

## News and Notes

*Richard Hopkins*

Congratulations to Alcuin members **Pat & Rosemarie Keough** who send this good news along:

"We have the most exciting news. *Antarctica* has just received its 18<sup>th</sup> prestigious gold award — World's Best Photography Book — at the 2003 International Photography Awards competition. We also took gold for "Nature Photographer of the Year" and "Best Sunset" — for all our imagery in *Antarctica*.

With these recent awards, *Antarctica* is now celebrated on the international stage for its contents as well as the extremely fine craftsmanship of the binding and printing. We're told that no other book has ever won top prize at each of the major world competitions."

Here are the other awards that *Antarctica* has won to date:

*Antarctica* won the "Outstanding Book of the Year — Best Book Arts Craftsmanship," in the Independent Publisher Book Awards 2003 competition.

North America's premier publishing honour, "Gold — Fine Edition Books" in the Gold Ink Awards 2003, was awarded to *Antarctica*.

*Antarctica* won "Best of Category" and a coveted "Benjamin Franklin Award" for being the world's best novelty book at the 2002 Premier Print Award competition.

The International Association of Printing House Craftsmen honoured *Antarctica* with "Gold — Fine Books"; and then at the 2002 Best of the Best Awards ceremony, with the "Craft, Art, Science Award."

In Canada, where *Antarctica* was published, it won a "Rock Award 2003"

from the Society of Graphic Designers, a "Citation" from The Alcuin Society for Excellence in Canadian Book Design, and was a "Finalist" at the Banff Mountain Book Festival. *Antarctica* also won the "Gold", the "Best of Show" and the "People's Choice" awards at the 2002 Gallery of Superb Printing competition. *Antarctica* was also the "First Prize" winner at Canada's Applied Arts Award 2002, for outstanding technical execution. Hemlock Printers of Vancouver awarded *Antarctica* the "Job of the Year 2001" and the "Job of the Month, December 2001."

What an incredible feat and what an incredible book! Again, congratulations go to Pat and Rosemarie Keough from The Alcuin Society.

**T**he **British Library** is to beef up its online activities by selling millions of rare books from its collections in a collaboration with the e-commerce site Amazon.co.uk, the library said on Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup>.

The library, part of the British Museum, will make 2.5 million rare and antique titles available to the public via Amazon's web site, including first edition novels and centuries old sheet music. The library already sells rare books and manuscripts through traditional channels.

The online shop adds to several ambitious projects the Library has recently undertaken. Earlier in November it announced "Collect Britain" (<http://www.collectbritain.co.uk>), a 3.25 million digitisation project to put 100,000 unique and rare items from its collection on the Web, including illuminated manuscripts and penny illustrated papers.

The project also includes audio elements, such as wildlife recordings from the UK, regional dialects and ethnographic recordings from Africa and Asia.

In October, legal changes allowed the library to add archives of web sites and emails to its legal deposit of printed materials. The electronic collection will build on a voluntary scheme that has been in place since 2000, and will include selected pages from the 2.9 million “.uk” web sites. The library is one of six sites that hold a copy of everything published in the UK since 1911.

MPs supporting the law hailed the decision as ensuring that an important part of the nation’s published heritage would remain safe and accessible to future researchers.” (Matthew Broersma, ZDNet UK).

**H**ave you ever wondered what a **rare books and special collections librarian** does with his or her time? This from a U.S. rare books librarian:

“If you ask forty different people, I am certain that you will get forty different answers. A lot depends upon the institution, precisely what one is hired to do (or hindered from doing, in certain environments) and in many cases what the supervisor asks for or permits.

A lot of what I do here comes down to over-developed feelings of personal responsibility, for I have an especial affection for the institution, and the collection, and thus many of the oddball things I undertake (and deem to fall under the nebulous heading ‘of other duties as assigned’) others might pass along to those ‘officially’ responsible for such things.

