

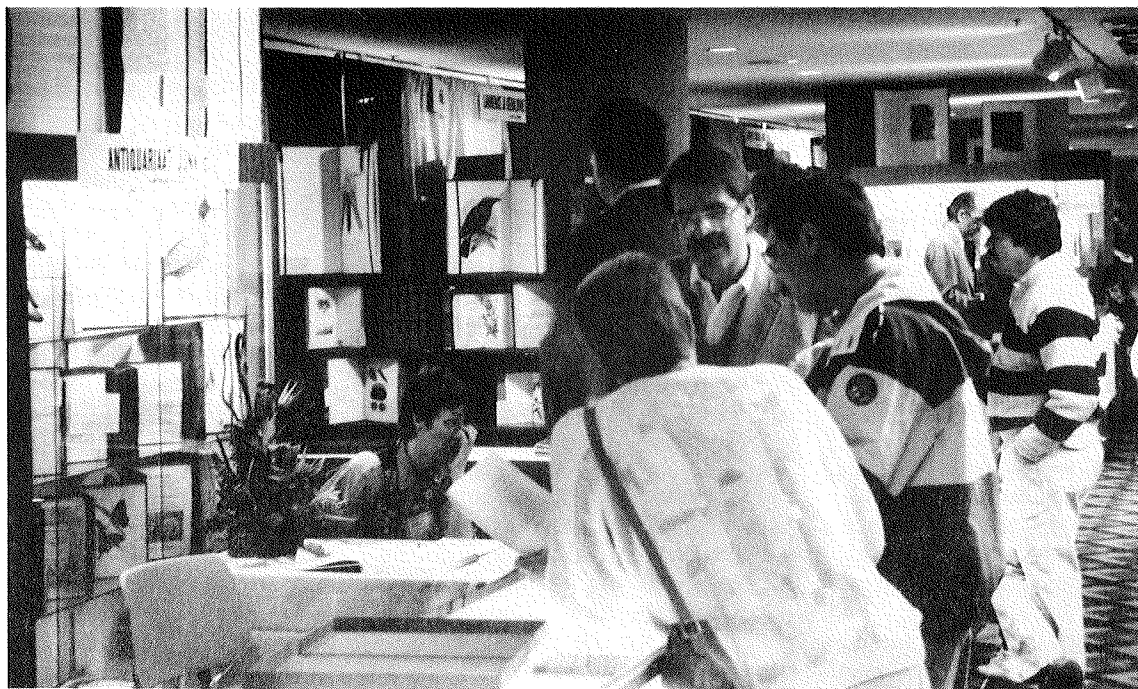
# The A B A A

## NEWSLETTER

VOLUME ONE, NUMBER TWO • APRIL, 1990



MEMBER  
IAB



*Record attendance and sales helped make the Los Angeles Fair held in February a stunning success*

### PRESIDENT GINSBERG'S FAREWELL MESSAGE

This is my last message to you as your President. I am honored and proud to have been able to serve you in this position during the past two years. The Board of Governors and officers have given of themselves above and beyond that which could be realistically expected. I cannot recall a time in my thirty years of membership in ABAA that so many issues of importance and great concern have occurred.

Some special acknowledgements are necessary for me to make at this time. Without the hard work and dedication of vice president **John Curtis**, these past two years would have been very, very difficult. He has been terrific.

As National Book Fair chairperson, secretary **Peter Stern's** efforts were Herculean. Also, whenever I needed a shoulder to cry on or a sounding board for an idea, he was there to listen and help.

Treasurer **Barry Wiedenkiller** took over this position and brought a difficult situation back to normalcy. He

established systems that will be of benefit to us for years to come.

Our past president **Ed Glaser** has been at every board meeting giving me solid advice. He has also taken on the duty of preparing new ethical guidelines which we hope to publish this summer.

As Chairperson for Security, Board Administration and Procedure, and Publicity, **Ann Marie Wall** wore many hats. Often the voice of reason and caution, she was one of the hardest workers with whom I have ever been associated.

**Barbara Rootenberg** served as the West Coast Security Chairperson. Her ideas have spawned telephone and fax chains throughout the country. Also, her active liaison with librarians has opened an important dialogue which we hope continues. Membership Chairperson is not an easy job. **Ron Randall** has been strong and sturdy, exhibiting good judgement and sound reasoning in all matters. (continued on p. 8)

## NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT



*Liane Wood-Thomas*

Liane Wood-Thomas joined the ABAA as the Executive Administrator in mid-November. Some of the time since then has been spent catching up with overdue work because the headquarters office was vacant for six months. You may have noticed that your annual dues notices were later than usual this year, but Liane hopes to be up to speed in a few weeks.

