

# The Florida Bibliophile

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Membership in the Fellowship of American  
Bibliophilic Societies is included with your  
FBS membership. The FABS Journal is now  
electronic as well as in print. Access a PDF of  
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**FBS Annual Banquet**  
**May 18**  
**Details on Page 26**



**Florida Bibliophile Society**  
A community of book lovers

## Minutes of the March 2025 Meeting of the Florida Bibliophile Society by Sean Donnelly, FBS Recording Secretary



*Date — Sunday afternoon, March 16, 2025, 1:30 p.m.*

*Location — The Jack Kerouac of St. Petersburg., Jack Kerouac's final home*

**Ben Wiley: I'm glad you're here, and I'm glad that we are at this particular location.** Jack Kerouac is familiar to me, but I've never been in this location in my life, so it's all going to be a revelation to me. Also, I do have a few introductory remarks I'd like to make about Jack and the house and Ken Burchenal, our host today.

Ken created a private nonprofit corporation dedicated to the preservation of Jack Kerouac's last home. It's not a museum per se, but it's a gathering place, a cultural space for community activities such as readings that are held here, learning events, lectures, seminars, meetings and other events consistent with its mission to enrich a counterculture — put the word “counter” in parentheses — that counterculture of St. Petersburg.

Kerouac lived in this house with his wife Stella and his mother Gabrielle from 1967 to his death on October 21, 1969. Although Kerouac had lived in parts of Central Florida on and off for much of his last decade, he alternated between a quiet domestic life here with his mother and wife and the restless wandering that made him famous for his most popular novel *On the Road*.

This house is the last place he came off the road. He was a pioneer of the Beat Generation. *On the Road* was published in 1957. It made Kerouac an icon of the youth counterculture of the late '50s and '60s. Many of us have flashbacks of those days. After *On the Road*, he wrote another 12 novels and numerous poetry volumes before his untimely death in St Petersburg in 1969 at the age of 47.

Kerouac was a literary innovator and the public face of the Beat Generation. He's known for his free-flowing, nonlinear prose, all of which seems to spring spontaneously from the author's head, apparently rejecting much of traditional literary style and craft. Yet we know now, in 2025, that his prose has much in common with similar developments in the visual, musical, theatrical, and architectural arts of the '50s and '60s.

His favorite topics across his nonfiction and fiction explore his Catholicism, jazz, travel, sexual promiscuity, Buddhism, drugs, alcoholism, classicism, racism, poverty, and more. Much of his writing, and the writing in general of the Beat Generation, was anathema to many conservative, heteronormative, middle-class Americans of the period and of today. He's part of the Beats, and you'll see some of their books here: Allen Ginsburg, William S. Burroughs, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Gregory Corso. And he's a major influence on such artists and musicians as Thomas Pynchon, Patti Smith, and Bob Dylan. I'm excited to introduce Ken Burchenal. Thank you, Ken, for inviting us and letting us be a part of this.



*Minutes, continued*

**Ken Burchenal:** We're overjoyed to have you guys here. This is exactly like a bullseye for our mission. This is what we wanna do. What I usually like to start tours with is just asking what brings you here – usually it's when somebody comes to take a tour or they want to stay here. They're already a Kerouac freak. But the vast majority of people, even people with a literature degree, still haven't read a Kerouac book. Even though he's no longer underground – he's meat and potatoes of any course on 20<sup>th</sup>-century American literature. Because for most people Kerouac is mostly a reputation, they only have a shallow understanding of what his writing was about and who he was.

In many ways, the most important thing Kerouac ever did for the youth counterculture or for us as a whole was create this image of the free-wheeling life. You know: throw on a backpack on and tennis shoes and hitchhike across – and find – America. That's what happens in a lot of his books, but that's not what his books are about. It's like saying that *Moby Dick* is a DIY guide to hunting whales.

When you think of Kerouac, what do you think of? What do you remember about the Beatniks?

**FBS responses:** I remember bongos on the beach, Long Beach Island, New Jersey. – Yeah, and the hats, the berets. – Maynard G. Krebs from *Dobie Gillis*.

**KB:** In pop culture, even into the '70s, the Beatniks were an object of derision. People like



*Beat Generation* is one of several albums Jack Kerouac made on which he reads his poetry. He wrote a lot of poetry, but it is not well known.

Kerouac or John Cleland Holmes or any number of others who were writing or creating music didn't consider themselves Beatniks. They were just iconoclasts; they were counterculture; they were underground, and that trend in American youth culture really starts with them. I mean, there's always been teenagers.



*The Kerouac house is virtually unchanged since the 1960s. For Ken, it brings back memories of the houses that he and his friends grew up in. He and his wife, Gina, have furnished the house in keeping with the '60s. It's like a time capsule.*

But the concept of a teen or a teenager or a youth counterculture doesn't really start until the late '40s and in the '50s.

You start seeing some of this in films like *Rebel Without a Cause* and *The Outlaws* and *The Wild Bunch*. You start seeing a celebration of rebellion, of questioning the status quo – again, in a pejorative manner. For example, in *Rebel*, Marlon Brando is in a leather outfit on a motorcycle, and he acts like a jerk, but he's a pretty attractive jerk. There was enough dissatisfaction with the status quo and enough affluence after the World War II that teens weren't having to work in a shoe factory. They had disposable income, and they had time.

All teenagers, unless they're being worked to death, look around and notice that the adult world is full of crap, and they certainly feel like they know how to fix the problem. People roll their eyes at teenagers and crazy teenagers. But in 1930, if you had a crazy teenager, you'd put him to work or you'd beat him, or you'd kick him out of the house. You're 14, and you have to find your own way. That changes after World War II.

Even for myself, Kerouac's importance is really his influence. So many people from the Grateful Dead to the Clash to the 25-year-old musicians that I meet now come here and do house concerts, and they're just like, "God, this is Kerouac's house." But if I ask if they've read any of his books, they

*Minutes, continued*

might say no. Kerouac went from being a global sensation from 1957 and the early '60s to being kind of a joke. He couldn't get published, couldn't get arrested. He had 17 novels by the time he died, and most of them had been published, but mostly in very obscure ways. He had hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of pages of published poetry, but nobody thought he was a poet when he died in 1969 with 90 bucks in the bank.

He spent the last bit of his money buying this house. His mother bought the house next door in 1964, and Kerouac lived there until 1966, when he married Stella. They traded the house next door for this house because of the extra bedroom.



*Ken Burchenal sits in the last chair that Kerouac ever sat in. Kerouac got up and went to the bathroom. His severely cirrhotic liver hemorrhaged, and he was rushed to the hospital. Emergency surgery was not able to save him. He died at age 47 on October 21, 1969.*



Apparently they had a two-bedroom marriage. It was a strange relationship in several ways, some very Freudian.

How I got the house? I was born in the Tampa Bay area but moved away with my education and career. I moved back to take care of my family's orange groves in Odessa, and we're living in Largo. It's nice but not a cultural hotspot, so we come down to St. Pete a lot. One of my daughters sent me a link to a story about Kerouac's house being for sale. I told my wife, "Hey, baby, let's go. Let's go look to this open house – it's Kerouac's house. Crazy."

When I walked in, it struck me: it was just like the house I grew up in – like all my friends' houses – places where I went to slumber parties. These interior glass doors: I don't know any of my friends who didn't face plant into one of those doors. The terrazzo floors: where you can't tell that there's water on it so you slip and fall. And this house: it just absolutely has not changed since 1963. The only thing that's happened to the house is it has been painted. Holes in the roof were fixed; the AC was changed. Obvious things were fixed, but as far as the major architectural features and the furniture – about half of it belonged to the Kerouacs. It was all here, and it was locked and untouched from 1990 until 2020.

Kerouac died in '69. His mom died in '74, and his widow, Stella, died in 1990. The estate had



**Minutes, continued**

*The typewriter is on a small desk in one of the bedrooms. Kerouac worked consistently up to his last day, leaving hundreds of manuscript pages. This is not the original typewriter. That was auctioned in 2020 and brought \$16,000 – less than the estimate by a few thousand.*

already been in litigation for about 15 years, which continued until 2020. So the place was locked up. Rats and Beatnik pilgrims would break in and do seances, and you know the place was absolutely empty. However, amazingly, in the back, there was still all of Kerouac's clothes and Stella's clothes and two filing cabinets full of unpublished work, which were worth a lot of money, but nobody took that. His Buddhas and his typewriter and all this stuff was just sitting here, and I don't know if the kind of people who go on pilgrimages would just not violate the space, but it was pretty much the way it had been left when Stella died in 1990. Her brother John Sampas became heir, but their siblings put up a fight ("the litigation"). In 2017, John died, and his son, also John (we'll call him John H.) became heir.

Finally, in 2020, the litigation got settled. John H., who had clear title, sold the house to a flipper. There was already a nonprofit that had been trying to buy it for a few years and had a verbal deal with John Sampas. He died right before it got settled, and so John H. sold it to a flipper and cut us out. The flipper was going to do what they always do to these '50s and '60s cinder block houses: they knock out walls, change it to open plan, put in new appliances – certainly taking out this old fashioned stuff – and probably put in white satin tile or something. That's what would have happened.

John Sampas was the guy we had to deal with. He was Stella's brother and a good friend of Kerouac's from their childhood. Stella was the main heir, but when she died, it became John. Then John Sampas died in 2017, and the estate fell to John H. Shen-Sampas – actually his young boyfriend that John Sampas had adopted as an adult (something people did in the days before same-sex marriage). And this doesn't even go into Stella's other siblings and all of their lawsuits. The idea that the bulk of this estate went to Uncle John's 30-year-old boyfriend did not sit well with the siblings – they had already ostracized John – and that kept all the animosity going. It was a nightmare, with the legacy of one of America's great authors hanging in the balance.

We worked out a deal with John H. that we would pay \$100,000 and he would finance another \$100,000 and sell the house to us for \$200,000.

That was 2018, but just around the time we got a pledge – literally one month before – John H. sold the house for \$100,000. It was his, and he wanted to go to med school, and he needed money to do that. I mean I don't really feel bad about that. I'm just really, really glad that the flippers didn't get hold of it.

I was an English professor, so my wife and I have never had two nickels to rub together, but we had just sold my family's orange groves in Odessa.



*Betty and Mike Lambert-Blue peruse a selection of Beat Generation writers.*

**Minutes, concluded**

When the family originally bought it, it was out in the middle of nowhere, but slowly and surely three counties grew out to it, so it became valuable property. That's the first time I ever had money in my pocket. So when we walked in and saw the house, we were like, "You know this is really cool, and we can, if nothing else, rent it. You know we could do it for the amount of what they're charging."

So we made a lowball offer and, like eight hours later, they called us and said, "You got it; it's yours."

We weren't sure what to do. But there was already a nonprofit that had been trying to save the house. So they came to us and said, "Hey, do you want a nonprofit?" And I told them, "As long as you come with it because we don't know what we're doing."

That was early 2020, and you know what happened next. That was the beginning of the pandemic so we had a slow start, but we've slowly but surely been building our programming. Now it's pretty solid.

