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October newsletter deadline: Sept. 28, 2022 (see p. 21)

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 Spring 2022 FABS Journal here.

ANNUAL DUES for the 2022–2023 FBS Season are due by December 31, 2022!

Membership is $50 U.S. per household per year. Send inquiries and payments to Ben Wiley at 3911 McKay Creek Dr. Largo, FL 33770. Dues may also be paid using our PayPal account: floridabibliophiles@gmail.com.
The FBS Annual Banquet was held in May at Brio Tuscan Grille in Tampa’s International Plaza. We’ve held the banquet there for several years now, and it has always been an ideal venue. The room has plenty of space for us and yet feels intimate. The staff is always helpful and responsive. The food is tasty and served family-style and in generous portions.

It was a great pleasure to be together again after the many months of Covid separation. Seeing old friends and meeting new ones made it seem that we had never been apart. The auction tables were stocked with wonderful books and book-related items.

We opened the meeting by welcoming all gathered and introducing the afternoon’s events. A moment of silence has held for all of us to remember Jerry Morris.

Our special treats were the presence of our guest speaker, Sarah Penner, with her husband Mark, and this year’s Lee J. Harrer Student Book Collecting Essay Contest winners Andrea Rinard, Allison Duque, and Mandy Trotti.

After lunch, Sarah spoke about her bestselling book, *The Lost Apothecary*, and how it came to be. It was her second book, and if you are wondering what her first book was, wonder on. It was never published. Sarah explained that she spent years writing her first book about two women in late 18th-century London and their conflict. She sent it to over 100 literary agents and was rejected by one after another. However, some made useful comments. Briefly, her plot made her main characters victims of their circumstances, and the resolution of their conflict was brought about by a man. The critique: Disempowered women whose problems are solved by men won’t fly anymore.

Sarah took this advice and more and turned the formula upside-down: women take control of their lives. At the heart of the story is a woman apothecary in late 18th-century London who covertly supplies women with poisons they want in order to deal with troublesome men in their lives. The main characters are women who make decisions and face their fates squarely.
The result was *The Lost Apothecary*. It debuted at #7 on the *New York Times* Bestseller List and spent three months on the *USA Today* and *Publishers Weekly* bestseller lists. It was on the IndieBound bestseller list for five months, became an international bestseller in Canada, Belgium, Sweden, and Spain (and perhaps more by now), and was a Book of the Year Top 5 finalist. Yes, it’s that good.

Sarah shared with us that the book has been optioned by Fox for a miniseries. Pretty exciting! But she cautioned that there are many steps between option and broadcast, all of which have to go perfectly. So we must be patient.

Brio Tuscan Grille is not far from Tampa International Airport — convenient for Sarah and Mark who were headed out to London, a city that Sarah truly loves. Despite impending international travel, Sarah was generous with her time and answered many questions with ease and humor.


It was a delight to meet our three Harrer essay contest winner Andrea Rinard and runners-up Allison Duque and Mandy Trotti. (They were profiled in *The Florida Bibliophile* for April 2022.)

Per our tradition, we asked the three to stand, introduced them to the group, and invited an ovation. Also per tradition, we presented each attendee with a keepsake booklet containing the three essays and biographical information about each writer. Then Andrea went to the podium and read her essay, which is included in this newsletter.

Our afternoon concluded with more conversation as the results of the silent auction were announced.

Around 4:30 p.m., the last of us were working our way toward the door, lingering over plans to get together and wishing each other a good summer.
Minutes, concluded

Andrea Rinard’s First-Place Winning Entry for the Lee J. Harrer Student Book Collecting Essay Contest

I’ve watched an episode or two of *Hoarders*, so I have a basic layman’s knowledge of the psychology behind a hoard. Items are kept because they represent memories, sentimental moments, wishes for a life not being lived. But collecting books is not the same as hoarding with all the negative connotations of that term. Or at least, that’s what I tell myself.

I can’t deny, though, the idea of books being emotional portals hits me very close, and I like having all the roads and paths to so many feelings and experiences around me.

I’ve always been a reader. As far back as I can remember, books were a part of my daily life, and I wanted my favorites to stay with me in case I needed to travel in a particular one again. I went to Uriel, Avonlea, Concord, and the Big Woods over and over. Later, I journeyed to West Egg, Tralfamadore, Pemberley, 124 Bluestone Road, and Macondo so many times that those locations were no more exotic to me than St. Augustine, Ybor City, Ft. Lauderdale, Jacksonville, or Sarasota.

Keeping my books is not only a way to revisit the people and places I know and love, but the practice also helps me remember the stories I love so much and reconnect with who I was when I first fell into them. Maintaining my collection is a way of maintaining myself as a child and young adult. I can look at a spine and immediately know not only the lives within the pages but the life that held them in her hands. As I grow older, I drift farther away from the person I used to be, but my books are beacons shining from shores within my reach. They guide me back to discovered strengths, shared realities, and ineffable longings.

My collection also serves now to guide me forward. As a graduate student and aspiring writer, I look within my shelves to find a beautiful image I remember, a quintessential gesture, the perfect word. There are master classes available to me within my own home without having to touch a keyboard or click a mouse. My books are the most perfect and complete database of craft I could ever find. I’ve never been comfortable with writing in my books, but sticky notes peek from pages like pastel flags across the shelves, calling me to see what my faithful teachers still have to share.

Although I covet sumptuous libraries, both public and private, my own collection is no less dear. Battered paperbacks snug next to hardbound copies I’ve gleaned from flea markets and Friends of the Library sales. I have books that have never been featured on any bestseller list but are as precious to me as anyone else’s leather-bound first editions. There is one special shelf of books I waited in line at readings to have signed by luminaries such as Margaret Atwood, Michael Cunningham, Toni Morrison, and Seamus Heaney. However, those share space with a faded copy of the picture book my grandmother used to read me and another book a new friend gave me that was so perfect for the time in my life she gifted it to me that it makes me ache anytime I think about how discovering that story made me feel seen and understood.

As I keep adding to my collection, I have started culling… just a little. I give books to friends I think will enjoy them, hoping as I press each little rectangular universe into another pair of hands that I’ll never get it back— that it will mean something wonderful to its new keeper.

Also, I need the space because my daughter has started her own collection. Some of my books find their way to her, but most of her shelves are filled with her own discoveries. Despite the differences in our tastes and titles, the collections link us, and I know that sharing the love and appreciation for books and reading is a priceless gift we give one another. When missing her while she’s away at college becomes too unbearable, all I have to do to find her again is browse the books that she keeps and see her—and discover a new part of myself— between the pages.
There’s More Than One Way to Ban A Book

by Charles Brown

September 18–24, 2022 is this year’s Banned Books Week. This year’s theme is “Books Unite Us. Censorship Divides Us.”

The American Library Association (ALA) says:

Books reach across boundaries and build connections between readers. Censorship, on the other hand, creates barriers. Banned Books Week is both a reminder of the unifying power of stories and the divisiveness of censorship, and a call to action for readers across the country to push back against censorship attempts in their communities.