Liane (née Wood-Thomas) was born in New York City forty-some years ago, was raised there, and later on the Connecticut coast. She returned to New York City after school, worked for the Museum of Modern Art and for Marlborough Gallery when it opened its first U.S. space in 1963.

After living a short while in Monterey, California, she worked for the European exchange system in-house newspaper in Nurnberg, West Germany. Her first son was born there in 1966, and her second upon her return to the States in 1967.

The next ten years were spent in community and political work in New Haven, CT. She was U.S. Senator Joseph I. Lieberman's (he defeated former Senator Lowell Weicker in

1988) first aide when he was Senate Majority Leader of the Connecticut State Legislature. She later worked in the office of New Haven Mayor Frank Logue, and was selected to the Democratic Town Committee.

She returned to New York City in 1978, and lived in the middle of the East River on Roosevelt Island. After working for a typesetting firm, she and a partner opened a word processing and disk conversion service bureau on Madison Avenue which thrived for seven years until the partnership dissolved in 1989.

Liane attends Hunter College evenings; her most recent course was Asian Civilization Until 1600. She is co-chair of the Roosevelt Island Drug and Alcohol Education Committee, a coordinator for the Homeless Shelter on the Island, loves British mystery stories, is completing a doll house for which she builds all the furniture, and has recently taken up T'ai Chi.

She attended the California Book Fair and enjoyed meeting many ABAA members, and looks forward to meeting more members at the New York fair this spring. Liane is eager to learn more about the antiquarian book business, and the ABAA membership.

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NOTE: The next issue of the ABAA *Newsletter* will be published in August. Deadline for copy is Monday, July 9. Anyone wishing to discuss possible articles, reviews, or editorials appropriate for the *Newsletter* should contact the editor, or make submissions to:

ABAA *Newsletter*  
400 Summit Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

## BRITS THANKFUL: BOSTON THEFT RESOLVED

The following letter from Nicholas

Goodyer, G.H. Walford (Booksellers), London, regarding the outcome of books stolen after the 1988 Boston Bookfair was received by the *Newsletter* earlier this year, and is here published in its entirety.

Dear ABAA *Newsletter*,

As reported in the *Newsletter* last year, several booksellers, including Messrs. Walford, Korn and Heath [from the ABA] had books stolen after the Boston Book Fair last year.

There was an administrative muddle (I choose my words carefully for publication!) after the fair which meant that all the packages and trunks for shipping were left unattended in the foyer of the exhibition hall for at least three days. Richard Lubin, who was manager for the company that set up the cases and stands for the fair, a long serving employee and obviously in a position of trust, saw his opportunity, and stole 11 cartons/trunks.

He held onto the books for some little while, but tried to sell them in a bookshop in the suburbs of Boston, where they were spotted by Matthew Needle, another bookseller, to whom we must be most grateful, who notified the local chapter of the ABAA. There then took place an operation involving aircraft and an FBI swoop, resulting in Lubin's arrest and detention.

Most of the stolen books were in his cellar at home, many of highest value and more obviously saleable had already been secured by Needle, who handed them over to the FBI.

(continued on p. 7)

## COMMITTEE & CHAPTER REPORTS

### BOARD ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURES

Since our last report to the membership in November of 1989, the Board Administration and Procedures Committee has been occupied with assembling into coherent form the various goals, objectives, plans for the future, and simple hopes expressed by Board members. We were also involved in finding and defining the role of our new Executive Administrator. A written summary of these objectives was presented to the Board at the February Los Angeles meeting. It was decided there that these objectives would be retained by the Administration for reference and guidance in the future. What follows is an abridged version of that summary.

Of primary concern is the establishment of a strong and enforceable code of ethics for our membership. The Guidelines Committee has been hard at work on this objective and is nearing completion of the project.

Additionally, ABAA will strengthen its administrative operations by expanding the role of our Executive Administrator to include that of Association "archivist," enabling him or her to lend continuity and coherence to policy matters and Board projects from one administration to another. Also, the Executive Administrator will be asked to communicate directly to the membership on a regular basis to update everyone on activities and issues before the Board.

