

The Florida Bibliophile

October 2023 • Volume 40, No. 2



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Join FBS! See p. 25

November newsletter deadline: October 31, 2023 (see p. 25)

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 2023 FABS Journal [here](#).

Florida Bibliophile Society

40

1983–2023



Florida Bibliophile Society
A community of book lovers

Minutes of the September 2023 Meeting of the Florida Bibliophile Society

by Gary Simons, FBS Secretary

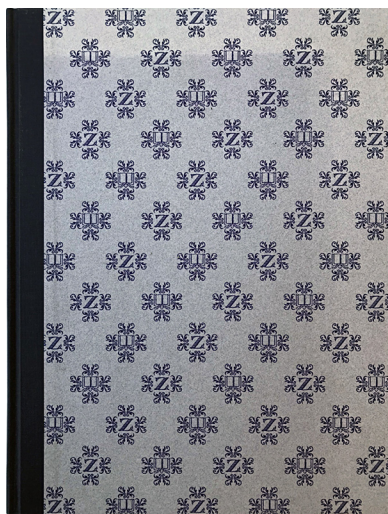
I'm back in the saddle again / Out where a friend is a friend." These were the opening lyrics of the theme song of the *Gene Autry Show*, in which Gene expressed his joy as a cowboy returning to the range. And so it was with us: a new FBS season had begun!

After President Charles Brown welcomed everyone back for our September meeting at the Seminole Community Library, "Summer Show and Tell," Gary Simons volunteered to be our first speaker.



Gary Simons showed us two books. The first was a handsome oversized book published in 1992 by a Los Angeles bibliophilic club, The Zamorano Club. This book listed all the programs – by speaker,

subject, and date – that the club had held since its inception in 1928. In effect, it documented in a charming way the club's long record of activity. He pointed out that the Florida Bibliophile Society itself had a record of forty years of meetings which might be similarly documented and presented in a projected FBS 40-year anniversary keepsake volume.



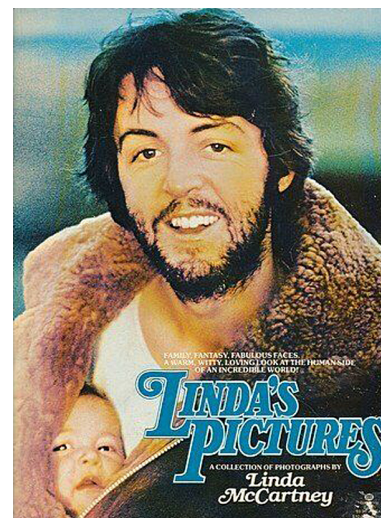
Gary's second book was a coming together of two bookish aspects of the 1920s: the fine printing movement, which used special papers, typography, and binding to make books beautiful as well as functional, and the often called "golden age" of book

collecting, in which wealthy industrialists ardently collected very rare books. During the 1920s, the San Francisco book designer-printer John Henry Nash and wealthy book collector William Andrews Clark, Jr., collaborated on a series of combination volumes, each of which contained both a facsimile of one of Clark's rarities and a new version of that work printed in Nash's monumental style. These combination books, printed in runs of 150 to 250 copies, were given away at Christmas by Clark to friends, associates, and libraries.

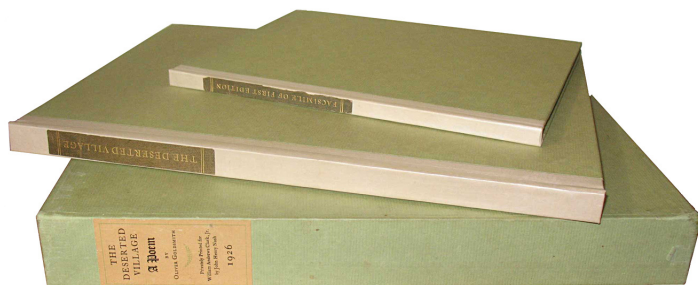
Gary showed us a 1926 edition of Oliver Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, one of the Nash-Clark combination volumes. He added that, although he was never on Clark's Christmas gift list, he now had copies of five of these celebrated volumes and was hunting for others.



Next up was **Jude Bagatti**. Jude is an accomplished photographer, and she was delighted to find – "for a pittance" – *Linda's Pictures*, a collection of Linda McCartney's photographs from the 1970s that was published in 1976. Jude's copy had the classic dust jacket featuring a picture of Paul McCartney. Linda McCartney had taken pictures of all the rock and rollers of her era – Jude showed us several of these photographs, and they were magnificent. As a topper, Jude noted that online copies of this book in good condition were listed for \$100 and up, so she felt her copy would become more valuable over time.

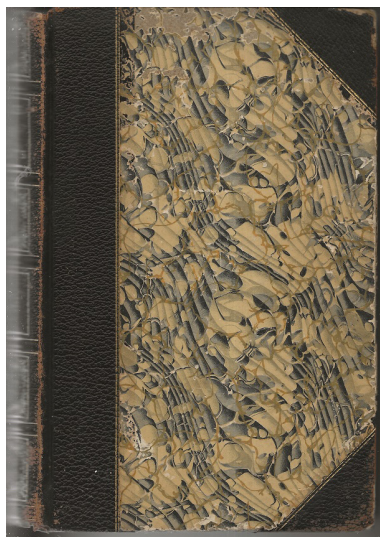


Kymberlee Rau showed us two book treasures that she "had only gotten yesterday" and was still researching and exploring. These books are special to



Minutes, continued

Kymberlee because of their associations: they came from the library of her friend's father, Allan, who recently died at almost age 100. Allan was a World War II vet, and an avid reader – Kymberlee showed us his picture.



The first volume was the William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt volume of *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents 1789–1905*, and the second was a British book, *The Wonder Book of Aircraft*, from 1929.

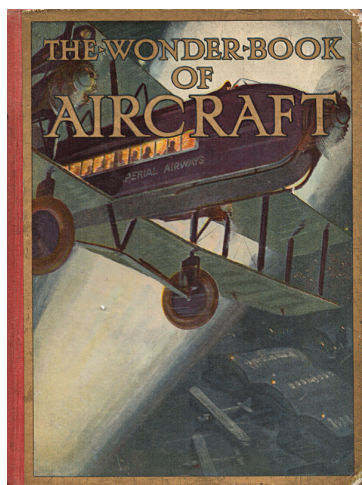
Kymberlee read to us two extracts from the first book; the first was from a message William McKinley sent to the

House and the Senate in 1897:

Information which has recently come to me from the governors of Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana, and from prominent citizens of these States and Tennessee, warrants the conclusion that widespread distress, involving the destruction of a large amount of property and loss of human life, has resulted from the floods which have submerged that section of the country.

These are stated, on reliable authority, to be the most destructive floods that have ever devastated the Mississippi Valley, the water being much higher than the highest stage it has reached before.

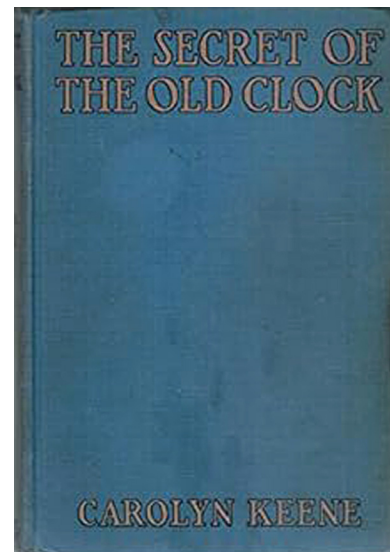
This passage gave her a sense of perspective from which to view accounts of contemporary disasters.



Kymberlee's second was a British book, *The Wonder Book of Aircraft* from 1929. Kymberlee noted the wonderful artwork, including twelve color plates, and marveled that even back then, there was a discussion of pilotless aircraft, i.e., drones.



Next **Todd Latoski**, presenting remotely over Zoom, told us he has been a collector of children's mysteries such as Nancy Drew, Hardy Boys, and Bobbsey Twins for many years. One of the pinnacles of collecting in that community is finding a first edition, first printing of Nancy Drew No. 1, *The Secret of the Old Clock*, from 1930. In the summer of 2014, he found a copy of this book at a store called Books on Bay; he reacted with awe and took lots of pictures, but he didn't buy the book because he "knew he could never afford it."



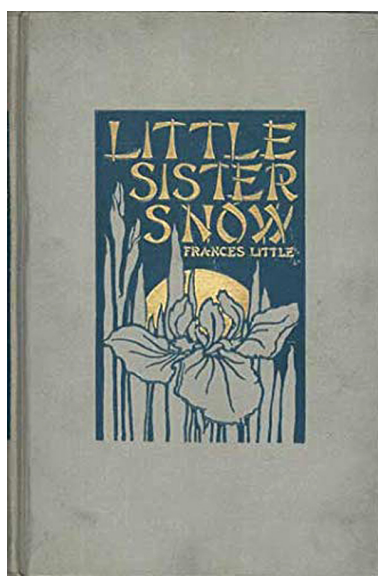
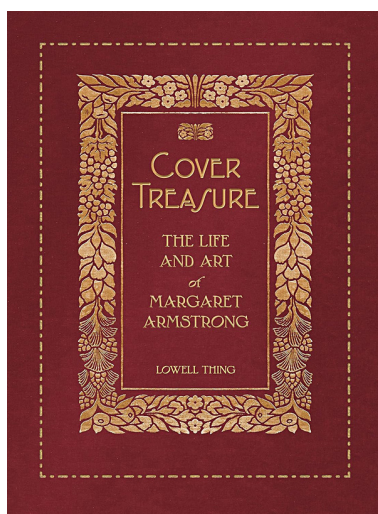
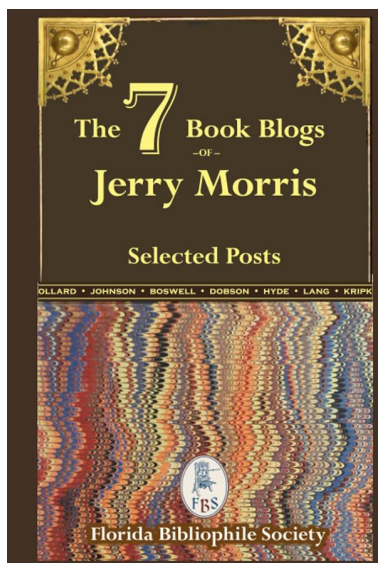
That Christmas, Todd's partner took him back to Books on Bay, and the store owner insisted he take a second look at the book "which had just been sold." Todd was reluctant, but the owner insisted. When Todd inspected the custom book jacket, he found that his partner had purchased the book for him as a Christmas present! Both for its innate value and as a testament of the love of his partner, this is now the prize book in Todd's collection.

In response to questions, Todd noted that he catalogued every book he had and currently had 4,935 books, and that he also had an extensive collection of DC comics.



Irene Pavese stepped up to the podium and first showed us a "very beautiful" book we all know well, *The 7 Book Blogs of Jerry Morris*, a book published last year by FBS to honor and preserve some of the

Minutes, continued



blogs of a former leading member of our society. Her second book was one she waited a long time to get, *Cover Treasure: The Life and Art of Margaret Armstrong*, by Lowell Thing. As an Armstrong collector herself, Irene loved all the detailed information and all the pictures of Armstrong covers. She declared this book to be the quintessential book on Margaret Armstrong.

Simultaneously expressing her delight and offering her thanks, Irene also told us that one of our fellow bibliophiles, Sean Donnelly, had just given her a copy of another Margaret Armstrong cover, *Little Sister Snow*. Lastly, she showed us an old-looking portfolio she had recently found in a thrift store that could be used to store a laptop or tablet but which masqueraded as an antiquarian book.



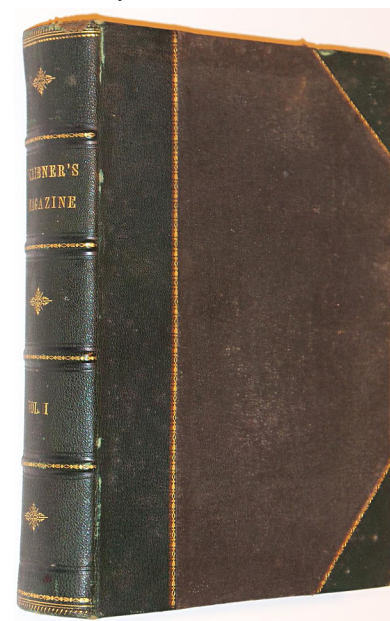
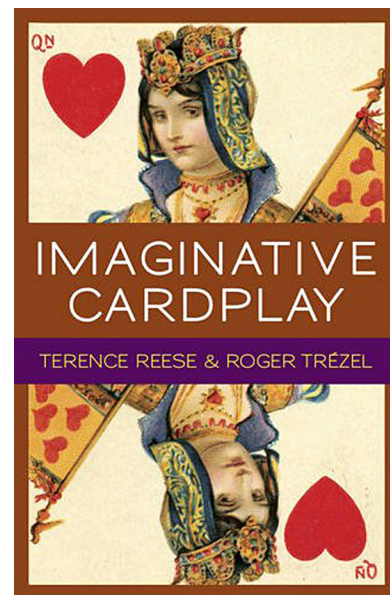
Jeannie Simons – with the opening interjection “the horror” – announced she was a reader, not a book collector. She did, however, admit to buying (and afterwards retaining) books on bridge. She showed us one bridge book she had

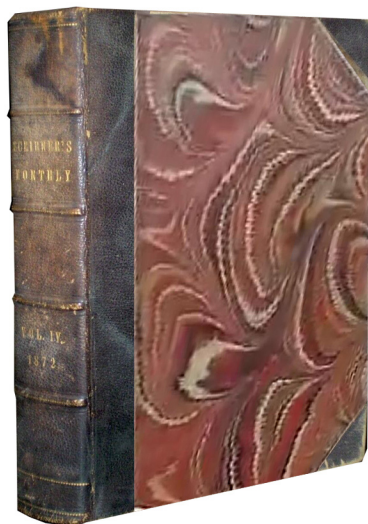
purchased this summer, *Imaginative Cardplay*, by Terence Reese and Roger Trézel. She noted that his book was intended for advanced players. Even though she only purchases books she intends to read, and she passes most of her books on to friends or the Sarasota Friends of the Library, she has about four shelves of bridge books. When asked about older bridge books, Jeannie noted that Carl Nudi had once given her an older bridge book which was “a keeper.”



