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THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA's mission is to support fine printing related to the history and literature of California and the western states of America. It is a membership organization founded in 1912, and known for fine print and research publications, alike. The Club reflects the diverse interests of book-minded people, and promotes ongoing support of individual and organizational achievements in the fine printing and allied arts, with particular focus on the western regions of America. The Club is limited to 1,250 members. When vacancies exist, membership is open to all who agree with its aims, and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Dues date from the month of the member's election. Memberships are: Regular, \$75; Dual, \$95; Sustaining, \$150; Patron, \$500; and Student, \$25. All members receive the *Quarterly News-Letter* and, excepting Student members, the current keepsake. All members have the privilege — but not the obligation — of buying Club publications, which are limited, as a rule, to one copy per member. All members may purchase extra copies of keepsakes or *News-Letters*, when available. Portions of membership dues in the amount of \$32 for regular membership, \$52 from the dual level, \$107 from the sustaining level, \$457 as a patron, and donations — including books — are deductible in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code.

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## *Loving Friends: A Pioneering Excursion in Collecting the Bloomsbury Group*

CHARLES A. FRACCHIA

AS A FIRE NEEDS OXYGEN IN ORDER TO BURN, book collectors need a steady supply of books in order to feed their passion.

In the late-1950s I began collecting the books which the English Catholic recusants (those in England who adhered to Roman Catholicism after the creation of a national church) produced between 1558 and 1640. It was a splendid experience: the books written and published under the threat of capital punishment, in English, Latin, and other European languages, smuggled to readers in England, each title with a romantic history.

But, by the mid-1960s, there were not sufficient books coming onto the market to supply me with the excitement of adding many of these once-forbidden books to my collection. (However, in the late-1960s I did manage to buy *en bloc* the recusant books of the Catholic diocese of Portsmouth and of Quarr Abbey.) I decided that I would select a second area to collect in order to feed my addiction to buying books.

The area I chose had its roots in a book I had read in 1955, while taking an economics course as a freshman at the University of San Francisco. The book was Robert Heilbroner's *The Worldly Philosophers*, a splendidly written series of biographical profiles and an exposition of the ideas of the most notable economists.

The last essay in the book was one on John Maynard Keynes. He fascinated me: book and art collector, intellectual iconoclast, *bon vivant*, patron of the arts, and part of a group of friends called the Bloomsbury Group.

*The Worldly Philosophers* led me to a biography of Lord Keynes: Sir Roy Harrods's. My fascination with Keynes exploded, as did my fascination with the Bloomsbury Group.

This fascination led to my decision in the mid-1960s to select the Bloomsbury Group as my supplementary area of book collecting.

Who or what was the Bloomsbury Group? Quite simply, the group consisted of fewer than a dozen friends whose friendship began with a handful of contemporary undergraduates at Cambridge University and which later expanded

to incorporate others, most notably Virginia and Vanessa Stephen, sisters of one of these undergraduates.

As a prelude to my collecting, I began to research background information on the group and its members. I found almost nothing, as strange as this might sound today. There was an academic study of novelist E.M. Forster and another academic study of Forster and Woolf.

But I did have lists of the books written by members of the group — individuals identified in Harrods's biography of Keynes.

These friends were writers, artists, and art critics. Two were reasonably well-known novelists: Virginia Stephen Woolf and E.M. Forster. Another — Lytton Strachey — revolutionized the writing of biography. Virginia's husband, Leonard Woolf, was a political activist and man of letters. Roger Fry was both an artist and an art critic. Vanessa Bell (Virginia's sister) and Duncan Grant were painters. Vanessa's husband Clive Bell was a writer on a panoply of artistic subjects. Keynes, as has been mentioned, was an economist, and had written numerous books on economic matters, including the magisterial *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*.

The fact that the Woolfs, the Bells, and Keynes lived and entertained in the area around London's Bloomsbury district would name this group of disparate friends.

And so I began: collecting the novels (and other writings) of Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, and David Garnett, the books on economics of John Maynard Keynes, whose exquisite writing made even the most abstruse of them a pleasure to read, the books on art and art criticism of Roger Fry and Clive Bell, and various books by Leonard Woolf and Francisco Birrell.

Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster had slipped into some obscurity in the years before I began to collect them (albeit that Forster's masterpiece, *A Passage to India*, had been made into a film and a television mini-series), and their books were relatively inexpensive. I remember rarely paying more than \$50 for a Virginia Woolf novel, complete with dust-jacket: recently, I saw her first novel, *Night and Day*, in a book dealer's catalogue for £50,000. I paid \$75, for a mint copy (and mint dust-jacket) of *A Passage to India*.

The Bloomsbury Group provided ganglia for collecting. Not satisfied with the books of the authors within the group, I purchased one of Duncan Grant's paintings for what was, in the late-1960s, a modest amount. And I would have gone on to the productions of the Omega Workshops — an enterprise organized by Roger Fry to produce artistic and decorative items as opportunities for his artistic friends — had my Bloomsbury collecting not come to a sudden end in the early-1970s.

Yet another aspect of my Bloomsbury collecting was a publishing venture of Leonard and Virginia Woolf called the Hogarth Press. Having its origin in

providing therapy for Virginia, who had occasional bouts of mental illness, the Hogarth Press was initially a small enterprise in which the books published had their type handset and printed on a small hand press.

The literary contacts and superb taste of the couple brought in manuscripts that are now seen as some of the most spectacular works of the twentieth century: Virginia's own novels, the poetry of T.S. Eliot (including "The Wasteland"), and some of E.M. Forster's works among them.

The hand press gave way to commercial printing, but Leonard Woolf continued his hands-on management of the increasing successful Hogarth Press, helped by a succession of young assistants.

My shelves, which had hitherto been filled with the vellum and calfskin bindings of sixteenth and seventeenth-century books and manuscripts, were now seeing twentieth-century books in increasing numbers, the avant-garde dust jackets that clothed many of the books being quite starkly obvious in my bookcases.

In addition to certified members of the Bloomsbury Group and the books published by the Hogarth Press, I expanded into the realm of those who were friends (and even opponents) of members of the group — the popular novelist Vita Sackville-West, for example, whose close and intimate friendship with Virginia Woolf served to include her in my ever-expanding collection.

Shortly after I began to collect the Bloomsbury Group the former obscurity of this association of friends came to an end. In 1967, Michael Holroyd's two-volume biography of Lytton Strachey appeared. I attribute what I consider the past forty years of "The Golden Age of Biography" to this event. A mass of details, exquisitely well-written, and unafraid to discuss Strachey's aggressive homosexuality — a topic which formerly was considered taboo — Holyroyd's biography caught the mood of the late-1960s' fascination with alternative lifestyles.

The biography also illuminated the lives of Strachey's friends in the Bloomsbury Group; and a literary industry was launched. Leonard Woolf's multi-volume autobiography began to appear. Wilfred Stone's study of E.M. Forster was published in 1966. Virginia Woolf's nephew Quentin Bell published a biography of his aunt in 1972, inaugurating the subsequent publication of hundreds of books on this icon of feminism. Books began to appear on the subject — and doings of the Bloomsbury Group as a whole — notably, David Gadd's *Loving Friends*, Quentin Bell's *Bloomsbury Group*, and Leon Edel's brilliant *A House of Lions*.