Specific books have been objected to for many reasons. Our first thoughts might be ideological or moral offense. For example, according to the ALA, the most challenged books from 2000 to 2009 were J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series. The complainants demanded the removal of these books from public libraries because of depictions of witchcraft and magic, the presence of “actual curses and spells” in the text, and the use of “nefarious means” to accomplish goals. Is Harry Potter the type of book that comes to mind with the description “banned books”? Who has the right to prevent our access to Harry Potter?

Many countries have government censorship boards, but we are fortunate in the U.S. that there is no official mechanism to ban books. Therefore, Americans with a complaint against a book must apply unofficial pressure by mounting campaigns to arouse the outrage of interest groups, often with appeals to protecting children. Such campaigns may provoke a useful discussion about the ideas in the book in question. They may actually promote sales of the books and have the opposite of the intended effect.

Many complaints about books focus on books for school-age children. Perhaps it is not surprising that the focus of these objections is often that they undermine a traditional perception of U.S. history or that they reflect emerging views of American culture, such as race or sexuality, both of which are touchy subjects in American culture — even saying this out loud is an offensive critique for some (“Who you calling ‘touchy’?”). Portraying the U.S. in a negative light often draws calls for book banning.

As Americans look more closely at their history, we are forced to wrestle with contradictions between the guarantees in our founding documents and the realities of inequalities and discrimination — a conflict between what we wish was true and what is true for many Americans. Books that present these questions may become targets for banning. Why should we be afraid of these questions? To paraphrase Adam Laats, a historian of American education, these questions force us to ask “Who are we as Americans.”

Just as some books make Top 10 bestseller lists, some books make the Top 10 Most Challenged Books. The most challenged book from 2010 to 2019 — often in the top 10 — was The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie. The book is a first-person narrative told by a Native American teenager that reflects the harsh realities of reservation life and coming of age as a Native American. The main character in the novel, nicknamed “Junior,” is encouraged by a teacher in his reservation school to attend a wealthier (and much whiter) mainstream high school over 20 miles away. Junior’s poor family supports this choice, and he benefits. Along the way, he observes the difference between reservation culture and mainstream culture.

Diary was praised by numerous reviewers and won many awards, including the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature, American Indian Library Association Best Young Adult Book, American
Ban a Book, continued

Library Association’s Best Books for Young Adults, Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, Fiction and Poetry, Odyssey Award as the year’s “best audiobook for children or young adults”, California Young Reader Medal – Young Adult Book... should we go on?

Nevertheless, demands to remove this book from libraries have been based on the following objections:

- Acknowledging poverty, alcoholism, and sexuality
- Allegations of sexual misconduct by the author
- Offensive language/Profanity
- Cultural insensitivity
- Deemed anti-family
- Depictions of bullying
- Gambling
- Racism
- References to drugs, alcohol, and smoking
- Religious viewpoint (anti-Christian content)
- Sex education
- Sexual references
- Unsuit for age group
- Violence

Note the first word in the list: Acknowledging. After love, what do young adults need more than this?

The conflict between what we wish was true and what is true.

As the longest running democracy in modern history, the intentions of America’s founders have proven extremely durable, but over 200+ years, cultural changes, technological changes, geopolitical changes – feel free to add some categories to this list – have challenged Americans and their governments to consider new ideas, debate their value, and adapt. Some have commented that the rate of change has increased in the last 40, 30, 20, 10 years so that many of us are challenged to keep up. Our cellphones are a great example! Many of us did not grow up with apps, and now they are essential to our lives. Yet, we happily purchase cellphones and enjoy their many functions. Well, most of us do. There are those who refuse to tie into the types of networks that cellphones represent out of concern for government control, invasion of privacy, etc.

There have been other changes as well as Americans continue to move forward and find more ways to live out the promises of our founding documents. In that effort, those who have been disadvantaged are moved to the front so that we can address the issues that affect them. These efforts can threaten existing power structures, and when the status quo is threatened, people may personalize this threat and ask “Who are we as Americans?”

The reaction to change can be a backlash(es) that looks closely at all aspects of American life to locate and condemn what it sees as the sources of this destabilization: “Someone is rocking our world, and we need to make them stop.”

Books and other media become prime targets because they are so visible and because they are so effective at distributing what some may regard as damaging messages.

Ultimately, book banning is an exercise in power. For example, a religious leader in a distant country calls for the death of an author who has written a book that he feels criticizes his religious beliefs. This call is taken up by individuals here and there who are more extreme in their views about these beliefs, and this demonstrates the leader’s power. The responding individuals also feel a sense of power and a deeper connection to the objects of their belief. Book banning can be seen as a similar effort to exercise power and gain the affection of followers.

In a recent opinion piece entitled “There’s More Than One Way to Ban a Book” in the New York Times, author and editor Pamela Paul examined the more subtle ways through book banning is creeping into the publishing process itself.

She begins by describing American publishers that have taken courageous stands to publish material even in the face of significant controversy. Paul says this is...
Ban a Book, continued

part of an American tradition in publishing:

The American publishing industry has long prided itself on publishing ideas and narratives that are worthy of our engagement, even if some people might consider them unsavory or dangerous, and for standing its ground on freedom of expression.

Paul’s first example is the decision of Walter Minton, president of publishing house G. P. Putnam’s Sons, to publish the first American edition of Vladimir Nabokov’s controversial novel Lolita in 1958.

Briefly, the book concerns a middle-aged man who becomes obsessed with and then sexually involved with a precocious 12-year-old girl. The first third of the book describes this relationship, then the girl abandons him, and the remainder of the book is about the man’s efforts to recover.

When Nabokov completed the novel in 1953, he sought an American publisher. Despite his reputation as an author, he was turned down by Viking, Simon & Schuster, New Directions, Farrar, Straus, and Doubleday. He published in France in 1955, making a hasty deal with a publisher later found to be unsavory. Copies found their way to England where the influential author and critic Grahame Green reviewed it as one of the three best books of the year, but there were reviewers who found the book deeply offensive. When the book came to the attention of the British censors, it was condemned and customs officers were ordered to seize all copies entering the U.K. France quickly followed.

Minton accepted the book for publication in 1958, and it was released in August of that year. Lolita became the first book since Gone with the Wind (1936) to sell over 100,000 copies in three weeks! In 1962, Lolita was released as a U.S. film, starring James Mason and directed by Stanley Kubrick. Lolita is widely regarded as one of the best novels of the 20th century.

Lolita has been challenged, removed, and condemned from time to time. In earlier days, these responses were based on moral grounds, i.e., on the fact that it contained sexual content and of a particularly unsavory type. In more recent years, Lolita has been challenged from other points of view, for example, for its insensitivity to child sexual abuse. When Lolita was published, child sexual abuse was not talked about openly – now we acknowledge the frequency of this abuse and are eager to protect children from it and provide resources for adult survivors. In this new environment of sensitivity to these individuals, the story in Lolita may present difficulties.