Keeping ABAA and/or Book Collecting in the media is another important objective to be realized. To this end, the Executive Administrator has been asked to issue regular press releases to appropriate publications regarding

our activities, and, when necessary, our positions on important issues. This will be accomplished under the guidance of the Public Relations Committee. A mailing list of suitable publications for our press releases will be developed and maintained by the Executive Administrator. Another means of keeping ABAA and its members in the public eye is active ABAA support of specialized book exhibitions, other than book fairs, tied in with the celebration of historical events, etc. Regional chapters will be urged to explore such possibilities and present proposals to the Board.

Many people want ABAA to become a stronger trade association. With this in mind, the Board will ask the Executive Administrator to maintain files of pertinent business regulations, insurance options, legislative rulings, etc., and to provide notice of these files to the membership on a regular basis. Of course, the full implementation of a security system is regarded as one of the most important functions that ABAA can perform for its members. A commitment to maintain, upgrade and review this system is last, but not least, among the Board's objectives for the future.

The Board Administration and Procedures Committee is an ad hoc committee which we hope has been helpful to the current administration and will continue to be so whenever necessary to the new administration coming this March, 1990. As outgoing chairman I would like to thank committee members Jim Presgraves, Peter Howard, Beth Garon, Ellen Schreiber, Taylor Bowie, and Peter Stern for their generous commitment of time and concern to the efforts we have made to make the administration of ABAA more effective.

Ann Marie Wall

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

A great deal can be done to publicize ABAA and book collecting and to improve relations within the trade if the proper mechanisms are put in place within the Association's administration. The public relations committee that has been working together the past year has focused its efforts largely on this preliminary task. Most importantly, through the work of Rob Rulon-Miller, we have launched the new *ABAA Newsletter* whose potential for improving understanding and airing controversies among ourselves is unlimited. We have a fine editor, an economically sensible format; now we need imaginative participation in the project on the part of our members. We urge everyone to read the *Newsletter*, respond to issues presented there, and make it a useful tool for all of us. Because the first issue of the *Newsletter* came in considerably under budget, we can look forward to three issues this year; in addition to our spring edition, we will have one for summer. The deadline for the summer issue is July 9, 1990.

In our last report, we described another large project of this committee, the distribution to the membership of ABAA member Jennifer Larson's talk at the Houston Forgery conference. We have experienced some delay here. We are waiting for final arrangements to be made between the University of Houston, sponsor of the conference, and the prospective publisher of all the conference papers.

A new public relations project initiated by Southeast chapter governor Jim Presgraves is a membership survey which you should be receiving in the weeks ahead. Your cooperation in

responding to the questions in the survey and adding additional useful comments will enable us to describe our association to the public in a more accurate and effective manner. As well, it will guide the Board of Governors to a better understanding of the needs and resources of the membership we represent.

In addition to these largely "in-house" activities, the committee has tried to remain alert to mention of ABAA outside our own minutes and publications. Where erroneous reports about the nature of our Association or misuse of the ABAA name has occurred and been brought to our attention, we have responded, seeking correction or clarification. Again, we are very dependant upon individual members bringing such matters to our attention.

Finally, with Ms. Wood-Thomas installed at headquarters as our Executive Administrator, the committee hopes to see our plans for a press release bureau come to life. Ms. Wood-Thomas is willing to maintain a mailing list of target publications for our press releases and will write these releases under the guidance of the committee. Please notify her or the committee about any upcoming and newsworthy events relating to your chapters or fellow ABAA members. Also, please bring to our attention any publication that you think should be added to this mailing list.

Ann Marie Wall

## SECURITY COMMITTEE

The recent theft of miscellaneous books from the floor of the Los Angeles book fair has intensified the feeling on this committee and among booksellers, in general, that book theft is increasing at a rapid rate.

Perhaps for the first time in recent years, the ABAA has been ready with a kind of weapon to fight back against such an attack on the livelihood of our

members. Within a very short period of time a listing of the stolen material was distributed to our entire membership and the word passed by the telephone chains. Thanks to the quick response and hard work of Michael Dawson at Dawson Books, a detailed and readable description of the items stolen was faxed to our Executive Administrator at headquarters, and, within days, Ms. Wood-Thomas made the information available to us all in a highly efficient manner.

The chances of recovering some or all of the stolen material are made greater now that every ABAA member and those non-ABAA members incorporated into the telephone chain have this information before them either by word of mouth or on a "pink" sheet.

If everyone in the network is attentive to the list from Dawson's and to the other lists we have distributed, it will be slightly more difficult for the book thief to sell his stolen wares. Additionally, as valuable books tend to rise through the market, such items are unlikely to go unnoticed on the shelves of vendors off the beaten track or in the catalogues of upcoming auctions. Cutting into the motivation of the thief is one of the best tactics the trade can use to protect itself.