We've had several groups like yours. We've had meetings, tours, parties – even team building. We've had weddings. We had a wake. People just come and use it as a space. That's available for a donation. But we now have a very, very popular monthly house concert, and we sell out every time. There's also a local promoter who's also a Kerouac fan, so he's bringing touring musicians.

We have a poetry reading every Sunday. That's also very popular. We've had Pulitzer Prize winners and MacArthur Genius Grant recipients, a number of really great poets have come. We also have an open mic at the same time, so it serves Tampa's poets. We just had the Underground Book Fair here last weekend. Hundreds of people came, you know, and local authors read their works and sold them, and so that's kind of the stuff we want to do. First, keep the place open so that we've gotten to where we pretty much break even, and slowly but surely, we want to build ourselves as a community resource so that we can seek grants and traditional philanthropy. That's our long-term goal. My wife and I still own the house, even though we've leased it in perpetuity to the nonprofit. But one way or another, I would like the nonprofit to own the house outright, and so we're working on that.

**Question:** What is the neighborhood response to your being here?

They were overjoyed – so far. Yeah, I mean we're very careful. Whatever events or activities we have, job one is not aggravating the neighbors. It was important when we were applying for our historical landmark status – which we got from St. Petersburg – but it's still job one. Sometimes, we let people stay at the house for up to a week, but we let them know it's cool as long as none of the neighbors complain.





## Jack Kerouac: Notes for a Timeline

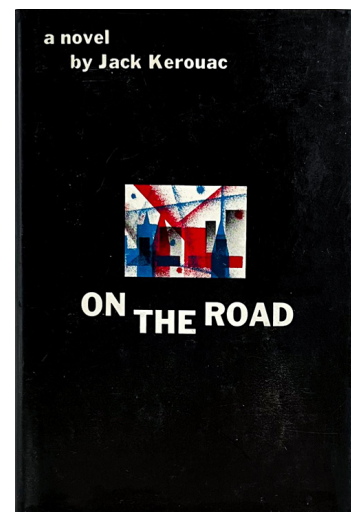
*Jack Kerouac has been the subject of over a dozen full-length biographies.  
He lived a rich and complex life. The following is a sampling of dates, places and names.*

March 12, 1922	Born Jean-Louis Lebris de K��rouac at 9 Lupine Road, 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor, in Lowell, Mass.	Youngest of siblings Francois Gerard Kerouac (1916–1926) and Gabrielle Caroline Kerouac (1918–1964)
1932	Living at 34 Beaulieu Street , Lowell	Brother Gerard dies, age 10 Inspires <i>Visions of Gerard</i> (w. 1956; p. 1963)
1939	New York	Enters Columbia University on football scholarship
1941		Broken leg ends football for JK; leaves Columbia
1942		July–Oct. – Merchant mariner aboard SS Dorchester Dec. 1942 – Joins Navy Oct. 1943 – Honorable discharge from Navy <i>The Sea Is My Brother</i> (w; 1942; p. 2011)
1943–1949	Living at 133-01 Cross Bay Boulevard, Oaone Park, Queens, NY	1944–1948 – Marriage to Edie Parker <i>And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks</i> (with W. Burroughs; w. 1945, p. 2008)
1950–1955	Living at Queens NY, Richmond Hill, 94-21 134 <sup>th</sup> Street	<i>Subterraneans, Maggie Cassidy, Book of Dreams</i> <i>Wake Up: A Life of the Buddha</i> (w. 1955; serialized 1993–1995; book Viking 2008) Nov. 1950 – Marries Joan Haverty
1951	Living at 454 West 20 <sup>th</sup> St, Manhattan	April – Writes <i>On the Road</i> July 1951 – Haverty divorces JK Feb 1952 – Daughter Jan Kerouac (1952–1996); met JK only twice
	Travels through U.S. and Mexico	
1955–1956	Living with Paul and Caroline (sister) Blake, Rocky Mount, N. C.	<i>Some of the Dharma</i>
1957	Living at 1418½ Clouser Ave., Orlando	
1958		<i>Dharma Bums</i> (w. Nov. 26–Dec. 7; p. 1958) Rejects Buddhism
1959		<i>Pull My Daisy</i> (film; 1959) <i>Steve Allen Show</i> (Nov. 1959 appearance)
1960		<i>Route 66</i> (TV drama series, 1960-1964) appeared to be a clear ripoff of <i>On the Road</i> ; advised not to sue
1964	Living at 5155 10 <sup>th</sup> Ave. N, St. Petersburg, FL	Sept. 1964 – Sister Caroline’s fatal heart attack Fall 1964 – JK and mother move in to 5155
1965		June 1965 – Kerouac in Paris
1966	Returns to Massachusetts	Fall 1966 – JK and Gabrielle return to Lowell Sept. 1966 – Gabrielle’s stroke Nov. 1966 – JK marries Stavroula Sampatacacus “Stella Sampas” Dec. 1966 – JK buys house at Hyannis, Mass.
1968	Living at 5169 10 <sup>th</sup> Ave. N, St. Petersburg, FL	1968 – JK, mother, and wife return to St. Petersburg 1968 – Neal Cassady dies in Mexico
Oct. 20, 1969		Kerouac working on a book about his father’s print shop. Suddenly felt nauseated and went to the bathroom. Be began to spit up blood. Taken to hospital. Dies of esophageal hemorrhage, complication of cirrhosis.

## Kerouac's Books

Jack Kerouac published 12 novels during his lifetime as well as numerous books of poetry. More have been published from his manuscripts since his death. In the early 1950s, he was a promising young author but largely unknown until the publication of *On the Road* in 1957, at which point he became an instant celebrity. Despite mixed critical reviews, the book sold very well, and it became an instant classic.

Fame was not his friend. He struggled with what he felt was a general misunderstanding of his work. It broke with tradition, and traditional critics disapproved. Kerouac coined the term "Beat Generation," and *On the Road* defined it for most people. For Kerouac, it was a type of writing he had struggled to create. It was part of a larger autobiographical project – "one vast book like Proust's" – that he called *The Duluoz Legend*. Dave Moore,\* a Kerouac scholar, has identified 14 of the almost 40 Kerouac books published to date that comprise the Legend. He has created a list placing the books in order of the periods in Kerouac's life that they cover and included the dates when they were written and published.



*On the Road*, first edition, 1957

<i>Book Title</i>	<i>Time Covered</i>	<i>Written</i>	<i>Published</i>
<b>Atop an Underwood</b>	Various	1936–1943	1999
<b>Visions of Gerard</b>	1922–1926	1956	1963
<b>Doctor Sax</b>	1930–1936	1952	1959
<b>The Town and the City</b>	1935–1946	1946–1949	1950
<b>Maggie Cassidy</b>	1938–1939	1953	1959
<b>Vanity of Duluoz</b>	1935–1946	1968	1968
<b>On The Road</b>	1946–1950	1948–1956	1957
<b>Visions of Cody</b>	1946–1952	1951–1952	1959 & 1973
<b>The Subterraneans</b>	1953	1953	1958
<b>Tristessa</b>	1955–1956	1955–1956	1960
<b>The Dharma Bums</b>	1955–1956	1957	1958
<b>Desolation Angels</b>	1956–1961	1956–1957	1965
<b>Big Sur</b>	1960	1961	1962
<b>Satori in Paris</b>	1965	1965	1966

Note: There are two books that are not novels but are sometimes included in the Legend of Duluoz:

- *Lonesome Traveler* – A collection of essays and sketches
- *Book of Dreams* – A dream-journal from dreams recorded between 1952 and 1960

\* [Dharma Beat Blog](#)





## Crash Bookshop and the Lakeland Bookstore Revival: A Love Story

By Brooklyn Lindsey, Proprietor of Crash Books

**I**n the spring of 2020, when the world was unraveling like an over-loved paperback, I did what any reasonable person would do – I opened a bookstore. In hindsight, it felt like starting a garden during a hurricane. But books are like that, aren't they? They have this maddening way of insisting on hope, even when logic says otherwise.

Crash Bookshop was born in downtown Lakeland, not in a blaze of economic confidence but in a quiet, stubborn belief that bookstores – real, brick-and-mortar, smell-like-paper bookstores – are still sacred spaces. And I wasn't alone. Around the same time, an incredible thing was happening: Lakeland's independent bookstores, some long-standing, some newly hatched, started talking. We all wanted the same thing—to keep bookstore culture alive in our city, to carve out spaces where book lovers could meet, linger, and fall in love with words all over again.

And so, the Lakeland Booksellers community was born. We decided that instead of competing, we'd collaborate.

Enter: the Lakeland Book Crawl, our love letter to independent bookstores and the people who still believe in them. Each year, readers grab their punch cards and traipse across town, visiting every indie bookshop from downtown to Dixieland and beyond. They collect stamps, find hidden gems, and, in the process, remember why bookstores matter.

Bookstores are, at their core, keepers of community. They are where you stumble upon a title you didn't know you needed. They are where you overhear a stranger recommending your next favorite read. They are where book clubs, poetry nights, and first-time authors find a home. And in Lakeland, they are thriving, despite the odds.



Bookends  
5100 US-98 N  
Connie Russell, owner



Inklings Book Shoppe  
243 N. Florida Ave  
Finley & Carmen  
Walker, owners

The [Lakeland Book Crawl's](#) seven bookstores are shown here in order from north to south along US-98 that runs through Lakeland.

Click on the image to visit the website.



Pressed Books & Coffee  
213 E. Bay St.  
Kaylin Wilson, owner

**Lakeland Book Crawl, concluded**

The Lakelander called it a “bookstore renaissance.” And I think they’re right. In a world that is always demanding more speed, bookstores offer slowness. They invite curiosity, serendipity, and deep conversation. And here in Lakeland, we’re not just keeping them alive—

we’re making them essential.

Last year, my friend and fellow bibliophile Sandi Silverman, started showing me the ways of hunting for (and finding) rare books. She inspires me to believe that there is space for me in the world of antique books. Our friendship led me to the Antiquarian Bookfair where I met friends of the Florida Bibliophile Society. The adventure is just beginning.

I hope you will visit your local bookstores and find things to buy but also get to know the people behind the curated collections.

And, to the Florida Bibliophile Society, to my fellow lovers of the printed word, I say this: Come visit us. Come to Book Ends, The Unbound Bookery, Little Bus Books, Pressed Books, Inklings, and BookaReaderville. Come to Crash and let me put a book in your hands that you didn’t even know you needed. Because bookstores are not just about books—they are about the people who believe in them. And in Lakeland, we believe.

This year the Lakeland Book Crawl starts on April 24<sup>th</sup> and ends on National Independent Bookstore Day, April 26<sup>th</sup>.