In her article, Paul shows how this kind of sensitivity has begun to lead to a suppression of works that deal with a number of issues that American culture is confronting. Paul says that books are now under pressure from both ends of the political spectrum – she quotes John Sargent, chief executive at Macmillan until last year and “widely respected in the industry for his staunch defense of freedom of expression”:

On the right, it’s going through institutions and school boards, and on the left, it’s using social media as a tool of activism. It’s aggressively protesting to increase the pain threshold, until there’s censorship going the other way.”

In the face of broad attacks launched on social media, print media, etc., publishers have become wary. Paul cites the 2020 novel American Dirt, the fourth book from author Jeanine Cummins.

Cummins’s book tells the story of a bookseller in Acapulco, Mexico. When her journalist husband is killed for printing an expose of a drug lord, the bookseller must flee with her son and make the arduous journey through Mexico and across the border to the U.S.

Far from having difficulty in finding a publisher,
American Dirt was the object of a bidding war among publishers. The winner was Flatiron Books, which reportedly paid Cummins “a seven-figure advance.” Flatiron conducted a massive publicity campaign and sent boxes of books to libraries near the Mexican border, held a release party, and obtained blurbs from Stephen King, Sandra Cisneros, Don Winslow, and John Grisham. Oprah Winfrey selected the book for her book club. American Dirt debuted at #1 on the New York Times bestseller list.

However, American Dirt was uniquely positioned to inflame passions on all sides of the immigration debate, and reactions came from many corners. Some emphasized the importance of the issue the book treats or its emotional engagement. Others criticized it for its lack of authenticity and exploitation.

Reviews were written and retracted; one review commissioned by Ms. was so negative, that the magazine declined to publish it.

Paul refers to this episode as the “American Dirt imbroglio.” She explains that this is what publishers are hoping to avoid.

We are all trying to find a way to understand and engage with emerging attitudes about immigration, race, and sexualities in an environment where these topics are the subjects of intense feeling, study, and publication (in the broad sense, including social media and television). For many, the solution is ideology – unwavering stands that can answer questions before they are even asked. It is difficult to resist this ideologization (a form of radicalization) in the charged atmosphere of modern America.

Paul says, “We shouldn’t capitulate to any repressive forces, no matter where they emanate from on the political spectrum. Parents, schools and readers should demand access to all kinds of books, whether they personally approve of the content or not. For those on the illiberal left to conduct their own campaigns of censorship while bemoaning the book-burning impulses of the right is to violate the core tenets of liberalism.”

She illustrates this point with resistance, both in-house and out, to Simon & Schuster’s book deal with former Vice President Mike Pence. One suspects that Mr. Pence is unlikely to write an outright screed, and he is entitled to explain, and even defend, himself. Mr. Pence deserves to be heard, and anger over his policies or statements should not influence professionals in the decision to publishing.

Our most famous stories about America are based on the toleration that permits individual freedom. We can be proud of this tradition. As we expand individual freedom into areas that were previously largely unknown, much less mentioned, our toleration must increase. We must replace “Don’t tread on me” with “Live and let live” and find common values that allow reasoned debate even about objectionable materials.

Who are we as Americans?
CENSORSHIP
BY THE NUMBERS

Books unite us. They reach across boundaries and build connections between readers. Censorship, on the other hand, divides us and creates barriers. In 2021, 1,597 books were affected by censorship attempts. Learn more at ala.org/bbooks.

WHO INITIATES CHALLENGES?

- 39% Parents
- 24% Patrons
- 18% Board/administration
- 10% Political/religious groups
- 6% Librarians/teachers
- 2% Elected officials
- 1% Students

WHERE DO CHALLENGES TAKE PLACE?

- 44% School libraries
- 37% Public libraries
- 18% Schools
- 1% Academic/Other

BOOKS AND BEYOND

The ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom tracked 729 challenges in 2021. Here’s the breakdown:

- 82% Books, graphic novels, and textbooks
- 5% Programs, meeting rooms
- 4% Displays, exhibits
- 2% Films
- 7% Other (includes filtering, access, databases, magazines, online resources, artwork, social media, music, pamphlets, student publications, reading lists)

REASONS FOR CHALLENGES

- OBSCENE
- BRIEF
- DECENCY
- PORN
- ANTI
- START
- SOLIDARITY
- Lgbtqa
- Antipolice
- Sex education
- Woke
- Pedophilia
- Drugs
- Political viewpoint
- Sexually explicit
- Antisemitic
- Critical race theory
- Profanity
- Indoctrinating kids
- Material
- Use of explosive term for African-Americans

CENSORSHIP STATISTICS COMPILED BY:
OFFICE FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM
American Library Association

Each word and phrase in this graphic is cited from 2021 censorship reports.
The Florida Bibliophile ● September 2022 ● Volume 39, No. 1

Ban a Book, concluded

The Top 10 Banned Books of 2021
as tracked by the American Library Association

1. Gender Queer by Maia Kobabe – Started as a way to explain to eir family what it means to be nonbinary and asexual, Gender Queer is more than a personal story: it is a useful and touching guide on gender identity—what it means and how to think about it—for advocates, friends, and humans everywhere.

2. Lawn Boy by Jonathan Evison – “Jonathan Evison’s voice is pure magic. In Lawn Boy, at once a vibrant coming-of-age novel and a sharp social commentary on class, Evison offers a painfully honest portrait of one young man’s struggle to overcome the hand he’s been dealt in life and reach for his dreams. It’s a journey you won’t want to miss, with an ending you won’t forget.” – Kristin Hannah, author of The Nightingale

3. All Boys Aren’t Blue by George M. Johnson – Both a primer for teens eager to be allies as well as a reassuring testimony for young queer men of color, All Boys Aren’t Blue covers topics such as gender identity, toxic masculinity, brotherhood, family, structural marginalization, consent, and Black joy. Johnson’s emotionally frank style of writing will appeal directly to young adults.

4. Out of Darkness by Ashley Hope Perez – “This book presents a range of human nature, from kindness and love to acts of racial and sexual violence. The work resonates with fear, hope, love, and the importance of memory....Set against the backdrop of an actual historical event, Pérez...gives voice to many long-omitted facets of U.S. history.” – School Library Journal

5. The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas – Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.


8. The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison – In Morrison’s acclaimed first novel, Pecola Breedlove – an 11-year-old Black girl in an America whose love for its blond, blue-eyed children can devastate all others – prays for her eyes to turn blue: so that she will be beautiful, so that people will look at her, so that her world will be different. This is the story of the nightmare at the heart of her yearning, and the tragedy of its fulfillment.

9. This Book is Gay by Juno Dawson – YA author Juno Dawson gives an uncensored look at what it’s like to grow up as LGBT. Including testimonials from people across the gender and sexual spectrums, this frank, funny, fully inclusive book explores everything anyone who ever dared to wonder wants to know - from sex to politics, how to pull, stereotypes, how to come-out and more. Spike Gerrell’s hilarious illustrations combined with funny and factual text make this a must-read.