This inaugural attention paid to the Bloomsbury Group would be followed during the next forty years by an obsession. A multiplicity of books would appear on the myriad of relatives of the Bloomsbury Group, on Virginia Woolf's mental illness and her feminist constructs, on the two art exhibitions organized by Roger Fry — in 1910 and 1913 — that introduced modern art into England, memoirs and biographies of those in any way connected with the Bloomsbury Group or with their ventures. Robert Skidelsky's superb three-volume biography of John

Maynard Keynes replaced Harrod's arid and reticent one. The tumultuous and promiscuous Bloomsbury lives were exhibited for all to see. Virginia Woolf's novels became movies and fragments of her life were displayed in the novel and subsequent film, *The Hours*. The film *Carrington* portrayed the bizarre relationship between Lytton Strachey and the painter Dora Carrington. There still seems to be no end to this effusive fascination with the Bloomsbury Group.

The fascination that began my collecting of the Bloomsbury Group grew, and my collection flourished; but exigent circumstances brought my collecting to an end. Devastated by the twin travails of a divorce and financial difficulties in the early-1970s, I was forced to cease collecting; and shortly thereafter both my English Catholic recusant collection and that of the Bloomsbury Group were acquired by the University of San Francisco's Gleeson Library.

The subsequent extraordinary popularity of the Bloomsbury Group has caused its works — writings and art — to become prohibitively expensive to collect. Only an exceptionally wealthy collector or institution could today plan to duplicate what I envisioned forty-plus years ago. In fact, one would be hard-pressed to afford just the books published each year on the members of the Bloomsbury Group and their works.

Needless to say, I lament having had to abort my collecting of the Bloomsbury Group. I admit to a certain pride in having identified early on the unique aspects of this group of friends and the intellectual and artistic importance of their works. And I am pleased that the collection is now housed on the shelves of the library of my alma mater.

I continue to read a goodly number of books published each year on the Bloomsbury Group, I have taught courses on the Group for both City College of San Francisco and for USF's Fromm Institute, and I continue to have a warm spot in my heart for this gaggle of "loving friends."

### *A Matter of "Opinion:" A Little Magazine from Los Angeles, 1929–1930, and the Bookseller Who Published It*

DAVID PARKER

IN AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY in 1955, Jacob Israel Zeitlin (1902–1987), bookseller, publisher and art dealer, described the growth of culture in Los Angeles, particularly after 1920, as a "small Renaissance." Zeitlin listed four signs that Los Angeles had come of age as a cultural center. These were the presence of a thriving antiquarian book trade; the organization of several clubs devoted to book and manuscript collecting; the emergence of a group of fine printers; and the existence of two great libraries, the Huntington

and the Clark. Zeitlin included the “peculiar art” entwined with the name of Hollywood, as he regarded the motion picture as a sort of visual literature. He observed that these factors had provided Los Angeles with a concentrated richness of resources, and proclaimed culture in Los Angeles during this period “a synthesis as diverse as Alexandria or Venice of the Doges.”

Zeitlin participated actively in establishing the four areas he identified in his address. He established himself as an antiquarian bookseller in 1927; he assisted in the creation of the Rounce and Coffin Club, whose primary focus was book production, and sold books to the members of other clubs devoted to book preservation; and he aided fine printing through his activities as a publisher, as well as a bookseller. He sold material to the Huntington Library, while he introduced one of the first directors of the Clark Library (Lawrence Clark Powell) to the book culture of Los Angeles.

Zeitlin ought to have added the presence of literary magazines and the emergence of art galleries to his list, because he had a hand in these endeavors as well. Zeitlin’s bookstores always had at least a portion of one wall devoted to the exhibition of visual artworks, so they served as a center for the study of the book arts and for other forms of graphic art, as well. In providing all this, he became the focal point of a loosely organized group of people. Zeitlin described this as “a fortuitous clustering of bright young men and women who were gregarious, liked bookstores, and enjoyed” the dinners at Rene and Jean’s to which they “frequently repaired in the evenings.” This circle would have a significant impact on the local culture of Southern California during the 1930s as its members attempted to create and to preserve a comfortable environment for cosmopolitan pursuits. *Opinion*, a short-lived magazine that emerged in 1929, best preserves the tenor, insights, and influence of this group.

Zeitlin was the catalyst behind this unusual collaborative publication. Only sixteen pages in length and in an edition of only five hundred, *Opinion* went to a number of affluent, well-educated adults in Los Angeles in the fall of 1929. As the word “collaborative” connotes, *Opinion* didn’t have one sole patron. At least thirty-four people gave to one or more of its seven issues. Each issue required twenty individuals to contribute \$50 each, a sizeable sum during the great depression. The \$1,000 amassed covered the costs of printing and distributing five hundred copies; no advertising was needed to support the magazine. One or two of these supporting contributors would be designated associate editor and given responsibility for finding writers and, in some cases, artists, to fill fifteen pages. The editors controlled whose writing would be included in each issue, and were responsible for making sure their writers met the publication deadline. Writers who were not financial contributors to the *Opinion* circle contributed half of the material (thirty-six of seventy-two articles, reviews, comments and poems) and here there was even more variety than among the contributors.

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A snapshot of the supporters, financial and literary, gives the flavor of this Los Angeles elite. Twelve of the thirty-four supporting contributors — Merle Armitage, Grace Marion Brown, Will Connell, Phil Townsend Hanna, Carl Haverlin, Herbert Klein, Carey McWilliams, Joseph Pijoan, Louis Samuel, Paul Jordan Smith, Kem Weber and Zeitlin — became supporting contributors to each issue. Lloyd Wright, Judge Leon Yankwich, artist and printmaker Richard Day, printer Lynton Kistler, Louis Adamic, Walter Arensberg, journalist, critic, and bookseller Wilbur Needham, and Arthur Millier, art critic of the *Los Angeles Times*, also contributed to at least one issue. Many of the supporting contributors had material published in *Opinion*, some in more than one issue.

Graphic artist Grace Marion Brown, one of the regular supporting contributors, designed the cover that was used for all seven issues of the magazine and which set the tone for the general format; the magazine was contained in a stark black wrapper with a stylized ornament and three cover lines, sufficiently modern for its era. The impresario and art collector Merle Armitage did some of the design, as did the printer Henry Mayers. A commercial printing plant, Wolfer Printing, with whom Phil Townsend Hanna, the editor of *Touring Topics*, had a connection, handled the printing.

The *Opinion* collaborative wanted its readers to know how the magazine was produced. Just below the masthead of its first issue, the editors announced that “*Opinion* has been conceived, sponsored and edited by a group of individuals successful in their separate occupations, keenly sensitive to aesthetic manifestations, and agreed (however much they may dissent on other subjects) that a medium devoted to the exposition of pure passions, prejudices and enthusiasms will be welcomed by certain readers.” *Opinion* reflected the interests of its contributors without any softening. The founding manifesto stated that *Opinion* would be composed of intelligently written articles on pertinent subjects. It would have no specific political axes to grind, and it would be free of fashionable cant. The editors welcomed “terse and pointed compositions — prose and poetical — which will be adjudged entirely from the standpoint of the honesty of their conception, the merit of their subjects and the competency of their development.”