At any point over the last six years, one may have found me:

- searching and (originally) cataloguing about 5,500 books;

- vacuuming excessively dusty books before their removal to the department from the open stacks;

- answering e-mail inquiries of diverse levels of interest and relevance;

- perching on a ladder while unsealing painted-shut transom windows for ventilation whenever the HVAC (Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning) system fails, replacing fallen sealing tiles, hacking through plaster walls to find leaks, etc.;

- assisting patrons in locating difficult-to-find materials in our own collections, or locating the nearest possible copy when we do not have one;

- helping patrons with palaeography or abbreviation problems, or doing brief Latin translations for those patrons who come in and say with a pitifully defeated tone, ‘You mean it’s not in English?’;

- teaching brief courses and ‘show-and-tell’ sessions using our materials for every age from elementary school children to graduate library school students;

- spending two hours with a droning wet-vac helping to suck up seepage in the Semitics department library during a heavy rainstorm;

- conducting tours of the department for interested students, staff, visitors, high administrative Pooh-Bahs, potential donors, etc.;

- helping to secure the cabinet and movement of an 8-foot grandfather clock before its removal from an exhibit gallery before renovations;

- answering telephone reference questions, once again of varying degrees of interest and relevance;

– blotting, fanning, and otherwise attempting to dry books soaked by a leaking HVAC system;

– doing collection surveys, shifting, listing, and otherwise organizing unprocessed collections;

– disassembling, re-assembling, and adjusting very uncooperative metal shelving;

– gathering illustrations for the university press for their catalogue covers, or helping film crews or patrons find photographic materials;

– attempting to master the ‘jiggling’ trick necessary to get the combination lock on the vault door to open;

– designing, mounting, and writing text for exhibits;

– hooking up a dehumidifier to drain into an unused toilet through a system of garden hoses and scrap-wood supports, in order to dry out an exhibit gallery between installations during a particularly humid Washington summer;

– conducting the daily ‘disaster check’ when opening up in the mornings;

– patiently directing to ‘a qualified antiquarian book dealer and appraiser’ the patron with *The Inevitable Question*: ‘I got this Bible from Aunt Bessie’s house, sec. It’s big and it’s real old, like, 1890s or something, so, like, do ya know how much I could sell it for?’.

And so, I hope that provides a useful — or at the very least entertaining — account of life as a rare books librarian. So far, after nearly 14 years in the field, I have yet to see anything that could generally be considered a ‘normal day’ by anyone else. The variety does, however, keep the job enjoyable, and rarely makes for a dull time!”

**A** new book from a new member of the Alcuin Society, Caryl Peters of **Frog Hollow Press** in Victoria (please see article in this issue):

Neilson, Shane. *The Beaten-Down Elegies*. Victoria: Frog Hollow Press, December 2003. 44 pages. \$35.00. ISBN 0-9732776-2-9.

This book has been published in an edition of 125 signed and numbered copies by Frog Hollow Press. It has been letterpressed on Zerkall Ingres paper, covered in handmade St. Armand Canal paper, wrapped (with French flaps) in Khadi Handmade Cotton Rag, and bound in a longstitch variation using Irish flax thread.

The author Shane Neilson is a poetry editor with *The Danforth Review* and is the winner of the Kim Rilda LeBlanc Memorial Award in Healing and the Arts. He has contributed poetry to *The Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine* and has had reviews, essays and poetry published in a number of Canadian journals and reviews. This is his first book.

**T**he Friends of St. Bride Printing Library, Third Annual Conference, October 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 2004. Call for Papers.

**BAD TYPE.** You are invited to submit papers that take a walk on the typographic wild side, which explore not what is lofty, proper and good in the graphic arts, but that which is “mad, bad and dangerous to know!”

“Bad Type” may be interpreted as that which does not fit with convention or could include work created by typographic dissidents and revolutionaries, or material used for rebellious or sedi-

tious purposes. Bad type might deal with work that purposely disobeys normal typographic customs to achieve wayward ends or it may cover material created to facilitate naughty, mischievous or roguish purposes. It could also include the curious work of amateurs with no particular design talents. The theme of "Bad Type" may be applied to individuals, their work, the purpose behind their work or the processes used to produce it.

If you have a topic that does not fit the typographic norm, then we would be delighted to hear from you.

We are looking not only for Conference speakers, but also for people who might wish to exhibit material or who would like to create graphic or art-installations on the theme of "Bad Type."

Please send an outline of your proposed talk/exhibition in not more than 300 words to [conference@stbride.org](mailto:conference@stbride.org). Closing date is February 1, 2004.

### **The Second International Conference on the Future of the Book.** Beijing, China, August 29-31, 2004.

Following the success of our 2003 conference, held in Cairns, Australia, the Book Conference 2004 will provide a forum for participants, academics, educators, librarians, researchers and teachers from around the world to discuss the future of the book. It will also provide a window to the past and the future of the book in China.