10. Beyond Magenta by Susan Kuklin – In interviews with six transgender or gender-neutral young adults, Kuklin represents them thoughtfully and respectfully before, during, and after their personal acknowledgment of gender preference. The photographs that grace the pages augment the emotional and physical journey each youth has taken. The teens differ in family dynamics, living situations, gender, and the transition they made, but alike in the candor and courage displayed in search of one’s true self.
THE FLORIDA BIBLIOPHILE SOCIETY

STANDS WITH SALMAN RUSHDIE

In August, 2022, All People Of The Book Were Called To Bear Witness.

A novel which ignited a culture war, a death fatwa, and attempted murder of the author.


On the morning of August 12, 2022, Sir Salman Rushdie was savagely assaulted at a public reading hosted by the Chautauqua Institution, NY; he may lose an eye and the use of an arm: <NY Times>. His 24-year-old assailant, charged with second-degree attempted murder, became radicalized during a recent trip to the Middle East; the attack is thought to have been religiously motivated. Within a week, PEN America, the New York Public Library, Penguin Random House, et al., organized Stand With Salman, a public event on the steps of the NYPL, with comments and readings on censorship, tolerance, and the role of writers in the 21stC. Speakers: Paul Auster, Reginald Dwayne Betts, Tina Brown, Kiran Desai, Amanda Foreman, Roya Hakakian, A.M. Homes, Siri Hustvedt, Hari Kunzru, Colum McCann, Gay Talese: <Video, NYPL event>. <Breaking News Coverage: Al Jazeera> / New York, August 12, 2022.

Page Written & Constructed By Maureen E. Mulvihill.
Contributing Writer, Florida Bibliophile Society; 2012-2015 VP.
Galileo Letter Is Confirmed Forgery

In 1934, the University of Michigan acquired an original letter by the famous physicist and astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564–1642). This document has been a prized possession of the university’s library, until now...

The Suspect

The letter was part of the collection of Rev. Dr. Roderick Terry (1849–1933), a Presbyterian minister born in Brooklyn, who served in New York churches, as a chaplin in the Spanish-American War, and retired to Newport, R.I. His collection was auctioned by American Art Association–Anderson Galleries in three sales in 1934 and 1935. It was described by the New York Times as “One of the most important auctions of rare books, manuscripts, and autographs to be held here in several years.”

The sale included “illuminated manuscripts, incunabula, rare first editions of important books in English literature from the 16th century to the 19th century, autograph letters and manuscripts of English and American authors, rare Americana, including early printed books, broadsides, and historical autographs, and autograph letters and documents of historical personages, musicians, artists, etc.” A detailed list of the items offered is astounding, including leaves from a Gutenberg Bible and Shakespeare folios. The original New York Times article from April 29, 1934, appears in the following pages.

“An Autograph Letter Signed by Galileo Galilei to Cosimo de’ Medici” appeared as Lot 92 in Part 1 of the sale. The letter was accompanied by a “certification of genuineness” by Cardinal Pietro Maffi (1858–1931), Archibishop of Pisa, claiming that the letter had been found authentic by comparison with others in the collection at Pisa, Galileo’s hometown. The letter is described as a draft document containing about 200 words in Italian with several diagrams. Letters of Galileo are extremely rare, and the catalog states that this one is believed to be the first offered for sale in the U.S.

At the top of the letter is a message dated August 24, 1609, to Galileo’s patron, Cosimo de’ Medici, describing Galileo’s new invention, the telescope. In the lower portion of the page, dated a few months later in January 1610, are diagrams that document one of Galileo’s most important discoveries with the telescope, observations of the moons of Jupiter. Together, these items make the single-page document significant in the history of science. The final versions of this draft are held in the Archivio di Stato di Venezia (the letter to Cosimo de’ Medici) and in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (notes on the moons of Jupiter) as part of the Sidereus Nuncius Dossier. Thus, the document has been rightly described by the University of Michigan as “one of the jewels at the University of Michigan Library.”

The University of Michigan did not buy the letter. It was purchased by Tracy McGregor, a Detroit businessman and bibliophile. After McGregor’s death, his trustees bequeathed the manuscript to the university in 1938, in special recognition of the services to astronomy by Heber D. Curtis, professor of astronomy.

The Sleuth

In May 2022, Nick Wilding, a historian at Georgia State University, had the occasion to examine the Galileo letter online because he is writing a biography of Galileo. He is well acquainted with Galileo manuscripts and noticed some irregularities in letter forms and word choices. Also, though the top part was written months before the bottom part, the ink seemed very similar, considering that ink was then made by hand, and the two parts of the letter would likely have come from different lots of ink. Wilding is a specialist in forgeries, and so has a keener eye than most for these irregularities.

Sources: University of Michigan; New York Times; The Guardian
He questioned the provenance of the Galileo letter, but could find no record of it in Italian archives. Its first appearance was in the 1934 purchase record at the Terry collection auction. The clues were beginning to add up.

Wilding contacted the University of Michigan library and asked for their provenance information and for an image of the letter’s watermark.

Pablo Alvarez, the curator at the library’s Special Collections Research Center, retrieved the document from storage and photographed its watermark, a circle with a three-leafed clover and the monogram, “AS/BMO.”

Alvarez knew Wilding’s reputation for detecting forgeries, so when he saw Wilding’s name on the request, he became uneasy.

The provenance as given in the auction catalog told Wilding that the letter had been authenticated by Cardinal Maffi by comparison to “other originals in the collection at Pisa.” Wilding pursued the “other originals” and found that they had been given to the cardinal by Tobia Nicotra, well known to Wilding as “a notorious 20th-century counterfeiter in Milan.”

Meanwhile, Alvarez asked the university’s conservation laboratory to examine the document. They returned reassuring information: the ink and paper were consistent with the Galileo’s time.

Wilding continued to follow up on each element of the document. The AS/BMO monogram turned up in another Galileo document, this time at the Morgan Library & Museum in New York. While the monogram was the same, the watermark was slightly different. The document was a letter dated 1607, and Wilding recognized it as uncannily similar to a letter he had seen in Italian archives. He suspected another forgery and reported his findings to the Morgan Library.

Wilding found that “BMO” was an abbreviation for the Italian city of Bergamo. With this information, Wilding found the final piece of the puzzle in the reference “The Ancient Paper-Mills of the Former Austro-Hungarian Empire and Their Watermarks.”

Wilding contacted both the Michigan and Morgan libraries with this result.

Alvarez examined the reference. No paper watermarked AS/BMO was known before 1770. Galileo, living 150 years before that, would have been most unlikely to have used this paper, a detail the forger had missed.

The Michigan manuscript is one of a handful of Nicotra forgeries that have been identified. Hundreds more remain to be discovered.

* * * * *

Returning to 1934, Walter Toscanini, son of the famous conductor Arturo, purchases a Mozart manuscript from one Tobia Nicotra, well known as a source of manuscripts. The younger Toscanini is an authority on antiquarian manuscripts and upon close inspection, believes the manuscript to be a forgery. He sends the manuscript to the Mozart University in Salzburg, Austria, where it is authenticated.

Toscanini is not convinced. With further investigation, he determines that the document is a forgery and approaches the Milan police. Detective Giorgio Florita and Toscanini catch Nicotra selling forged documents to Hopeli, a Milan publishing house. Nicotra is arrested for failing to produce an identity document when asked.