We have not been deaf to complaints about the format of these pink sheets. At present we are working with ABAA's Executive Administrator to finalize a format for stolen or missing book entries in our planned computerized data-base. At the very least, we should be able to provide alphabetized lists in the near future.

Complicating our scheme for a missing books data-base are the problems of accommodating the needs and requirements of libraries with long lists of material to report. We have formed a good working relationship with the members of the American Library Association's RBMS Security Committee, and, at their suggestion, we have been talking with people at OCLC to determine the feasibility of using that service as a means for

libraries to report their losses directly to us. The technical problems involved here will not be sorted out overnight, but we intend to keep the membership up to date on our progress.

Another positive development in security matters is the beginning of a dialogue among ABAA, the PBFA, the ABA and the RBMS security committee. Representatives of each group met together at the February Los Angeles Book Fair to discuss BOOKWATCH, the joint on-line security system devised by ABA and the PBFA. ABAA Security is now examining the operation of BOOKWATCH and hopes to learn a great deal from its success.

A natural outcome of that meeting was an expressed desire on everyone's part to involve the Canadian and other national associations in our efforts. We are grateful to David Brass, Paul Hutchinson and Michael Phelps, representing the English booksellers, and to Gary Menges, Susan Allen and David Zeidberg of RBMS for meeting with us to share their ideas.

Our thanks go out to Terry Tanner of Hamill & Barker who, as Midwest Chapter Security Officer, represented ABAA at the mid-winter session of the RBMS security committee meeting. Terry's presence at that meeting helped to send the message to the library community that the ABAA is vitally interested in that community's own security problems.

Ann Marie Wall

## MID-WEST CHAPTER

The Midwest Chapter met for the first time in 1990 on March 4 in Chicago at the shop of Florence Shay [Titles, Inc.] for Sunday brunch. Helena Szepe, a new member, was welcomed for the first time, as was a prospective member, Steve Daiter.

Plans for a 1991 Chicago fair were discussed, including the possibility of moving the fair from downtown Chicago to a location near O'Hare

Airport. The Palmer House, a fashionable downtown hotel and venue for the last Chicago fair, will be undergoing extensive renovations during May, 1991, the proposed date of the fair. A bookfair committee consisting of Tom Joyce and Florence Shay is exploring all possibilities. It is the intent of the chapter to build on the success of the 1989 fair, and promote a Chicago fair on a bi-annual basis.

A nominating committee was appointed by chapter president Rob Rulon-Miller to assemble a list of candidates for election to seats being vacated this fall. The committee consists of Beth Garon [Beasley Books], Tom Joyce, and Takis Vadoros.

Following the meeting, the attendees welcomed Arthur Rubin, a Chicago book collector, translator, and acquaintance of Gertrude Stein, who was part of the literary community in Paris after World War II. Mr. Rubin spoke to us about his days with Stein, and life in post-war Paris.

The chapter's next meeting will be this summer in the Twin Cities.

Rob Rulon-Miller

#### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

The Southern California Chapter has been busy with the organization and promotion of the highly successful Book Fair held February 2nd, 3rd, and 4th at the Airport Hilton Hotel. Muir Dawson takes all the credit - he was the work horse of the committee, and Hugh Tolford did a super job as our professional organizer. With over 9,500 attendance in three days, we believe a new attendance record was set for any ABAA bookfair. Our chapter account is back to its maximum allowance, and the chapter will be making significant additions to the Benevolent Fund and the National Treasury.

Officers for the past two years have been Kenneth Karmirole, President; Michael Dawson, Vice President; Leon Rootenberg, Treasurer; Patti Graham, Secretary. New elections will be held in March, and new officers will begin their terms in April.

The chapter is producing a new membership directory every January, we are supporting the UCLA Book Collecting Contest, and look forward to a number of new publicity ideas coming from Ellen Enzler, our new publicity committee head.

A membership "telephone tree" has been set up by Michael for the notification of members of stolen books.

Ken Karmirole

#### SOUTH-EAST CHAPTER

The South-East Chapter began 1989 with 15 members, one of whom defected to Connecticut. We have added four new members since, which represents about a 20% increase.

We have given a fair amount of consideration to commercial exhibits, entering into dialogue with our non-Southern colleagues in the Mid-Atlantic Chapter. At this point, no dreams have moved to reality.

Members of the chapter hosted on March 3 a reception for dealers participating in the St. Petersburg, FL bookfair at the Hilton and Towers, March 2-4, 1990.