David Hall began by saying that he had discovered this summer that one can get 30 pounds of books into a 20-pound FBS tote bag! Last January, when David had talked to FBSers about his experiences as an editor at the publisher Charles Scribner's Sons, he showed us some bound volumes of *Scribner's Magazine*. He then held up a bound version of Volume 1 of *Scribner's Magazine* for January–June 1887. In late August, David visited Hobart, New York, a little “book town” in the Northern Catskills modeled after Hay-on-Wye in England. Hobart now has ten bookstores. At Adams' Antiquarian Books in Hobart, Dave bought Volume 4 of a related magazine, *Scribner's Monthly*, from 1872.

These books made David wonder when the practice



Minutes, continued

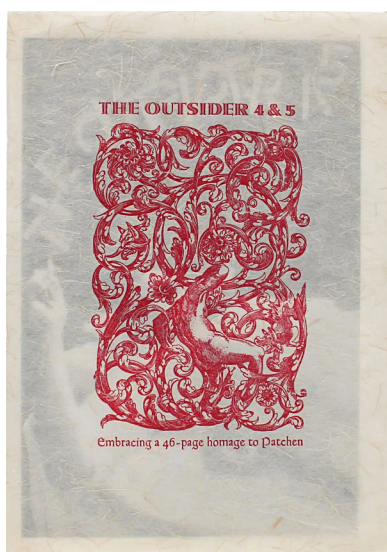
of binding magazines into volumes began. Going back to his own shelves he found a bound volume of *Harper's Magazine* from 1851 which included the first appearance of part of the great novel *Moby-Dick*. David then posed the question to the group.

In the ensuing discussion, Linda Morris asked if it would be possible to bind copies of our publication, *The Florida Bibliophile*,

and Gary Simons pointed out that FBS now offered beautiful hard copies of *The Florida Bibliophile* which were certainly suitable for binding.



Bill Hale had three different books to bring to our attention. Bill is a twenty-four-year-old writer, book collector, and bookseller (see AgelessLiterature.com). His first book was a bound volume of Issue



4/5 of *The Outsiders*, a 1960s literary magazine published by Loujon Press. *The Outsiders* brought the work of Charles Bukowski to national attention in addition to publishing work by such notable writers as Jack Kerouac and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Bill particularly liked the use of various papers, the poems, and the artwork. The book also contained a dried flower with

supposedly magical powers!

Bill's second book was a first edition of *The Strength to Love* by Martin Luther King. He said he would not sell that book because he felt that it was undervalued, both in terms of its historical context and the

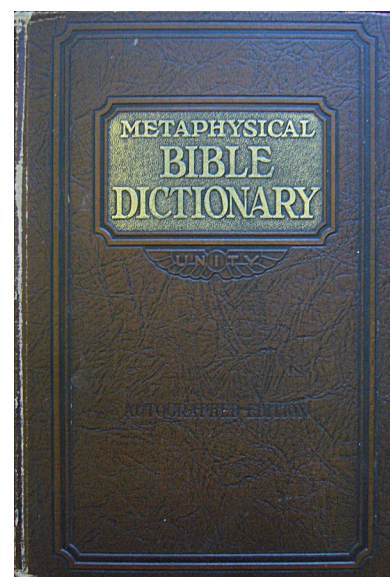
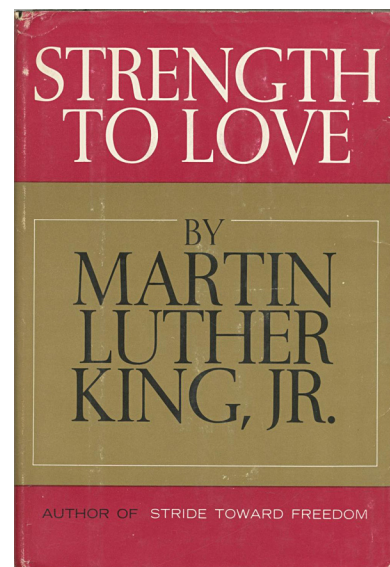
information it contained. In Bill's opinion, King offered insights into philosophy and biblical texts which are well worth studying.

Bill's last book was a signed copy of the *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* from 1931, which Bill also valued for its insights into the Bible. (Bill will be the speaker at the FBS November meeting.)



Like Jeannie earlier in the afternoon, **Ben Wiley** began by saying he was a reader, not a collector. Accordingly, he distributed a colorful flyer that had been made up for "Chapter Chat," a book club that meets monthly at the Largo Library. Ben heads up the discussions and chooses the books. He had identified ten books as being worthwhile subjects for book club discussions, and he briefly described each book on his list for us:

- September: *The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry* by Gabrielle Zevin (a book of transformation and second chances)
- October: *Father of the Rain* by Lily King (a daughter and alcoholic father)
- November: *Island of Missing Trees* by Elif Shafak (coming of age)
- December: *Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows* by Balli Kaur Jaswal (East meets West)
- January: *Sweetness of Water* by Nathan Harris (post Civil War)



Minutes, continued

CHAPTER CHAT

Meets at 5pm Adult Program Room

Discussion led by Ben Wiley bwiley@tampabay.rr.com

 <p>September 13, 2023 The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry by: Gabrielle Zevin</p>	 <p>February 14, 2024 Euphoria by: Lily King</p>
 <p>October 11, 2023 Father of the Rain by: Lily King</p>	 <p>March 13, 2024 Absolute True Diary of a Part Time Indian by: Sherman Alexi</p>
 <p>November 8, 2023 Island of Missing Trees by: Elif Shafak</p>	 <p>April 10, 2024 Crying in H Mart by: Michelle Zauner</p>
 <p>December 13, 2023 Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows by: Balli Kaur Jaswal</p>	 <p>May 8, 2024 Jim the Boy by: Tony Early</p>
 <p>January 10, 2024 Sweetness of Water by: Nathan Harris</p>	 <p>June 12, 2024 Horse by: Geraldine Brooks</p>

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- February: *Euphoria* by Lily King (New Guinea in 1930s)
- March: *Absolute True Diary of a Part Time Indian* by Sherman Alexi (racism, a banned book)
- April: *Crying in H Mart* by Michelle Zauner (Korean-American memoir)
- May: *Jim the Boy* by Tony Early (growing up 1960s in North Carolina)
- June: *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks (from antebellum Kentucky to present day).

Ben added that it was fun finding and reading the books, fun pulling them together into a reading

list, and fun leading the discussions.

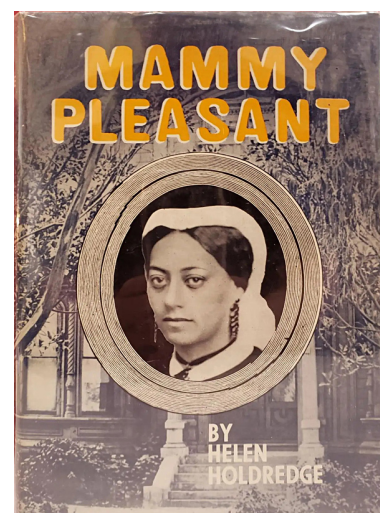
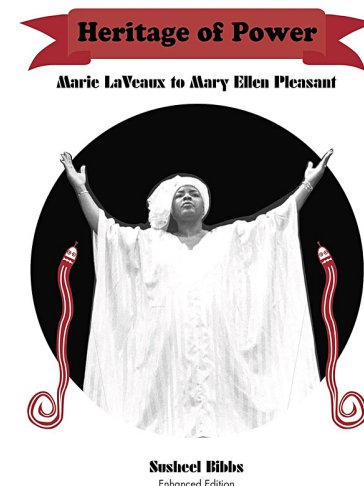
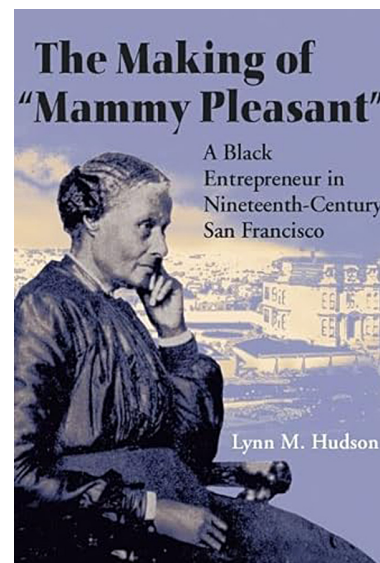


Roxanne Rhodes

Hoare belongs to a study group about African American women writers. She had spoken to that group about a woman (actually not a writer) who some have described as the Mother of Civil Rights in California, Mary Ellen (Mammy) Pleasant (MEP).

Much of her information came from *The Making of Mammy Pleasant* by Lynn M. Hudson, one of three biographies about Mary Ellen Pleasant — all of which, according to Roxanne, are quite different. Another work, *Heritage of Power: Marie LaVeau to Mary Ellen Pleasant* by Susheel Bibbs treats MEP as a voodoo queen. Helen Holdridge's book, *Mammy Pleasant* (1953) was largely based on interviews from the 1930s and was semi-fictionalized.

MEP built a San Francisco mansion, where outsiders considered her a housekeeper, while she was actually a business partner of the supposed owner. Accounts of her origin differ widely. As a girl, she was indentured to a Quaker couple, where she married an abolitionist



Minutes, continued

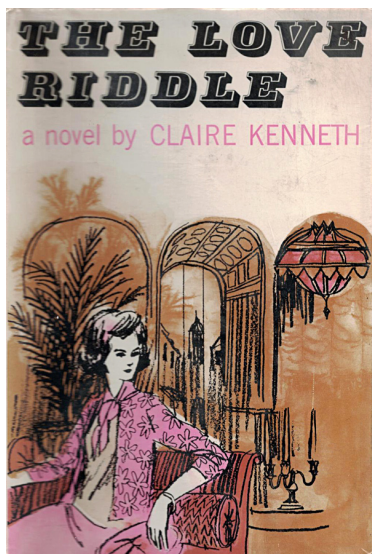
who subsequently died and left her a good deal of money. She went to San Francisco during the Gold Rush, speculated in currency, and made a great deal more money. She supported the Underground Railroad and legal actions in support of feminist and abolitionist causes. Supposedly she financially supported John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry. She dictated a memoir when she was dying in 1902, which was supposed to be published in a magazine called *The Pandex of the Press*, but only a single installment of that magazine was ever published.



Wes Brown said he liked to pick up books with unusual themes, authors, or contents. He spoke briefly about three books that fit that pattern. He



picked up a copy of *Congo Song* (1944) by Stuart Cloete, attracted by its exotic cover that features a voluptuous and confident woman regarding herself in the mirror, with this blurb: "Alone in a society of men on the Equator, Olga Le Blanc is occupied by her lovers, her tame gorilla, and her own good looks."



Wes purchased *The Love Riddle* (1991) by Claire Kenneth because of the author's exotic bio. It spoke of her as born in Hungary, honeymooning in Cairo at the outbreak of World War II, tortured by the Gestapo for helping a U.S. pilot, becoming a successful novelist in Hungary, undergoing forced labor under the communists, and fleeing to the West in 1956. He also presented a book on the Orient Express

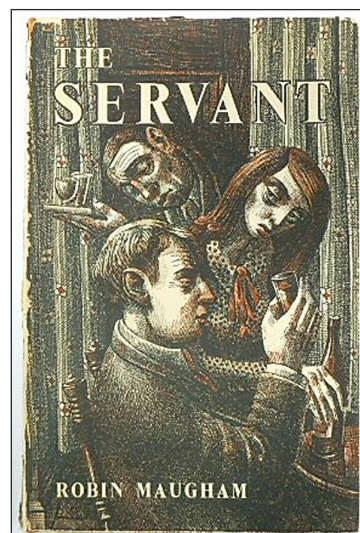
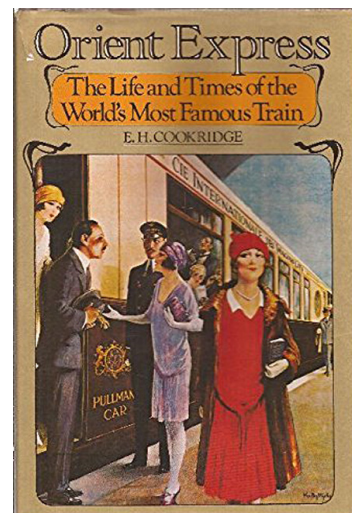
purchased from Mike Slicker because of the exotic lives described in the stories of the train's passengers.

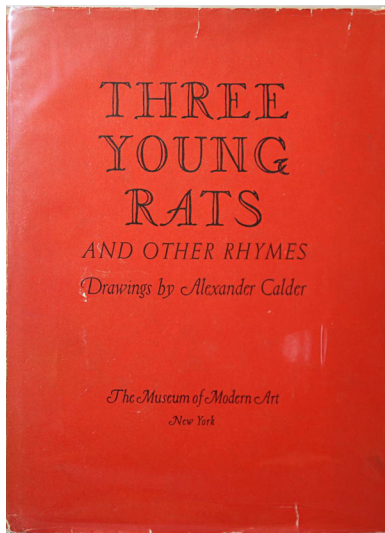


Our next speaker was **Sean Donnelly**. In his early 20s, he worked at the University of Tampa Press, which was then publishing *The Pinter Review* about the famous

playwright Harold Pinter. Someone told him at that time that Pinter also developed screen plays from other writers' novels and recommended that Sean look into *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (the novel by John Fowles) or *The Servant* (a novel by Robin Maugham). Sean especially liked the film version of *The Servant* from 1964, but he didn't know how much of the film's value had been supplied by Pinter or how much came from the novel by Maugham.

