing.

November 17 • Jonathan Chopan: Imagining the Other: On Writing outside the Self. Mr. Chopan, an Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Eckerd College, read from his recent book, *Veterans Crisis Hotline*, and took questions from the audience.

December 15 • FBS Holiday Party. FBS members Ben and Joyce Wiley hosted a wonderful holiday party at their home in Largo.

January 19 • Jerry Morris: My Books About Books Collection. Jerry is president of FBS and an accomplished book collector. Among other areas, Jerry collects Books About Books, a fascinating topic. His collection currently numbers more than 1,300 books, and as promised, he didn't miss a one!

February 16 • Mark Harris: Collecting Comics. For many people, comics are still a lighthearted collectible, but they are now widely recognized for their potential for serious business, art, and literature. Mark, an avid and knowledgeable collector, began with the 1938 advent of modern comics and outlined their history to the present day as well as that of the industry and the dynamics of collecting.

March 15 • FBS Open Mic. Many FBS members are also writers. Members are invited to share a short work of poetry or fiction – even a song! – or a favorite collecting story at the March meeting.

April 19 • Lola Haskins, Poet – Readings from *Asylum*. Lola delighted us with her readings in National Poetry Month 2017. She returns to FBS in 2020. Her most recent book, *Asylum: Improvisations on John Clare*, was published in the prestigious Pitt Poetry Series.

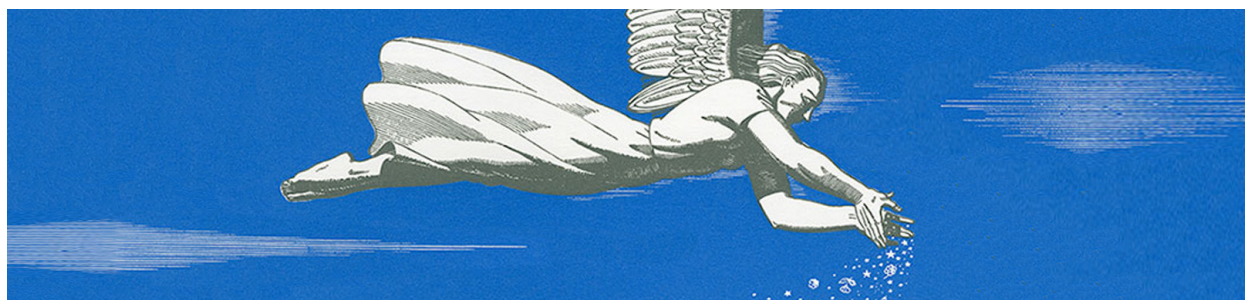
April 24–26 • Florida Antiquarian Book Fair. One of the largest book fairs in the U.S. happens each year, right in our backyard, at the Coliseum in downtown St. Pete. Each year, FBS hosts a table at the entrance to the Book Fair where we answer questions and hold parcels for visitors. Many visitors sign up for our newsletter, and some join FBS. A highlight occurs on Sunday when FBS collectors provide free book evaluations.

May 17 • ANNUAL FBS BANQUET. This year's banquet will again be held at Brio Tuscan Grille at the International Mall in Tampa. We'll enjoy Brio's delicious food and a quiet and elegant private room. In addition, there will be a silent auction, a guest speaker, and the reading of this year's winner of the 4th Annual Lee J. Harrer Student Book Collecting Essay Contest. It's always a delightful time to break bread together and celebrate another exciting bibliophilic year.

All meetings are held at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday afternoon unless otherwise announced.



Endpaper • Zap! Biff! Pow!



The art on this page this year is the work of the American illustrator Rockwell Kent. In the 1930s, he was already publishing graphic novels, series of elegant engravings, mostly without words. They treated serious subjects like poverty, belonging, and reform. In 1971, Kent's obituary in the *New York Times* described him: "... a thoughtful, troublesome, profoundly independent, odd and kind man who made an imperishable contribution to the art of bookmaking in the United States."

He was ahead of his time. In the 1930s, visual storytelling took the form of comic strips like *Krazy Kat* and the *Katzenjammer Kids*, beloved fixtures in American newspapers. They were joined in that decade by another visual form, the comic book, which has flourished generation after generation, reinvented as manga in postwar Japan, and giving rise to the graphic novel. Now regularly reviewed in the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker* (always appreciated for its cartoons!), and many others,

the graphic novel has taken on serious subjects like poverty, war, racism... Kent would have been proud. Even comic books – like the soap operas – are not always taken seriously, but in the last 30 or 40 years, they have both found a way to bring social issues into their narratives to make the attitudes of their readers and viewers more humane.

Mark Harris did a great job of laying out the history of a misunderstood medium. It was a pleasure to hear about it from a true enthusiast. His outline was clear as he led us through what can easily become a mire of names, dates, and publishers. Mark also gave a great portrayal of a publishing venture that at the end of the day, like all publishing, is a business striving to connect artists eager to tell great stories with their public eager to read them.

See you at the bookstore!

Charles

The Florida Bibliophile Society

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Unattributed material has been prepared by the editor.

The Florida Bibliophile Society is a 501c3 organization. All contributions to FBS are tax deductible.