Champagne punch and hors d'oeuvres were served, and Jim Presgraves [Bookworm & Silverfish], chair of the chapter, welcomed the visitors. Barbara E. Nailler, Wolf's Head Books and Michael Slicker, Lighthouse Books, made the arrangements. About 100 people attended the reception, and a number of ABAA directories and copies of our code of ethics were distributed.

The aim of the open house was to improve the awareness of the ABAA among non-members, along with some fun and conversation. The SE chapter was created at the November, 1988 meeting of the Board of Governors and is composed of members from Alabama, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and the Virgin Islands.

The chapter is also in the process of preparing an ABAA questionnaire to be distributed to the national membership. It is an attempt to find out more about our demographics, and in what ways we might profit from ABAA membership.

Jim Presgraves

#### MUIR DAWSON--21st PRESIDENT

[Muir Dawson, Dawson's Bookshop, Los Angeles, will become the 21st president of ABAA at the annual meeting of the association, March 24. The *Newsletter* asked Mr. Dawson for a brief statement, which follows.]

As an active member of the ABAA since its founding in 1949, I am well aware of the fine tradition of service to our organization that we have to build on. My aim in serving as President will be to do everything possible to make the ABAA function smoothly and efficiently. There are a number of new projects under way, and I would expect to see that they are finished or functioning before adding new activities. We must be careful not to undertake more than we can handle. There may be room for the Board of Governors to assist the chapters with better communication.

Serving on the Board of Governors of the ABAA is a considerable contribution of time and money, and I would hope that each member of the Board will feel that the effort results in satisfying accomplishments.

Muir Dawson

## INTERSTATE SALES TAX

[State and local tax laws vary. The following article is intended as an informal guide only. Those looking for legal and accounting advice should seek competent guidance from a certified public accountant or a tax attorney. --Editor's note.]

If some members of Congress get their way, you may soon have to collect sales tax for every state into which you ship books.

Currently, due to a 1967 Supreme Court decision (*National Bellas Hess v. Illinois*), you are required to collect tax *only* for states in which you have a business presence (*nexus* is the legal term) such as a store or a warehouse. The states are looking for revenue and want to change the definition of nexus to include such things as direct solicitation (advertising, mailing catalogues, telephone call, etc.).

There are several proposals before Congress which would negate the 1967 Supreme Court decision and require businesses to collect sales and use taxes on interstate transactions. The most significant is sponsored by Rep. Jack Brooks (Dem., TX), the new Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, where his bill has been introduced.

Both supporters and opponents of this measure are lobbying heavily. Leading proponents are state officials and government employee unions who expect to benefit from increased revenue. Opposition forces are led by the Direct Marketing Association which is working with more than twenty groups, including representatives of elderly and disabled persons (who tend to use mail order a lot). They are supporting Sen. Robert Kasten (Rep., WI) who is pushing a resolution to

block such legislation in the Senate. No one can predict whether such legislation will pass. Following are answers to typically-asked questions.

**Q. If this bill passes, will there be a uniform sales tax rate for all out of state sales?**

**A.** Unlikely. Each state sets its own rate; some go as high as 8%. The high tax states would be unhappy if an average rate were used. Mail order customers in low tax states would have to pay more than to local stores and would also complain.

**Q. Will there be a standard form for filing?**

**A.** That would be nice, but again the answer is unlikely. Each state has its own rule, definitions and regulations; it would be nearly impossible to accommodate all on one form.

**Q. Won't that create a burden for business?**

**A.** Yes, especially for small businesses. There are 45 states and 200+ municipalities which levy some form of sales or use tax. They differ as to filing dates, forms, rates, definition of exempt and taxable sales, etc. Large businesses can computerize much of the filing and have full time staffs to deal with the many auditors who check their returns.

**Q. Auditors! I thought only the IRS could audit me.**

**A.** Sorry. Right now you can be audited by the IRS and by your home state as well as any other state in which you have a business presence. Under this bill any state into which you ship goods is included in the definition of business presence.

**Q. This will be a nightmare. I'm too small to afford this. Isn't there a way out?**

**A.** Yes. Congress isn't without compassion. Most of the proposed bills have exemptions for small businesses. Suggested exemption levels vary from \$5 million to \$12.5 million annual total sales. However, if you have sales of more than \$250,000 per year to one state you will probably have to collect tax from that state even though you're under the overall limit.

**Q. That's not so bad. Most booksellers I know are well below those levels and probably always will be. Why did you bother me about this?**

**A.** Once this passes you could theoretically be audited by every state just to determine whether you are under its exemption limits. This is not likely, but the possibility of abuse exists. More important is that once this is in force it will be very easy to reduce or eliminate exemption levels.