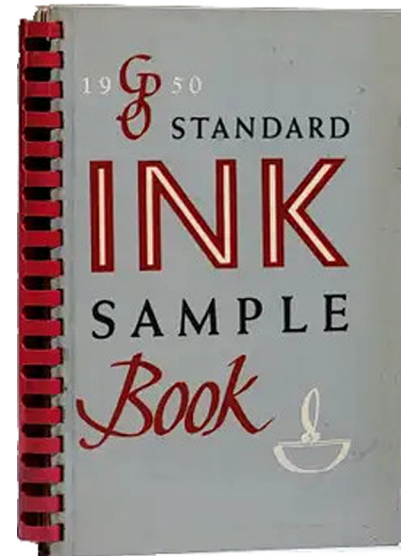
Having seen the film *The Servant*, Sean looked for the novel. After many years, he found a copy of a novel – he thought it was fantastic! He determined that the novel was part of a dark genre of post-war novels that he liked and that Pinter had followed the novel very closely when he wrote the screenplay. Sean searched for a signed first edition of the novel from 1948 without success, but he did find a tie-in version of the novel from 1964 that was published when the film came out. Nevertheless, he still wanted a real first edition, and over the summer, one turned up on ebay. Even better, the inscription to "William, James or Tony" referred to one of the movie's leads, actor James Fox, born William Fox, who played the character Tony in the movie.



Minutes, concluded

Our last speaker of the day, **Charles Brown**, shared three books. His first book, *The Three Young Rats and Other Stories*, was charmingly illustrated by Alexander Calder, one of Charles' favorites. He found his second book, *The Standard Ink Sample Book*, in the same Annapolis book store as his first book. This book, issued by the Government Printing Office in 1950, is full of swatches of standard ink colors. Charles is interested in printing and color systems so for him this book was a real find.

Lastly, Charles presented an accordion book he purchased early in 2023 at the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair. As one might imagine, accordion books fold out and form an extended sequence. This book, which elicited "wows" from the audience, showed German soldiers in various uniforms from various places and military units around the year 1890.



September's "Summer Treasures: Show and Tell" was an afternoon full of an amazing variety of books and of bibliophilic interests!



October: the Nationally Bookish Month

Each October, Americans celebrate National Book Month. During this month, we recognize how important reading, writing, and literature are in all facets of our society.

National Book Month was founded in 2003 by the National Book Foundation, which presents the National Book Awards. National Book Month corresponds with the announcement of the finalists for those awards. The awards are presented in November. Neil Baldwin, executive director of the National Book Foundation in 2003, said of the first National Book Month, “We realized that this is the best time of the year to package everything we do and promote reading as well as the National Book Awards.... This year marks the 15th anniversary of the creation of the foundation so we want to make our celebration of reading bigger than ever.”

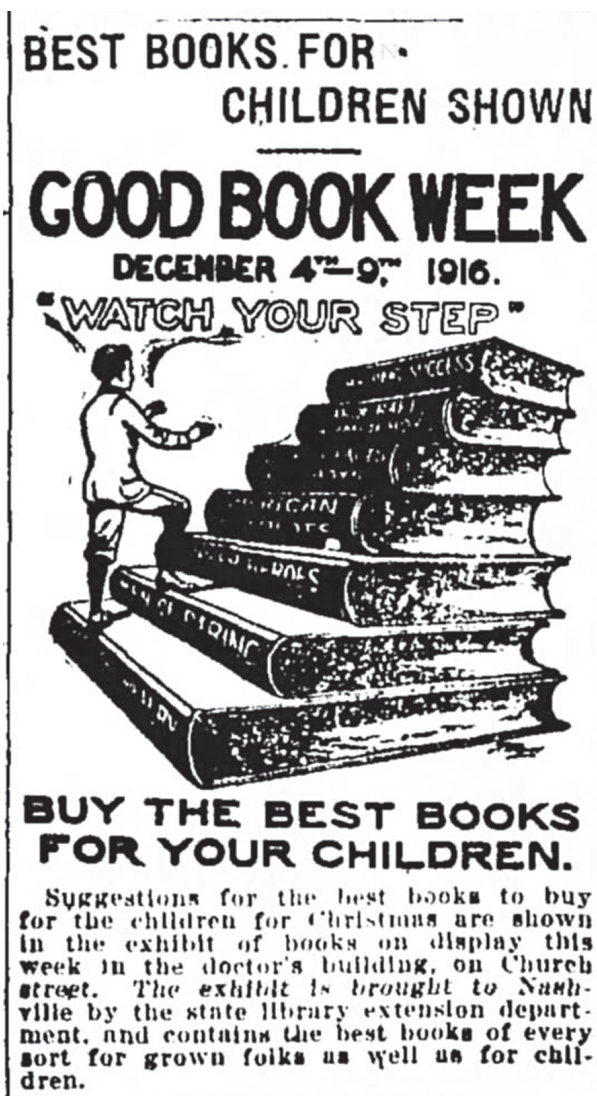
Beginnings

National celebrations of books had their beginning in 1913, when Franklin K. Mathiews, librarian of the Boy Scouts of America, began touring the United States to promote higher standards in

children’s books. A concern of the era was called “the boy problem,” which focused on unwholesome reading for boys, so-called “dime novels,” which often featured gunplay, violent tales of the Old West, or stories of battle or intrigue that often put boys in age-inappropriate situations. Mathiews wrote critically about publishers

who produced unsuitable books, but rather than opposing them specifically or calling for bans, he wrote books for boys with wholesome themes and realistic settings. He also produced lists of recommended books, and worked with publishers, notably Grosset and Dunlap, to produce these books in affordable editions.

To further promote better quality books, Mathiews



BEST BOOKS FOR CHILDREN SHOWN

GOOD BOOK WEEK

DECEMBER 4th-9th 1916.

"WATCH YOUR STEP"

BUY THE BEST BOOKS FOR YOUR CHILDREN.

Suggestions for the best books to buy for the children for Christmas are shown in the exhibit of books on display this week in the doctor's building, on Church street. The exhibit is brought to Nashville by the state library extension department, and contains the best books of every sort for grown folks as well as for children.

Advertisement for Good Book Week from The Tennessean (Nashville) for December 7, 1916. In 2023, Children's Book Week was held May 1-7. This year, it will also be held November 6-12.

proposed the creation of a Children's Book Week to be supported by booksellers, publishers, and librarians that would emphasize better quality reading for children. Mathiews enlisted two important allies: Frederic G. Melcher, the visionary editor of *Publishers Weekly*, who believed that “a great nation is a reading nation,” and Anne Carroll Moore, the Superintendent of Children's Works at the New York Public Library and a major figure in the library world. With the help of Melcher and Moore, in 1916, the American Booksellers Association and the American Library Association



Franklin K. Mathiews

National Book Month, *continued*

sponsored a Good Book Week with the Boy Scouts of America.

The idea steadily gained momentum. In 1919, “Children’s Good Book Week” was celebrated from November 10 to 15 “in all parts of the United States,” as reported in the *Honolulu Advertiser*.

In 1944–1945, Melcher assigned responsibility for Children’s Book Week to the newly-established Association of Children’s Book Editors. This group expanded Book Week activities and evolved into what is now known as the Children’s Book Council (CBC).

In 2008, the Children’s Book Council set up the nonprofit organization Every Child a Reader, which now sponsors Children’s Book Week, the nation’s longest-running literacy initiative.

Something for Grown-ups

When Children’s Book Week was celebrating its centennial in 2019, National Book Week was only a few years old. As mentioned earlier, it was established in 2003 by the National Book Foundation as a way of expanding awareness of the National Book Awards as well as an appreciation of American literature and reading in general.

Just as National Book Month originated with the National Book Foundation, the foundation was a product of the National Book Awards.

The National Book Awards were first presented in 1936. They were established by the American Booksellers Association, a trade association of independent booksellers founded in 1900.

The association’s spokesperson was no less than Christopher Morley, a famous American journalist, novelist, essayist, and poet of the day. In May 1936, Morley presented the first National Book Awards in New York City in four categories of books published in 1935:

- 1st: the most distinguished novel of the year, *Time Out of Mind* by Rachel Field
- 2nd: the most distinguished original novel of the

year, *The Circus of Dr. Lao* by Charles Phinney, depicting a cross-section of the New Deal

- 3rd: the most distinguished biography, *Personal History* by Vincent Sheehan
- 4th: the most distinguished general nonfiction, *North to the Orient* by Anne Morrow Lindbergh.

The awards continued through 1942, but were suspended during the war years and for several years thereafter.

The Awards Reborn

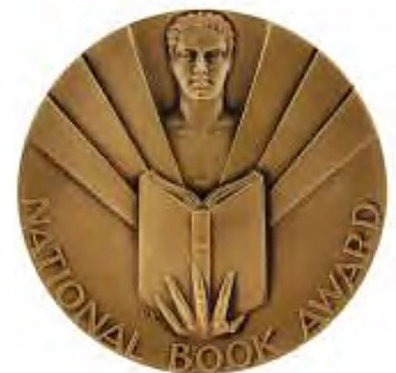
In 1950, the National Book Award was revived by representatives of three book industry organizations: the American Book Publishers Council, Inc., the American Booksellers Association, and the Book Manufacturers’ Institute. Judges for the awards that year were journalists, authors, poets, and professors, selected to provide a “well-rounded” viewpoint of American books.

Awards that year were given in three categories: fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. The winning books were *The Man*

with the Golden Arm (fiction) by Nelson Algren, *The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (nonfiction) by Ralph L. Rusk, *Selected Poems* and *Paterson: Book III* by William Carlos Williams.

Winners received a gold medal designed by acclaimed sculptor and medallist artist Ralph Menconi who was established as a master of high relief portraits and who was much in demand.

The awards suffered as the years progressed. Publishers were becoming unhappy, concerned that the awards were being given to “little-read books” and books that were “too literary.” This concern reached a crescendo in 1979, when publishers



The medal presented to winners of the National Book Award in 1950. Designed by sculptor and medallist artist Ralph Menconi.

National Book Month, *continued*

withdrew their support, and the awards were cancelled.

The Awards Re-Reborn

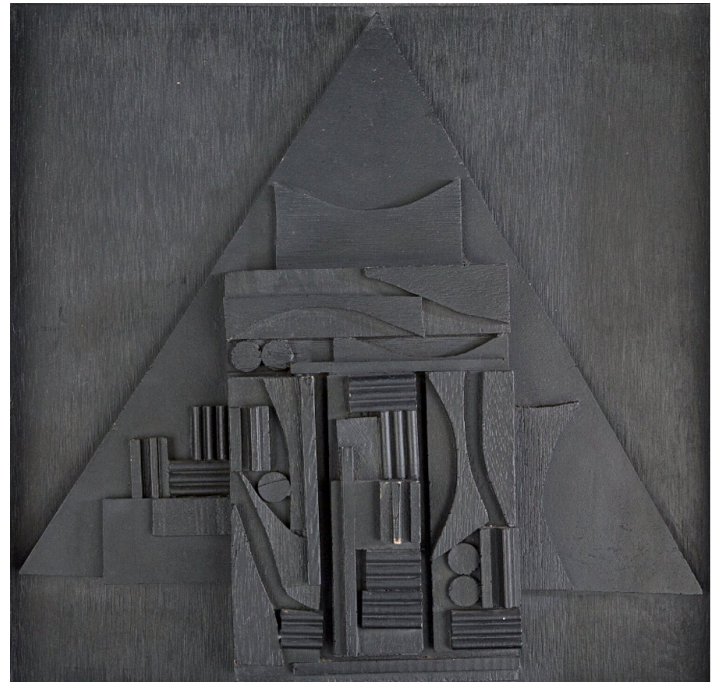
A major reorganization was undertaken to bring back publisher support. In 1980, the competition was again revived, now called The American Book Awards, or TABA, and with “dozens of new categories,” including general reference, current topics, mystery, science fiction, illustrated, religion-inspiration, in both hardback and paperback – 34 categories in all. Notably, poetry was not one of them – hardback or paperback. an elaborate “Academy” system, like the one for the Oscars, was created to vote on the winners.

Norman Mailer, Philip Roth, and William Styron joined 40 other former winners of the National Book Award to criticize the new approach because they felt the awards were being driven by commercial interests. Mailer, Roth, and Styron asked that their books be withdrawn from the competition. Writers’ groups boycotted. Some publisher withdrew support. Styron was awarded first prize for fiction despite his request.

Criticism of the new democratized awards was scathing. Larry Swindell wrote in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, “The ceremony was a disaster. The awards are a disgrace.... If the National Book Awards had been too ‘elitist,’ early critics of the TABAs sensed a too-desperate populist impulse behind them.” Indeed, as Swindell noted, winning tended to follow sales records. As to “disaster,” the acoustics were terrible, and the award presentation was reduced to envelope opening *à la* Oscars.

The American Book Award committee moved quickly to find its balance. The number of awards in 1981 was reduced to 18 compared. The “Academy” system for choosing the winners was replaced with a simple jury system. By 1982, with more adjustments, the many communities that contribute to making books had made peace.

The number of prizes continued to drop as did industry-driven distinctions like hardback and



In 1980, sculptor Louise Nevelson created this sculpture, copies of which were given to the winners of The American Book Award. Dimensions are approximately 15 inches by 15 inches.

paperback. Poetry was restored. In 1986, the award was renamed – re-renamed? – National Book Award. It was a signal that the experiment was over and that much had been learned on all sides.

The Awards Re-Re-Reborn

At that point, the American Book Awards, Inc., separated itself from the organization that had set it up financially in 1980: the Association of American Publishers. It was time to sink or swim.

In 1988, the National Book Foundation was established to manage the funding of the awards and to engage with a broader mission of literacy awareness and education. As one commentator observed, the need for the National Book Award to sell books had been abandoned. It could now be about the books.