The articles in *Opinion* resembled the contents of *The Smart Set* and its successor, *The American Mercury*. *Opinion* was not as interested in politics as *The American Mercury*, and the politics it covered were California politics. The writers who contributed to *Opinion* were concerned with issues in art, politics, literature, current affairs, religion/philosophy and entertainment, not all of which required the writer to take an editorial position. Almost one in every five articles dealt specifically with Los Angeles.

An article in the fourth issue summed up a recurring theme: middleclass boorishness and pretension. After all, the boosterish excesses of the 1920s led to the great crash of the stock market in October 1929, just as *Opinion* appeared.

In Spring 1930, as the Great Depression took hold, newspaperwoman Ruth Skeen commented on the idea of “Babbitry.” This term had entered the American vernacular almost immediately after Sinclair Lewis published his novel, *Babbitt*, in 1922, “Babbitry” signified the middle-class conformist American businessman, and, by extension, the middle-class conformist American. Skeen, having concluded that Lewis and H.L. Mencken had discovered the truth about American conformity, and were now exploiting it, observed, “All America is Babbitt divided into four classes.”

She proceeded to provide a taxonomic account of Babbitry: The *unconscious* Babbitt, who she described as “legion,” believed in the virtue of rural communities and the wickedness of cities, and would most likely think Lewis was trying to undermine civilization. The *self-conscious* Babbitt, she proposed, had “Mencken [as] his prophet and *The American Mercury* as his Bible.” He would not do anything unless he were sure Mencken would approve, and he was deathly afraid other people might recognize him of having Babbitt-like characteristics. Skeen found this form of Babbitry “disgusting and insufferable.” Her third type was the *unconscious* Babbitt, who had “fancied himself as an artist” and lived like one until he inherited money and property. Since he was always a Babbitt at heart, he became one as soon as he had the means to do so. Finally, she grouped herself among the large number of *conscious* Babbitts who rejoiced in their middle-class, Midwestern upbringing in the days where Babbitry had not yet been discovered; it was simpler then, and it brooked no nonsense.

Noted attorney, author, and reformer Carey McWilliams had begun the charge against Babbitry in the first issue, in October 1929. He debunked the brochure, *Culture and Community*, which the Civic Bureau of Music and Art had issued under the editorship of Antoinette Sabel. McWilliams felt that the excessively conservative brochure dramatically misrepresented the cultural life of the city, particularly with regard to art and literature. While it listed *plein-air* impressionists Guy Rose (already deceased) and William Wendt, it left out many living artists, particularly modernist artists like Stanton Macdonald-Wright, and others, whose works Jake Zeitlin had begun to display on the walls of his bookstore. McWilliams thought prolific screenwriter Darryl Zanuck, whom the pamphlet failed to identify, was the region’s greatest writer. Since the pamphlet sponsored what McWilliams considered to be obsessive booster culture, he thought that certainly the oratory of the Reverend Robert Schuler and the evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson should be thought of as local literature, as well. McWilliams, though, was immune, having been vaccinated, as one of his articles stated, with “Anti-Shuler Serum.”

The December 1929 issue discussed the peculiarities of celebrating the Christmas holiday in warm, snowless Los Angeles. Jose Rodriguez observed that the celebration, another exhibition of Babbitry, was artificial: “The most

complete and vicious exhibition of bad taste ever given by a city," he opined, "are the Christmas decorations erected in downtown Los Angeles, and the canned Christmas carols broadcast therefrom. Rodriguez instead proposed that the reader embrace the irrationality of celebrating Christmas with fake snow in a warm climate as a symptom of the American championship contest — displays in Southern California had to be better than those in the cold climate many Los Angelenos had left.

The January 1930 issue, edited by Judge Leon Yankwich and Carey McWilliams, railed against Babbitry on additional fronts. The unsigned editorial, surprisingly misogynistic for a publication of which many of whose writers were women, proposed that *Opinion* had no patience with the supposedly bold ideas found in ladies' clubs, by which it meant the Friday Morning Club, the longest-established women's club in Los Angeles. It declared that such ideas, issuing from the minds of "ladies who are no longer attractive to men," are "simply outlets for desire that cannot ever be translated into action."

Goldie Weisberg took on the common people as well. She provided an account of Los Angeles in its "dusk-shrouded" aspect, according to the literary trends of the moment, which most certainly included satire. She found that "the Folks," a formulation by the Croatian immigrant writer Louis Adamic to describe the retired farmers, grocers, Ford agents, hardware merchants and shoe salesmen mostly from the Midwest, "dominated the nightlife of Los Angeles," and that it was "practically impossible to obtain liquor except in hotels, restaurants, clubs, drug stores, speakeasies, or C.O.D."

In the March/April issue, Nathanael Frank, a screenwriter and aspiring film director, wrote about the film industry. In a peculiar way, he attempted to explain why creative people were treated so badly by the heads of studios, even though they shared the same heritage as Jews. In an article called "Art among the Chosen People," Frank attributed this to history. Until they were forced out of the *shtetlach* of Eastern Europe, he wrote, Jewish society put learning at the top of all accomplishments, and merchants subsidized study. Frank then observed that in the United States, merchants, without this resented obligation, embraced Babbitry. In Hollywood, profiteering studio owners showed their contempt for the artists they had been forced to support in the Old Country. For this reason, Frank was having trouble becoming a director. As Frank is unknown to "Google," and to "IMDB" as well, perhaps other factors were at work.

The best article came next. Attorney Charles B. Hazelhurst wrote humorously about the second coming of Jesus earlier that year among the Babbitts of Southern California. Acting as the attorney for Jesus, Hazelhurst described the travails of Our Lord. First, he had to arrange a \$500 bond for Jesus, who, after walking ashore at San Pedro, had been arrested for holding a public meeting without a permit, blocking traffic, not being properly clothed and not using His full name

when he was booked. The following morning, the lawyer paid the \$100 fine Jesus had incurred by sleeping in a public park, which had brought a charge of vagrancy.

Police, of course, enforced the Eighteenth Amendment to the constitution. Jesus ran afoul of the Volstead act by turning water into wine at a wedding where a lady member of the Board of Prohibition and Public Morality guzzled “about eleven goblets.” Brought to trial two days later, the jury found Jesus not guilty after he preached a sermon of love and tolerance. The attorney saved the best for last, getting in a dig at boosterism: “I might mention that I don’t like the way some of our real estate sub-dividers are making use of this event.”

Even the magazine could not top the second coming. The final issue of *Opinion* dated May 1930 contained no material that reflected on Los Angeles or Southern California, and its group of writers disbanded during the summer of 1930. As Ward Ritchie recalled, “as happens so often with this type of magazine, the original excitement was over... The contributors had all had the opportunity to express themselves, once or twice, and the continuance was no longer worth the effort.” Zeitlin himself commented that it had run out of steam, it had no “*opinion*” (author’s italics). Since the magazine had no unifying philosophy, random self-expression could not keep it going.

Jake Zeitlin viewed *Opinion* as the “symptom of a ferment that was going on in a place that [had not] arrived at anything like the cultural maturity that it has now.” Certainly nothing like *Opinion* appeared in Southern California after its demise, but many of its contributors went on to achieve success. Supporting contributor Phil Townsend Hanna provided some with the opportunity to continue to write *Opinion*-style articles for much wider distribution. Hanna edited *Touring Topics* (later, and currently, *Westways*), the publication of the Southern California Automobile Association. It had begun in 1907 to provide “material of use to the motorist in Southern California.” Hanna took a seriously expanded view of what constituted “material of use to the motorist” and essentially produced the intellectual counterpart to the Southern Pacific Railroad’s Northern California lifestyle magazine, *Sunset*.