A search of Nicotra’s apartment reveals a virtual “forgery factory,” with endpapers and other book materials taken from Milan libraries and many forgery projects in progress for personages including Christopher Columbus, Warren G. Harding, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, Leonardo da Vinci, Abraham Lincoln, the Marquis de Lafayette, Martin Luther, Michelangelo, and George Washington. Many of these names reflect the popularity of Nicotra’s work in the U.S. – a rich field for his toil – where he sold hundreds of documents to
knowledgeable collectors in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1932, he was wined and dined during a tour of the U.S. with a small orchestra, posing as Ricardo Drigo, Director of Music for the Imperial Ballet of Saint Petersburg, Russia. Drigo had died in 1930. At the time, Nicotra was well known in the U.S. for his well-received and widely read 1929 biography of Arturo Toscanini.

A further search of Nicotra’s apartment revealed a large and luxurious salon with black velvet walls and seven shrines, each decorated with flowers and photographs and paintings of the “seven loves” that made his life at 53 – to him, an unbearably old age – bearable. As he said when asked about the reason for his crimes: “I did it to support my seven loves.”

On November 9, 1934, Nicotra was sentenced to two years in prison and a fine of 2,400 lire (about 3,100 dollars today). Despite some secrecy in the trial’s conduct to avoid embarrassment, the trial and its sensational revelations were widely reported in U.S. newspapers.

Nicotra was paroled early by the National Fascist Party that ruled the Kingdom of Italy from 1922 to 1943. They needed a master forger.
Galileo, continued

Catalog entry for lot 92, “An Autograph Letter Signed by Galileo Galilei to Cosimo de’ Medici” from *The Library of the Late Rev. Dr. Roderick Terry of Newport, Rhode Island, Part 1* (1934)

92

AN AUTOGRAPH LETTER SIGNED BY GALILEO GALILEI TO COSIMO DE’ MEDICI


A remarkable historical letter by one of the most famous scientists of all time. Believed to be the first signed autograph letter by Galileo to be offered for public sale in America. Autograph letters by Galileo Galilei are of the greatest rarity.

The letter is addressed to Galileo’s patron, the second Cosimo de’ Medici, through whose influence the astronomer had recently been appointed to the chair of mathematics at the University of Padua. It was written from Padua at the height of Galileo’s prosperity, probably in the year 1600, and relates to one of the astronomer’s most important discoveries, the Galilean telescope. The value of this discovery in naval warfare is explained in the letter. At the conclusion of the letter is a chart or diagram explaining Galileo’s observations with the telescope of the movements of the planet Jupiter and its satellites.

A certification of genuineness by Cardinal Maffi, Archbishop of Pisa, accompanies the letter, written on a visiting card. It attests that Cardinal Maffi has compared the letter with other originals in the collection at Pisa and found it to be authentic. Galileo was a native of Pisa, and some of his more important experiments were conducted in that city, particularly from the leaning tower.

The letter reads as follows (in translation): “Most serene Prince. Galileo Galilei most humbly prostrates himself before your Highness, watching carefully, and with all spirit of willingness, not only to satisfy what concerns the reading of mathematics in the study of Padua, but to write of having decided to present to your Highness a telescope [“Occhiale”] that will be a great help in maritime and land enterprises. I assure you I shall keep this new invention a great secret and show it only to your Highness. The telescope was made for the most accurate study of distances. This telescope has the advantage of discovering the ships of the enemy two hours before they can be seen with the natural vision and to distinguish the number and quality of the ships and to judge their strength and be ready to chase them, to fight them, or to flee from them; or, in the open country to see all details and to distinguish every movement and preparation.” Beneath the letter are diagrams and notes explaining the position of Jupiter on several nights.
Galileo, concluded

Letter of Galileo Galilei to Leonardo Donato, Doge of Venice, August 1609, University of Michigan Library
Publication of John D. MacDonald Letters

In March 2016, FBS members Cal and Nola Branche wrote in the pages of this newsletter about events being planned for the centennial of John D. MacDonald’s birth. They also wrote about a remarkable collection found among MacDonald’s papers at the University of Florida library:

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.

Cal and Nola, avid collector’s of MacDonald, shared these letters with MacDonald’s son Maynard, who had never seen them and expressed his gratitude for the opportunity. Cal and Nola also embarked on a project to organize a selection of the 373 letters into a book. Working with University of Florida archivist Flo Turcotte*, the Branches accomplished this goal, and the result of the trio’s work was published in May 2022 as Dear Dordo: The World War II Letters of Dorothy and John D. MacDonald.

The Florida Bibliophile for March 2016 includes three letters from the MacDonalds’ correspondence. Cal wrote this introduction to them:

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.

Fans of MacDonald and many others will likely feel as Maynard did: grateful for the opportunity to participate in this remarkable period of the lives of Dordo (Dorothy) and John as well as for this view of the period itself, during which so many couples were separated by thousands of miles and the uncertainty of war.

Our congratulations to Cal, Nola, and Flo on the publication of Dear Dordo!

*Flo is known to many FBS members for her presentation about Marjorie K. Rawlings in October 2015.
**Books in Brief**

**In Praise of Good Bookstores**  
Jeff Deutsch  
Princeton University Press  
216 pp., 2022

Do we need bookstores in the twenty-first century? If so, what makes a good one? In this beautifully written book, Jeff Deutsch – director of Chicago’s remarkable Seminary Co-op Bookstores – pays loving tribute to one of our most important and endangered civic institutions. He considers how qualities like space, time, abundance, and community find expression in a good bookstore. He also predicts – perhaps audaciously – a future in which the bookstore not only endures, but realizes its highest aspirations.

In exploring why good bookstores matter, Deutsch draws on his lifelong experience as a bookseller, but also his upbringing as an Orthodox Jew. This spiritual and cultural heritage instilled in him a reverence for reading, not as a means to a living, but as an essential part of a meaningful life. Central among Deutsch’s arguments for the necessity of bookstores is the incalculable value of browsing – because, when we are deep in the act of looking at the shelves, we move through space as though we are inside the mind itself, immersed in self-reflection.

**The Unfinished Book (Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature)**  
Alexandra Gillespie and Deidre Lynch, eds.  
Oxford University Press  
528 pp., 2021

This collection argues that the physical book is unfinished – it still has much to offer as informational medium, art object, or conceptual resource. The chapters work together to demonstrate how much book history has to gain from emerging literary-critical interests of the 21st century, such as scholarship on empire, environment, disability, and African-American and Indigenous studies. The chapters span terrain from the earliest Indus Valley writings to Cicero’s 1st-century BCE library to the latest videogames, with new ways of thinking about the form, edges, and boundaries of the book. Overall, this collection launches a new generation of scholarship as it introduces provocative new approaches about the nature, place, and time of books.

**Jeff Deutsch** is director of Chicago’s Seminary Co-op Bookstores, the first not-for-profit bookstores in the United States whose mission is devoted to bookselling. He is the first bookseller to sit on Princeton University Press’s Board of Directors.