Epilogue

We’ve come full circle. We’re back to 2003. The National Book Foundation founds National Book Month, which celebrates readers and the books they love. It seems to have found its place in hearts and minds. Not a populist gesture – a gift.

National Book Month, *concluded*

National Book Award Finalists 2023

In 2023, there are five award categories: Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, Translated Literature, and Young Peoples' Literature. The award in each category will be presented on November 15, 2023.

Fiction

- ***Chain-Gang All-Stars*** by Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah (Pantheon Books / Penguin Random House)
- ***Temple Folk*** by Aaliyah Bilal (Simon & Schuster)
- ***This Other Eden*** by Paul Harding (W. W. Norton & Company)
- ***The End of Drum-Time*** by Hanna Pylväinen (Henry Holt and Company / Macmillan Publishers)
- ***Blackouts*** by Justin Torres (Farrar, Straus and Giroux/Macmillan Publishers)

Nonfiction

- ***The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History*** by Ned Blackhawk (Yale University Press)
- ***Liliana's Invincible Summer: A Sister's Search for Justice*** by Cristina Rivera Garza (Hogarth / Penguin Random House)
- ***Ordinary Notes*** by Christina Sharpe (Farrar, Straus and Giroux / Macmillan Publishers)
- ***We Could Have Been Friends, My Father and I: A Palestinian Memoir*** by Raja Shehadeh (Other Press)
- ***Fire Weather: A True Story from a Hotter World*** by John Vaillant (Knopf/Penguin Random House)

Poetry

- ***How to Communicate*** by John Lee Clark (W. W. Norton & Company)
- ***from unincorporated territory [âmot]*** by Craig Santos Perez (Omnidawn Publishing)

- ***suddenly we*** by Evie Shockley (Wesleyan University Press)
- ***Tripas*** by Brandon Som (Georgia Review Books / University of Georgia Press)
- ***From From*** by Monica Youn (Graywolf Press)

Translated Literature

- ***Cursed Bunny*** by Bora Chung, translated by Anton Hur (Algonquin Books / Hachette Book Group)
- ***Beyond the Door of No Return*** by David Diop, translated by Anton Hur and Sam Taylor (Farrar, Straus and Giroux / Macmillan Publishers)
- ***The Words That Remain*** by Stênio Gardel, translated by Bruna Dantas Lobato (New Vessel Press)
- ***Abyss*** by Pilar Quintana, translated by Lisa Dillman (World Editions)
- ***On a Woman's Madness*** by Adtrid Roemer, translated by Lucy Scott (Two Line Press)

Young People's Literature

- ***Gather*** by Kenneth M. Cadow (Candlewick Press)
- ***Huda F Cares?*** by Huda Fahmy (Dial Books for Young Readers / Penguin Random House)
- ***Big*** by Vashti Harrison (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers / Hachette Book Group)
- ***The Lost Year: A Survival Story of the Ukrainian Famine*** by Katherine Marsh (Roaring Brook Press / Macmillan Publishers)
- ***A First Time for Everything*** by Dan Santat (First Second/ Macmillan Publishers)



PEN America Joins the Battle for the Books in Florida

1,400. That's the number of book bans instituted in Florida in the twelve months between July 2022 and June 2023. That's the most in the nation and more than double the No. 2 state in this dubious competition, Texas, and almost half of all book bans in the country. Congratulations, Florida.

Legislation passed under Florida's Governor Ron DeSantis allows a single individual to challenge a book and force its removal pending a complete review. Additional legislation forces teachers and librarians to remove any books that discuss gender or sexuality under severe legal penalty. When first passed, this law applied to kindergarten through the third grade. It was extended in the recent legislative session to the eighth grade. Many books are attacked on the slimmest of grounds; a book may be challenged if it makes a student feel uncomfortable.

The American Library Association recorded 695 challenges to library materials and services over the first eight months of 2023, the fastest pace since the association began tracking challenges 20 years ago.

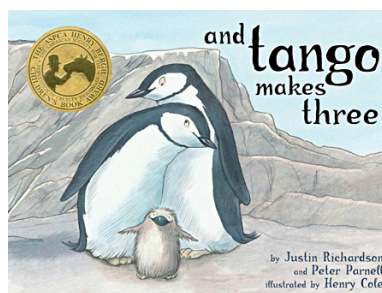
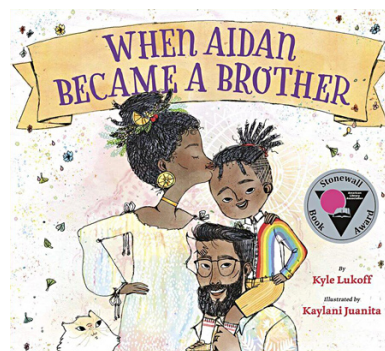
In a CBS poll from 2022, more than 8 out of 10 people said that books should not be banned even if they criticize U.S. history, express political ideas they disagree with, depict slavery, or discuss race. On this last issue, respondents to the same poll thought that teaching students about race in America helped them understand what others went through (68%) and made them more racially tolerant (42%). Small percentages felt that teaching about race made students feel guilty about past generations (23%) and less racially tolerant today (16%). Other results from the poll reinforced the observation that Americans want to confront and deal with racism. CBS said, "We see wide agreement across party lines, and between White and Black Americans on this. Parents feel the same as the wider public."

Yet the book bans continue to increase.

A Selection of Florida's Banned Books

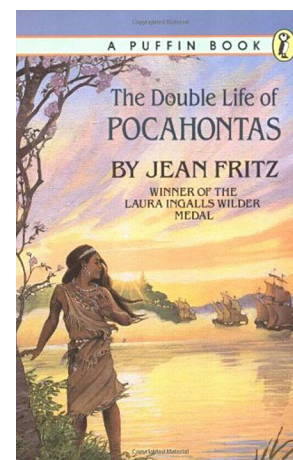
When Aidan Became a Brother won the 2020 Stonewall Book Award and became one of the most-banned children's picture books of the 2021–2022 school year. The book follows a young transgender boy's evolution from coming out to becoming a big brother. Aidan's

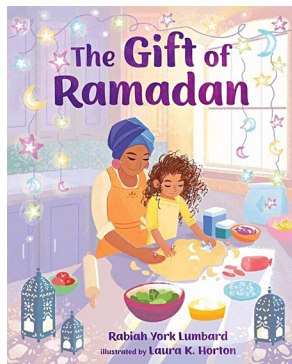
loving family learns to embrace his identity and to show love for the new baby arriving in the home, whoever he, she, or they will choose to become. A story of love and acceptance.



except that Roy and Silo were both males. The implications were too much for the book-banners.

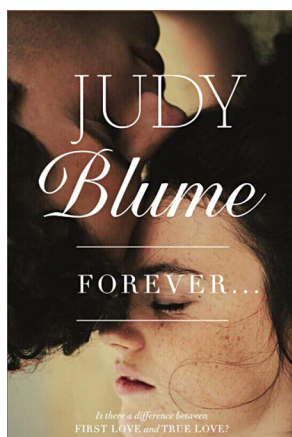
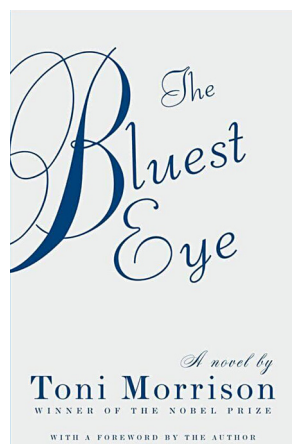
Pocahontas is well-known to school children as a gentle woman who aided the settlers of Jamestown and married one of them. They are less likely to know that at around age 16 she was taken captive by the settlers and held for ransom. Under their influence, the teenage Pocahontas converted to Christianity and became Rebecca. She married John Rolfe at age 17 and bore him a son at age 18. Rolfe took her to London and presented her as a "civilized savage." She became the toast of London. As they prepared to return to Jamestown, she died of unknown causes at age 20 or 21. Jean Fritz's book is the story of a short life lived between two cultures. Not a fairy tale.



PEN America, *continued*

The Gift of Ramadan explores several generations of a family and how they take part in this Islamic holiday. Little Sophia wants to fast for Ramadan this year. Her grandma tells her that fasting helps make a person sparkly – and Sophia loves sparkles. But when her attempt at fasting fails, Sophia must find another way to participate. This lovely multigenerational family story explores the many ways to take part in the Ramadan holiday.

Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison published her first book, *The Bluest Eye*, in 1970. It has been highly lauded as a work of adolescent literature that challenges racism and white beauty standards. Set in 1941, it is the story of a young African-American girl named Pecola who is consistently regarded as “ugly” due to her mannerisms and dark skin. She develops an inferiority complex and a desire for blue eyes, which she equates with “whiteness” and beauty.



Judy Blume's 1975 book *Forever...* is the story of a young couple's first relationship, loss of virginity, the concept of questioning being with someone forever, and many other things that many teenagers confront. These are subjects for which teenagers deserve the sensitive and honest treatment found in this book. It is honest about sexual intercourse – the loaded term of course is “explicit” – but that is not the subject of the book.

Enter PEN America, a nonprofit organization whose goal is “to raise awareness for the protection of free expression in the United States and worldwide through the advancement of literature and human rights.” PEN America was founded in New York City in 1922, one year after PEN International was founded in London, on October 5, 1921, at the Florence Restaurant by English writer, playwright, and poet Catherine Amy Dawson Scott. PEN International's first president was John Galsworthy, and its first members included Joseph Conrad, Elizabeth Craig, George Bernard Shaw, and H. G. Wells.

PEN America had a similarly impressive beginning on April 19, 1922, with Booth Tarkington as its first president and members who included Willa Cather, Eugene O'Neill, Robert Frost, Ellen Glasgow, Edwin Arlington Robinson, and Robert Benchley.

PEN America's members today also include some of the U.S.'s finest writers and journalists among many others that are concerned about preserving the freedom of expression guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution.

PEN America's programs embrace a number of themes:

- Free expression and education
- Writers at risk
- Press freedom and disinformation
- Campus free speech
- Digital safety and online abuse
- Artists at risk

Specific programs include:

- PEN World Voices Festival
- PEN America Literary Awards
- PEN America Literary Gala and PEN America Los Angeles Gala
- PEN America Prison and Justice Writing Program
- Support to writers
- Publications

PEN America, *continued*

Since 2020, PEN America has been following book banning closely and reporting on it in the annual *Banned in the USA* report. According to PEN America, almost half the books banned in Florida “include a theme or instance of violence and abuse, including sexual assault. About 40% cover topics on health and well-being for students, including mental health, bullying, substance abuse and puberty. About one-third of the books include LGBTQ+ characters or themes, and about one-third discuss race or include characters of color.”

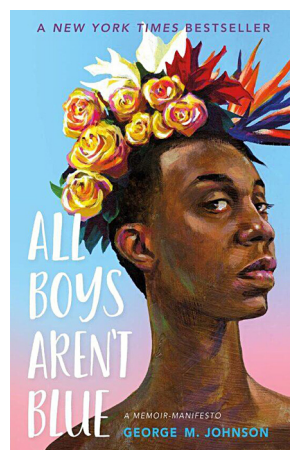
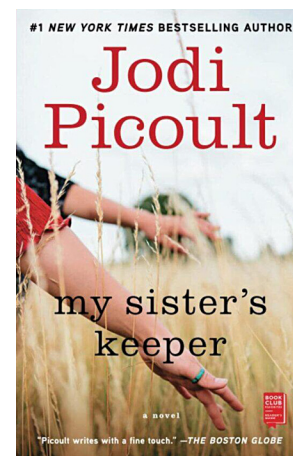
The alarming trend in Florida has drawn the attention of some serious writers. During the recent Banned Book Week (first week of October), PEN America announced that Judy Blume, James Patterson, Michael Connelly, and over 20 other prominent writers were responding to the Florida situation by raising over \$3 million to help PEN America open an office in Miami and expand its efforts to counter Florida’s surge in book bannings.

Connelly said, “What PEN America is doing in Florida is very important to us and our neighbors. We have been astonished to see books ripped off the shelves and students forced into the middle of a fight they didn’t ask for or deserve. All of us, especially those of us who make our living in the literary world, are called upon to defend against book bans and legislation that suppresses new voices.”

“Seeing some of America’s most beloved and avidly read authors step to the front of the fight against book bans is inspiring. These are writers, not politicians or activists,” PEN CEO Suzanne Nossel said in a statement. “While the book banners’ campaign is national in scope, Florida has become the laboratory for censorship laws and the intimidation of teachers and librarians. It is extraordinary to witness a group of our nation’s favorite authors pick up their pens to draw a line in the sand.”

WPLG Miami reported that the idea for the Miami office came from talks among PEN officials, including board member Michael Pietsch, the CEO of Hachette Book Group, Connelly’s publisher.”

Jodi Picoult’s My Sister’s Keeper was a New York Times bestseller. Kate suffers from an acute form of leukemia. Her younger sister Anna was brought into the world to provide umbilical blood to save Kate, but without success. When Anna turns 13, Kate needs one of her kidneys. She has always been willing to help Kate, but this time the stakes are too high and the chances of success too low. Anna sues her parents for the right to make her own decision. This is not an easy book. There is sexual content, homosexual themes, drug abuse and suicide. Hanging over all this are life and death choices.

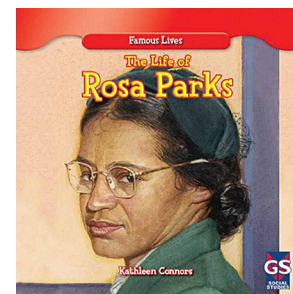


All Boys Aren't Blue by journalist and "LGBTQIA+" activist George M. Johnson explores what it's like to grow up Black and queer.