Although *Opinion* disappeared after seven issues, this little magazine demonstrated in 1929 and 1930 that a small group could incite learned discussion among an urban elite and leave a timeless record containing their concerns about their beloved Los Angeles.

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## *The Gift of Service: The President’s Report for 2010*

LOOKING BACK OVER MY YEARS AT THE BOOK CLUB, I believe that those members and volunteers who participate the most fully are also those who reap the most satisfaction from their Club membership. During my time on the Board, the Club discussed various future quarters. We considered moving to Third Street; we talked of refitting the old rooms; and, finally, settled on the space overlooking Sutter Street. During this planning process, many members of the Board, the committees, and the Club contributed ideas and know-how. Just after my election, last fall, construction began. As you know, we have occupied the new rooms since July 2010.

Thanks are due to those many members who gave freely of their time and expertise. The Club has always been an *affaire* of highly motivated volunteers. Of course, we appreciate and depend upon our paid staff, headed by Executive Director Lucy Rodgers Cohen. No one can forget the services of early secretary Oscar Lewis, who served for 25 years; but, as a club, we have always depended on the kindness and competence of volunteers. This is true of every aspect of club life, from membership, to publications, to hospitality, and to programming.

Special thanks to Susan Filter, who — when head of the Facilities Committee — insisted that the Club look and feel like a *club*. That’s why, when Candra Scott & Anderson Interior Designers showed us their portfolio of cozy reading rooms and comfy hospitality suites, Lucy and I turned to each other and said, “This is what the Club has always thought it should look like!” I’m grateful that the Board agreed with us. And from the reactions of visitors and members alike, the new rooms are as comfortable as they are attractive.

During construction, I found it very heartening that those who designed the new rooms were already Club members or became members during the course of construction, such as: Facilities Chair John Tillotson, initial architect Donald MacDonald, project manager Margaret Sheehan, pressmark and collateral

designer Tom Ingalls, development consultant Marilyn Bancel, and letterer Christopher Stinehour. What better assurance of longevity and tradition than that the Club be built by those who belong?

We now have the pleasure of furnishing the Club with its memorabilia. For instance, the Board has just named the storeroom after John Borden; a plaque honoring Donovan McCune is in the works; and there are hopes that we can snag a bust of founder Albert Bender. As the Club continues into its second century, we need to remember benefactors, such as: Oscar Lewis, Albert Sperisen and Donovan McCune. Without their efforts and gifts, the Club would not have lasted nearly a century, nor would we be occupying such magnificent rooms.

I would like to single out our devoted librarian, Barbara J. Land, for special thanks and recognition. For over 30 years, Barbara has worked with many members, including David Webber, Albert Sperisen, and John Borden. She was the first Club member who greeted me when my firm, Burch+McElroy, supplied the composition for *Six Years as a Book Agent in San Francisco*, a BCC publication of 1992. Over the last few years, Barbara has been joined by other members also devoted to the library's mission. (Please read the Library Committee reports elsewhere in this issue.)

Thanks to Library Chair Henry Snyder, Associate Librarian John McBride, and the many volunteers who have moved and shelved the library, as well as dramatically expanded its holdings. Roger Wicker deserves double thanks: for brokering the magnificent gift from Clifford Burke, as well as for his years of activity in programming speakers — especially Richard-Gabriel Rummonds in November 2010.

In its new rooms, the Club is now blessed with opportunities for growth. We can easily accommodate more members in the Club rooms for lectures and parties; exhibitions have more space; and Club publications are now shown to great advantage in the gallery, thanks to Notara Lum. After serving eight years as membership chair, I know what it takes to maintain the Club's rolls; I am grateful to have been mentored by Vince Lozito and Earl Emelson. I have confidence in David Rubiales as chair, supported by Susan Caspi on staff. Bring them new members; I assure you they will be well treated!

The Club needs to plan its growth and future carefully. The new rooms are suitable for many kinds of events and activities, and collaborations with sister organizations such as the Hand Bookbinders of California. Our upcoming centenary celebration should affirm our mission: "*to support fine printing related to the history and literature of California and the western states of America.*" The challenge for the Club is to professionalize our operations and development plan — via nonprofit incorporation and a five-year financial strategy — while maintaining the camaraderie and spirit of volunteerism. We are, after all, a club of members

devoted to the book. To help us plan the next decades and to choose wisely from all the available options, we are fortunate to have on hand Gene Takagi, Esq., financial planner David Gluck, and development planner Marilyn Bancel.

Over the last years, strategic planning/development has been guided by Bruce Crawford, Malcolm Whyte, Anne Smith, and others; our key conclusion was that the Club be committed to the highest level of excellence for all our activities. For example, “Publications” has been the longest and most famous of Club activities. Since 1914, we have published over 225 books; since the 1930s the *Quarterly* and keepsakes have delighted Club members.

In the last year, I believe the Club has affirmed its tradition of fine printing. I am confident that Chair Roberto Trujillo and the Publications Committee will continue the Club’s tradition of the well-written, well-edited, and well-printed book. Most appreciated would be the purchase of these wonderful books — especially by your standing order subscription. As well, the *QN-L* can use your news and input, especially in its refreshed letterpress format.

Finally, I want to thank all those who served before me and with me — and who will serve after me! Congratulations to John Crichton as new president. I am pleased to serve as one of the past presidents on the Governance Committee. For those serving on the Board, I wish you all the gift of service that I know will repay you many times over. For those of you who have considered helping the Club, I encourage you to join a committee. Consult the list on the inside front cover of the *Quarterly*; why not find out if they could use your expertise and assistance?

For all members, I wish you the best of times at the Club, whether chatting with colleagues, listening to a lecture in our rooms, or with a BCC book in hand.

— KATHLEEN BURCH

## *A Great Late-Twentieth Century Printing Library Comes to the Club*

ROGER WICKER

LIBRARIES, NOT UNLIKE GARDENS, often start out to be one thing, and over time, become something different than what was planned. This is not the case with the The Book Club of California’s library. It was tended by its principal “gardener and topiarist” with a clear notion of what was in front of him regarding the contours of the land and he knew a “specimen” from a pretty weed or a hybrid. Albert Sperisen, a member for decades, printer and publisher of his own Black Vine Press, was the man with the refining vision of just what our first accumulation of fine press books actually was, what it represented and what it could become.

Today, some forty years later, the Library of the Book Club of California has approximately 2,000 carefully chosen and curated volumes in those glass-fronted cases in the new Library room. “What’s in there?” we all have asked, peering at the spines of the books during Monday night Open Houses. Gardener-curator Barbara Land, the long time Club Librarian, began learning how to weed and cultivate by working alongside Albert, absorbing and adding his lore and knowledge to her own not inconsiderable knowledge. (Did Albert know about AACR-2? [Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, version 2.] Did Albert care?)

Over the years, the Library and the Club have published, been given, and bought books of importance to the history and evolution to the art and production of books worldwide. All appeal in one way or another to our varied membership. Almost every book person has arcane and specialized knowledge and enthusiasms for what this book or that book represents in terms of technical details of its production, and the importance and influence of its content.