[www.lakelandbookcrawl.com](http://www.lakelandbookcrawl.com)

[www.crashbooks.org](http://www.crashbooks.org)

IG @crash\_bookshop

IG @brooklynlindsey



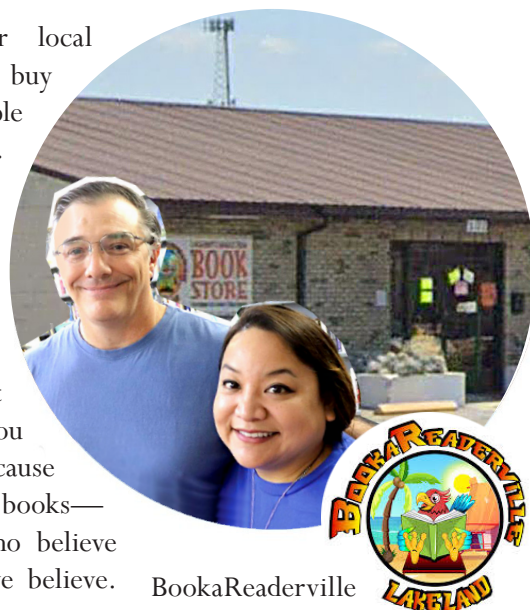
The Unbound Bookery  
1026 Florida Ave. S  
Sandy Silverman, owner



Crash Bookshop  
3125 Bartow Rd.  
Brooklyn Lindsey, owner



Little Bus Books  
1047 E. Main St.  
Michael and Lynsey Pippin, owners



BookaReaderville  
2120 S. Combee Rd.  
Patty & Billy Healy, owners





## Coffee+Table+Book: The Bigger, the Better

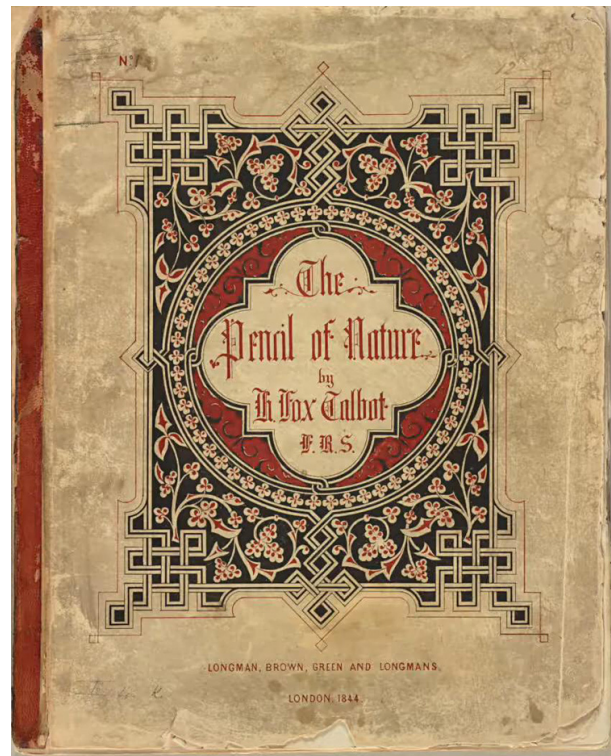
A coffee-table book, also known as a cocktail table book, is an oversized, usually hard-covered book whose purpose is for display on a table intended for use in an area in which one entertains guests and which can serve to inspire conversation or pass the time. Subject matter is predominantly non-fiction and pictorial (a photo-book). Pages consist mainly of photographs and illustrations, accompanied by captions and small blocks of text, as opposed to long prose. Since they are aimed at anyone who might pick up the book for a light read, the analysis inside is often more basic and uses less jargon than other books on the subject. Because of this, the term “coffee-table book” can be used pejoratively to indicate a superficial approach to the subject.

– Wikipedia

“Pejoratively?” *Research Market Insights* indicates that coffee-table books represent about \$175 million in sales this year so scoff all you like. Coffee-table books have become big (pun intended) business, with entire publishing houses dedicated to them and major publishers devoting more resources to them. These oversized books that were often collections of topic-related photographs focused on nature or travel now run the gamut of subjects. Increasingly, the coffee-table book is offered at different price points, from the standard oversize to the oversize oversize to the oversize oversize with an exclusive artwork, custom case, designer stand, etc. Prices can range into the hundreds or thousands of dollars.

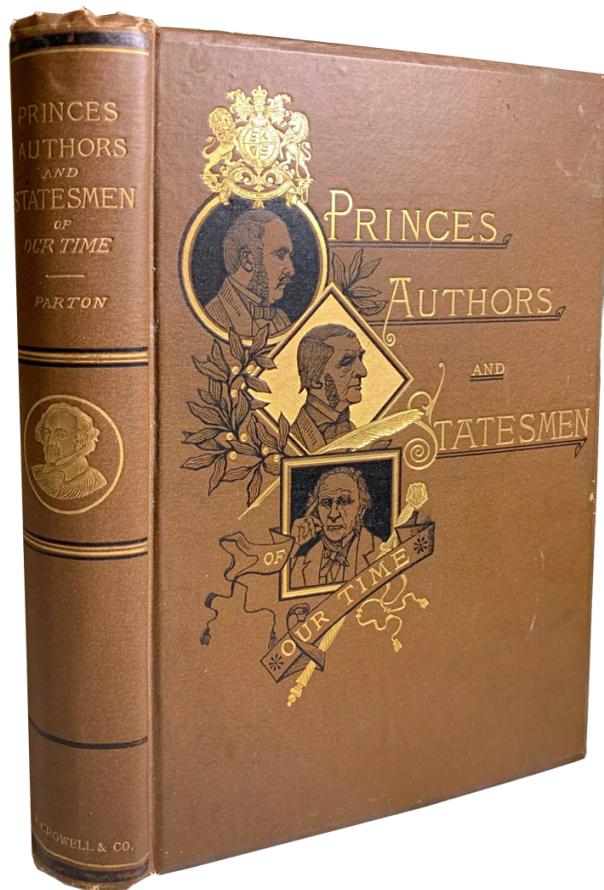
### Origins

The term “coffee-table book” apparently originated in *Arts Magazine* in 1961. At least, it is often cited that way on the Internet. Like a piece of cheese sitting on a wire device (bibliophiles will understand), one website in particular placed



Top: *The Pencil of Nature* (1844) by H. Fox Talbot. “[Talbot’s] firm’s initial project was Talbot’s *Pencil of Nature*, the first commercially published book illustrated with photographs — a milestone in the art of the book greater than any since Gutenberg’s invention of moveable type . . . . The *Pencil of Nature* contained twenty-four plates, a brief text for each, and an introduction that described the history and chemical principles of Talbot’s invention.” — Metropolitan Museum of Art

Bottom: Henry Fox Talbot holds a copy of *The Pencil of Nature*. Talbot (1800–1877) was a polymath elected to the Royal Society in 1831 for his work in mathematics, optics, chemistry, electricity, etymology, decipherment of cuneiform, and ancient history. He invented the salted paper and calotype processes and the photoglyphic engraving process, the precursor to photogravure. He was also a noted photographer who contributed to the development of photography as an artistic medium.

Coffee-table books, *continued*

Some Noted Princes, Authors, and Statesmen of Our Time (1885) by James Parton. During the Victorian era, books were often richly decorated with illustrations and extensive gold stamping on covers and spines. The books were beautiful on a shelf or a table.

before me a link to a specific *Arts Magazine* issue on the Internet Archive. I found no reference to “coffee-table book” (or searching “coffee”, “table”, and “book” separately) in that issue or any other *Arts Magazine* from 1961. I leave it to our talented investigating readers to provide an actual issue number and page on which this first reference occurs. I consulted the Oxford English Dictionary online, and with no mention of *Arts Magazine*, it gave the earliest use of “coffee-table book” as the *Daily Mail* (London) for October 20, 1960:

Nor do I mean only the bonzer known in the trade as the ‘coffee-table book’ . . . left around to display taste and status.

The phrase “known in the trade” implies that the term was in use in publishing before that. I can

provide no context for this sentence for less than \$39.99.

On our side of the of the pond, Christine Elliott, in her book *The Coffee-Table Book in the Post-War Anglophone World* (2024), cites a *New York Times* book review by Charles Poore of *The Past We Share* by Peter Quennell and Alan Hodge:

It is a coffee-table book. The young man who is waiting in your living room to take the daughter of the house to a party they are already late for can improve his mind by turning its pages.

Dear Internet, we have an update.

### More Origins

Regardless of the exact date of the first use of “coffee-table book,” the concept goes back a few centuries. In his 1581 essay “Upon Some Verse of Virgil,” Michel de Montaigne remarked:

I am vexed that my Essays only serve the ladies for a common movable, a book to lay in the parlor window...

In *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759), Laurence Sterne refers to Montaigne’s remark when his title character worries that his history is likely to “prove the very thing Montaigne dreaded his Essays should turn out, that is, a book for a parlour window . . .”

Apparently, the parlour window book never really took off.

The term “coffee-table book” could not have appeared before coffee was introduced into Europe in the 1500s (reaching Hungary in 1530, Italy in 1580, and England in 1650) or the introduction of a low table used in sitting rooms as a place to set drinks and snacks during the Victorian era.

Those sitting rooms probably contained shelves full of leatherbound volumes with gold-leaf decorations (probably rarely removed from the shelf), in the *Daily Mail*’s terms, displaying “style and taste.” But sitting on a table, they might not invite perusal.



Coffee-table books, *continued*

## Eras

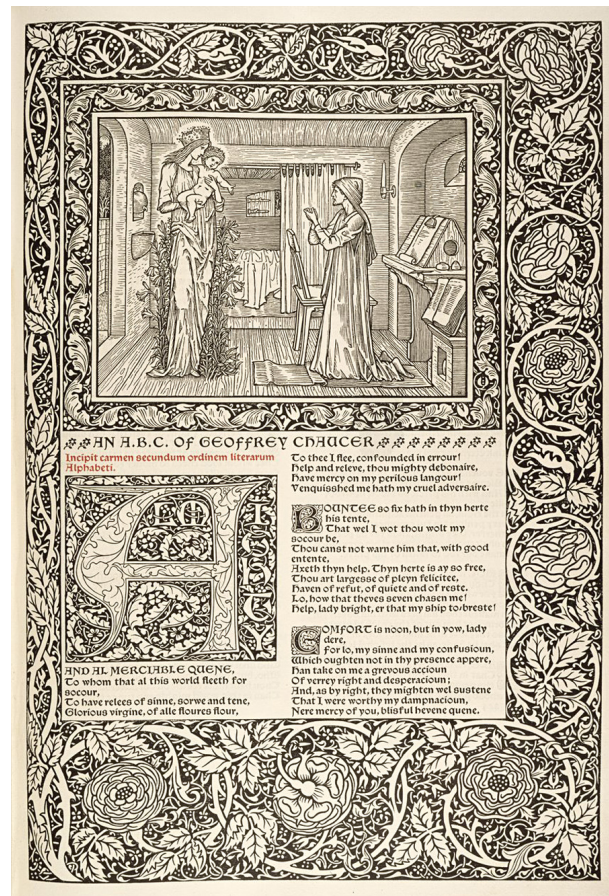
Speaking of the Victorian era, that is when the modern idea of a coffee-table book seems to originate. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw an explosion of print and illustration. and, critically, photography, which was invented in the 1830s and by the 1840s was contributing to books.

It was common to cut favorite illustrations, photographs, and texts out of magazines and newspapers and put them in albums that would be placed on a table for guests to enjoy. No need to read an introduction; just flip open and enjoy a cartoon, a beautiful scene, or a historic portrait.