The conference will include a mix of a keynote address, papers, workshops and colloquium sessions, with speakers discussing topics as varied as: the effects of print on demand and ebooks; written

text in the context of the new communications environment; the future of the book from a library perspective; computers in education and e-learning; reading, books and the Internet; teaching and learning literacy in school and at home; and trends in the publishing industry.

For further information please visit the Conference website at <http://www.Book-Conference.com>.

**The third annual Book History at A&M Workshop** will take place May 23-28, 2004 in the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives, Texas A&M University. The five-day workshop provides an intensive, hands-on introduction to hand press era printing and its allied technologies — typesetting, papermaking, bookbinding, illustration, and ink-making. Students will have an opportunity to cast type in a hand mould. They will also set type, impose formes, make paper, and print on a replica common press. The workshop is intended for librarians, archivists, students, teachers, collectors, and private individuals and others who work in areas related to or who have an interest in the subject. The workshop also includes a series of evening lectures by scholars active in the field of book history. To register, find out more, or see photographs from last year's workshop, please go to: <http://lib-oldweb.tamu.edu/cushing/bookhistory/2004.html>.

**The fully illustrated web catalog of Hand Bookbinders of California, 31<sup>st</sup> Members' Exhibit** is now available online at <http://www.philobiblon.com/hbc31st>.

The Alcuin Society would like to welcome all of the following **new members** (chronological order) who joined the society in the year 2003. Membership count is now 313.

Ariadne Patsiopolous, Vancouver, B.C.  
Megan Hobson, Smithers, B.C.  
Luc Dewinter, Sint-Niklaas, Belgium  
Brian Henderson, Waterloo, ON  
Dimitrios Karakitsos, Concord, MA  
Sonia Khosla, Calgary, AB  
Kimberley Minkus, Vancouver, B.C.  
Anne Carscallen, Coquitlam, B.C.  
Jim Burns, Sidney, B.C.  
Ron Goerss, Miami FL  
Lorraine Grout, Burnaby, B.C.  
Alexis Greenwood, Vancouver, B.C.  
Carol Bretz, New Waterford, OH  
Brian Busby, Vancouver, B.C.  
Donna Hossack, Vancouver, B.C.  
Andrea Taylor, Vancouver, B.C.  
Marilyn Glenn, Fairfield, OH  
Chantal Lefebvre, Vancouver, B.C.  
Leah Gordon, Vancouver, B.C.  
Jennifer Ramsey, N. Vancouver, B.C.  
Matthew Warburton, Vancouver, B.C.  
Chris Trunkfield, N. Vancouver, B.C.  
Janet Kellett, Qualicum Beach, B.C.  
Myrna Baba, Roberts Creek, B.C.  
Robert Mostar, Richmond, B.C.  
Norman McKnight, Berkeley, CA  
Jim Rimmer, New Westminster, B.C.  
Indira Dutt, Maple Ridge, B.C.  
Heather Dean, Vancouver, B.C.  
Robert Evans, Campbell River, B.C.  
Van Egan, Campbell River, B.C.  
Thomas Cave, Vancouver, B.C.  
Faye Cooper, N. Vancouver, B.C.  
Joe Cvetkovich, Vancouver, B.C.  
Tom McQuaid, Seattle WA  
Jocelyne Laflamme, Vancouver, B.C.

The following members (alphabetical order) have rejoined our ranks. We are delighted to have you back!

Peter Bartl & Jane Merks, Balfour, B.C.  
Roberto Dosil, Vancouver, B.C.  
Gayle Garlock, Victoria, B.C.  
Arifin Graham, Victoria, B.C.  
Val Spiedel, Vancouver, B.C.  
Liana Van der Bellen, Ottawa, ON

I would like to draw your attention to the Alcuin Society List of Publications, November 2003, enclosed with this mailing of *Amphora*.

Our past inventory is quickly running out and for some publications only a few copies are left (some only a single copy!) Part of the reason for this is that it takes space to store all of this material and we simply don't always have that space. So read carefully through the list, since for many items it will possibly be your last chance to pick up a pristine, unread copy of some of our publications.

## AMPHORA

MANUSCRIPTS  
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR  
BOOK REVIEWS  
BOOK EVENTS, ETC  
are welcome

Submit to  
The Editorial Committee  
4446 Ontario Street  
Vancouver, BC V5V 3H1  
or by E-mail to  
rhopkins@interchange.ubc.ca  
Electronic copy preferred