In planning for the move from the old Library to the new Library, thoughts arose, “Had some weeds and hybrids snuck into the collection?” and “What was the future of all these books being crated, checked and double-checked into its own room with a study table, safe cabinets, and enough shelf space to get it all in?”

Over several months in 2010 this ongoing conversation, question and answer of “What if we did...”, and “How could we...?” went on. One of the ideas that emerged was to combine book arts with the Library. We now had enough space to actually use the nineteenth-century Columbian press to print occasional Keepsakes to commemorate Club events. Along with this came the idea of exposing the members and children of the digerati to the ways in which these books were planned, printed, bound and presented to generations of readers.

Through this give and take emerged a coherent thought and a vision of how to achieve it. Director and Library Committee member Toby Schwartzburg, a new student of hand bookbinding, presented “The Library of the Book Club of California: A Vision.” It observed: “An increasing number of young people are turning in their spare time to manual arts and crafts. We can bring fine bookmaking to them. Fine bookmaking is an important craft with a growing number of students and practitioners. Our accessible library should have a broad collection which can be brought to young people to educate them in the art of the physical book. Being able to see and handle such books is inspiring, as all of us who collect books can verify.”

Where would such books come from? The “Vision” suggested a solution: “Within the Book Club of California, we have a need to increase the annual value of donations to the Club. It will be an important part of the expanded library to seek out and encourage large donations to the Library. Such gifts will be available to members for their own pleasure and research. The expanded collection will aid in the pursuit of the Club’s mission of expanding fine press publishing.”

Luckily for the Book Club, a large and important collection of just this kind of book had been seeking a suitable home since 2007. It seemed a perfect fit. Finally, as in the Zen ox herding story, it was sought, found, tamed, harnessed and brought home.

Fine press printer Clifford Burke, the founding energy of the Cranium Press, a San Francisco letter-press publishing shop of the 1960s, had such a collection. Burke was originally a printer in the off-set print shop of San Francisco State University, running off syllabi, exam papers, publicity for student groups, administration documents: all the printed work needed by a large and thriving university.

Burke went through the same Zen sense of self discovery that the Book Club did later. He wrote: “I discovered [fine press printer Adrian Wilson’s] *The Design of Books* in a bookshop in Sausalito shortly after it was published [1967], and devoured it over and over. It was my first introduction to the formal array of elements in the archetypal book, as well as conceptualization and design procedures; to this point I had based my work on printed models.

“I don’t remember how I was led to get in touch with Adrian. It might have been George Fox who, through one of his uncanny abilities, had set me on the path of fine papers when I’d scarcely opened my shop door. I showed Adrian Peter Wild’s *Sonnets* [Cranium Press, 1967] and Max Finstein’s *There’s Always a Moon in America* [Cranium Press, 1968] as examples of my work to convince him to take me on as his apprentice.

“I found Adrian recovering from open heart surgery, rebuilding Tuscany Alley after the fire, and living in an apartment up the hill. My work [for Adrian] on *The Book Called Holinshed’s Chronicles*” [Book Club of California, 1968] began with my plugging away alone in that apartment (while the Wilsons were working on their house), pasting up the dummy for the book, and went on to helping set up the Colts Armory Press, making up all the Monotype pages, lockup, and presswork to Adrian’s standards (“I think you’re about half a pencil line low on the right”). And it concluded at the Schuberth Bindery collating and examining the printed sheets.

“I can’t imagine a more intense apprenticeship, working on a single book at that high level, through every step. Of course, there was his library right at hand, and his design process as he engaged in new work, as well as his business negotiations and dealing with folks in the world of books. I was learning it all, all at once, and the stories of those magical months go on and on...”

In conversations with Clifford over several years about a home for his collection I suggested several institutions that might be suitable. He always asked the question: “How will they use it?” A locked up, inaccessible gift was not what he had in mind for his collection of fine press and small press books, and many books on printing practices, inks, paper, design and typography.

When it became apparent that a new spirit was in the air in the Book Club Library, I conveyed this news to Burke and to the Library Committee of Mary Manning, Barbara Land, Henry Snyder, Toby Schwartzburg, John McBride and others. They brought in Clifford Burke's collection where it is a worthy fit for the new Library vision.

Clifford's own printing includes his Cranium Press work, Adrian Wilson's titles and Burke's later Desert Rose imprint. Job work includes hundreds of mainly West Coast small letter-press publishers' titles. Printing and publishing as Cranium Press brought orders from Robert Hawley's Oyez Press, Mudra, Jack Shoemaker's Sand Dollar, Wingbow, Four Seasons, Zephyrus Image, and others.

More broadly, Clifford Burke acquired, as published, titles from Brooding Heron Press, Janus Press (who published his first "artists' book"), Yolla Bolly Press, Gray Wolf, Ed Dorn's Frontier Press, early editions of Black Sparrow Press, Tangram (edited, designed and printed by Jerry Reddan, also a Wilson apprentice), Long House, Copper Canyon, Dave Haselwood, Wesley Tanner's Arif Press, the Auerhahn Press, City Lights, Big Sky, Broken Moon, Angel Hair, Five Trees, Limited Editions Club (designed by Wilson, and printed by Burke), Gray Spider, Origin, Poltroon, Red Hill, Tomoye Press, Turtle Island, Unicorn, the Book Club of California, the San Francisco Zen Center, and more.

Most of these books are not "impressive" in the way a Kelmscott title is, signaling its significance through its binding, bulk, decoration, and printing. Instead, they appear to be simple or plain, but are actually complex exercises of total design, melding choice of type, paper, and binding. Their "simplicity" might inspire a novice printer to undertake something "simple" and so learn by actually doing what is a great exercise in learning: The "simple" design that these books display is the result of lots of knowledge and craft that doesn't "show off."

Burke's books are almost without exception handsome, modest, witty and original in their design, displaying the thought that went into their creation. They are inviting books. They radiate the craft and the art of their inspiration and their making. Above all, they spark a drive, a devotion, and a true and passionate love for making and collecting such books.

### *Our Library and its Committee*

FOR MOST OF 2010, THE LIBRARY REPOSED IN CARTONS but its Committee did not rest. In January, Mary Manning, Wally Janson, Barbara Land and I packed the books over several days. A few months later when we vacated Room 510, I moved 250 cartons into a closet meant to hold the Club's chairs, while administrative assistant Emily Gift placed the boxed ephemera and flat files in the storeroom.

In September, over a mere few days, Henry Snyder, Land and I shelved the books in the new Library just in time for the opening Gala. The new floor-to-ceiling shelving accommodates it all: printing history on the west wall; fine press printers and their presses along the long north wall; and oversized volumes and rarities in two cabinets on the south wall. On the east wall, the door into the hall matches one in the storeroom and offers ready access to the space where cataloguing and processing will occur in a less formal setting.

For a library “in repose,” newcomers to our shelves over these last months have kept us extraordinarily vigorous. Prominent in the Hand Bookbinders’ vitrine in the library is the Club’s recent splendid acquisition, *The Ephemera of Adrian Wilson* (1994). It is one of thirteen boxed copies with the bound bibliography and two drawers of choice ephemera, including original sketches by Wilson. It belonged to the printer of the project, James Wehlage, being inscribed to him by author Joyce Lancaster Wilson and publisher James Linden. The bindery model and extra photographs supplement the set.