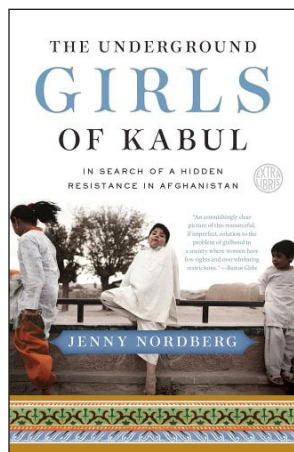
It was Top 10 on the American Library Association's Rainbow List, a selection for the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults, a YALSA Teens' Top 10 selection, a nominee for Goodreads Choice Award for Memoir & Autobiography, and a selection for Outstanding Books for the

College Bound: Literature and Language Arts. A New York Times Bestseller. It is a powerful and well-told story. Johnson is honest about his life in all aspects — part of what makes this book so compelling, and as he says, educational.

Rosa Parks could not be forced to give up a seat on the bus, so they took her off the shelf. This book is 24 pages long. There isn't a single off-color word or event. Just the story of someone who stood up against the Establishment of her time. She wasn't a saint; she was a hero. Banned in Duval County public schools where every third child is African-American. What is the message?



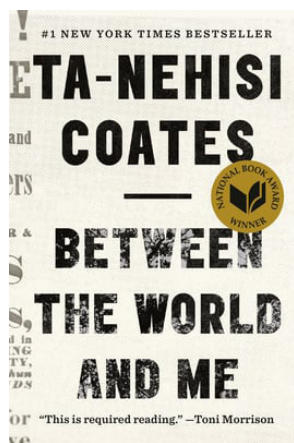
PEN America, concluded



“Bacha posh” is a custom among Afghans in which a girl is dressed and raised as a boy. A number of reasons are given for this custom, but it allows the girl more freedom in Afghan society — girls can play sports, go to school, associate in public. At puberty, the girls may choose to continue to live as male or to adopt a female persona. This book tells the story a number of girls and women who are or have been bacha posh. Their experience gives them a special insight into the position of women in Afghan society. Afghans can have a nonstandard approach to gender roles.

No.1 New York Times Bestseller • National Book Award Winner
 • Named one of Time’s Ten Best Nonfiction Books of the Decade
 • Pulitzer Prize Finalist • National Book Critics Circle Award
 Finalist • “Required reading,”
 Toni Morrison • Named one of
 the most influential books of the
 decade by CNN • A Top 10 Book
 of the Year: New York Times
 Book Review, O: The Oprah
 Magazine, The Washington
 Post, People, Entertainment
 Weekly, Vogue, Los Angeles
 Times, San Francisco
 Chronicle, Chicago Tribune,
 New York, Newsday, Library
 Journal, Publishers Weekly •
*“the most important essayist in
 a generation and a writer who
 changed the national political
 conversation about race”* (Rolling Stone)

*In a letter to his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates explains his journey
 to understand his place as a black man in American society.
 Unflattering. Revelatory. Obviously, banned.*



Over the summer, Michael Connelly, author of 38 novels with more than 85 million copies sold worldwide, and his wife, Linda McCaleb Connelly, spearheaded PEN America’s newest Florida effort with a commitment of \$1 million.

Connelly described supporting the PEN initiative as an easy decision. Connelly said that he was mainly motivated by personal feelings about libraries, where he would cool off during muggy summer days in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. A librarian introduced him to a novel that changed his life, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, now a frequent target of book banners for “strong language, discussion of sexuality and rape, and use of the n-word.” Connelly said, “If I didn’t read that book I would not be writing books like *The Lincoln Lawyer*.”

The PEN America Miami office is expected to open before the end of 2023. Best-selling author James Patterson said, “I applaud PEN America for having the courage to open an office here at the epicenter of so much of this cynical opportunism — my backyard, Florida.”

Ruby Bridges: “My books are written to bring people together. Why would they be banned? But the real question is, why are we banning books at all? Surely, we are better than this.”

Mitchell Kaplan: “I can hardly recognize the state where I grew up.”

Reshma Saujani: “Through my own experience as a banned author, I’ve learned that book bans aren’t really about books. Under the guise of “parental rights,” everyday citizens are using our schools to drive an egregious and un-American agenda that aims, among other things, to oppress women and other marginalized groups in our society, and send our country backwards. But, I’ve also learned there are more of us than there are of them. Let’s harness our collective power, and get to work. Our children’s future — our country’s future — depends on it.”

and 100s more!



Bookselling on the Seine: Not an Olympic Sport – Yet

Bouquiniste is a French word for “bookseller.” Once a generic term, it came to refer to the booksellers whose stalls line Paris’s Seine River. Two hundred forty bouquinistes sell around 300,000 used and antiquarian books, newspapers, posters, postcards, and stamps from about 900 regulation-green kiosks called “boxes.”

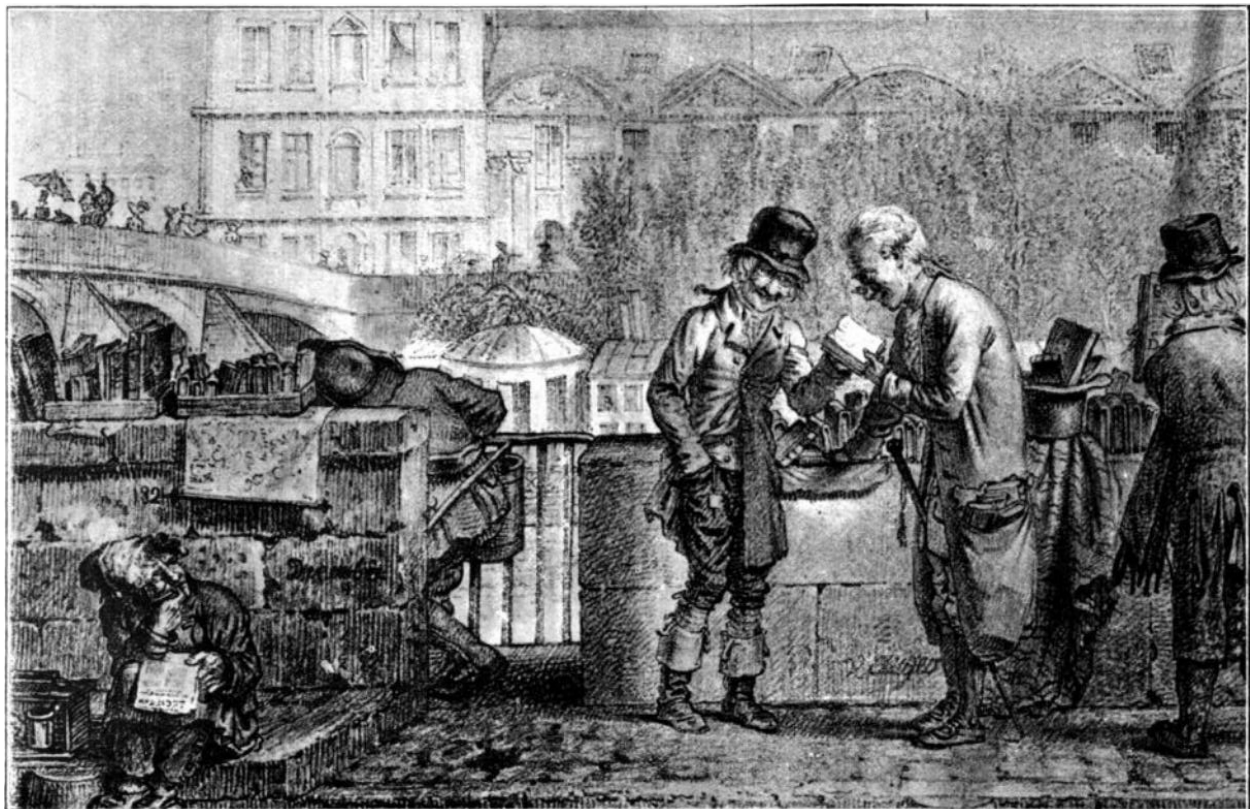
The French word for book is *livre* so whence “bouquiniste”? The core of this word is “*bouquin*,” from the Flemish “*boeckin*,” a diminutive, a “little book.” This derivation points to the antiquity of the bouquiniste tradition.

The romantic version of the bouquinistes’ origin says that a boat transporting books sank in the Seine near the Cathedral of Notre Dame. Sailors threw themselves into the water to save the books. To make up for the lost value of the cargo, they sold what they recovered to those strolling on the banks of the river, and a tradition was born.

The more authentic version says that the tradition goes back to the 1500s. Printing and publishing were in high gear since Gutenberg had introduced the printing press in 1440. Itinerant booksellers would travel from town to town and set up pop-up bookshops along the banks of the river, selling their wares from tables or baskets. In Paris, they tended to gather along the Seine near the center of the city.

What did actual bookstore owners think? In 1649, they had the bouquinistes outlawed; book displays were prohibited in the vicinity Paris’s main bridge. This was the first of several attempts to banish the bouquinistes. In 1721, the possibility of prison was added to this law. But nothing completely discouraged the bouquinistes. As Paris developed, especially along the Seine, new locations for bookselling were created and exploited.

In the late 1700s, during the revolution, the bouquinistes were more valued than ever for their stocks of revolutionary materials and newspapers.



A passerby negotiates with a bouquiniste for a desired volume in this 1821 print.

Sources: Bloomberg; Euronews; New York Times; Atlas Obscura; Lonely Planet

Thanks to Carl Nudi for the tip!

Bouquinistes, concluded

The dispossession of many wealthy estates also caused many antiquarian books to appear in Paris book stalls. Further building along the Seine during the reign of Napoleon I created even more spaces for bookselling. Finally in 1859, Paris reached an agreement and established specific areas in which the bouquinistes could operate. Fees were established as well as operating hours: sunrise to sunset. The carriage green color used throughout Paris was set as the official color of bouquiniste boxes.



The bouquinistes have operated under these regulations since that time. They have become a Paris fixture, an icon of the city, and a representation of its easy-going sophistication.

So it was no surprise that plans by the Paris authorities to move the bouquinistes for the 2024 Olympic Games met with resistance. The bouquinistes have been resisting the Paris authorities for centuries.

The reason for the move? The games will be held in the Stade de France, the national stadium of France, and vicinity, but the opening ceremonies are planned as a waterborne parade on the Seine. Other famous sites will be used as Olympic venues, including beach volleyball at the base of the Eiffel Tower and equestrian events in the gardens at Versailles. This is all part of a plan to restore the “grandeur of the games” after the last Olympic games were dramatically affected by the Covid pandemic.

The 2024 Olympics opening ceremonies are expected to attract as many as 600,000 spectators to Paris. They will wish to line to the banks of the Seine to watch the 10,000 or so athletes float by on 160 boats.

It’s a spectacular plan, but it involves relocating hundreds of book stalls. Bouquinistes are concerned about damage to the stalls and the goods they contain as well as the amount of time that the sellers will be able to sell their goods. Even bouquiniste sales have suffered with the impact of the Internet, and many have added souvenirs as an important supplement to their income. The flood of visitors on that one day could be a bonanza.

Paris authorities are concerned with visitor security and believe that the boxes present a great opportunity for terrorists.

Government reassurances that the boxes will be moved and returned as quickly as possible only served to alarm the bouquinistes even more.

Bouquinistes who have experience with having their stalls moved cite damage and significant repair costs. Many of the boxes have not been moved for decades and moving them presents unknown challenges.

Negotiations have continued, and progress has been made. The city has proposed testing a removal and has reduced the number of stalls that must be moved to under 600. Talks continue, but the move seems definite.



‘A Most Rare Vision’

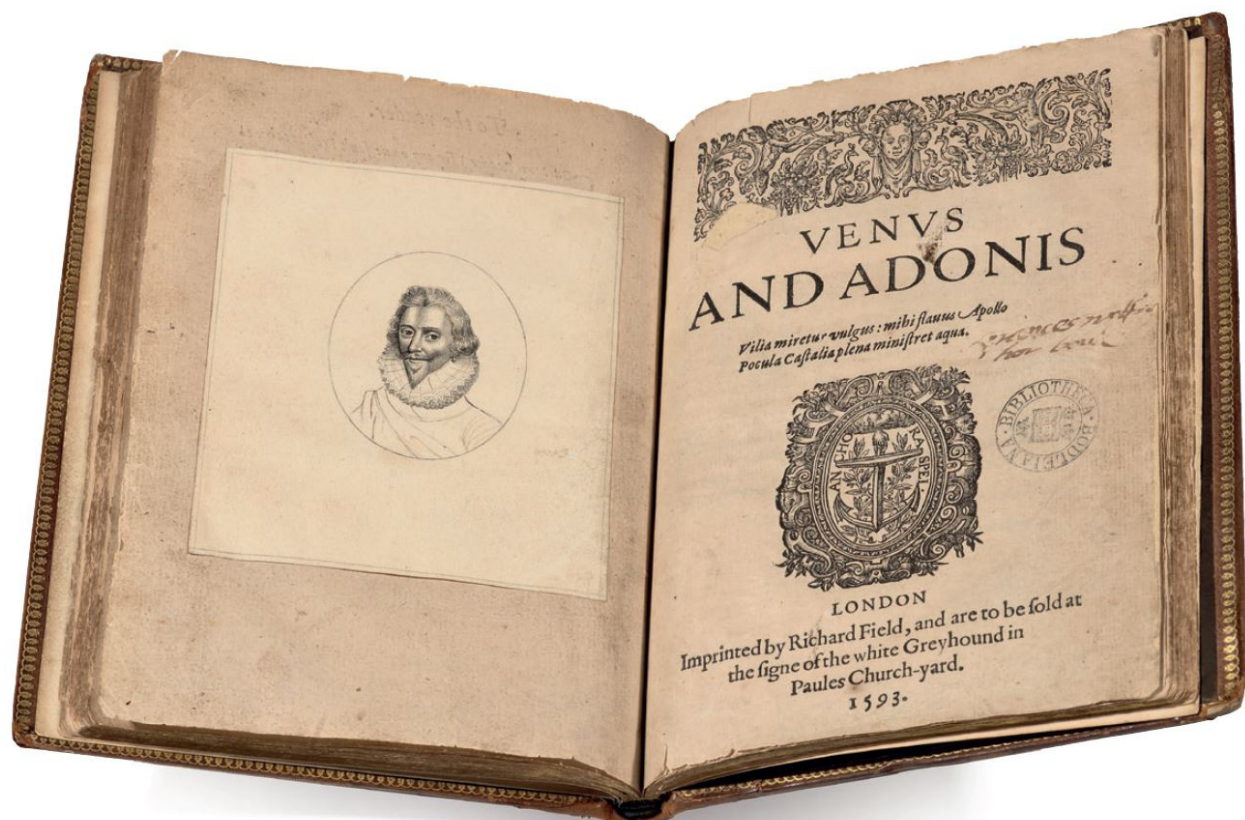
According to *The Book Lover’s Miscellany* by Claire Cock-Starkey, the rarest book in the world is the 1593 edition of William Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*.