Large illustrated books had a history dating back to the 1500s, but their production was so complex and time consuming, that print runs were small and few could afford them. By the 1800s, the mechanization of printing and improved methods of printing color created an opportunity to create large illustrated albums affordable to the affluent and growing middle class. The books still tended to be leather or clothbound. For example, large, heavily illustrated bibles were often bound in deeply tooled leather, making as much of statement closed as they did open. However, illustrated covers became very popular. The book was useful for its information and a work of art to be admired.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with further improvements in printing machines and color printing and the development of graphic design, books could be larger and more heavily illustrated. The Arts and Crafts Movement created many memorable examples, for example, the Kelmscott Chaucer produced by William Morris – sometimes considered the most beautiful book ever made. While published in an edition of 500, books like this were widely imitated using commercial production.

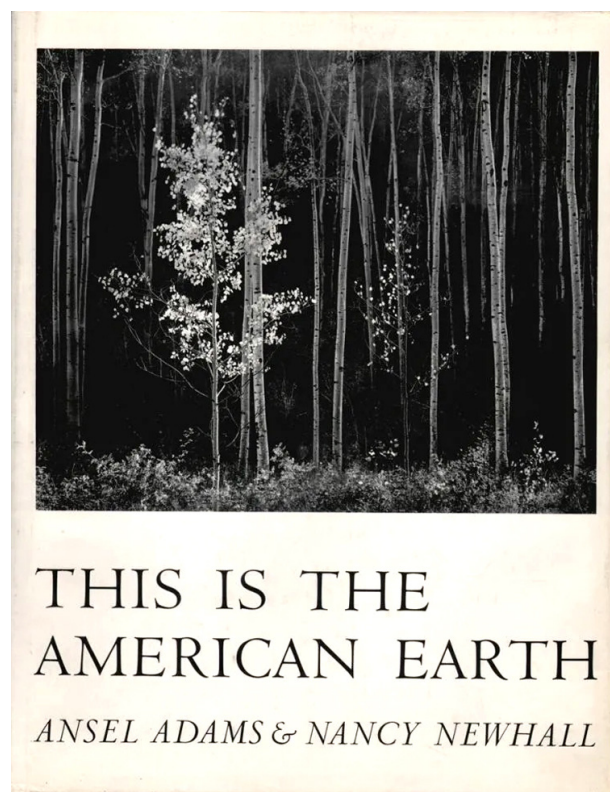
After World War II, there were more advances in publishing and an entirely new culture of graphic design. Interest in art and culture was high, and the publication of fine art books increased. With the



The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer Now Newly Imprinted (1896) by Geoffrey Chaucer, design by William Morris, illustrations by Edward Burne-Jones. As a product of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the so-called "Kelmscott Chaucer" was a product of original design, fulfilling the movement's ideals of quality, beauty, and the inherent value of materials and craftsmanship. This book was called the most beautiful book ever printed. Morris's Kelmscott Press produced about 60 titles and profoundly influenced many aspects of graphic design.

war over, Christine Elliott points to the optimism that pervaded the English-speaking countries and promoted the opulence expressed by the coffee-table book.

Swiss art dealer Albert Skira, who since the 1920s had made a name publishing books illustrated by 20<sup>th</sup>-century artists, such as Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Salvador Dali, again produced in limited editions. But in the postwar years, he laid out plans for the publication of extensive series of art books that would be more affordable. Over 100 titles were published in series such as The Great Centuries of Painting and The Taste of Our Time.

**Coffee-table books, continued**

This is the American Earth (1960) by Ansel Adams and Nancy Newhall. This book was the first in a series called Exhibit Format because of the scale and photography. It was the concept of David Bowen, then executive director of the Sierra Club. It is often considered the first modern coffee-table book, and set a standard for quality of production and content for many other – but certainly not all – large-format books.

In the 1950s, the development of modern home plans promoted the living room as a flexible space for entertaining as well as family time. Furniture groupings usually included a potentially large coffee table which could serve many functions.

By 1960, new printing technologies made color reproduction economical. This led to a shift from photobooks that were produced for an exclusive market to mass-produced color albums. The modern “coffee-table book” was established.

A series of books from the Sierra Club provided early entrants. These were produced by David Bowen, executive director of the Sierra Club for 17 years and as dedicated to educating the public as he was to protecting the environment. The series, called Exhibit Format, began with *This is the*

*American Earth* and would eventually comprise 20 titles. These were both beautiful and educational books. The series had important influence on the passage of environmental legislation. The popularity of the series demonstrated the commercial possibilities of the large-format book. Bowen is often credited with inventing the modern coffee-table book.

Elliott describes in detail how a confluence of factors led to the popularity of coffee-table books. Among these factors, the affluence of the postwar years, especially in the U.S. led to an expanded culture of gift-giving, and books make an ideal gift in many cases. Unwrapping a beautiful large book made an immediate impact and can be installed on the coffee table instantly – after a quick flip-through.

In the UK, an outsider who entered publishing during the postwar period, Paul Hamlyn, brought new and successful ideas into British publishing. His success, eventually earned the acceptance of the old families that dominated British publishing. Hamlyn published “affordable, full-colour, coffee-table books for a general audience and experimented with new ways of producing and distributing books” (Elliott, p. 141). Hamlyn’s business sense and innovations validated his new approach to publishing and selling books. In doing so, he expanded book ownership in an era of social change.

### **The Modern Scene**

Coffee-table books are now an important part of every major publisher’s inventory. As gifts, as display impact items, as niche luxury gifts, hundreds of new titles are produced annually. The digital printing revolution has made the economics of producing these books even more attractive.

These titles are often like giant issues of National Geographic: they are lushly illustrated but equally well researched. In 1994, Phaidon published the first edition of *The Art Book*. Covering work from the Middle Ages to the present day, it gave each artist or art topic one page. The topics and artists



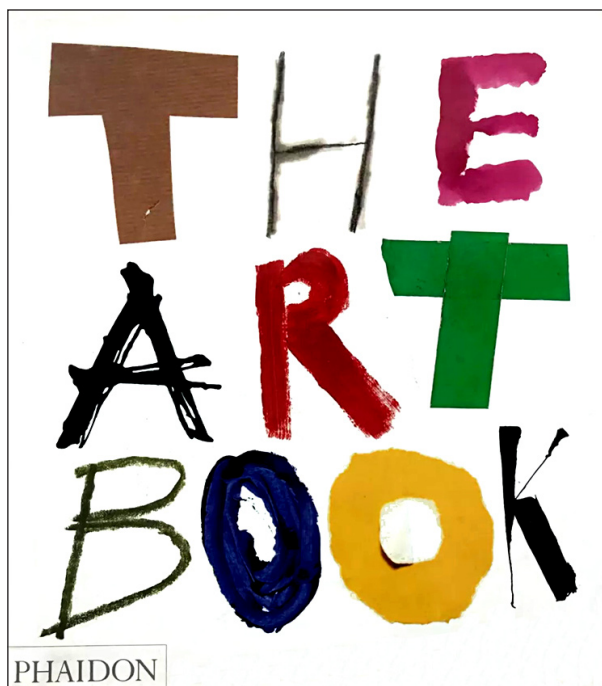
**Coffee-table books, continued**

are in alphabetical order, making it immediately more comprehensible to the average reader. At 500 pages, it was a thick and impressive tome with an attractive artistic cover. It sold well as have subsequent editions and is credited with bringing information about art to a wide audience. Its success spawned the Phaidon Vitamin art book series, beginning with *Vitamin P* (painting; 2002) and now including *Vitamin D* (drawing), *Vitamin Txt* (text in art), *Vitamin C* (collage), and others, all in the large, square, chunky format of *The Art Book*.

In 1994, the same year that *The Art Book* was published, a new player entered the coffee-table book scene. Prosper and Martine Assouline began a publishing business in the basement of their Paris apartment. Their first book was *La Colombe d'Or* (1994), about the history of their favorite hotel in the South of France, including photographs by the Assoulines. This book set the tone for the type of the books they would continue to publish: strictly large-format photo-heavy books. To date, they have published over 2,000 of these books. The books were widely appreciated by wealthy clients and their decorators. Stacks of the books can be seen in photographs of the homes featured in magazines like *Architectural Digest*. This has led the company to brand itself as a “luxury lifestyle brand,” offering their affluent clientele furniture, rare objects, and luxury gifts, many of which have been subjects of their books, such as the recent books on Patek Philippe watches, champagne, Roger Federer – you get the idea.

From the Assouline website:

Since its beginnings in 1994, Assouline has been dedicated to creating books that are as informational as they are beautiful works of art. The respect for the product and the process of creation is evident in every facet – the traditional technique of hand-binding covers, the imagery that transports the reader to another place and time, the luxurious thickness of each page. Known worldwide for bringing luxury to the publishing industry,



*The Art Book (1994) by Phaidon Editors. This book has been reissued in at least six editions since it was first published in 1994. It is a large heavy book: 600 pages at 10.5 x 2 x 11.7 inches. Subsequent editions have become smaller. The most recent is about 9 by 8 inches, but the content has been enriched, and the book remains a steady seller.*

Assouline produces one-of-a-kind books on fashion, art, architecture, photography, design, and travel, weaving a story of L'Art de Vivre with every publication.

A complete survey of the modern market in coffee-table books would be impossible in these pages, but we cannot close without mentioning one of the most visible of large-format book producers, Taschen.

Benedikt Taschen was an avid comic book collector in the 1980s. He began a publishing operation to share this collection, but quickly broadened his publishing interests both mainstream subjects as well as avant garde art and erotic material. The books are beautifully made and produced in many sizes. Of special interest here are the large-format books, many of which are also produced in smaller, more affordable editions.

An example of the trend in Taschen coffee-table books is the 2004 publication *GOAT Now*

## Coffee-table books, concluded



GOAT: Champs Edition (2004) by Taschen. The bundle includes the book, and inflatable porpoise, an inflatable tire floatee, and a stool, as shown. The book comes in a silk box with additional photographs and four silver gelatin prints. The price is \$15,000. The book is 20 inches by 20 inches with 800 pages of about 3,000 photographs.

a common (and overused) expression, GOAT (greatest of all time) was popularized in the early 2000s in hip hop culture. For the Taschen publication, it was applied to legendary fighter Muhammad Ali (1942–2016; “float like a butterfly, sting like a bee”).

GOAT has remained popular over the last 20 years and has been offered in a number of formats and bundles. The most recent is the “Champ’s Edition.” The 800-page book is printed in a 20-in by 20-inch format and comes with a Jeff Koons sculpture, *Radial Champs*, which resembles a blow-up porpoise, and four gelatin silver prints of The Champ, each signed by Howard L. Bingham and

Muhammad Ali. Price: \$15,000, edition 1,000. The Taschen website says, “Few left.”

GOAT is also available in what Taschen calls their sumo edition. This “Collector’s Edition” is signed by Muhammad Ali and Jeff Koons and comes with the photolitho (poster) of *Radial Champs* by Jeff Koons. Price: \$6,000, edition 9,000.

The “standard” edition of GOAT is 13 by 13 inches and 652 pages. It comes with a dust jacket. Price: \$150, edition not limited.

A quick scan revealed a Champs Edition that sold for \$2,250 in 2021. The Collector’s Edition can be found for \$4,000 to \$5,000 on resale sites. And the standard edition is available for just over \$100 on Amazon.