As Roger Wicker notes, Clifford Burke has added some dozen items to our already deep Wilson collection. Particularly dear is Burke’s well-read and battered cloth copy of *The Design of Books* that Adrian inscribed to him as “printer extraordinary” at Christmas 1968.

Over the next months Burke is sending eight hundred books, one half being his working typographic library, the other half a collection of his colleagues’ printing over the last forty years. We most recently received a complete run of Tangram, the compact and choice chapbooks, published and printed by Jerry Reddan, a fine pressman long in the service of The Arion Press. We are deeply grateful.

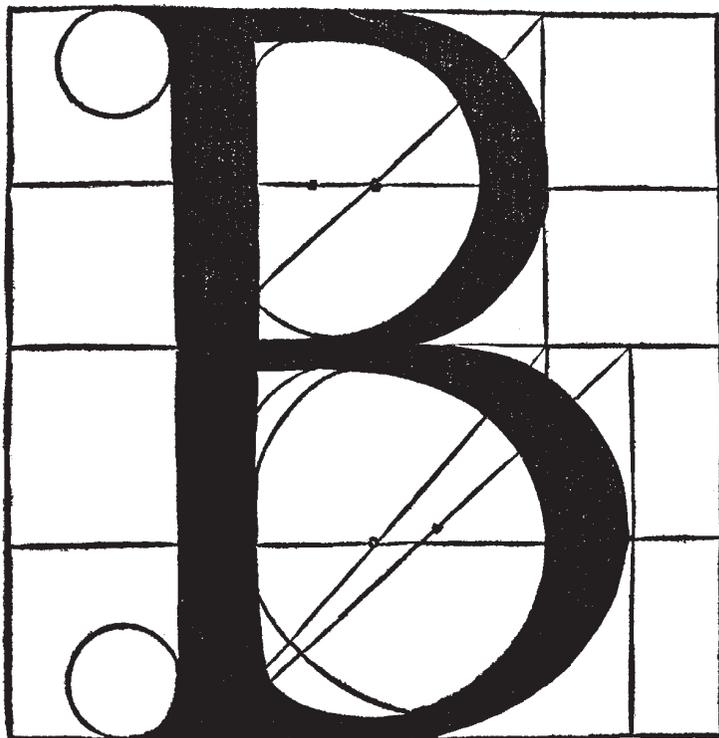
Mining engineer Noel Kirshenbaum has generously dredged a steady mass of books, magazines and ephemera. Much is the remaining working library assembled by his late and beloved wife Sandra, the editor and publisher of *Fine Print*, the journal of record for the 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, *Fine Print* (1975-1990) is an intensive guide to the fine printing of those years, and will help to define the collection as it fills out the latter decades of the twentieth century.

At beginning of 2010, we were able to buy at auction from the collection of the late Donald Fleming (who has been very generous to the Club) a long run of Typophile chapbooks and keepsakes dating back to the 1940s; materials on Bruce Rogers; a batch of type specimen books including an extremely rare Palmer & Rey type catalog (1892); and a full run of *Matrix*, several in the special bindings with extra ephemera.

John Windle recently donated two items by Edward Bosqui, nineteenth century master printer of this city: *Grapes and Grapevines of California* (Windle’s facsimile edition of 1980) and a fine original of *Illustrations of West American Oaks* (1889). Many thanks, John.

Thus we serve the Club where all bookish ones may browse. Welcome to the Library.

— JOHN MCBRIDE



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## *Greetings from the Library Committee*

ASSOCIATE LIBRARIAN JOHN MCBRIDE has given an account of our activities since the first of the year elsewhere in these pages. To his account of new acquisitions we are proud to announce the gift by Mill Valley printer Carol Cunningham of her own collection, consisting of a complete set of publications under the aegis of her Sunflower Press, a collection of miniatures, and books given to her by friends acquired during a half-century association with the fine press community. Her gift of 287 pieces immediately gives our library a proud presence among institutions with collections of miniature books.

Now that we are ensconced in our handsome new quarters, our work is cut out for us. First, we wish to provide online access to our growing collection via the web. Our librarian, Barbara Land, estimates we have 2,400 separately cataloged books accessible only through our card catalog. We were able to download 1308 machine-readable records from OCLC to form the nucleus of an online catalog. Our task is to match these to the collection, and then to create new records for the remaining items. These include not only the estimated 1,100 items in the card catalog but not in the OCLC extract, but also some 1,000 gifts received just this year from Clifford Burke, Carol Cunningham, Barbara Land, Don Fleming, and others.

We will also sort the ephemera and pull out all separately bound pamphlets and small books. We will create individual records for them and shelve them with the books in the main library. We have eight volunteers who will be working on our projects.

In addition to the library, we will be shelving the Book Club's own collection of its publications in the shelves flanking the fireplace in the Gallery. We will also create a browsing collection for members and guests in the bookcases behind the bar in the Club Room. Included will be duplicate copies of Book Club publications.

Our splendid new room in our expanded Club quarters gives us a golden opportunity to dramatically increase both the scope and depth of the library. The Library Committee is actively soliciting both individual books and whole collections to build a library truly representative of the aims and mission of the BCC — to promote and support fine printing in California and the West.

With our new facility and enlarged collections, we are planning an ambitious educational program. We intend to support book arts programs in Bay Area schools by providing a venue for classes using materials in the collection; by creating a reference and research collection to introduce K-12 students to the beauties of the book; and by offering programs on fine printing for service clubs and other local organizations.

We seek books, pamphlets, and ephemera in three collection areas: fine press books and ephemera printed in California and elsewhere in the West; books on printing history and the book arts to serve as a reference and teaching collection; and reference books on California history, authors, and literature to supply background for the content of the books in the fine press collection.

We also welcome your gifts of funds to support purchase and processing of new acquisitions and library maintenance.

Please let us hear from you to discuss possible donations, or to arrange for a meeting or a pickup. You may contact us at [library@bccbooks.org](mailto:library@bccbooks.org).

— HENRY SNYDER, *Chair*

### *Some Very Special Wishes*

A GENEROUS LOCAL BOOKSELLER has offered the Club an extremely rare broadside at far below its catalog price. Printed by John Johnson, the author of the famous *Typographia* (1824), this memorial to William Caxton, Wynkyn de Worde, Richard Pynson and their successors is composed of some 60,000 characters.

\$2,500 is required, of which we have raised a little under \$1,000. The bookseller will frame the broadside and will acknowledge the donors on the back. Please offer your support for this acquisition.

The Book Club Library would especially appreciate these donations (arranged chronologically): The Bible in Syraic (Leiden: Johannes Muller, 1707, the first stereotyped book); Horace's *Opera* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1855, edition illustrated with engravings and possibly a work in Cyanotype); the Grabhorn *Mandeville* (1929); the Grabhorn *Whitman* (1930); and any book printed at the Fine Arts Press (Orange, California).

— BARBARA LAND, *Librarian*

### *Serendipity*

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CLUB ROOMS, our new president, John Crichton, proprietor of the Brick Row Bookshop in San Francisco, and our *QN-L* printer, Richard Seibert, master of Letterpress.