**Q. Why would they do that?**

**A.** The state tax commissioners have been making some rosy income projections while lobbying for this. Once they find out how much money really comes in and the cost of enforcing an unwieldy system, the states will be back in Washington asking for more.

**Q. Ouch! Would they drop the exemption low enough to affect me?**

**A.** Impossible to predict. But if exemptions are lowered significantly the number of affected businesses will rise sharply. They will raise quite a ruckus and Congress will have to pay attention.

Q. Then they'll repeal it. Right?

A. I only answer the serious questions.

Q. OK. OK. What will Congress do then?

A. Come up with a replacement tax.

Q. What sort of tax would that be?

A. A consumption tax of some kind. The two candidates are a national sales tax or a value added tax.

Q. What's the difference between them?

A. A sales tax takes place only at the retail level and is based on the total amount of the sale. A value added tax (VAT) occurs at all levels of activity and effectively applies only to the increase in value of goods. The system is complicated because businesses can claim credits for VAT paid on goods purchased. Also, there is no VAT on exports.

Q. Sounds like it's more trouble than it's worth. I know they have a VAT in Europe. Why do they do it?

A. VAT originated in France where tax avoidance is a national pastime. Tax authorities like the comprehensive nature of VAT which makes it harder to cheat (although it is done; there is no limit to human ingenuity). The politicians like it because it is hidden. VAT is included in the price of everything rather than tacked on as sales taxes are.

Q. Won't there be opposition to a tax like that?

A. Yes. Consumption taxes have long been criticized as falling too heavily on the poor. Congress would probably exempt or put a low rate on food, medicine and clothing to minimize the charge that VAT hurts the poor.

At the same time every interest group will be lobbying for special treatment. The result could be very complicated (the forms you will have to fill out should be something special). For

example, in England maps have a zero VAT rate (the English appreciate the importance of geography), but if a map is in a frame, then it is subject to a VAT!

Naturally, if VAT comes to America, we will inform our noble representatives that books, maps, manuscripts, etc. are cultural treasures which should not be taxed. They might believe us, though I wouldn't count on it.

Q. Why would Congress want to increase taxes so much?

A. They're desperate for money because they're scared of the deficit and are even more scared of offending the constituencies which receive federal spending. The only sources of revenue which can make a real dent in the deficit are a big increase in the income tax (Congress is afraid to do more than nibble around the edges there) or a consumption tax.

Q. So the interstate sales tax may be just a ploy to bring in a national consumption tax. A case of the camel getting its nose under the tent?

A. Something like that. You'll pass that course in "Theory and Practice of Taxation" yet. Actually I'm not sure our representatives are capable of planning that far ahead. However, they are very astute at grabbing opportunities.

Once the sales tax becomes so onerous that every business person in America is crying about it, Congress will come to the rescue with a simpler (at first) but more costly national consumption tax. They'll say they're only doing it because this is what business wants.

Q. Makes me feel good. Is there anything I can do about it?

A. Write to your representative in Washington. He may not be smart enough to read, but he sure can count.

George Ritzlin  
Evanston, Illinois

(Brits, cont. from page 2)

After a long delay, and with our stock sitting in the FBI's vaults, Lunin pleaded guilty. At this stage perhaps two thirds of the lost books were accounted for. The week before sentencing, in an attempt at mitigation, he quite unexpectedly walked into his lawyer's office and handed over most of the rest. He was sentenced on October 12th to 4 months detention, 2 months in a half-way-house and \$10,000 fine.

His apprehension was a direct result of the local chapter of ABAA, with Doug Harding as its chairman, and Michael Ginsberg liaising for the national association, circulating descriptions of the stolen books. They had notified the FBI, hired a local detective, and, once some of the books came into light, were in a position to take immediate action. The help we have been given by Ken Gloss of Brattle Books in Boston, too, could not have been better.

There were three American booksellers who lost books at the same time, and, in spite of prompt insurance settlements, they willingly and generously joined us in preliminary legal moves, which never had to be implemented. The advice of the ABAA's own lawyer was most helpful in the initial stages.

In that most litigious of countries, legal proceedings may not yet be finished. Actions for recovery of costs may still go ahead. But Walford's has been incredibly lucky. We and Eric Korn recovered nearly all our stolen material, Tony Heath was only a little less fortunate. We have thanked our American colleagues personally, and we three do so now, in this formal way, for their kind words, practical help and generosity of spirit.