**Alexandra Gillespie** is Professor of English at the University of Toronto and a member of Toronto’s Collaborative Program in Book History and Print Culture and its Centre for Medieval Studies.

**Deidre Lynch** is Ernest Bernbaum Professor of English Literature at Harvard, with numerous publications on 18th-, 19th-, and 20th-century literature, culture, and reading communities.

Source: Princeton University Press

Source: Oxford University Press
Books in Brief, continued

**Bibliophobia: The End and the Beginning of the Book**
Brian Cummings
Oxford University Press
592 pp., 2022

*Bibliophobia* is about material books, about their care and destruction during 5000 years of writing, from Sumeria to the smartphone. It begins with the modern idea of “the death of the book” implied by the rise of digital media and traces the twin phobias of the book’s omniscience and oblivion across that same time span. Books imply cognitive content embodied in physical form, and at its heart, this relationship of body and mind – or letter and spirit – always retains a mystery. Religions are founded on holy books, which are also sites of transgression, so that writing is simultaneously sacred and profane. *Bibliophobia* is a richly illustrated global history. It discusses topics such as the origins of scripts; the development of textual media such as scrolls, codices, printed books, and artificial intelligence; the collection and destruction of libraries; the use of books as holy relics, talismans, or shrines; and literacy in the history of slavery, heresy, blasphemy, censorship, and persecution. It proposes a theory of writing, how it relates to speech, images, and information, or to concepts of mimesis, personhood, and politics.

Brian Cummings is Anniversary Professor at the University of York. He is a Fellow of the British Academy and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

**The Wordhord: Daily Life in Old English**
Hana Videen
Princeton University Press
296 pp., 2022

Before Shakespeare’s English or Chaucer’s Middle English, Old English – the language of *Beowulf* – defies comprehension by untrained modern readers. Used throughout much of Britain more than a thousand years ago, it is rich with words that haven’t changed (like “word”), others that are unrecognizable (such as neorxnawang, or paradise), and some that are mystifying even in translation (gafol-fisc, or tax-fish). In this delightful book, Hana Videen gathers a trove of these gems to illuminate the lives of the earliest English speakers and the origins of the language you are now reading. We discover a world where choking on a bit of bread might prove your guilt, where fiend-ship was as likely as friendship, and where you might grow up to be a laughter-smith. *The Wordhord* journeys through Old English words and customs related to practical daily activities; relationships and entertainment; health and the body, mind, and soul; the natural world; locations and travel; mortality, religion, and fate; and the imagination and storytelling. Each chapter ends with its own “wordhord” – a list of its Old English terms, with definitions and pronunciations.

Hana Videen holds a doctorate in Old English from King’s College London and is now a writer and blogger based in Canada, where she translates curiosities of history into engaging narratives.

*Source: Oxford University Press*

*Source: Princeton University Press*
Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England
Claire M. L. Bourne
Oxford University Press
352pp., 2020

Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England is the first book-length study of early modern English playbook typography. It tells a new history of the period’s drama by considering the page designs of plays by Shakespeare and others printed between the late 15th and early 18th centuries. It argues that typography was used creatively by printers, publishers, and playwrights to make the effects of theatricality – from the most basic, such as change in speaker, to more complex, such as movement on stage – intelligible on the page. The product of these experiments was a uniquely dramatic typography, constantly responsive to performance effects, that made it possible for ‘plays’ to be marketed, collected, and read in the 16th and 17th centuries as a print genre distinct from other imaginative writing. It has been said, “If a play is a book, it is not a play.” Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England shows how the “play” and “book” worked together: it was the very bookishness of plays printed in early modern England that allowed them to be recognized by their earliest readers as plays in the first place.

Claire M. L. Bourne is Assistant Professor of English at the Pennsylvania State University. Her research focuses on early modern drama, the history of the book, and theatre history.

Source: Oxford University Press

The Cat Who Saved Books: A Novel
Sosuke Natsukawa, translated by Louise Heal Kawai
HarperVia
208 pp. 2021

From the #1 bestselling author in Japan comes a book about a young bookseller and a talking cat – a cat with a mission: rescue books from mistreatment, misappropriation, and general misuse. Bookish high school student Rintaro is about to close the secondhand bookstore he inherited from his bookworm grandfather when a talking cat appears with an unusual request – or demand – that the teenager help him to save lonely books left unread and unloved. The cat and Rintaro must liberate them from their neglectful owners. This odd couple embark on an amazing journey through a series of mazes to set books free. They meet a man who leaves his books to perish on a bookshelf, an unwitting book torturer who cuts the pages of books into snippets to help people speed read, and a publishing drone who only wants to create bestsellers. Their adventures culminate in one final, unforgettable challenge – the last maze leads Rintaro into a realm that only the bravest dare enter . . .

Sosuke Natsukawa is a doctor in Nagano, Japan. His prize-winning first book, God’s Medical Records, sold 1.5 million copies and was adapted into a film.

Louise Heal Kawai resides in Yokohama, Japan, and has translated Japanese literature in many fiction genres since 2005.

Source: Amazon
The Library at Pergamum (now Bergama, Turkey) was one of the greatest of the ancient world. In the second century BCE, Pergamum was a thriving city and a major cultural center of the Western world. The library was part of the temple complex on top of the Pergamum acropolis, with commanding views of the city and the enormous amphitheater constructed on the hillside next to the acropolis. The library was said to hold up to 200,000 volumes, each written on specially prepared animal skins. Pergamum gave its name to this type of writing material: parchment. In the late second century BCE, Pergamum fell to the Romans, and reportedly, Marc Antony gave the contents of the library to Cleopatra. Many volumes were returned to Pergamum at a later date, and the library existed well into the Common Era, but it was never again the renowned intellectual center it once was.

This Month’s Writers and Contributors

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

Cal and Nola Branche
David Hall
Linda Morris
Maureen E. Mulvihill
Carl Mario Nudi
Elenora Sabin
Gary Simons
Lynn Weiss
Ben Wiley

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

September 2022

Summer Treasures: Show and Tell
Macdonald-Kelce Library
401 W. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa, FL
September 18, 2022, 1:30 p.m.
(also available on Zoom)

When asked, “How was your summer?” A book collector’s answer will probably begin, “I found...” Sometime later, an opportunity may present itself for a second question. September show-and-tell is an opportunity for all of us to answer this question. It’s always fun to learn about new books and new authors and and new collecting themes. From young adult to rare tomes, it’s also a great time for us to learn more about each other and the many areas of knowledge and interest that FBS members bring to the society.

October 2022

Art Adkins: From the Beat to the Book: A Policeman Writes Detective Novels
Macdonald-Kelce Library
401 W. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa, FL
October 16, 2022, 1:30 p.m.
(also available on Zoom)

Art Adkins’s career as a police officer spanned over 30 years in Ft. Lauderdale, Los Angeles, and Gainesville, Florida. His experiences with the LAPD were embodied in Slade Lockwood, the lead character of his first book, *The Oasis Project*, in which a retired LAPD detective returns to Cedar Key to find mysteries that require his unique skills. The sequel, *Power Grid*, was published in 2022. Art is already at work on the third novel in this series.