Venus and Adonis may be an unfamiliar Shakespeare title to many people, but check your *Complete Works of Shakespeare* (the one you bought when, like many of us, you decided you would read all of Shakespeare’s plays – we don’t discuss how far we got), and you will find it somewhere near the back among Shakespeare’s poems, alongside the 154 sonnets, the *Rape of Lucrece*, and a couple of others.

By 1593, Shakespeare had already staged several plays, but in that year, all the theaters were closed because of an outbreak of bubonic plague. Shakespeare took that opportunity to write *Venus and Adonis*. It was the type of minor epic based on classical material that was popular at the time and which many poets and playwrights were producing.

Shakespeare’s poem was inspired by stories found in the *Metamorphoses*, a lengthy narrative poem by the Latin poet Ovid (43 BCE–CE 17/18). Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* is a catalog of Greek mythology connected by the theme of transformation, i.e., metamorphosis. The art of these minor epics was to take the source material and expand by exploring its themes and elaborating its actions – exactly what Shakespeare did in many of his plays.

Shakespeare’s version is not only more extensive than Ovid’s, it is also a bit wilder. Venus, the goddess of love, is overwhelmed by her attraction to the exceptionally handsome Adonis. More than one goddess had been through this, but in Shakespeare’s version, Venus is thoroughly lovestruck. She constantly presents herself naked to Adonis, offering herself to him in very direct terms, but he is more focused on hunting. It’s a very Elizabethan take on the story.



Codex Sassoon, concluded

It was the first work that Shakespeare ever published. It was very popular, and it made him famous. It was reprinted in 1594, and regularly reprinted for the next 50 years, going through at least 16 editions. It was the most popular work that Shakespeare published during his lifetime. In fact, “the most popular work of vernacular poetry in the entire period.”

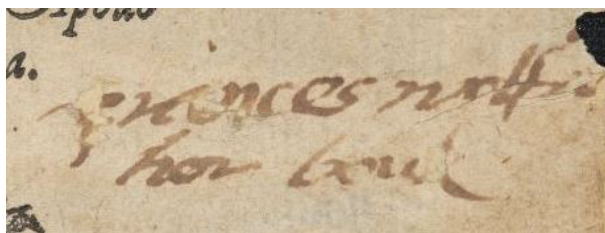
Curious then that the 1593 edition should be so rare. How rare? Only one complete example is known, and it is held at Oxford’s Bodleian Library. A few fragments are known. It has been suggested that the rarity is due to the popularity – the small books were passed around, read and re-read until they fell apart. All of the early editions are rare.

We might not have this copy except that it was bound with another book and owned by a famous book collector, Frances Wolfreton (1607–1677), “a rare example of a 17th-century non-aristocratic woman who formed a substantial book collection.” She signed many of her books, including this one, on the title page: “Frances Wolfr. / hor bouk”.

The book bound in front of *Venus and Adonis* is *Licia*, the Elizabethan sonnet cycle by Giles Fletcher (the elder, 1548–1611), which was also published in 1593. Fletcher was a member of Parliament and held other positions, including Elizabeth I’s ambassador to the court of Feodor I, emperor of Russia.

The two books may not have been bound together for Wolfreton. Her name has been scrubbed from the title page of *Licia* and replaced with the name John Millway and dated 1602.

Wolfreton left her books to her son Stanford with



The signature of owner Frances Wolfreton – Frances Wolfr. / hor bouk – is found on the title page of the only known copy of the 1593 edition of Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*.



Venus (Melos, c. 125 BCE) and Adonis (Bertel Thorvaldsen, before 1887)

“Hunting he lov’d, but love he laugh’d to scorn”

the instruction that while they might be loaned to his brothers and sisters, they should be returned and Stanford “shall returne them to their places againe, and he shall carefully keepe them together.”

Most of Wolfreton’s books remained in the family until they were sold at Sotheby’s in 1856. There were exceptions. Some were sold in the late 1930s, and others in 1988. As we shall see, at least one was sold before 1856. (See Sarah Lindenbaum’s projects on the books of [Frances Wolfreton](#) and [Early Modern Women’s Book Ownership](#).)

By the late 18th century, the 1593 edition of *Venus and Adonis* was unknown, but the great Shakespeare scholar of the period, Edmond Malone (1741–1812), had speculated that it existed and spent years searching for it. He found a copy in 1805 in the Manchester bookshop of William Ford. Malone paid 25 pounds, a high price at the time, but he did not regret “his bargain.”

When Malone died in 1812, the book passed to Malone’s brother Lord Sunderlin, who offered part of his brother’s collection to the Bodleian in 1815. The transfer was completed in 1821, and *Venus and Adonis* remains in the Bodleian to this day.

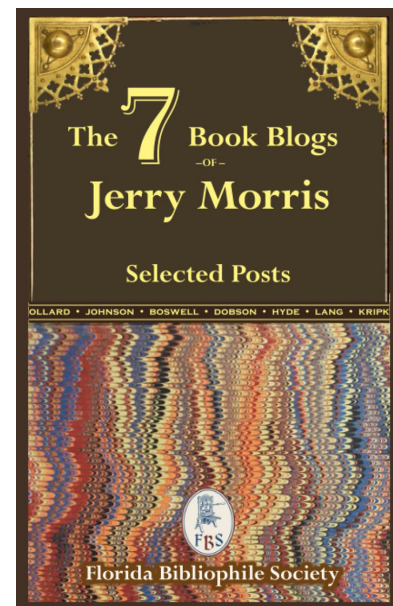
FBS Publications

The 7 Book Blogs of Jerry Morris

FBS. May 2023. 312 pp. \$43.50 (hbk), 30.00 (pbk). Color illus.

The 7 Book Blogs of Jerry Morris collects 29 out of the more than 300 blog posts that Jerry published over a 20-year period. Selected by a committee of Jerry's devoted readers, these posts represent the range of Jerry's bibliophilic interests as well as his many contributions to the history of books and the people that collected them. A few of the bibliophiles Jerry wrote about include Mary and Donald Hyde, J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, Adrian H. Joline, Alfred W. Pollard, and Madeline Kripke. A number of booksellers are also subjects of these blog posts, including Larry McMurtry and his famous bookshop, Booked Up, in Archer City, Texas, and John R. Lindmark and his ill-fated eponymous shop in Poughkeepsie, New York – an infamous “chapter” in bookselling history. Also included, of course, are Jerry's personal collecting interests, such as his extensive work cataloging the libraries of Samuel Johnson, James Boswell, and Charles Lamb. Especially close to Jerry's bibliophilic heart was his collection of the editions of William Strunk's (and later Strunk and White's) well-known guide, *The Elements of Style*. Jerry's meticulous research and wide-ranging relationships throughout the world of bibliophiles allows him to illuminate some overlooked but fascinating individuals and publications.

Available through Amazon Books: [hardback](#) and [paperback](#).

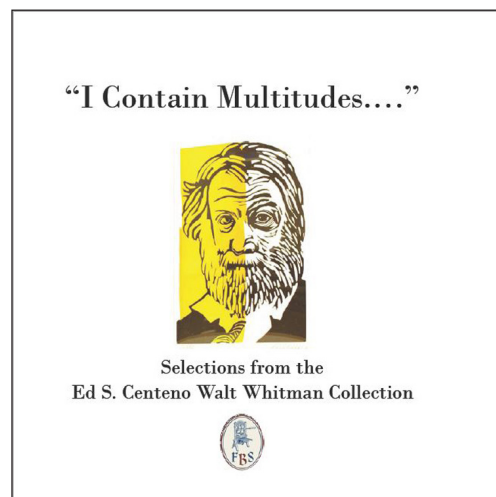


“I Contain Multitudes . . .”: Selections from the Ed S. Centeno Walt Whitman Collection

FBS. April 2022. 58 pp. \$20.00 (pbk). Color illus.

In April 2022, the Florida Bibliophile Society hosted a special exhibition of items from the Ed S. Centeno Walt Whitman Collection at the Largo Public Library in Largo, Florida. Ed opened the exhibition with a slide presentation at the Largo library. This book contains photographs, descriptions, and history of over 100 items in Ed's collection, which includes editions of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman ephemera and period collectibles, as well as specially commissioned works of art. The collection is a remarkable and revealing tribute to Whitman. This book is an excellent introduction to Whitman, with information on his creative process and output and his outsized impact on American and world poetry. The book is also an excellent introduction to Ed Centeno, an intrepid and engaging collector whose enthusiasm for life and for Whitman is truly contagious. Only a few copies of this limited edition of 100 books remain.

Order directly from the Florida Bibliophile Society by sending a check for \$20.00 to Florida Bibliophile Society, P.O. Box 530682, St. Petersburg FL 33747. You may also request a copy via email at floridabibliophiles@gmail.com and use the same email address to pay through PayPal.



Books in Brief

Blurb Your Enthusiasm: An A-Z of Literary Persuasion

Louise Willder
Oneworld Publications
352 pp., October 2022

Louise Willder

Blurb Your Enthusiasm

An A-Z of Literary Persuasion



Blurbs are now ubiquitous, but it was not always so. When a little-known poet named Walt Whitman included a highly complimentary letter from literary giant Ralph Waldo Emerson in the 1856 (second) edition of *Leaves of Grass*, he is believed to have used the first blurb. However, it would be another 50 years before the word “blurb” was coined to describe this practice. By the early

20th century, the inclusion in (or on) books of overblown, self-congratulatory copy had become something of a publishing industry in-joke. It was Gelett Burgess, a well-known humorist, that gave these phrases the name “blurb” in 1907 in a mocking blurb for his own book.

One hundred years later, blurbing is a minor industry, in which Louise Willder is a successful practitioner. Willder considers the blurb in all aspects. To quote her blurb book’s blurb: “blurb wizard Louise Willder joyfully divulges what those 100-or-so words can tell us about literary history, the craft of writing, authors from George Orwell to Zadie Smith, genres from children’s fiction to bonkbusters, cover design, the dark arts

of persuasion and even why we read. Nina Stibbe says, “Very funny, erudite and profound. A delight!”

Louise Willder has been a copywriter at Penguin Books for 25 years. She estimates that she has produced about 5,000 blurbs.

Sources: Penguin Press; Mental Floss; Lithub; publicbooks.org

The Manuscripts Club: The People Behind a Thousand Years of Medieval Manuscripts

Christopher de Hamel
Penguin Press
624 pp., November 2023

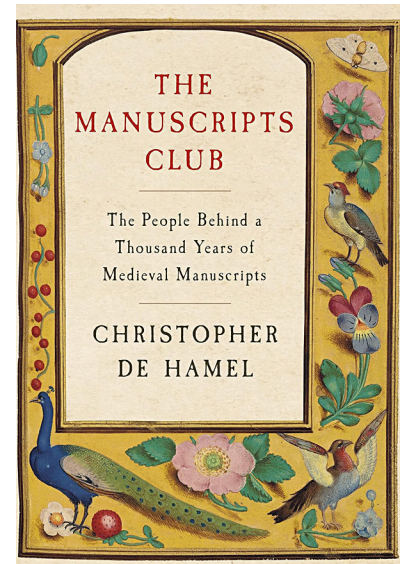
The illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages are among the greatest works of European art and literature. Truly, they are marvels. Around 1850, John Ruskin bought his first manuscript. This was his reaction: “The new worlds which every leaf of this book opened to me, and the joy I had in counting their letters and unravelling their

arabesques as if they had all been of beaten gold – as many of them were – cannot be told.”

However, what about the men and women who made, collected, and preserved manuscripts through the centuries, and to whom we owe their existence? de Hamel describes some of these extraordinary people who spent their lives among illuminated manuscripts over the last 1,000 years: a Normandy monk, a French prince, a Florentine bookseller, an English antiquary, a rabbi from central Europe, a French priest, a Greek forger, a German polymath, a British connoisseur, and the woman who created the most spectacular library in America. Christopher de Hamel’s unexpected connections and discoveries shed light on the great manuscripts through the lives and passions of their keepers and companions.

Christopher de Hamel is an award-winning author and specialist in manuscripts through work at Sotheby’s and as former librarian of Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, UK.

Source: Penguin Press

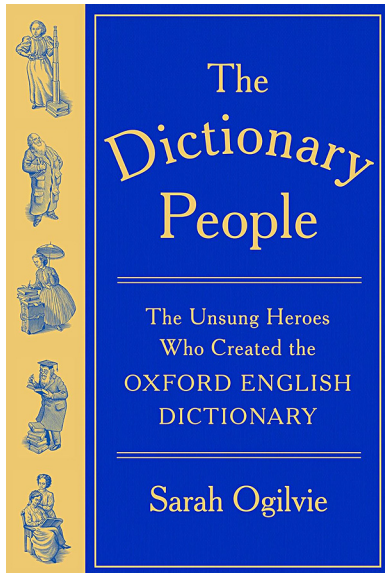


Books in Brief, *continued***The Dictionary People: The Unsung Heroes Who Created the Oxford English Dictionary**

Sarah Ogilvie

Knopf

384 pp., October 2023



Sometimes called “the Wikipedia of its day,” Wikipedia describes the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED to its friends) as “the principal historical dictionary of the English language, published by Oxford University Press. It traces the historical development of the English language, providing a comprehensive resource

to scholars and academic researchers, as well as describing usage in its many variations throughout the world.”