Nicholas Goodyer



(Ginsberg, cont. from page 1)

## EDITORIAL

When decisions have to be made quickly the executive committee acts. Thanks to Taylor Bowie, George Kane, Barry Wiedenkeller and John Curtis for their courage and determination. Perhaps the most important job of all is our Nominating Committee. Doug Harding and George Ritzlen answered the call and prepared a slate of officers and governors for the next two to three years. All of us are indebted to them for their labors and good judgement.

Former president and current ILAB delegate, Lou Weinstein's advice and counsel have been truly first rate. His representation of our association at ILAB meetings has brought us the international respect we truly deserve. Rob Rulon-Miller has single-handedly put together our newsletter. It is a first class publication. Thank you Rob for all those hours and agonies an editor must endure.

Our attorney, Larry Fox, a bibliophile in his own right, has helped this association with sound advice. His love of our association is evident in all that he has done in our behalf.

Peter Howard, Jim Presgraves, Leona Rostenberg, Doris Frohnsdorff, Beth Garon, David Marglois, Ellen Schreiber, Muir Dawson and Rusty Mott were the other members of the board. Each in his or her own way has contributed greatly to the programs and ideas of this administration. Without their commitment, dedication, determination, sweat, and intestinal fortitude, the past two years would have been impossible.

Finally, I would like to make an appeal to all of our members. Remember and take to your heart and mind the number one goal of our association: *To further friendly relations and a cooperative spirit among members.* To my mind, we all need to try little harder to achieve this wonderful plateau of *amor liborum*.

Michael Ginsberg

[This column is open to all members of ABAA. Any *grammatically correct* submission of reasonable length and timely content will be considered for publication. The opinions expressed in this column are strictly editorial in nature, and do not necessarily represent ABAA's policies or positions.]

In his obituary of John Jenkins (*Newsletter*, Vol. I, no. 1) Michael Parrish has drawn our attention to some of the ordinary achievements of the preeminent Texas dealer, but has neglected entirely to mention what I consider his one great and abiding contribution to the world of anti-quarian bookselling.

I would suggest that the many achievements of John Jenkins, such as the Presidency of ABAA; the catching of book thieves with underworld associations; the authorship of a book at such a tender age that it was assigned to him as a college text; the second career as a high-stakes poker player - - I would suggest that these and other oft-mentioned accomplishments pale in the light of a truly original, genuinely novel, absolutely *brilliant* notion -- the Jenkins Notion, we might wish to call it -- which states that the way to tell whether a document is fake or not is through *debate*.

I have taken for my text his letter of March 7, 1988, in which it is stated that "We have *debated* [my emphasis] for *years* [my emphasis again] as to whether all of these [Texas documents] are authentic or not." This letter was written long after Tom Taylor had begun his inquiry into the nature of certain Republic of Texas broadsides (on more slender evidence than that available to Jenkins), and after Jenkins had been made aware that some items in his insurance claim of September, 1987, had first been questioned.

It is a wonder to contemplate the many desirable ends the Jenkins Notion furthers at a single stroke. In the first place, it enables the shrewd,

the articulate, the *creative* bookseller to triumph over the merely lucky or plodding one. It is a sad fact of our modern society that intelligence and wit seldom meet with anything like an adequate financial reward or emolument -- here is one way we can all work towards setting matters right.

Secondly, it is well known that verbal and rhetorical skills are dangerously underdeveloped these days. Sorely needed forensic expertise will be enhanced by a challenge of the sort posed by the Jenkins Notion: what better way to hone our collective technique than to have thousands--or tens of thousands--of dollars riding on the outcome of a debate?

Furthermore, all of us in the book trade are well aware of the ever-dwindling supply of quality merchandise with which to replenish our stock. If questionable, or even *brand new* items are successfully sold through highly skilled debating techniques, why, so much the better for all of us. A lucky collector will have in his collection an item that he could not, in the ordinary course of events, hope to possess; a dealer will have made a nice sale--perhaps representing a *very* nice profit over cost; and let us not forget that the dealer will likely spend those nice profits in the bookshops of his less scintillating colleagues. Everybody benefits.

Can there be any greater tribute to the memory of John Jenkins than to carry this daring notion of his beyond the modest proportions he envisaged for it? At book fairs, we could have regular teams of independent or mercenary debaters at the ready for any challenge to authenticity that may arise. Or, to boldly take the concept into another realm, why is it that we booksellers have so hampered ourselves in our pricing theory by dull conformity to prior market levels? Auction houses don't bother with this, and look how well they are doing. The possibilities are endless. We are limited only by our imagination. Let us take a lesson from a master.