It’s hard to say what the economics of this series are. In the first few years after publication, the Champs edition appeared to be appreciating on the secondary market. The drop in prices suggests a collectible market rather than an investment market. Their investment potential probably varies widely – again a subject well beyond the snapshot provided here.

Similarly for the first book in the sumo format, 1999’s *Helmut Newton*. New (unused) books are selling for around \$14,000 and used for around \$9,000. It comes with a stand designed by Phillippe Starck. In 1999, it was largest regular production book of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

If these efforts seem ambitious, they have been rewarded and are likely to continue. Many of these modern coffee-table books contains exclusive and rare content. For collectors in specific areas, they may be well worth the price. As they say, “If it’s worth it to you, it’s worth it.”

So next time you see a large-format book laying on a coffee table, flip, don’t scoff,





## Una and the Lion



Victoria became Queen of United Kingdom in 1837. She would serve until her death in 1901 – the longest serving British monarch until Elizabeth II.

In 1839, a special £5 gold coin was struck to commemorate Victoria's ascent to the throne. The coin was designed by William Wyon, the chief engraver of the Royal Mint. Often regarded as the most beautiful British coin ever struck, it depicts the 20-year-old queen on one side and the again the queen as Una, a character from Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, walking with a lion. She holds the orb and scepter, traditional marks of her authority. She uses the scepter to guide or constrain the lion, a metaphor of her power.

The coin is a collector's dream. Only about 400 were minted and among them there are variations in the design, including different metals, different hairbands on the depiction of the queen, different edge types, and in the reverse inscription. It contains just over a troy ounce of gold, which would be worth about \$3,000 today. But because of its rarity, it is valued far above that price. An average price for the coin is \$45,000, but a proof specimen can bring a few hundred thousand dollars.

Sources: Artnet; Heritage Auctions; Britannia Coin Company

The coin pictures here is from the a remarkable collection of 15,000 coins assembled in the 1930s by – we don't know who. The original collector and his heir are both anonymous. When the stock market crashed, the original collector put all the coins in cigar boxes and buried them in the garden. He died shortly thereafter, and his wife, the only other person who knew their location, left them there until the 1990s. They were insured for \$100 million, and they are now due to be auctioned in a series of spectacular events throughout the summer.

Why are they here? First, they are beautiful and worth sharing. Second, the *Faerie Queen* was an allegory of the reign of Elizabeth I, and use of Una here connects Victoria and Elizabeth I. Third, the precision of coins is part of their beauty derived from very precise engravings – in reverse – that are struck into precious metal. It has much in common with letterpress printing in which each letter is engraved in reverse onto a hardened steel punch, which is used to "print" the letter into a soft metal like copper, from which the lead type used in printing is cast. The type often leaves a distinctive impression in the page. The reverse of the raised image on the face of a At this point, coin.



## Largo Turns A Page: A Special Display for a Special Event

by Sean Donnelly

The extra display case at the Largo Public Library was free again in March, so I created a tie-in for the annual Largo Turns A Page (LTAP) event.

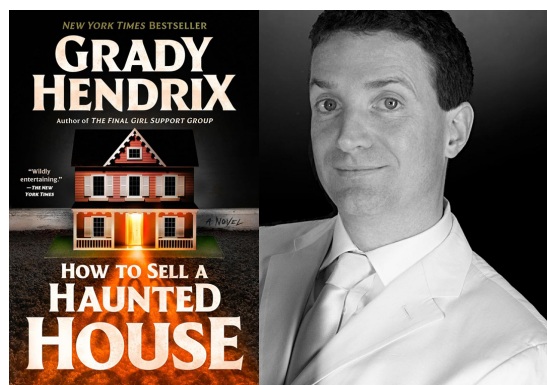
Every year, for Largo Turn A Page, the Friends of Largo Library bring in a best-selling author to give a free talk. This year, Grady Hendrix came to town to discuss his novel, *How to Sell a Haunted House*.

Puppets figure prominently in the story, so I selected some relevant materials from my collection. The focus of the exhibit was publications by and about William A. Dwiggins and Paul McPharlin — authors, printers, and designers who were also instrumental in reviving interest in puppetry in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

To round out the display I included Punch & Judy books and a pair of Indonesian shadow puppets. Over 200 people attended the “Haunted House show” on April 3rd. After a brief introduction by Friends’ president Ben Wiley, Grady talked for over an hour, giving a high-energy presentation that was alternately funny, informative, and profound.



**Your past – and your family – can haunt you like nothing else!** When Louise’s parents die, she dreads going home . . . doesn’t want to leave her daughter with her ex; doesn’t want to deal with her family home, stuffed with her father’s academic papers and her mother’s puppets and dolls. Most of all, she doesn’t want to deal with her brother, who never left their hometown, can’t hold a job, and resents her success. But she’ll need his help to get the house ready for sale. And beyond all the challenges of preparing the house for sale, the house really doesn’t want to be sold.





## FBS on Facebook

CLICK ON THE PIC



Stamp fanatic professor stole 3,000 items from Scotland's national archive

### Ten Pound Island Book Company

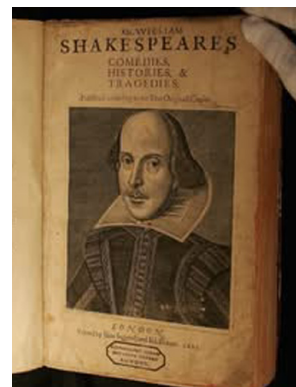
Old, Rare and Out of Print Books, Manuscripts and Charts Pertaining to the Sea



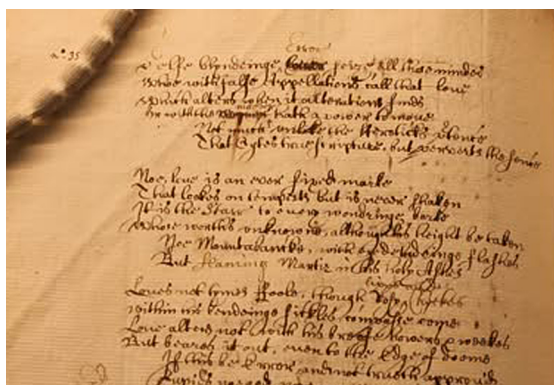
Bookman's Log by Greg Gibson is a great insider's look at the antiquarian book trade



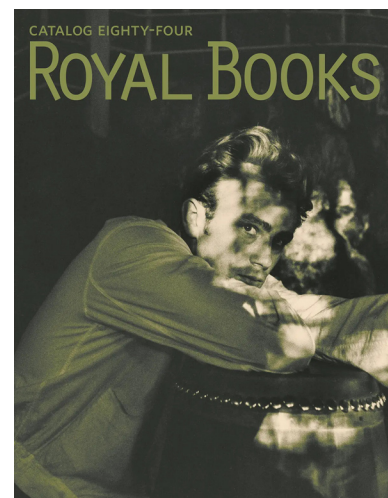
Why a California Couple Gave Millions to Rare Book School



'Wolf Hall'  
Screenwriter Peter Straughan Sets Tale of Shakespeare's First Folio as Next Feature



Forgotten Copy of Shakespeare Sonnet 116 Unearthed in Oxford Library



Royal Books, Catalog 84



## FBS Club Page

### The latest from poet Lola Haskins:

#### Like Pearls Like Zeros

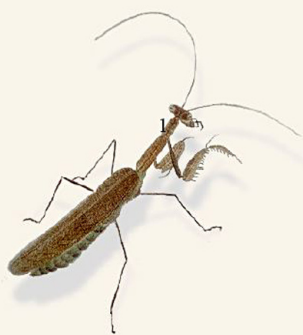
Lola Haskins is well known to many FBS members. She has presented to FBS twice to a very appreciative audience. She has just



published her 15<sup>th</sup> book of poetry, *Like Zeroes Like Pearls*. As the cover suggests, these poems are drawn from Lola's observations and encounters with insects. As always, she finds surprising insights into her subject and connections to human nature.

Published by  
Charlotte Lit.

Like Zeros  
Like Pearls



Poems  
Lola Haskins

### Book evaluations with Irene Pavese

Thurs., April 24, 1 p.m.  
Gulfport Library

Trash or Treasure? – Irene will be visiting the library to help visitors determine if their old books have more than just sentimental value. She will help them identify and understand the value of their books. Her first visit to Gulfport Library was so popular, she was invited back.



### FBS welcomes our newest members!

**Michael Ranneberger** – Michael collects first editions of early American history and literature. He is a former ambassador to Kenya, Mali, and Somalia.

**Thomas P. White** – Tom collects mysteries, signed books, nuclear-related books, and illustrated books, especially those illustrated by Barry Moser.

**Nominations for FBS officers are open in April. Consider joining the merry band of members who run the society.**

### New Date! FBS member Terry Seymour to speak on his latest book at Princeton

Wed., May 7, 4–5 p.m.



[Virtual access available](#)

Terry will speak about his book *Edmond Malone's Tempest Theory: An Account of the Creation, Distribution, and Survival* (2024). Terry's book is a census of a pamphlet published by 18<sup>th</sup>-century Shakespeare scholar Edmond Malone concerning the origin and date of *The Tempest*. Malone privately printed 80 copies of the pamphlet, each inscribed to a specific recipient. Terry will discuss the extensive research (and travel) needed to develop his book and provide background on Malone and the controversy about *The Tempest*.

Hosted by Friends of the Princeton  
University Library



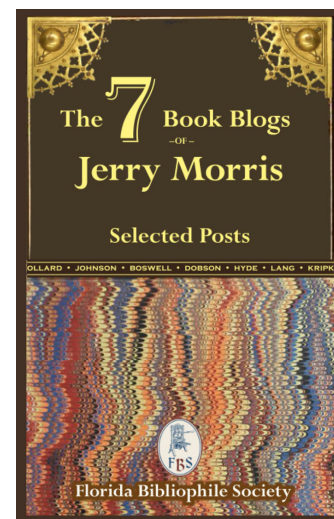


## FBS Publications

### *The 7 Book Blogs of Jerry Morris*

FBS. May 2023. 312 pp. \$50.00 (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 Jerry's devoted readers, these posts display the range of Jerry's bibliophilic interests and his many contributions to the history of books and bibliophiles such as Mary and Donald Hyde, J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, Adrian H. Joline, and Madeline Kripke. Larry McMurtry and his famous bookshop, Booked Up, in Archer City, Texas, and John R. Lindmark and his ill-fated shop in Poughkeepsie, New York, are also included. And of course, Jerry's personal passions: Samuel Johnson, James Boswell, Charles Lamb, and William Strunk, author of *The Elements of Style*. Jerry's meticulous research throughout the world of bibliophiles allows him to illuminate many fascinating individuals and publications. Available on Amazon: [hardback](#) & [paperback](#).



"I Contain Multitudes...."



Selections from the  
Ed S. Centeno Walt Whitman Collection



### *"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.** This book contains photographs, descriptions, and history of 100 items in Ed's collection, including editions of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman ephemera, period collectibles, and commissioned works of art. This is an excellent introduction to Whitman, with information on his creative process and output and his

outsized impact on American and world poetry. Order 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](mailto:floridabibliophiles@gmail.com) and use the same address to pay through PayPal.