Begun in 1857, the OED’s first edition took 70 years to complete. The life of James Murray, its primary editor from 1879 to 1915, and the OED’s origins have been captured in *The Professor and the Madman* (1998) by Simon Winchester. He was one of many editors and over 3,000 contributors (known as “readers” to the editorial team) from all over the world. Ogilvie uses Murray’s address books and correspondences to identify many unheralded and uncredited “readers” and create both portraits and panoramas of these devoted volunteers. Ogilvie adds insights to Murray as

well, as the manager of these readers, whose “unselfish devotion and service to that language” he genuinely admired.

Sarah Ogilvie is a linguist, lexicographer, writer, and technologist. She currently teaches at Oxford University, in digital humanities.



Sources: Knopf; NetGalley; *The Guardian*

The Coffee-Table Book in the Post-War Anglophone World

Christine Elliott

Palgrave Macmillan

258 pp., 2023

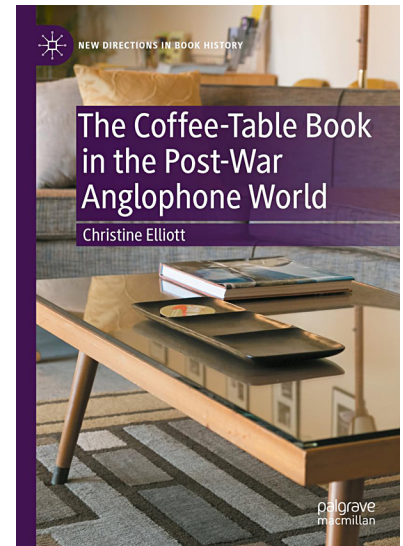
Christine Elliott’s experience in producing her coffee-table book *Custom Bicycles: A Passionate Pursuit* (2012) led her to to her own passionate pursuit: a Ph.D. in Media and Communications.

The Coffee-Table Book in the Post-War Anglophone World is adapted from her doctoral thesis.

Elliott realized that coffee-table books occupied a unique place in the home and in culture at large and that they had been largely overlooked in book history. Elliott places the origins of the coffee-table book in the context of post-war recovery and middle-class affluence in the 1950s. During this period, as people bought homes and furnished them, the coffee table became a focal point of living rooms and its decoration was important to homeowners. Elliott examines the development of this “genre” and its cultural significance. She argues that the appearance and popularity of these books was made possible by three important developments: advances in full colour printing technology, social change, and publishing entrepreneurship and innovation. Despite the popularity of these books, Elliott finds that they have acquired a poor reputation, which she investigates.

Christine Elliott is an independent scholar who has worked with disadvantaged young people within various public and private sector social justice programs.

Sources: Palgrave Macmillan; Monash University

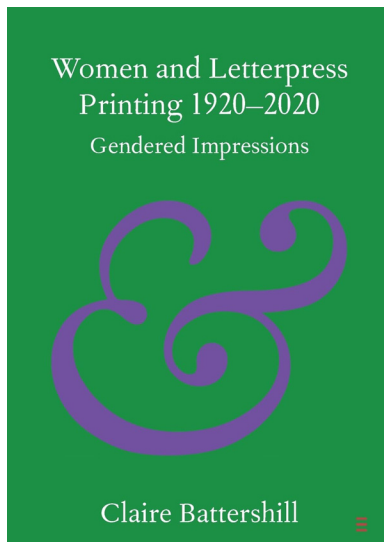


Books in Brief, concluded**Women and Letterpress Printing 1920–2020** (Elements in Publishing and Book Culture)

Claire Battershill

Cambridge University Press

167 pp., June 2022



This Element analyzes the relationship between gender and literary letterpress printing from the early 20th century to the beginning of the 21st.

This rich history includes writers like Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), who along with her husband, Leonard, founded The Hogarth Press in 1917; Anaïs

Nin (1903–1977), the French-born American diarist, and essayist who created the Gemor Press in New York in 1942; and surrealist writer, poet, and political activist Nancy Cunard (1896–1965), a self-taught printer who wrote a memoir about the experience of running her own printing house. Printing “slowed down” the process of writing: “It focuses you on one letter at a time.”

Claire Battershill offers a way of thinking about the feminist history of printing as we confront the presence and particular character of letterpress in a digital age. This Element traces the critical histories of women and print, offers an analysis of some of the modes of discourse and training through which women and gender minorities have learned the craft of printing, offers brief biographical vignettes, and focuses on printers’ own written reflections about letterpress.

Claire Battershill is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Information and the Department of English at the University of Toronto.



Sources: Cambridge University Press; University of Toronto

[Bookish fiction]

The Personal Librarian

Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray

Berkley Books

352 pp., June 2021

In her twenties, Belle da Costa Greene was hired by J. P. Morgan to curate a collection of rare manuscripts, books, and artwork for his newly built Pierpont Morgan Library. Greene became a fixture in New York society and powerful in the art and book worlds, known for impeccable taste and shrewd negotiating.

But Greene had a secret: despite a complexion that passed for white, she was the daughter of Richard Greener (she changed her name), the first Black graduate of Harvard and a well-known advocate for equality.

This remarkable novel tells the story of an extraordinary woman, famous for her intellect, style, and wit, and shares the lengths she must go to for the protection of her family and her legacy and to preserve her carefully crafted white identity in the racist world in which she lives.

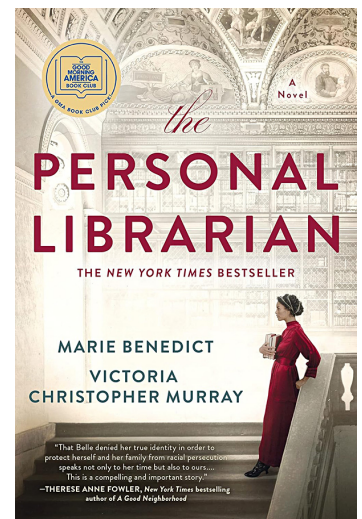
A New York Times Bestseller and named a Best Book of the Year by NPR.

Marie Benedict is a lawyer and author of several well-received books that have been translated in multiple languages.

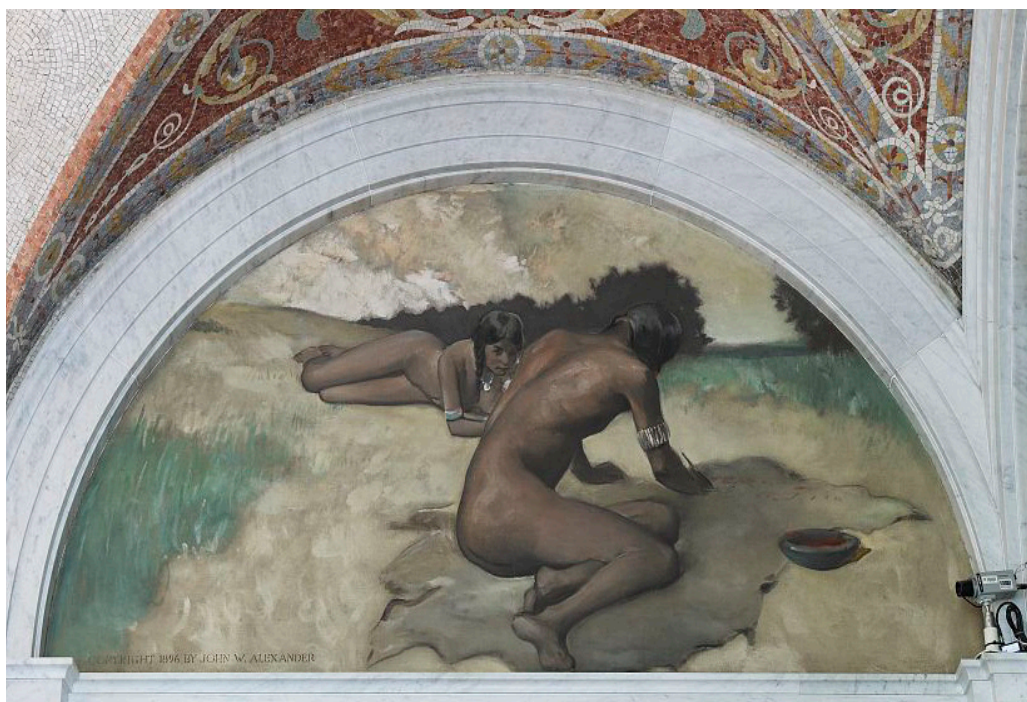
Victoria Christopher Murray is an award-winning author of 20 books, with over one million in print. The story of how these two writers came together to write this book is as fascinating as the story of Greene herself.



Sources: Berkley Books; Goodreads



Murals in the Library of Congress. One of the murals in the “Evolution of the Book” series by John W. Alexander (1856–1915) is *Picture Writing*, the simplest of the murals. A Native American writes symbols on a deer skin while a female companion looks on. Pictographs were widely used by Native American tribes not as words but as symbols. Some were easily understood between tribes and others remain cryptic to this day. Alexander’s murals are not a history of the book per se, but illustrate the development of writing and narrative from several cultures, in line with a theme of the Library of Congress’s decoration: the many cultures that contributed to modern civilization.



Library of Congress



This Month's Writers and Contributors

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

Wesley Brown
Sean Donnelly
David Hall
Maureen E. Mulvihill
Carl Mario Nudi
Irene Pavese
Gary Simons

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!

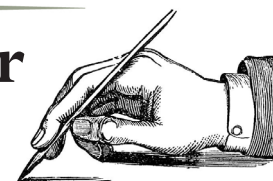
If you love books, take your interest to the next level by joining a group of dedicated book lovers (i.e., bibliophiles). You will meet serious collectors, dealers, scholars, and readers, and you will discover a lively, enjoyable group.



It's easy to join – just send an email with your name, mailing address, and phone number to Floridabibliophiles@gmail.com. Use Paypal to send your \$50 annual dues to that same address, or mail a check to Florida Bibliophile Society, P.O. Box 530682, St. Petersburg, FL 33747.

Joining FBS also makes you a member of our national organization, FABS, 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

October 2023



Rob Norman: Skin in the Game: Writer, Bookseller, Dermatologist

Book Lovers Bookstore
6205 S. Dale Mabry Hwy., Tampa, FL
October 15, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

Rob's day job is dermatology, which includes his private practice, teaching at several medical schools, and overseas medical volunteer. He has also found time to write or edit over 60 books, ranging from his specialty in dermatology to his role as a Master Naturalist to local Tampa historian. To these activities, Rob has now added "bookseller." He calls his shop the Book Lovers Bookstore, where "book lover" could apply to the customers or the owners. It's a work in progress, but Rob loves to share, and he has invited FBS for a visit to the shop "as is" to learn more about him and his interests and accomplishments and to poke around in the books and find a few treasures.

November 2023



Bill Hale: Portrait of the Book Seller as a Young Man

Seminole Community Library
9200 113th St. N., Seminole, FL
November 19, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

(also available on Zoom)

James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* tells a writer's coming-of-age story – Bill Hale has such a story of his own to tell. Now a writer and bookseller, it's not necessarily his relative youth that makes him unique but rather how someone of this generation develops such an interest in books and the antiquarian market at that. Bill will share his own "portrait of the bookseller as a young man": the byways and sidetracks, good choices and bad, and early literary influences that led him to his present book career and writerly interests. As an active online bookseller via his website Ageless Literature and as a busy promoter and entrepreneur of all things literary, he exemplifies passion, vitality, and a sense of unlimited horizons. He has a great story to tell.



Book Events and Podcasts

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

Florida Book Events

OCTOBER, NATIONAL BOOK MONTH

October 1–7 – Banned Books Week

— October 19 —

Books at the Beach 2023

St. Petersburg, FL

(www.booksatthebeach.com/)

— October 20–22 —

Florida WritersCon

Hilton Orlando, Altamonte Springs, FL

(www.floridawriters.org/florida-writerscon)

— October 21–25 —

Alachua Co. Friends of the Library Book Sale

Gainesville, FL (folaclid.org/)

November 1 – National Authors' Day

— November 1–30 —

JCA Jewish Literary, Film, and Arts Festival

Jacksonville, FL (jcajax.org/jcafest/)

— November 3–4 —

Sanibel Island Writers Conference

Florida Gulf Coast University,

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

— November 10–12 —

Life to Paper Book Festival

Nautilus Sonesta, Miami Beach, FL

(lifetopaperbookfest.com/)

— November 11 —

Tampa Bay Times Festival of Reading

The Palladium, St. Petersburg

(www.festivalofreading.com/)

Rare Book Cafe Coffee Break

FBS welcomes the Rare Book Cafe Coffee Break, the new format of the Rare Book Cafe, begun several years ago by Florida booksellers and FBS members Steve and Edie Eisenstein. “Coffee Break” is co-hosted by long-time RBC regulars Lee Linn (The Ridge Books, Calhoun, GA) and Ed Markeiwicz (Montgomery Rare Books & Manuscripts, Portland, OR). Get a cup of coffee and join [RBC Coffee Break on Facebook](#).

COFFEE BREAK No. 27: A visit with Maine bookseller Bill Lippincott – We check in with Bill Lippincott, president of the Maine Antiquarian Booksellers Association, in the run-up to the “Books in Boston” Shadow Show. We learn about the health of the antiquarian book business in Maine as well as the black bear who is part of the logo of the MABA organization. Both Bill Lippincott and our co-host Lee Linn will exhibit at the shadow show.