Jennifer S. Larson



## BOOK THEFT IS FRONT PAGE NEWS IN PHILADELPHIA

[The following report is compiled from front page stories in the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, March 1 and 2; and from phone conversations with Natalie Bauman on March 2, and with Stephan Loewentheil on March 6, 1990. -- Editor]

With the combined efforts of Natalie Bauman [Bauman Rare Books, Philadelphia], the FBI, and non-ABAA dealer, Stephan Loewentheil [19th Century Shop, Baltimore], nearly 120 rare books stolen from the Van Pelt Library at the University of Pennsylvania have been recovered. The total value of the theft is reported to be \$1.7 million.

A part-time employee of the Van Pelt Library, Kathleen Wilkerson, was taken into custody February 28 and arraigned on theft charges and released on her own recognizance. About 100 of the stolen books were discovered in her apartment, and two more in the home of her parents. Nineteen titles, including quarto editions of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Henry V*; Robert Louis Stevenson's copy of an incunable Latin Bible; an incunable edition of Dante's *Divine Comedy*; first editions of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, and Newton's *Optics*; and, a cache of Byron letters were recovered from Bauman's shop, where Wilkerson had brought them to sell.

According to Natalie Bauman, Bauman Rare Books had purchased from Wilkerson for \$40,000 a number of "less important titles" as early as last August, some of which have already been sold. Bauman stated that all possible efforts are being made to recover these books, although she said that recovery of all the books may be difficult, noting that at least one title had been sold in Japan.

The cache of books that included the Shakespeare quartos had not been

purchased by the Baumans. According to Bauman, Wilkerson was to produce a meticulously-kept notebook supposedly compiled by her grandmother which documented the purchase and provenance of the books being offered. Bauman said her suspicions about the provenance increased when Wilkerson failed to produce the notebook. According to Wilkerson, Bauman owes Wilkerson an additional \$50,000 for books delivered.

On February 22, Stephan Loewentheil visited the Bauman's shop shortly after the Baumans had taken delivery of the group of books that included the Shakespeare quartos. According to officials, Loewentheil suspected that the books might be stolen, and did some checking into the provenance on his own. In the case of Henry V, he discovered that it was apparently the property of the University of Pennsylvania. On Monday, February 26, Loewentheil notified officials of the library's special collections department, who notified Penn security officers, who in turn notified the FBI.

The FBI went to Bauman's shop on Tuesday and recovered six of the titles. Natalie Bauman, who was in Texas at the time, returned to Philadelphia and turned over to the authorities another 13 titles. Bauman stated that she did not think the books were stolen, but because of their rarity wanted to proceed carefully with the purchase. "We grew more suspicious when the notebook was not forthcoming," said Bauman. "Which is why we were withholding payment until the question of provenance could be solved."

No further immediate arrests were anticipated. Penn officials stated that the books had not been immediately discovered as missing because Wilkerson had systematically destroyed inventory records since as early as 1982, when she began working at the library.

## INTERNATIONAL BOOKFAIRS

The 30th ILAB Congress and the 13th International Antiquarian Book Fair will be held in Tokyo, October 7-14, 1990. The ABAJ would like as many members as possible to come and ascertain for themselves the buoyant state of the Japanese antiquarian book market.

In accordance with ILAB tradition, the Congress will provide many opportunities for participants to establish mutual understanding, and facilitate the international circulation of antiquarian books. An overnight trip for all will provide a further occasion to socialize with bookmen and bookwomen from around the world.

For more information contact ABAA headquarters (212)-757-9395.

The Australian and New Zealand Association of ILAB will be sponsoring the 17th Annual Book Fair in Melbourne, September 21-23, 1990.

At the Association's last Annual General Meeting, members voted in favor of inviting overseas participation in its fairs. The fair has been scheduled as close as possible to the dates of the ILAB Congress and Book Fair in Tokyo to make travel convenient for those visiting the region.

The venue will be the Southern Cross Hotel in the heart of Melbourne. Some of the stands have been reserved for overseas exhibitors. The rental fee of approximately AD\$1400 includes an invitation for two to the Annual Dinner. There is no V.A.T. or customs duty on antiquarian books entering or leaving Australia.

The deadline for application is May 1. For further information write: The Australian and New Zealand Association of Antiquarian Booksellers, 24 Glenmore Road, Paddington, NSW, Australia 2021; or dial direct [011-61]-(02)-331-1411.