

*FABS-tastic*

The four-day FABS 2006 Symposium, hosted by the Book Club of Washington this past May, was attended by 80 keen bibliophiles hailing from right across the USA, and three resident Canadians—Pat and I, and our 12-year-old son Glen. All agreed that this symposium was the best to date. There were visits to remarkable private and institutional libraries, panel discussions, lectures, lively discussions between passionate book collectors, fellowship, great meals and so on. From a personal viewpoint, we particularly enjoyed viewing highlights of Dr. Martin Greene's extensive polar exploration collection housed in a magnificent library built to Martin's specifications; also Cynthia Sears' and Frank Buxton's fine binding and artists' books collections displayed along with other fine art in Yonder, a fabulous facility located adjacent to their Bainbridge Island home; and Darrell Allen's exceptional collection of rare 17th- to 19th-century botanical books exhibited at the Bloedel Reserve. In these private collections we saw such volumes as original copies of Shackleton's 1908 *Aurora Australis*, Philip Smith's inspired designer bookbindings of *Moby Dick*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *King Lear*, and such rare botanical books as those of Elizabeth Blackwell (c1700-1758), Jean Louis Prevost (1804) and Christopher Trew (1695-1769). The wide array of speakers and the panel discussions were not to be missed, including Terry Belanger's witty comments summarizing strategies of how collectors justify their passion, such as: "It's not my fault I'm a collector. My ancestors were collectors, which implies a genetic defect." Terry is the Head of the University of Virginia's Rare Book School and was one of five fine speakers participating in a discussion titled "What are we all doing in the same room together?" At the finale banquet we were honoured as featured speakers. We presented an illustrated lecture of our decade-long journey to create ANTARCTICA, our 27-pound tome. This FABS event was thought to be the finest to date.

Rosemarie Keough, Salt Spring Island, B.C.

*St. John's wayzgoose*

I've been enjoying the new issue of *Amphora* very much. It's a lovely issue, with a fine new look. The interview with Charles van Sandwyk is especially good.

EDITOR – Rollin Milroy

ASSOCIATE EDITOR – Naomi Pauls

BOOKS EDITOR – Peter Mitham

PRODUCTION EDITOR – Ryan Vernon

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS –

Howard Greaves, John King,

Steven Palter, Ralph Stanton

LAYOUT – Sheila Adams, Eye Design Inc.

Back issues of *Amphora* are available for \$15 each; please inquire for numbers still in print. Letters, story ideas, manuscripts and other material for possible inclusion in *Amphora* are welcome and should be sent to the Editor's attention at the mailing address below, or via the *Amphora* e-mail link on our Web site. We cannot promise to return unsolicited material.

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Membership in the Alcuin Society has the following categories and annual dues: Individual (\$40), Institution (\$60), Corporate/Patron (\$100) and Student (\$20, three years maximum). Individual Canadian members receive a \$16 tax receipt; Patrons receive a \$76 receipt. All categories receive *Amphora*, plus occasional keepsakes and ephemera. Members also have the option, but not obligation, of purchasing books or other materials published or distributed by the Society. The Alcuin Society is registered under the Societies Act of British Columbia as a non-profit association.

The Alcuin Society, P.O. Box 3216  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
V6B 3X8 Canada

www.alcuinsociety.com

**THE ALCUIN SOCIETY** was the idea of Geoff Spencer, to promote a wider appreciation of finely wrought books among book lovers around the world. Other founding members were Basil Stuart-Stubbs, Bill Duthie, Sam Black, Bill McConnell, Dale Smith and Sam Fogel.

The name Alcuin was chosen to honour the memory of Alcuin of York (A.D. 735 to 804). Alcuin was a man who cared not only about books but also about handwriting, which he rescued from the styles of the period. As Charlemagne's "Minister of Culture," Alcuin selected the most legible script of his day and gave it official blessing. Known as Caroline minuscule, it ultimately led to our modern lowercase alphabet.

To further its aims, the Alcuin Society engages in a wide range of educational activities, many of them in collaboration with educational institutions—lectures, workshops, exhibitions, field visits and competitions. Annual design awards are made by a panel of expert judges for the best in Canadian book design. *Amphora*, the Society's journal, covers a wide range of topics related to the book: the future of the book, the history of the book, the book arts (typography, type design, calligraphy, papermaking, illustration, printing and binding), publishing, bookselling, book collecting, notable library collections, and reading.

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*The Alcuin Society*

*is proud to have as patron the*

GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA

*Her Excellency the Right Honourable*

*Michaëlle Jean.*

I am helping to organize a small wayzgoose to be held in St. John's this November; it's the project of a recently founded letterpress group. We will be having George Walker come to do workshops and talks, and will have a printers' fair. Our hope is to educate our community about printing and fine press books. I wonder if you'd be interested in an article about the event, after the fact, of course. I'd be happy to write a small something, and to supply some photos too.

Thanks! And congrats on a fine issue.

Marnie Parsons, St. John's, Nfld.

*We look forward to Marnie's article on the event in our February 2007 issue — Ed.*

### *Acid Redux*

Over the past several years I have been somewhat acidic about the lamentable state of our publications. Today the first issue of Rollin Milroy's regime as editor of *Amphora* arrived; #143 is all that I hoped *Amphora* could ever be. How refreshing to be delivered from the confines of the parish pump, even at the expense of mutilating the beauty of the English language occasionally ("periodicity"! "materiality"! "functionality"!). The two-colour printing is an enormous improvement. Above all, it seems that there is now some prospect of getting the damned thing out on time.

I'm also delighted that there might be some hope of including a keepsake with each issue. I liked Bringhurst's pamphlet, the first of his writings I've been able to read without twitching. I am, naturally, disappointed that it has been found necessary to reduce the number of issues to three, but doubtless there are valid reasons. When membership increases, I hope it will be possible to revert to the traditional four.

Please congratulate the new editor from an old one. Now there's every chance I can cut down on my Maalox intake!

Geoff Spencer, Vancouver, B.C.

*We welcome correspondence from members about anything they read in Amphora, or with local news of the book arts. Letters can be sent by post or e-mail (if the latter, please include your full name and city). Those printed may be edited for length — Ed.*

### O O P S

Close readers will have noticed that we used Charles van Sandwyk's preferred spelling of Ernest Shepard's last name in our previous issue's cover article. Our apologies to the artist and his flock — Ed.