On Monday, September 13, the Book Club rejoiced with unlimited joy, a huge crowd, tasty delicacies, entertaining entertainment, librations, and articles in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on September 11, 20, and 27. The largest book collectors club in the United States opened up its golden gate in Suite 500 for Hannah Cohen, Executive Director Lucy Cohen's daughter, to sing her original "California's

calling/Oh it's hard to let her go/From her hill, you'll hear her whisper/Baby, please come home." After a century, the Book Club is home. Kudos go to Ed Cohen, President Kathleen Burch, and Project Manager Margaret Sheehan.

Once in our new digs, Danya Winterman's Program Committee inundated us with quality. On September 27, 2010, Denny Kruska, author of the Club's splendid book on James Mason Hutchings, and subject of the last issue of the *QN-L*, inaugurated our program series. A magnificent collection of Yosemite ephemera beginning in the 1850s augmented his talk.

Additionally, as a keepsake for the joint Roxburghe-Zamorano meeting, Kruska wrote *Thomas Almond Ayres: First Artist of Yosemite (1818-1858)*. In this pioneering work, Kruska gives an artistic biography of Ayres and lists all of his works known or mentioned. Among the illustrations are three heretofore unpublished charcoal drawings on sandpaper from the collection of Joseph T. Silva. (32 pages, Castle Press).



Next, on October 14, wine authority Thomas Pinney, our recent Oscar Lewis Award winner, spoke to devoted winers about winosapien George Saintsbury (1845-1933), who otherwise masqueraded as a British university professor. Through some eighty books, he entertainingly critiqued French and English literature, enjoying libations throughout.

As this public event was the day before the Roxburghe-Zamorano Clubs met jointly, Pinney had an appreciative audience. The Club did give a pinney for his thoughts, for he has edited and annotated Saintsbury's *Notes on a Cellar-Book* (1920; University of California Press, 2008), sometimes adding footnotes to footnotes. The learned and opinionated Saintsbury discoursed on everything from bottle shapes, rum punches, and small beer, to the time the rats captured his cellar. Best of all, he remarked on the remarkable wines and spirits he cellared and drank.

Vintage wine, Saintsbury felt, was one of the most perfect products created, but only if one had the ability to appreciate perfection. To emphasize this observation, Club member David Graves, co-founder of Saintsbury Winery in the Carneros district of Napa, amply and generously irrigated the appreciative bibliophilic audience. His Vin Gris is an especially tasty rosé. In a twist that Saintsbury would have enjoyed, his namesake winery issues this Pinot Noir specialty on April 1, but it definitely is no joke.



The third program we report was spectacular. On November 8, frail Richard-Gabriel Rummonds, 79, supported by a cane, arrived by Amtrak from Port Townsend, Washington. Once behind the podium, his soft voice enthralled all. Leaving, we talked to three guests who wished to become members.

Rummonds is the master of the iron handpress, with two lavishly-illustrated volumes to prove it. *Printing on the Iron Handpress* (Oak Knoll Press, 1998) captures in five-hundred pages the essence of his techniques developed on the Plain Wrapper Press between 1966 and 1988. *Nineteenth Century Printing Practices & the Iron Handpress, with Selected Readings*. (2 vols. Oak Knoll Press, 2004) takes 1150 pages to distill two hundred years of printers' wisdom contained in 250 manuals. His "Handpress" website aids those with questions now.

The slender Rummonds is a genius, with a puckish sense of humor, drawn to design and the complexities of life. He was at ease whether designing housewares in Berkeley, designing books for Knopf in New York, or printing on an iron handpress in Verona, Italy. A faculty with languages allowed him to speak and print in English, Italian, Spanish, German, and French.

In the 1950s Rummonds was part of the Berkeley poetic renaissance, especially influenced by his boyfriend, acclaimed poet Jack Spicer. Such affairs led to intense creativity, but breakup turned his feelings of loss into introspective poetry and short stories. They led Rummonds to become a master printer.

In 1966 Ecuador he printed *Eight Parting Poems*, and in 1967 from Argentina came *1945-1965: An Evaluation of Two Decades of Self-Deception* through short stories. In all, Rummonds printed only three of these Quarto editions, eight pages of personal inspection. He much preferred the contemporary works of others.

Rummonds hugely amused his audience with the background of his third personal Quarto, *Cora C. Fletcher* (1976). It originated in Berkeley. In 1954, Rummonds, 22, was editor, and Leon Cohen, 20, business manager, of the University of California Berkeley literary magazine *Occident*. For the spring issue, Rummonds wished for a 1920s *avant garde* woman writer to profile and most fortuitously, spring-fling boyfriends Rummonds and Cohen found Cora C. Fletcher.

The spring *Occident* blossomed with this wonderful discovery on pages two, three, and four. Readers reveled in Fletcher's chatty letter to Rummonds written that March from San Angel, Mexico; her exposition "On the Tiny, Tiny, Tiny Story;" her example, "The Emperor's Lion;" and a brief explanatory biography.

The short biography contained therein reveals that, "CORAC. FLETCHER was born in San Francisco in 1891. She was connected with the Exiles in Paris in the Twenties. Several small volumes of her stories have been printed privately by S.T. Comberback's White Albatross Press. She is best known for her collection of lusty stories of Greek and Byzantine life grouped under the title, 'The Then and Now Stories.' She is currently living in Mexico."

Upon reading the *Occident*, Berkeley English professors rediscovered Fletcher's artistic ability from their younger days, and, seeing that the university library naturally contained all of her works, assigned them to students. Acclaim poured in — until a brawl between Rummonds and Cohen left the latter with a badly bit finger and his revelation that Fletcher was a hoax!

The University kicked out Rummonds, and twenty-two years later from Verona, he confessed to the deception. The Berkeley library catalogue is now digitized. How many entries survive for Cora C. Fletcher's works?

Thanks to Roger Wicker, who arranged for Rummonds' appearance; past-President Kathleen Burch, known for amazing *gratis* design work around the Club; and John McBride, most knowledgeable on the fine press world of the past fifty years, each in the Club's packed lecture space received the appropriate 1954 articles as a keepsake.

Rummonds promised his memoir, *Fantasies and Hard Knocks: My Life as a Printer*, will be even racier. Look for it in 2011. Until then, do not miss a single one of the Book Club of California's entertaining programs!



Next up, on December 6, come hear BCC author and Stanford professor Peter Stansky. His concurrent exhibition and talk "On or About: Bloomsbury and December 1910" ties in with Charles Fracchia's article in this issue. To emphasize this centennial of the birth of Bloomsbury, Stansky's 1996 Harvard University Press book, *On or About December 1910: Early Bloomsbury and its Intimate World* will be available.



Laid on our table are a number of member publications. First up are two fine books by Gordon J. Van De Water, president of the Zamorano Club. The first is, appropriately, *The Zamorano 80 Revisited: A Collector's Update of a Classic Work* (2010). In it, Van De Water, who has gained sixty-seven first editions since 2001, provides selections to give flavor, lists multiple editions, and tracks prices through the past sixty years. Additionally, seventeen appendices describe collections from auction catalogues and private collectors.

Van De Water has published on his collecting through the years, including *A Catalogue of the Works of Pearl S. Buck* (1999) and *Fit for Sight and Touch: Fine Press Books of John Henry Nash* (2003). *A Stroll By My Western Bookshelves* (2009) is based on the truism, "It's a rare being that can eliminate a book before adding another to the collection — a collector never can!" Grouping related books into topics run alphabetically, Van De Water provides a joyful romp through his shelves. Several Club books receive favorable notice, as does Gary Kurutz, twenty-year chair of the Publications Committee, "a self-effacing gentleman of great erudition."