Art’s books are a blend of his experience and intensive research. He will speak about the transition from law enforcement to mystery writer and what he has learned along the way.
Florida Book Events

— September 8–11 —

Books at the Beach  
St. Pete Beach, FL  
(www.booksatthebeach.com/)

— September 18–24 —

Banned Books Week  
Look for events near you.

September 23–25

38th Annual Necronomicon  
Tampa, FL  
(necronomicontampa.org/)

— October 22–26 —

Alachua Co. Friends of the Library Book Sale  
Gainesville, FL  
(folacld.org/)

— October 28–29 —

Other Words Literary Conference  
Southeastern University, Lakeland, Florida  
(www.floridalitartsco.org/words-conference)

— October 28–30 —

Florida WritersCon  
Altamonte Springs, FL  
(www.floridawriters.org/florida-writerscon)

— November 1 —

National Authors’ Day

— October 3–November 16 —

JCA Jewish Literary, Film, and Arts Festival  
Jacksonville, FL (jcajax.org/jcafest/)

— November 3–5 —

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

— November 11–13 —

Life to Paper Book Festival  
At The Bookshop by Life to Paper  
190 NE 46th Street, Miami, FL 33137  
(https://lifetopaperbookfest.com/)

Behind the Bookshelves, the AbeBooks Podcast

Behind the Bookshelves offers interviews with authors, collectors, and booksellers covering a wide range of topics. Recent episodes include:

October 29 – Collecting John Le Carre

Steven Ritterman’s collection of more than 300 John le Carré books includes first editions, signed copies, galleys, and variants. Le Carré (1931–2020) worked for British security services in the 1950s and 1960s and is best known for his spy novels, particularly The Spy Who Came in from the Cold and Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy. Steven describes his quest for the complete le Carré collection, which includes meeting the author at a New York book signing event and comparing notes on le Carré’s debut book with a fellow collector. We discuss the Cold War, mundane spying processes, and the rising prices of rare le Carré books.

July 26 – Cornwall poet Charles Causley

Charles Causley’s peers in the 1970s regarded his poetry to be on par with Ted Hughes and John Betjeman. Our guest, Nicola Nuttall, is acting director of the Charles Causley Trust, a registered charity that preserves Causley’s legacy. The Trust’s 2022 Causley Festival of Arts and Literature took place in Launceston in Cornwall from July 29–31.

July 13 – Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull

Two of the greatest leaders in Native American history, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, were members of the Sioux Nation. They led native forces at the Battle of Little Big Horn where General Custer famously met his end. Our guest, Mark Lee Gardner, is author of a new book, The Earth Is All That Lasts: Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull and the Last Stand of the Great Sioux Nation, a biography of the two chiefs and a look at the decline of the Sioux Nation.

July 2 – Where Great Writers Write

Author Alex Johnson returns. He has just released Rooms of their Own: Where Great Writers Write. It’s a beautifully illustrated book that describes the writing locations used by 50 famous authors: attics, hotel rooms, huts, bedrooms, and basements where great literature was created. We discuss George Bernard Shaw’s revolving hut, W.H. Auden’s slum in New York, Roald Dahl’s child-free hut, and much more.
The Biblio File, with Nigel Beale

THE BIBLIO FILE is one of the world’s leading podcasts about “the book” and book culture. Host Nigel Beale fosters wide-ranging conversations with authors, poets, publishers, booksellers, editors, collectors, book makers, scholars, critics, designers, publicists, literary agents, and others who just plain love books. The website provides podcasts back to 2006, lists of reading, links, etc.

Recent episodes:

August 27 – Elisabeth Ruge, Germany’s leading literary agent: Ruge is a German editor, publisher and literary agent. She discusses the roles she has played over her career. We talk about the importance of “attention” in the book editing and publishing; about letting go; about spin and elevator pitches; about James McBride’s The Color of Water; and much more.

August 19 – Jonathan Landgrebe on Suhrkamp Verlag, Germany’s Faber & Faber: Landgrebe is the publisher of Suhrkamp Verlag. We talked about his role as head of one of Germany’s most revered publishing houses, and to riff off Siegfried Unseld’s book The Author and His Publisher.

August 13 – Pamela Paul on her role as books editor at The New York Times: We talk mostly about the role that book editors play in the lifecycle of “the book.” I also whine a fair amount about how I don’t like the fact that she left her position, plus we diverge into discussion about Pamela’s recent opinion piece “There’s More Than One Way to Ban a Book.”

American Antiquarian Society Virtual Book Talks

Founded in 1812 by Isaiah Thomas, a Revolutionary War patriot and printer, the American Antiquarian Society is the oldest history society in the U.S. AAS focuses on pre-1876 events and holds the “largest and most accessible collection” of related print materials.

The AAS’s Program in the History of the Book in American Culture (PHBAC) was established in 1983. PHBAC sponsors Virtual Book Talk, showcasing “authors of recently published scholarly monographs, digital-equivalents, and creative works broadly related to book history and print culture.” Free, but advance registration is required.

Recent and upcoming episodes:

September 15, 2 p.m. – Daniel Diaz Crouch: American Fragments: The Political Aesthetic of Unfinished Forms in the Early Republic – During 1776–1820, Americans consumed a myriad of literary texts called “fragments.” Crouch recovers this archive to raise pressing questions about the relationship between aesthetic and national realities: What kind of artistic creation was a fragment? And how and why did deliberately unfinished writing emerge alongside a country that was itself still unfinished?

October 27, 2 p.m. – Michael D’Alessandro: Staged Readings: Contesting Class in Popular American Theater and Literature, 1835–1875 – Staged Readings studies the social consequences of 19th-century America’s theater and popular literature. Among watershed events – waves of immigration, two financial Panics, increasing wealth disparities, and the Civil War – American theater and literature developed rapidly. Playhouses were crowded with new spectators, best-selling novels flew off the shelves, and, all the while, distinct social classes began to emerge.

November 17, 2 p.m. – Marcy J. Dinius: The Textual Effects of David Walker’s “Appeal” Print-Based Activism Against Slavery, Racism, and Discrimination, 1829–1851 – David Walker’s Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World (1829–1830) is recognized as one of the most politically radical and consequential antislavery texts ever published, yet its impact on North American 19th-century print-based activism has gone under-examined. Dinius offers the first in-depth analysis of Walker’s argumentatively and typographically radical pamphlet and its direct influence on five Black and Indigenous activist authors.
In 1952, James Bond author Ian Fleming created *The Book Collector*, a “unique periodical for bibliophiles,” featuring articles on book collecting, modern first editions, typography, national libraries, etc. Fleming died in 1964, as did the journal’s editor John Hayward. After a brief hiatus, the journal was reborn in the hands of new owner and editor, Nicolas Barker. In 2016, Fleming’s nephews, James and Fergus Fleming, took over the journal, and in 2020, they created a podcast, featuring readings from the journal’s archives. There are now 56 podcast episodes available on SoundCloud. Recent additions include:

- Portrait of a Bibliophile XIV: Marx and Engels
- My Uncle Ian, by James Fleming
- Fred Bason’s Diary, Episodes 4 and 5
- Fred Bason’s Diary, Episodes 6
- Some Uncollected Authors XLIII: Gilbert White

Hundreds of podcasts are available in many series of interest to bibliophiles. Here are a few selections:

- The Hertford Bookshelf (6 episodes) – Professor Emma Smith meets Hertford writers to find out more about their work, influences, advice for would-be writers, and memories of the college.
- The Paratexts Podcast (4 episodes) – Dr. Dennis Duncan looks at literary paratexts: the parts of a book that aren’t the main text: indexes, prefaces, footnotes, errata lists...