COFFEE BREAK No. 25: Richard Mori on anticipating the Boston Shadow Show – Richard is partnering with Duane Stevens of Wiggins Fine Books in Shelburne Falls, MA, to produce “Books in Boston,” the Shadow Show to the Boston Antiquarian Book Fair. “Books in Boston” will be presented on Sat., Oct. 28, 2023, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Boston Hilton Back Bay’s Belvidere Ballroom, within a few minutes walk of the Boston Antiquarian Book Fair.

COFFEE BREAK No. 26: Beca the Bookseller, Betsy the Book Van, a skull named Horace – Co-hosts Ed Markiewicz and Lee Linn have a hilarious time with Rebekah (Beca) Cron, a bookseller with Henry Sotheran, Ltd., London, and Fold the Corner, her new venture in Surrey, UK. Beca is outfitting a book van she’s named Betsy, and she’s planning book adventures all across Europe. Ed and Lee get the inside scoop in this delightful segment. Watch to the end to learn about the skull named Horace.

Book Events and Podcasts, *continued*

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 love books. The website provides podcasts back to 2006, lists of reading, links, etc.

Recent episodes:

Sept. 14, 2023 – Sir Tim Waterstone on Building a Bookselling Empire – Waterstone revolutionized bookselling in Britain and changed the country's cultural landscape. We met at the Garrick Club in London to talk about his memoir, *The Face Pressed Against a Window* (Atlantic, 2019) and about how he accomplished what he accomplished. Topics included Tim's troubled relationship with his father, his eight children, the creative strategy behind growing Waterstones and more.

Aug. 18, 2023 – Novelist David Mitchell on What he Does and How he Does it – Mitchell feels compelled to make better and better narrative. A steady flow of award-winning novels led, in 2018, to the *Sunday Times* Award for Literary Excellence, which recognizes a writer's body of work. His "plan" is working.

Aug. 12, 2023 – John Banville on How and Why He Writes Novels – Banville is an Irish novelist, short-story writer, and screenwriter. He's won many prizes, including the Booker in 2005 for *The Sea*, and he's considered a Nobel contender. In addition to significant "literary" work, he's also written a string of popular crime novels.

July 31, 2023 – Tim Parks on How to Be a Better Reader – Parks is author of 19 novels as well as essays and nonfiction. He talks with me about the the reader – how to be a better one. While I want rules, which he will not give, he does provide a lot of excellent insights.

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.

Upcoming episodes:

Oct. 12, 7 p.m. ET – Lawrence Buell and Megan Marshall – Henry David Thoreau: Thinking Disobediently – A leader in the American Transcendentalist movement, Thoreau was an advocate of self-reliance, a self-professed mystic now acclaimed as a pioneer life-scientist, and a seminal theorist of nonviolent protest. Buell explores the thought and impact of this iconic, but highly controversial figure. Marshall will join the discussion on Thoreau's life and will open the conversation to audience questions.

Oct. 19, 7 p.m. ET – Nell Irvin Painter – Sojourner Truth Was a New Yorker, and She Didn't Say That – Truth was a Hudson Valley New Yorker, a significant fact in her own life but often overlooked. Despite more awareness of Black history, Truth is still often confused with Maryland's Harriet Tubman. Painter focuses on Truth's New York origins and recovers the authentic Truth from the "Truth" invented years later by journalist Frances Dana Gage.

Oct. 26, 2 p.m. ET – Caroline Wigginton – Indigenuity: Native Craftwork and the Art of American Literatures – In this innovative work at the intersection of Indigenous studies, literary studies, book history, and material culture studies, Wigginton argues for the often-hidden intimate relationship between American literary history and Native craftwork. She also shows how the making and using of books is repatriating Native communities.

Book Events and Podcasts, concluded**The Book Collector Podcast**

In 1952, James Bond author Ian Fleming created *The Book Collector*, a “unique periodical for bibliophiles,” with articles on book collecting, modern first editions, typography, national libraries, etc. Fleming and the journal editor John Hayward died in 1964, but the journal was revived by new owner-editor Nicolas Barker. In 2016, Fleming’s nephews, James and Fergus Fleming, took over and in 2020, created a podcast, featuring readings from the journal’s archives. There are now [74 podcasts](#) on SoundCloud, with these recent additions:

The Destruction of the Country House Library, by John Saumarez Smith – Smith recalls the destruction of two country house libraries in 1939: Dropmore and Hampden. (Cf. Peter F. Reid, “The Decline and Fall of the British Country House Library,” *Libraries & Culture*, Vol. 36, No. 2, pp. 345–366.)

Bond Behind the Iron Curtain – Audiobook Teaser – In 2001, *The Book Collector* published *Bond behind the Iron Curtain* by Ian Fleming’s nephew James, who explores newly revealed material translated from Russian and Eastern European languages attacking capitalism and the character and morals of 007. Described in *The Guardian* as “one of the best things I have ever read on Bond” (June 10, 2021).

University of Miami Special Collections

“Deep Dives” is an online series of webinars offering an informative, enticing, and educational look into a selection of images that are representative of materials in Special Collections.

Sept. 14 – Robin Nolasco – Art for the People: A History of Illustration Techniques in Books and Popular Media

Nolasco reviews the various processes used to illustrate printed matter over the last 500 years, beginning with woodblocks and continuing through etching, lithograph, four-color process and more. The webinar includes many remarkable examples from the University of Miami’s Special Collections.

Grolier Club of New York Videos

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 include:

July 19 – Rare Book School Lecture – Joshua O’Driscoll on Nuns at Work: The Poor Clares as Makers of Books in Gothic Cologne – O’Driscoll’s examines manuscripts of the Poor Clares of Cologne. Around 1320–1360, these nuns produced sumptuous illuminated books for local monastic use and wealthy civic patrons. Inscriptions and marginal portraits in surviving manuscripts indicate that the Poor Clares acted as both scribes and painters. Some women documented their activities as both patrons and producers of manuscripts. Scholars have suggested that small red discs with distinctive patterns of white lines and dots formed “crypto-signatures” to distinguish each painter’s work. If true, these signatures may have served a role in production, as the manuscripts were often illuminated collaboratively. The manuscripts vividly testify to the central role of female patronage and production in the history of medieval art.

Princeton University Press “Ideas” Podcasts

PUP Ideas Podcast, co-sponsored by the New Books Network and Literary Hub, features interviews with the international roster of PUP authors, across a diversity of subject areas.

Sept. 28 – Peter K. Andersson – Fool: In Search of Henry VIII’s Closest Man – In some portraits of Henry VIII there appears another, striking figure: a gaunt, morose-looking man with a shaved head and, in one case, a monkey on his shoulder.

Sept. 7 – Jeff Deutsch – In Praise of Good Bookstores – Deutsch, director of Chicago’s Seminary Co-op Bookstores, one of the world’s finest bookstores, pays tribute to one of our most important and endangered civic institutions.

...and More



Ah, the 60s... and the headband.

Like the classic 60s headband, the headband of a book serves a practical purpose, often in a decorative way. Originally, the headband was sewn directly into the folded sections of the book. This helped keep the book sections tight at the top and bottom of the spine where, after much use, the sections might tend to separate. It also helped maintain the integrity of the book at this vulnerable spot where the text block joins the cover.

The alternating colors result from the traditional method of using two threads at the same time to sew the headband, but a single color is equally possible. “Sew” is not completely accurate, the headband is produced by a combination of sewing the threads into the sections and weaving them along the top. The threads are wrapped around a solid core. At one time, this would have been vellum or catgut, but some type of cord was also used, and that is what is common today in fine bookbinding. A third thread can be added to the weaving, which can produce a bead in front of the headband.

The modern headband, i.e., a glued-on ribbon, emerged at the turn of the 17th century as a means of reducing the cost to produce individual books. These early examples often have a core to more closely resemble the handsewn headband, which may have taken almost as much time to make as a sewn headband, but the glued-on headband probably added more flexibility to the production process, especially as the number of books printed in a single edition increased into the thousands. By the 19th century, it was also common to omit even the glued-on headband.

A headband is usually applied at the top and bottom of the spine. Sometimes, the top band is called the headband, and the bottom band is called the tailband. The term endband is then the general term. These terms are useful when precise description is needed, but in general use, it is now common to refer to both as headbands.



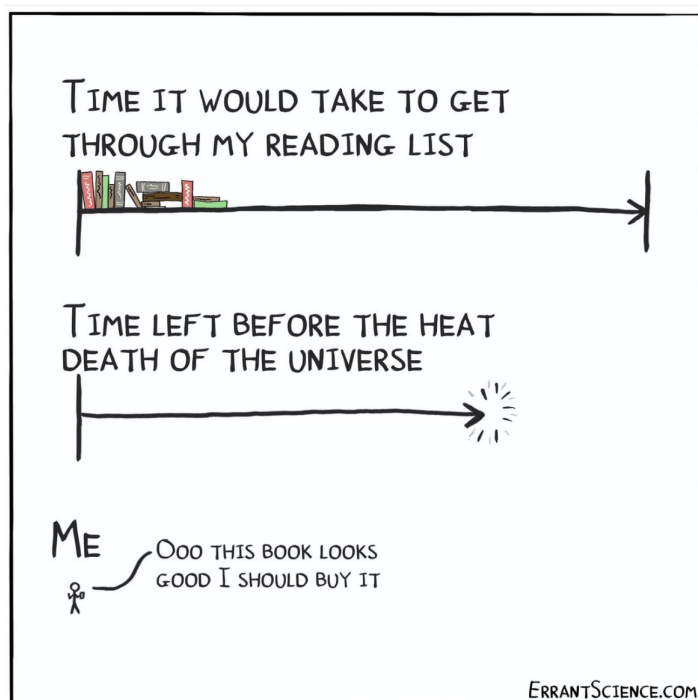
Modern headbands show the traditional two colors of thread, but these are actually the edges of ribbons that are glued to the spine. They are not sewn into the signatures.



Modern example of a traditional headband which is sewn and woven at the top edge of the spine.



The headband of this book from 1657 is at the left. The main threads are two different colors, but due to age, the difference is difficult to see. Note the bead in front of the headband that may indicate an additional thread was used in making the band.



—our thanks to FBS friend Robert Reed

Florida Bibliophile Society 2023–2024 Season



FBS meetings will be held both in-person and via Zoom. Check the Upcoming Events page for details.

September 24 • FBS Members—September Show and Tell: Members brought a remarkable assortment of books to share — each with its own remarkable story!

October 15 • Rob Norman — Skin in the Game: Writer, Bookseller, Dermatologist — We will meet at Rob's "Book Lovers Bookstore" in Tampa. It's a work in progress where we will be welcome to plunder the stacks and find some treasures as well as hearing Rob's presentation about his life in books.

November 19 • Bill Hale — Portrait of the Bookseller as a Young Man — In his mid-20s, Bill Hale is a writer, a bookseller, and a promoter of arts and culture in the St. Pete area. Bill will tell us the unusual chain of events that led to his love of books and writing.

December 17 • FBS Holiday Party: Planning is underway for another glittering holiday gala. Stay tuned for details.

January 21 • Gino Passi, Carl Nudi, Sean Donnelly — University of Tampa's MacDonald Kelse Library Special Collections: Under the guidance of Special Collections Librarian Gino Passi, with insights from Carl Nudi and Sean Donnelly, we will tour the Special Collections and inspect some of its more important books and ephemera.

February 18 • Kaitlin Crockett and Jeff Williams — We will be meeting in Gulfport to visit the letterpress printing facilities of Kaitlin Crockett, one of our May 2023 banquet speakers. We will also visit with muralist and sign painter Jeff Williams in the same building.

March 1–3 • Florida Antiquarian Book Fair, one of the largest book fairs in the U.S., will be held at the St. Pete Coliseum. FBS will host a hospitality table in the foyer and staff a booth where we can spend more time with guests and introduce them to FBS. Sunday will feature our free book valuations.

March 17 • Ted Wray — Book Artist. Ted will share some his amazing sculpted book creations and discuss his methods and inspirations.

April 21 • Jason Fortner — Field Trip to Clearwater's Francis Wilson Playhouse: We will meet at the Francis Wilson Playhouse in Clearwater for a tour, display, and presentation of Jason's collection of theatre ephemera, including vintage Broadway posters and backstories. We will also be able to enjoy a Sunday matinee production of the award-winning play "The Play That Goes Wrong" by Henry Lewis, Henry Shields, and Jonathan Sayer. Play tickets are extra.

April 20–24 • Gainesville Getaway: The semiannual Alachua County Friends of the Library book sale features over 500,000 books, CDs, and other media in the Friends' Book House in downtown Gainesville. FBS members often make a day trip on Saturday or make a weekend of it in beautiful North Central Florida.

May 26 • Annual Banquet: Our May banquet speaker will be **Roslyn Franken**, award-winning author and motivational speaker. Roslyn is the Holocaust memoirist of *Meant to Be: A True Story of Might, Miracles, and Triumph of the Human Spirit*.

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



Endpaper • Summer Souvenirs



Our September meeting was a great occasion!

It was like a homecoming. Fun to be back at good ol' Seminole Community Library. Great to be back together. And it was a festival of books. These folks do love books!

What a variety of books. Each one a discovery, and each one a valued addition to a collection. I was impressed with the personal stories connected to so many of the books. And I suspect that there were many more such stories if we'd had time...

It reminded me that books can be powerful souvenirs of significant times, places, people in our lives. Perhaps part of being a bibliophile is believing that every book holds something special. A revelation. A delight. A new adventure. Taking a deeper look at the object in your hands and appreciating its many connections, creators, and owners. Known and unknown.

At one time, I might have preferred that every book I bought be pristine, and of course, the "ideal state" is still impressive. But I now appreciate the occasional book that has been highlighted, commented, drawn in, stamped, signed... All evidence of where that book has been and the people it has meant something to. Our books connect us with others, sometimes in a mysterious way.

Our books are snapshots in a photo album without captions. You might take a book off the shelf and be flooded by memories and associations that perhaps no one else will ever know. We can get awfully attached to these funny papery things.

Great to get together with others that share these feelings. We're off to another great year!

See you at the bookstore! — Charles

The Florida Bibliophile Society

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