Rightfully, Van De Water condemns uncouth corporations that toss their history into dumpsters with "the feeling that the past must be destroyed in order to create a new facade for the company" by "executives still seeking the latest in corporate image." In this manner, the eighteen-foot bronze propeller from a Marinship-built tanker that long stood as a signature sculpture at Mission

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[Eric Gill]. *The Four Gospels of the Lord Jesus Christ According to the Authorized Version of King James I.* Waltham St. Lawrence, Berkshire: The Golden Cockerel Press, 1931. Number 184 of 488 limited edition copies bound in half pigskin by Sangorski and Sutcliffe. Wood-engraved illustrations and initials throughout by Eric Gill.

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and Speer streets disappeared. Happily, though, on October 9, the California Maritime Academy in Vallejo proudly dedicated this gleaming discard.

Another story concerns a purchase from John Hardy Books in Nevada City: “Unbeknownst to me, I was inadvertently overcharged by fifteen cents because of a change in the tax tables. When I received the invoice there was the fifteen cent refund and an apology for the oversight. I thought stories like this were told only about Honest Abe.” Attorney and mediator Hardy is the Club’s vice president. After this enjoyable read, look for Van de Water’s insights on Lao Tzu’s *Tao Te Ching* in 2011.

Both may be ordered from Xlibris Corporation (888) 795-4274; orders@Xlibris.com). *Zamorano* is \$34.99 hb; \$23.99 p; *Stroll*, \$29.99 hb; \$19.99 p.



To panda to our basic black and white instincts, director Malcolm Whyte has issued *Panda: Her Story*. Panda, a black and white miniature bull terrier has owned Malcolm and Karen Whyte for thirteen years. Now, she reveals all in thirty-two illustrated pages to arrive “at a marvelous truth.” Yours for \$23.95 from Word-Play Publications, (415) 397-3719; wordplay@worldpassage.net.



For old time’s sake, we have koched another book. It is *Splendid on a Large Scale: The Writings of Hans Peter Gyllembourg Koch, Montana Territory, 1869-1874*, designed by Berkeley fine printer Peter Rutledge Koch. Reminiscent of Koch’s *QN-L* years, the title page sports Richard Wagener’s wood engraving of Koch Peak, while an appendix contains Koch’s Book Club exhibit description, “Unpacking my Great-Grandfather’s Library.”

Peter Koch and Peter Koch are literary men, vociferous readers, and book collectors. It must be in their genes. The nineteenth-century Koch helped found the Montana State University in 1873, paying particular attention to its library, while the twenty-first century Koch sent his papers to the Stanford University Library.

From 1869 to 1874, the Koch under review kept a daily pocket journal and wrote long, descriptive letters, often weekly but at least monthly, to various family members but especially to his betrothed, Laurentze. Peter Koch’s graphically detailed letters are indeed a “richly nuanced, fluent, and intimate account” of frontier Montana.

*Splendid on a Large Scale* is a joint publication of Bedrock Editions and the Drumlummon Institute, both of Helena. It may be ordered from Drumlummon Institute, 402 Dearborn Avenue, #3, Helena MT 59601. info@drumlummon.org. \$60 hb. \$19.95 p.

Meantime, our Lone Star friends, the Book Club of Texas, have just released *Collecting Texas*. Of course, BCC member Al Lowman elucidates his collecting ways within its pages. Best of all, the book describes those collectors whose treasures built the fine research holdings at the San Jacinto Museum, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library, the DeGolyer Library, and libraries of Texas A&M at Corpus Christi, and the University of Texas at Austin, Arlington, and San Antonio. 300 copies: \$75 regular; \$150 deluxe. Please order from Pamalla Anderson, The Book Club of Texas, DeGolyer Library, P.O. Box 750396, Dallas, TX 75275; andersonp@mail.smu.edu; (214) 768-3231.



With sadness, we report the passing of our predecessor in this editorial post. We remember the meticulousness with which he proofed the *QN-L* and his mortification if a tiny typo escaped his energetic eye. Harlan Robert Kessel (1928–2010) left for the Golden Hills on August 27. We always knew him for bookish pursuits: a co-founder of the Northern California Booksellers Association, marketing director for the University of California Press for twenty-one years, president of the Alameda Historical Society, and co-founder of the Western Heritage Press.

We were not aware of Kessel's devotion to the environment, and for such people as ourself, he wrote his obituary: "No one else will tell it as I do." Appropriately, Kessel entitled his memoir, printed by Richard Seibert, *On the Contrary: Remember These Things*. As a director representing Oakland and Orinda of the East Bay Regional Park District, he fought successfully against freeways, tunnels, and quarries and triumphantly added the Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve and six parks in Oakland. The era between 1976 and 1992 became known as "Kessel's War with the Park District," but he deserves the last words, "In the end, a good Democrat knows the right thing to do." Good for Harlan!



On November 4, the Chinatown Branch of the San Francisco Public Library at Powell and Washington streets deservedly gained Him Mark Lai's name. Lai (1925–2009) was the "Dean of Chinese American History" and, as one article title phrased it, was "the scholar who legitimized the study of Chinese America." Growing up, this mechanical engineer for Bechtel found the library a refuge from his family's eight by ten-foot living quarters.

Lack of sources in the library led Lai to collect everything he could, from business records to newspaper articles. His two-hundred linear foot collection is available for research in UC Berkeley's Ethnic Studies Library. At San Francisco State in 1969 with Phil Choy, Lai taught the first college course on Chinese Americans

and, in 1980, was a co-author of *Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island*. Colleague and co-author Judy Yung has just broadened the story to all who passed through that facility in *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* (Oxford University Press, 2010).



Lose one, win one. The one we lost? The huge George and Ira Gershwin archives from Ira's estate is closing at the end of the year. It moves from 101 Natoma Street to join an equally significant collection at the Library of Congress.

What we gained is part of local history. Beginning in the 1960s, Michael Rossman, a founder of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement in 1964, collected 23,500 event posters, political, social, and musical, from light poles and plywood construction siding around Berkeley. The feeling is irresistible. We did the same for thirteen years at UC Riverside. Then a daughter arrived, wife demanded the closet, and we dumped eight linear feet of such posters and leaflets on Special Collections. Even today, the awl on our Boy Scout knife is ever ready to pry staples or the blade to cut tape. Now, the Oakland Museum has Rossman's incomparable collection ready for the benefit of the public.

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Just in: Available at £30 from the Blackstaff Press, Belfast, for a December release, is a touching memoir of Belfast, Northern Ireland.

In 1955 artist Gerard Dillon visited poet W.R. Rodgers (1909–1969), while he wrote his radio play, “The Return Room.” Aired to great acclaim on the BBC in December 1955, it evoked shared memories of their boyhoods in 1920s Belfast.

This limited edition, supervised by Rodgers’ daughter, otherwise known as the Club’s Executive Director Lucy, presents the script of “The Return Room,” Dillon’s accompanying illustrations, and a CD of the 1955 broadcast with Rodgers as narrator and Dillon singing traditional Belfast songs. Fellow Northern Irish poet Paul Muldoon, poetry editor for *The New Yorker*, provides an insightful foreword.

— DR. ROBERT J. CHANDLER

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