### *The Florida Bibliophile*

Nine print issues per year, September–May. \$75.00 per year with membership.

**Among the best bibliophile newsletters in the U.S., the digital edition of *The Florida Bibliophile* is received by hundreds of book lovers. We now offer a print edition for members.** Each month's issue contains 30 to 40 lavishly illustrated pages of news, book events, book history, original articles, and much more. As convenient as digital is, there's nothing like print. Beautifully printed on quality paper, it's a book lover's delight!

Order from the Florida Bibliophile Society by sending a check for \$125.00 to cover membership and subscription. Send your membership form and check to Florida Bibliophile Society, P.O. Box 530682, St. Petersburg, FL 33747. You may also request a subscription via email at [floridabibliophiles@gmail.com](mailto:floridabibliophiles@gmail.com) and use the same address to pay through PayPal.



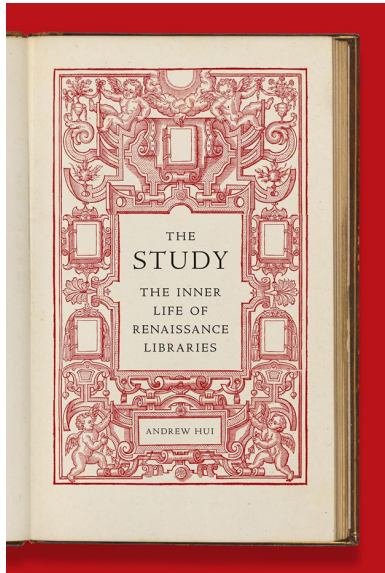
## Books in Brief

### The Study: The Inner Life of Renaissance Libraries

Anthony Hui

Princeton University Press

336 pp., December 2024



The printing press was developed in 15<sup>th</sup>-century Europe. In those days, books were expensive, but wealthy Europeans collected books avidly into libraries that became refuges. These studioli – little studios – were dedicated to self-cultivation, with positive or negative results, depending on the individual.

Hui tells this story, touching on many well-known personalities of the time from his point of view as an insatiable bookworm. He traces how humanists from Petrarch to Machiavelli to Montaigne created their own intimate studios, or studies. He looks at imaginary libraries in Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Marlowe, and discusses how Renaissance painters depicted the Virgin Mary and St. Jerome as saintly bibliophiles. Yet these retreats drove Don Quixote to madness, Prospero to exile, and Faustus to perdition. Hui finds parallels with our age of information surplus, charting the studiolo's influence on writers like Borges and Eco.

Beautifully illustrated, *The Study* incorporates perspectives on Islamic, Mughal, and Chinese book cultures and offers a timely and eloquent meditation on the ways we read and misread today.

**Andrew Hui** is an Associate Professor of Literature at Yale-NUS (Singapore). He is an inaugural faculty member of this new college, one of the few liberal arts colleges in Asia.



Source: Princeton University Press

### Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr.: Citizen Printer

Amos Paul Kennedy Jr., Myron Beasley, Kelly Walters

Letterform Archive Books

292 pp., September 2024

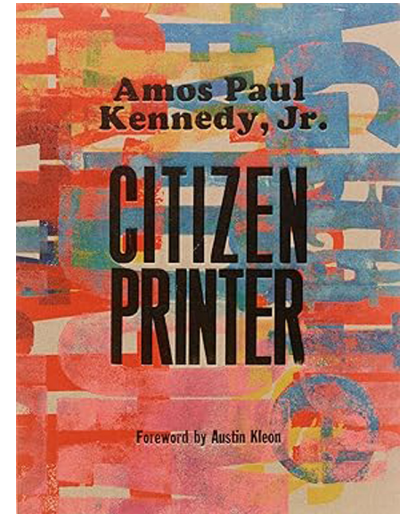
Kennedy was working a corporate job at AT&T, when at age 40, he discovered letterpress printing during a visit to Colonial Williamsburg.

Kennedy earned his MFA at University of Wisconsin–Madison and teaching at Indiana University before setting up Kennedy Prints! a communal press in Detroit.

Kennedy devotes his printing practice to social justice and Black power, emblazoned in rhythmically layered and boldly inked posters made for the masses. *Citizen Printer* tells this inspiring story and offers readers tools for lifting their voices, too. A vital monograph on this trailblazing contemporary Black artist, *Citizen Printer* features 800 reproductions representing the breadth of Kennedy's posters and prints, plus original portraiture of the artist at work, a powerful artist statement and a foreword by *New York Times* bestselling author Austin Kleon, all presented in a dynamic type-forward design from American Institute of Graphic Arts medalist Gail Anderson and Joe Newton.

Kennedy has been featured in the *New York Times*, the *New York Times Magazine* and the *Economist*, and his work has been exhibited by the Library of Congress, the Museum of Modern Art, New York and other institutions through the US. He was the subject of a 2012 feature-length documentary, *Proceed and Be Bold!*

Source: Walters



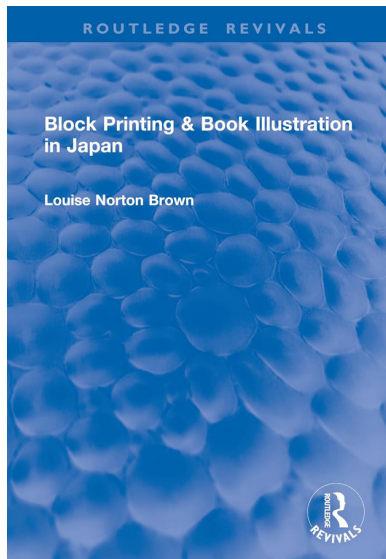


Books in Brief, *continued***Block Printing & Book Illustration in Japan**

Louise Norton Brown

Routledge

276 pp., November 2024



*Block Printing & Book Illustration in Japan* was first published in 1924. Japanese art and design are ubiquitous now, but this book, one of the first guides to Japanese illustration, remains indispensable and was thus selected for Routledge's Revival series.

Brown (1865–1923), an artist in her own right, was the sister of artist John Norton (1876–

1934). She became passionate about Japanese prints during her training at the Art Institute of Chicago. She travelled widely in Japan, seeking collectors and persuading them to open their archives to her for study.

She gained access to extensive collections of rare materials and developed considerable expertise in the history and practice of Japanese book illustration. She published some of this work in Scribner's in 1920–1921 in a two-part article "Book Illustration in Old Japan."

A few Japanese artists became a focus of Western interest, but Brown's in-depth knowledge led her to encourage and aid Westerners to discover the many other wonderful works produced by Japanese illustrators over several centuries. Her greatest effort in this direction was *Block Printing & Book Illustration in Japan*. The author completed the book and it was in galley at the time of her death in 1923. Final proofing was conducted by others, and the book was published in 1924 to wide acclaim.

Source: Routledge; Scribner's; *The Connoisseur*

**The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Graphic Literature: Artists and Writers on Creating Graphic Narratives, Poetry Comics, and Literary Collage**

Kelcey Ervick and Tom Hart, eds.

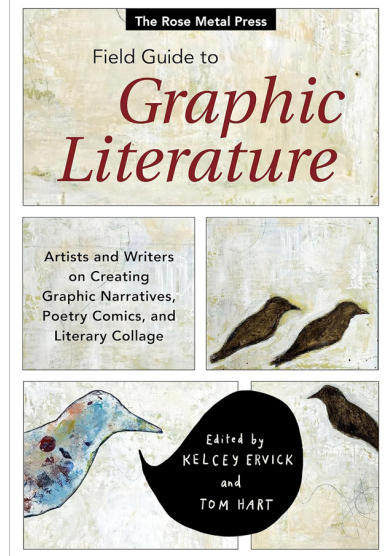
Rose Metal Press, 296 pp., July 2023

This fourth volume in the immensely popular Field Guide series gives readers unprecedented insight into the techniques of 28 of today's most innovative creators of poetry comics, graphic narratives, and image-text hybrids.

With original craft essays, corresponding exercises, and full-color examples of their work, each contributor offers reflection and instruction informed by their own methods and processes. From mark-making and page composition to deeper renderings of place, character, and voice, this much-needed guide to the field illuminates and demystifies the process of creating image+text work. Editors Kelcey Ervick and Tom Hart also provide a historical introduction that links today's graphic literature to visual storytelling of the past and helpful pedagogical resources to round out the volume. This is a book for writers who want to make graphic narratives and literary collage, illustrators and comics artists exploring new approaches to storytelling, teachers encouraging their students to work with image and text, and anyone curious about what one contributor calls "comics magic."

**Kelcey Ervick** is the author of several graphic novels and traditional novels. Her comics have appeared in *The Washington Post*, *The Believer*, and Lit Hub, and elsewhere

Source: Rose Metal Press

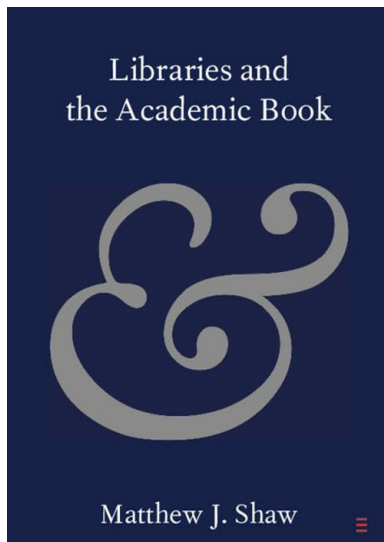


**Books in Brief, concluded****Libraries and the Academic Book**

Matthew J. Shaw

Cambridge University Press

December 2024 (ebook)



The academic book is a special animal. Written by experts for experts, academic books must be produced by specialized publishers, are often release in limited runs, and are often expensive.

This entry in Cambridge's Element series provides an overview of the

development of the publishing history of the scholarly – or academic – book, which in turn led to the creation of the modern research library.

Shaw argues that libraries played an important role in the birth and growth of the academic book, and he explores how publishers, readers and libraries helped to develop the format and scholarly and publishing environments that now underpin contemporary scholarly communications.

The book concludes with an appraisal of the current state of the field and how business, technology, and policy are mapping a variety of potential routes to the future.



**Matthew J. Shaw** is the Librarian of Queen's College. He came to this role after five years as Librarian at the University of London and 15 years as a curator at the British Library.

Source:

**Women Poets, Male Publishers: Myth vs. Market in Post-1960s Britain**

Lise Jaillant

Palgrave Macmillan

289 pp., March 18, 2025

*Women Poets, Male Publishers* is the story of the role that male editors and publisher played in bringing women's poetry to the reading public in the 1960s and following decades.

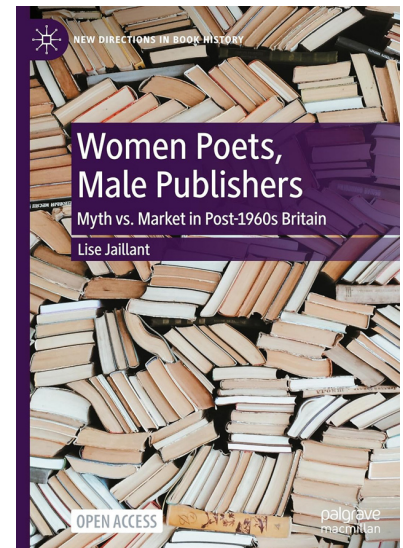
This is not in any way to minimize the critical role played by the women's movement and feminist presses such as Virago in the 1960s and 1970s. led to the rediscovery of forgotten women writers. Trailblazing feminist publishers helped create a canon of women's literature, helping living writers to survive and sometimes thrive in a literary marketplace that had so far been dominated by men.