The Grolier Club of New York has posted many book-related videos on Vimeo, including virtual exhibition openings, tours, talks, and show-and-tell episodes.

**Recent episodes:**

- July 20 – Collector’s Showcase
- June 29 – “Tracks: Images Documenting the Building of the Railroads”
- June 6 – Special Functions Lecture: Mary Catherine Kinniburgh on “20th-Century Counterculture Poets’ Libraries”
- June 3 – Special Functions Lecture: V. M. Braganza on “The Secret Codes of Lady Mary Wroth”
- May 13 – Special Functions Lecture: David Alan Richards on “Kipling’s Kim: The Great Game and the Real Spies”
- May 6 – Virtual Panel Discussion: “Photographs at the Edge: Vittorio Sella and Wilfred Thesiger.”
- May 3 – Special Functions Lecture: Sarah McCoy on American 18th-Century Women Printers

**Princeton University Library**

Princeton podcasts cover a wide range of topics. Search for “book,” “text,” etc. and check search results. Related videos will appear at the right of individual podcasts.

- September 27, 2021 – Evyn Kropf | Introduction to Arabic Manuscripts-Overview, Terms, Methods, Special Challenges
- October 20, 2020 – The Books and Prints of Anaïs Nin and her Gemor Press
...and More

Half-title – On opening a hardback book, one finds the front paste-down, which is the page glued to the inside of the front cover, and the front fly leaf, the first free page of the book, usually attached to the paste-down. The next page is often printed with only the title of the book, and this is the half-title.

The half-title emerged early in the history of printed books. Unlike manuscripts, which were produced one at a time, printed books were produced in editions. For an edition of 1000, the printer printed 1000 copies of page 1, then 1000 copies of page 2, etc. (This is a simplification, but we’ll deal with “imposition” and how books are really printed onto pages in future installment.) The pages are then assembled into text blocks where they await binding into covers. The half-title protected the text block and identified the book. Very handy.

As book manufacture evolved, printers began to put the title on the spine of the book, and some binders began to remove the half title. By then, buyers regarded the half-title as a regular part of a proper book, and thus the half-title has been largely retained over the centuries. Modern books may omit the half-title for a variety of reasons, but it is still common.

As to whether the half-title and the bastard title are the same thing, we remain silent for time being.

“Anyone who has a book collection and a garden wants for nothing.”

– Cicero, to M. Terentius Varro, c. 46 BCE, in Letter to Friends 9.4.1 (Epistulae ad Familiares)
Florida Bibliophile Society 2021–2022 Season

- **September 18** ● **FBS Members – September Show and Tell:** Excited about a recent acquisition? Bring 1–3 of your favorite new books, and tell us about them.

- **October 16** ● **Art Adkins – From the Beat to the Book: A Policeman Writes Detective Novels:** Art was a Los Angeles police officer in for many years before “retiring” to Micanopy, where he owns and operates the Antique City Mall. In his “spare” time, he writes detective novels. His second novel, *Power Grid*, was published in 2021.

- **November 20** ● **Gareth and Griffeth Whitehurst – Field Trip to Whitehurst Gallery and Library, Tarpon Springs:** Father and son Whitehurst will welcome FBS to visit their remarkable library housed in a replica of the Jefferson Memorial.

- **December 18** ● **FBS Holiday Party:** Always a special get-together! Food, fun, books, laughter. Details to be announced.

- **January 15** ● **David Hall – Memories of a New York City Bookman:** David’s thirty-year career as an editor for was spent in the intense world of New York publishing. He knows book publishing in a way that few do, and he will take us inside.

- **February 19** ● **Carey Gordon – From the Nile to the Silk Road: A Life in Books:** Carey’s career in the foreign service took him to many exotic locations. During his time in each, he learned local culture and collected books. Carey will share his experiences and selections from his remarkable library.

- **March 19** ● **Irene Pavese – The Evolution of Margaret Armstrong: Botanist, Illustrator, Book Designer:** She collects the work of Margaret Armstrong (1867–1944) whose illustrations for books, especially covers in the Art Nouveau style, are inspired by her botanical background.

- **March 10–12** ● **Florida Antiquarian Book Fair** is one of the largest book fairs in the U.S. It will be held as usual at the St. Pete Coliseum. FBS will host a table at the entrance where we answer questions and hold parcels for visitors. We plan to have a booth dedicated to FBS where we can spend more time with guests. On Sunday, we usually offer free book evaluations.

- **April 16** ● **Greg Byrd – The Art and Architecture of Constructing the Poetry Book:** For National Poetry Month, we welcome Greg Byrd. Greg is a professor of English at St. Petersburg College where he teaches American Literature, Creative Writing, English Composition, and Literature. He is the author of two novels and several books of poetry.

- **May 21, 1:30 p.m.** ● **Banquet:** Watch this space. Planning for the 2023 FBS Banquet is underway.

All meetings are held at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday afternoons unless otherwise announced.
Our banquet in May was a wonderful occasion. The brief report in this newsletter doesn’t capture the joy of being together again – it made this special event that much more special.

Of course, a significant presence at the banquet was an absence. We were all too aware of the loss of Jerry Morris, whose devotion to FBS has been so important in sustaining the work of the organization for several years. As an admired bibliophile and dear friend, there were many moments when I thought “I wish Jerry could see this.”

We knew that Jerry did a lot, but when he wasn’t there to do his normal magic, we learned how much he had been doing. The executive committee met more than once to fill Jerry’s big shoes. I’d like to say how impressed and grateful I am for the way my fellow members of the executive committee stepped up to the occasion, examining the gaps in our operation and filling them so willingly. To our secretary Gary Simons with abounding enthusiasm and many skills; to our archivist, Zoom specialist, and man of many hats, Carl Nudi; to Irene Pavese, a former officer, advisor, and an important part of our institutional memory; and to our new vice president Ben Wiley, who has dazzled us with his scheduling, I extend my deepest appreciation. For many, the transition from May to September will be seamless, and that’s how it should be, but I want you know that mighty work has been done to make it so.

To our treasurer, Linda Morris – she has been a perfect treasurer (and baker and hospitality chair). She is taking an understandable and much deserved break. We can’t thank her enough and are so grateful that we will continue to see her at our meetings.

I’d like to dedicate the 2022–2023 season to these six people. I hope you’ll join me in thanking them.

See you at the bookstore! — Charles