This book adds to this picture by examining the major role that conservative male publishers played in (re)discovering women poets in post-1960s Britain. With the growing influence of the Women's Liberation movement, these publishers realized that there was a growing market for poetry by women. At the same time, the Arts Council of Great Britain started pushing for more diversity, nudging its "clients" to make more room for women and ethnic minorities.

This book is currently an open-access title available for [download through Springer](#).

**Lise Jaillant** is Professor in Digital Cultural Heritage at Loughborough University, UK, with expertise in publishing history in the digital age.

Source:





One effect of the printing press was to accelerate and intensify the brewing religious crises of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It allowed the rapid production and distribution of tracts arguing religious points of view. The tracts were distributed house to house and in the street by peddlers called colporteurs, a practice that has been taken up by various groups up to the present day. The term colporteur came to apply to anyone who peddled printed materials. The colporteurs became an important source of books, especially cheaper editions that could be purchased by common people. The colporteur's low overhead allowed discount pricing for books. While they often had a bad reputation, they were important for the distribution of books in the early centuries of printing. This anonymous oil painting from the 17<sup>th</sup> century shows the simple equipment and direct means by which the colporteur worked. The noun is colportage: the act of peddling books.



across the aisle to her (she wa  
s, would you like to use my rain  
e and said, «THANKS.» I sat back  
e looked at me, with a sad little  
aned over her. «May I sit with

### This Month's Writers and Contributors

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

Sean Donnelly  
David Hall  
Maureen E. Mulvihill  
Carl Mario Nudi  
Gary Simons  
Ben Wiley

Have an idea for an article for *The Florida Bibliophile*?  
Contact Charles Brown, [cbrown@atlantic.net](mailto:cbrown@atlantic.net),  
[atlantic.net](http://atlantic.net), to submit or for assistance in preparing your  
article.

## Join FBS!

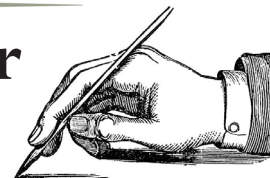
Love books? Take your interest to the next level by joining a group of dedicated book lovers (i.e., bibliophiles). You will meet serious collectors, dealers, scholars, and readers, and you will discover a lively, fun group.



It's easy to join – send an email with your name, mailing address, and phone number to [Floridabibliophiles@gmail.com](mailto:Floridabibliophiles@gmail.com). Annual dues are \$50 for membership or \$125 for membership plus *The Florida Bibliophile* print subscription. Use Paypal to send your payment to the gmail 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

### April 2025



### Irene Sullivan: Studies in Juvenile Justice

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

April 27, 2025, 1:30 p.m.

(also available on Zoom)

Irene Sullivan was a juvenile judge for 20 years in the Clearwater area. She is recognized nationally as an expert on juvenile justice and has written two books on the subject: *Born and Raised to Murder* and *Raised by the Courts*.

If the titles seem grim, it's because the subject is serious. Irene will speak to us about Florida's courts and their impact on the state's youth. Juvenile judges make decisions that they know are likely to shape a child's entire life. They must balance the law and compassion for children who often come to their courts having already lived difficult, compromised lives.

### May 2025



### Florida Bibliophile Society Annual Banquet

Guest Speaker: James West, President,  
The Manuscript Society

St. Petersburg Marriott Clearwater, 12600

Roosevelt Blvd. N., St. Pete, FL

May 18, 2025, 12:30 p.m.

Founded in 1948, the Manuscript Society is the oldest society of autograph and manuscript collectors in the U.S. It is now international with an impressive program of publications and meetings.

James West is the current president of the Manuscript Society. About 30 years ago, he began collecting material on polar exploration and voyages. He has many fascinating stories to tell about the explorers and the documents they produced. Plus the silent, great food, and great fellowship. Always a wonderful time!

Members, reserve a place for you and your guests before May 7 by contacting Ben Wiley ([bwiley@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:bwiley@tampabay.rr.com) or 727-215-2276). Tickets: \$30, payable via PayPal using account [Floridabibliophiles@gmail.com](mailto:Floridabibliophiles@gmail.com), or mail a check to Florida Bibliophile Society, P.O. Box 530682, St. Petersburg FL, 33747.





## Book Events and Podcasts

Know of any events of interest to book lovers? Send corrections and additions to Charles Brown, [cmbrown@atlantic.net](mailto:cmbrown@atlantic.net).

### Florida Book Events

For the numerous library book sales in Florida, visit [www.booksalefinder.com/FL.html](http://www.booksalefinder.com/FL.html).

— April 15 —

**Ringling Literati Book Club, Sarasota, FL**  
Book of the Month: *Dwell Time: A Memoir of Art, Exile, and Repair* by Rosa Lowinger  
([www.ringling.org/events/literati-book-club](http://www.ringling.org/events/literati-book-club))

— April 23 —

**World Book Day**  
Annual UNESCO event to promote the joy of reading!  
“Changing lives through a love of books and reading”  
([www.worldbookday.com](http://www.worldbookday.com))

— April 24–26 —

**4<sup>th</sup> Annual Lakeland Book Crawl**  
Lakeland, FL  
([www.lakelandbookcrawl.com](http://www.lakelandbookcrawl.com))

— April 26 —

**21<sup>st</sup> UF Symposium on Comics and Graphic Novels, “Folding and Unfolding: A GCO Symposium on Zines and Small Press Comics”**  
Gainesville, FL (est. 2002)  
([www.english.ufl.edu/comics/conference.shtml](http://www.english.ufl.edu/comics/conference.shtml))

— April 26–30 —

**Alachua County Friends of the Library Book Sale**  
Gainesville, FL  
([folaclld.org/m%5Esale%5Edates.html](http://folaclld.org/m%5Esale%5Edates.html))

— April 27 —

**Independent Bookstore Day**  
**Shop Your Local Bookstore!**  
([www.indiebound.org/independent-bookstore-day](http://www.indiebound.org/independent-bookstore-day))

— May 1, 6–9 p.m. —

**Oxford Exchange Book Fair: A Celebration of Local Authors**  
420 West Kennedy Blvd., Tampa (est. 2015) (bookstore.  
[oxfordexchange.com/programming/oe-book-fair/](http://oxfordexchange.com/programming/oe-book-fair/))

— May 3 —

**Free Comic Book Day**  
Use the store locator at  
[www.freecomicbookday.com/](http://www.freecomicbookday.com/)

— May 4 & 18 —

**Little Haiti Book Festival 2024**  
May 4, Little Haiti Cultural Complex, (in person)  
May 18 (online)  
([www.miamibookfair.com/littlehaiti/](http://www.miamibookfair.com/littlehaiti/))

### Rare Book Cafe Coffee Break

**RBC was begun several years ago by Florida booksellers and FBS members Steve and Edie Eisenstein. It continues as “Coffee Break,” the brainchild of T. Allan Smith.**

“Coffee Break” is co-hosted by long-time RBC regulars Lee Linn (The Ridge Books, Calhoun, GA) and guest co-host Richard Mori (Mori Books, Franklin, New Hampshire). Get a cup of coffee and join RBC Coffee Break on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#).

**COFFEE BREAK No. 98: After the Florida show – So much to share with you –** Co-hosts Lee Linn and Richard Mori share some of their adventures at the just completed Florida Antiquarian Book Fair. Lee has an old Girl Scout cookbook discovered by her son Gardner, who accompanied her to the book fair. Richard shares some recent acquisitions, including some outstanding posters.

**COFFEE BREAK No. 97: Co-host Lee Linn Chats with Two Tampa Bay Young Book Lovers –** Lee chats with two Tampa Bay area readers, Ava Allison, 15, and Audrey Morgan, 13, about their love of books and their philosophies on the books they choose.

**COFFEE BREAK No. 96: Mike Slicker – See you at the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair –** Mike owns Lighthouse Books ABAA in Dade City, Florida and is a longtime bookseller in the Tampa Bay region. He is chairman of the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair. Mike shares some of the items he’s bringing to the book fair, including books illustrated and signed by Arthur Rackham. Co-host Lee Linn also shares some of the titles she’s bringing.

**COFFEE BREAK No. 95: Sandi Silverman Shows Such Beautiful Books –** Sandi Silverman, a Florida Antiquarian Book Fair regular, has a shop in Lakeland, Florida, a short trip from The Coliseum where the Book Fair will be held. We have a lively conversation and look at some of the beautifully designed items Sandi’s bringing to the Book Fair.

See p. 28 to learn about *Book Lovers’ Paradise*, the new magazine from the producers of RBC.

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.

*Most recent episode*

**Feb. 15 – Michael Erdman on the history of magazines (and women's rights) in Turkey** – Michael Erdman is Head of Middle East and Central Asian Collections at The British Library with overall responsibility for all manuscript holdings in Arabic, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Chagatai, Coptic, Hebrew, Kurdish, Ottoman Turkish, Persian, and Syriac. I talked with him about my recent magazine hunting exploits in Istanbul, and how what we found fits into the overall history of magazine publishing in Turkey. Esoteric, I know, but hey, this is where passion takes you.

## Library of Congress

**Douglas Kearney's latest book of poetry "I Imagine I Been Science Fiction Always"**

– *Washington Post* Book Critic Ron Charles speaks with Douglas Kearney about his groundbreaking



new collection of visual poems, "I Imagine I Been Science Fiction Always." Kearney has published eight books ranging from poetry to essays, winning a succession of prizes. For example, his 2023, "Optic Subwoof," a collection of his Bagley Wright lectures, won the Poetry Foundation's Pegasus Prize for Poetry Criticism and the CLMP Firecracker

Award for Creative Nonfiction. Kearney is a Samuel Russell Chair in the Humanities in the College of Liberal Arts and Professor of English at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

[Listen to the podcast](#)

## Book Lovers' Paradise – Magazine for Bibliophiles Releases Issue 2

Wearing the slogan "Produced in Paradise for Book Lovers Everywhere," the second quarterly issue of *Book Lovers' Paradise* was released in July.

A joint effort of T. Allan Smith, producer of *Rare Book Café's Coffee Break*, Mike Slicker, a founder of FBS and owner of

Lighthouse Books in Dade City, Florida, and Sarah Smith, manager of the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair, *Book Lovers' Paradise* is "a labor of love for all of us, and I think the result is something we can be proud of, knowing that we're offering useful tools for people with an abiding interest in the subjects we cover."

Allan, Mike, and Sarah view *Book Lovers' Paradise* as a way to extend the sharing of book knowledge and love of fine books that is enjoyed in encounters with booksellers at the book fair.

Articles in Issue 2 include:

- In pursuit of your passion: In the bibliosphere, there are many roles
- Collecting fine bindings: what you should know
- Collecting appliance ephemera
- How old are the maps in your collection?

*Book Lovers' Paradise* is published quarterly and electronically, free of charge. To receive a link to each new edition, send an email to [bookloversparadisemagazine@gmail.com](mailto:bookloversparadisemagazine@gmail.com) with SUBSCRIBE in the subject field. Also available on Issuu.



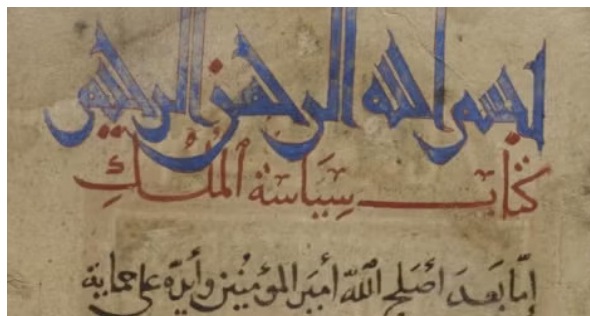


**Book Events and Podcasts, concluded****Coffee with a Codex**

Every Thursday at noon, the Kislak Center at the University of Pennsylvania presents [Coffee with a Codex](#), an informal virtual meeting with Kislak curators about a manuscript from Penn's collections. Free but requires registration to receive a Zoom link. Past events are available on YouTube.

**April 10, 12–12:30 p.m. – Glossed Fragments** – Curator Dot Porter will bring out Ms. Codex 1603 and Ms. Codex 729, two substantial fragments featuring glossed texts. Ms. Codex 1603 is a quire from a glossed Second Corinthians (France, early 13<sup>th</sup> century), while Ms. Codex 729 is two unbound quires from a work dealing with a section of canon law (France, early 14<sup>th</sup> century).

**April 17, 12–12:30 p.m. – Letter from Aristotle to Alexander the Great** – Candidate in Political Science and SIMS Graduate Student Fellow Abdulaziz Alotaibi will bring out LJS 459, an early copy of the long form of a popular treatise presented as a letter from Aristotle to Alexander the Great. Topics covered include statecraft, astronomy, astrology, magic, and medicine. It was written in Iraq between 1193 and 1211.



**April 24, 12–12:30 p.m. – Early Texts on Astronomy** – April 24 was the annual “Bring Our Children to Work Day” at Penn, and Curator Dot Porter was joined by her son Andrew. He’s keen on astronomy, so they brought out three of our early astronomy texts: LJS 26, a 13<sup>th</sup>-century Italian copy of Sacrobosco’s *Tractatum de sphaera*; LJS 216, a 13<sup>th</sup>-century French copy of the same text; and LJS 384, a 12<sup>th</sup>-century German copy of *De philosophia mundi* by William of Conches.

**University of Miami Special Collections**

[Chelsea Jackson – Tales from the Archives: the 1926 Miami Hurricane Recounted First- and Second-hand](#) – Hurricane naming did not begin until 1953. Before that, exceptional hurricanes are known by their date and location. The Great Miami Hurricane of 1926 is one of these. It was a large and intense hurricane that devastated the Greater Miami area of Florida and caused catastrophic damage in the Bahamas and the U.S. Gulf Coast in September 1926. Damages have been estimated at \$100 million. The devastation caused by the hurricane ended Florida’s land boom and represented an early start to the Great Depression in the state. It has been estimated that a similar hurricane would cause more than about \$235 billion in damage.

These are some of the facts and figures, but through the archives at the University of Miami, Chelsea Jackson takes as close to the storm as we can get, through the first-hand accounts of those who experienced the storm and second-accounts of the storm relayed to others. Illustrated with archival images, this is a special opportunity to learn about an event that changed Florida.

**Public Libraries Podcast**[FYI Podcast 75: Read Romance](#)

– [Fight Patriarchy](#) (12:49 min)

– Kathleen Hughes, PLA, hosts Lori Lieberman, a Teacher/Librarian from Lincoln High School in Portland, Oregon, as they explore the intricate dynamics of the romance genre, and Lieberman’s upcoming Public Library Association conference program, “Read Romance/Fight Patriarchy.” They discuss the popularity and enduring stigma on romance literature, the genre’s paradox as a billion-dollar industry and a source of shame for readers. Lieberman sheds light on the feminist essence embedded in romance narratives and their potential to challenge patriarchal norms.



## ... and More

### Leporello

**D**on Juan was introduced to the world around 1630 in the Spanish play *The Trickster and the Stone Guest* by Tirso de Molina. The play was a warning about waiting too late to repent, but in its many adaptations over the following decades, it acquired a more playful tone, tempering its serious message.

In the play, Don Juan's servant Catalinón not only sees the public Don Juan, suave and deceptive, but also the private man, gaining awareness of his crimes. Catalinón helps the audience chart Don Juan's treacherous spiritual journey and his carnal one.

Perhaps the best known adaptation of De Molina's play is Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*, with libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte. Sometimes called the "opera of all operas," *Don Giovanni* has retained its popularity since it was first performed in 1787.

In Da Ponte's libretto, the servant Catalinón becomes the man Leporello. When the high-born Donna Elvira recognizes Don Juan as a lover who jilted her, and despite lingering love, she begins to berate him.



Alik Abdukayumov as Leporello

Don Juan calls on Leporello to convince her that Don Juan is unworthy of her. To prove the point, Leporello sings the so-called "Catalogue Aria," displaying a list of his master's 2,000+ conquests, catalogued by country and social class. The list unfolds accordion-style from Leporello's notebook.

Books published as foldouts are often called leporello, concertina, or accordion style. Maps, skylines, unconventional texts, graphic novels may be published as leporellos, and as this format is becoming more common, an example should be easy to find. Many unique artist's books are also made in this format.



Christo (1935–2020), *The Umbrellas*, Joint Project for Japan and U.S.A., San Francisco: Bedford Arts, 1991

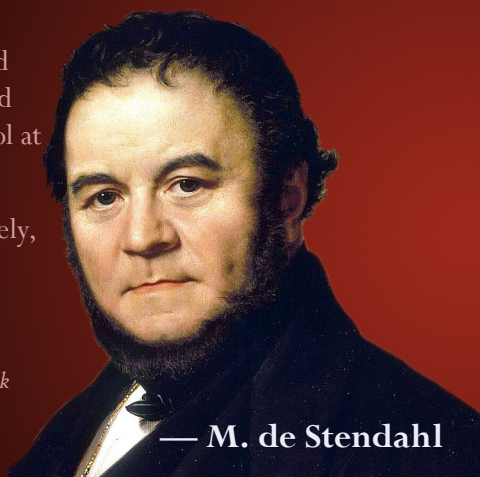
"So that's it, is it, lazy bones! always going to read your damned books are you, when you're keeping watch on the saw? You read them in the evening if you want to, when you go to play the fool at the curé's, that's the proper time."

Although stunned by the force of the blow and bleeding profusely, Julien went back to his official post by the side of the saw. He had tears in his eyes, less by reason of the physical pain than on account of the loss of his beloved book.

— from *The Red and the Black*

**A good book is an event in my life.**

— M. de Stendahl





# Florida Bibliophile Society 2024–2025 Season



Ben Wiley

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

**September 15 • FBS Members – September Show and Tell:** Members brought a wide variety of fascinating books. It was a great afternoon!

**October 20 • An Afternoon of Books –** We spent the afternoon chatting about FBS's future and enjoying special presentations by Gary Simons and Charles Brown. Sean Donnelly's presentation, "Tales of a Bookseller," has been postponed.

**November 17 • Russell Spera\*: Dante for Collectors –** Russell spoke enthusiastically about his years of collecting and researching Dante. His personal collection contains over 300 English versions of the *Divine Comedy*; he brought several examples. His answers to the many audience questions added much to the presentation.

**December 15 • FBS Holiday Party:** Another glittering occasion! We enjoyed the gracious hospitality of Ben and Joyce Wiley, accompanied by good friends and all the varieties of holiday cheer: a warming cocktail, delicious food, Christmas crackers, an exchange of gifts, and of course, a few books were involved.

**January 19 • Field Trip to Olde Mill House Print Museum in Homasassa, Florida –** Our trip to Homasassa was cancelled when museum owner Jim Anderson informed us that he was still recovering from hurricane damage. Instead, we met at Book Rescuers in Largo and were introduced to their new digs where books abound. The print museum will be rescheduled for the FBS 2025–2026 season.

**February 16 • Field Trip to Ersula's History Shop –** Owner and writer Ersula Odom\* introduced us to her museum-shop which features books, memorabilia, primary source documents, black history, and more. Located at 1421 Tampa Park Plaza, Tampa. Fabulous!

**March 1–2 (Sat.–Sun.) • Florida Antiquarian Book Fair,** one of the largest antiquarian book fairs in the U.S., held at the historic St. Pete Coliseum. FBS hosted a hospitality table in the foyer and a table just for us inside the fair. FBS greeted hundreds of visitors, providing general information and introducing many to FBS. Great books, great people – it's always a blast!

**March 16 • Field trip to the Jack Kerouac House, St. Pete –** Kerouac helped define the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Beat movement. His wanderings ended up in St. Pete, and his final home is becoming a museum. Owner of the Kerouac house, Ken Burchenal, told fascinating stories about Kerouac and the strangely magical house.

**April 27 • Irene Sullivan: Studies in Juvenile Justice –** A retired juvenile judge, Irene is author of two books, *Born and Raised to Murder* and *Raised by the Courts*, which explore Florida's courts and their impact on the state's youth.

**April 26–30 • Gainesville Getaway:** Spring edition of Florida's biggest library book sale. Stay tuned for details.

**May 18 • Annual Banquet:** Our annual May banquet is always a highlight! This year's guest speaker will be Jim West, President of the Manuscript Society – we're very excited! Watch this space for more details!

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

\* FBS member



## Endpaper • Deceptively Normal



It will soon be 60 years since Jack Kerouac lived at 5169 10<sup>th</sup> Ave N in St. Petersburg, but he could have left yesterday. Part of the mystique of the house is that it is like a time capsule. As described in the minutes at the beginning of this newsletter, Ken and Gina were delighted to find it virtually unchanged since the 1960s and, wherever needed, have chosen furnishings that match the period.

For most of my life, it was just the '60s — nothing special. But during my brief stint in used furniture in the 1990s, I discovered the nondescript era of my childhood had become the Midcentury, and its furnishings were highly desirable among younger people at the end of that century.

When we arrived at the Kerouac House, the cushions on the sectional were neatly arranged, a crocheted zig-zag throw (in earth tones) was draped over the

leather lounge chair, and the beds were made. The house had readied for company. It was like Jack had invited us over but then left the key under the mat so we could hang out even though he suddenly couldn't make it.

The decision not to "museumize" the house is a surprising one, but one that seems very, very right. The time I was in the house unfolded like a series of awarenesses, like sitting in Jack's chair, not in some exhibit, but in its context.

People I've told about the visit comment on how unassuming the house is. But great things happened there as they do in unassuming houses all over. Somehow that seems like a very Beat aesthetic. Its not about houses; it's about a creative spirit.

See you at the bookstore! — Charles

## The Florida Bibliophile Society

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Unattributed material has been prepared by the editor, Charles Brown.

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