

ALCUIN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

EDITED BY HOWARD GREAVES

Many thanks to contributors Nicholas Collins, Leah Gordon, Richard Hopkins, Michael Preston, Jeremiah Saunders, and Ralph Stanton.

No. 1, July, 2008

Welcome!

It is hoped that this Newsletter, which will appear three times per year and accompany the mailings of *Amphora*, will keep members up to date with the activities of The Society. We will be happy to receive comments and contributions from members. Let us know the sort of news that interests you.

This initial edition will probably be much longer than subsequent issues on account of the 'catching up' needed.

National Young Book Collectors' Award

The first of what is hoped will be an annual event for Canadians under 30 was launched on June 4 at UBC's Rare Books and Special Collections. Masterminded by John Meier of the Bibliographical Society of Canada, it is co-sponsored by the Canadian Bibliographical Society, The Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of Canada and The Alcuin Society. The rules of the contest are posted on the Society's website and there is a first prize of \$2,500. A remarkable publicity poster (English on one side, French on the other) which can be viewed at www.alcuinsociety.com was designed by Douglas and McIntyre's Peter Cocking and printed by Hemlock Printers in Burnaby.

www.alcuinsociety.com

Thanks to board member and webmaster Jeremiah Saunders, the Society's very attractive website shows the latest digital tools serving the more traditional book-arts. Jason Vanderhill photographs many of the functions and personalities of the Society and these fine shots can be viewed on the website. If you have photographic material relevant to the activities of the Society for the website, let us know.

Heraldry authority speaks at 2008 Annual General Meeting

A talk, *New Wine in Old Bottles: What Canadians Have Done to Create the World's Most Exciting Heraldry* was given by the recently retired Chief Herald of Canada, Robb Watt. It was illustrated by a very colourful and informative powerpoint presentation of Canadian heraldic examples - governmental, business and private. This was followed by Robb and Ralph Stanton explaining the process of developing the Society's Coat of Arms, which was unveiled by Dr Wosk, its benefactor.

The Alcuin Society's new publication: Duthie's Bookmarks

Duthie Books has been a much respected bookselling operation in Vancouver for just over fifty years and their bookmarks, the work of 24 of artists, issued over that period have just been celebrated in this Alcuin publication. It was designed by Robert Reid who worked in the early sixties with some of these young artists who were then students at Emily Carr College of Art and Design where he was an instructor. Many of them, of whom Tak Tanabe is a prime example, have since gone on to fame, national and international.

Copy #1 was presented to Dr Yosef Wosk, who helped finance the project, at the 2008 AGM where

Board member Nicholas Collins, a successful veteran of such campaigns, is managing the appeal. (nicholasollins1915@yahoo.com)

The Vancouver Foundation: Its beginnings.

It was started in 1943 with one person, \$1,000 and a vision. Alice MacKay had saved \$1,000 from her secretarial job and wanted to help homeless women trapped in a cycle of poverty. Inspired by MacKay's generosity, local industrialist W. J. Van Dusen added \$10,000 to her endowment and encouraged nine friends to match his own gift. The Vancouver Foundation was born. That original \$101,000 investment has since grown into almost \$800 million, and is the largest community foundation in Canada.

Board needs a Recording Secretary

The Alcuin Society is seeking to recruit a Recording Secretary to keep minutes and provide document packages for Board meetings.

The position will also provide assistance to the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer as needed. The work will be interesting and provide a stimulating environment with many opportunities to meet people in the world of books. The Society is looking for an energetic and well organized person with experience in the secretarial/executive assistant field. Like other board positions this is an unpaid position.

Please contact: ralph.stanton@ubc.ca

A publication on a Canadian cultural landmark

The Great Adventure: 100 years at the Arts & Letters Club has been produced by the Arts & Letters Club of Toronto, the Eastern venue of the 2007 & 2008 Alcuin Design Awards presentation. This beautifully pro-

duced book by Margaret McBurney, marks the centenary of the club and limns in prose, drawing and photograph all that has happened during the last 100 years and the people that made it all happen.

And where art, literature and music are concerned these people really did make it happen. The Group of Seven was formed here; prime movers such as Robertson Davies, Vincent Massey, Marshall McLuhan, and many others were all members.

The Great Adventure. \$50.00 from www.artsandlettersclub.ca

An End to Royal Pickings

Devotees of Amphora's Royal Picks will have noticed that it's no more. Its author, John King, has decided to devote more time to his antiquarian book business (antbook@dccnet.com) and signed off. Further, he will be greatly missed by the Society in his decade-long role of stocking, promoting, selling, invoicing and keeping fine records of the Society's backlist. This magnificent service has been a fundamental strength (and source of revenue) of the Society, which wishes him well in the future.

COMING EVENTS

AUGUST 14-17

Sunshine Coast Festival of the Written Arts

SEPTEMBER 28

Word on the Street, Vancouver

OCTOBER 2

Alcuin Design Awards, Emily Carr University, Vancouver

OCTOBER 6

Alcuin Design Awards, Arts and Letters Club of Canada

OCTOBER 21-26

Vancouver International Writers Festival

NOVEMBER 1

Alcuin Society Book Auction, Vancouver

Reinhard Derreth, one of the original artists, gave members some reminiscences. Six copies were sold immediately at the event.

The book's price is \$200 with a 20% discount for members. Postage is \$10.00.

Please send orders with payment to:

The Alcuin Society,

P.O. Box 3216, Vancouver, BC V6B 3X8

Members' Occasional Meetings

These were instituted for members to meet one another and talk about their common interest in the bookarts in an informal setting.

A meeting was held at the end of May which took advantage of a rare visit from the Northwest Territories of Ib Kristensen who worked with Robert Reid in the sixties at the Redpath Press of McGill University on the widely acclaimed Lande Bibliography of Canadiana. It was an opportunity for members to look at, and speak to the creators of, this beautiful book as well as others they had worked on.

Suggestions for topics, as well as book artists that members would like to meet in this informal way, are welcomed.

From Rags to Reading

"Discarded medieval underpants rank alongside the invention of printing in the spread of literacy, says historian" (Globe and Mail, 13 July 2007.) A Report from the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds about a paper presented by Marco Mostert of Utrecht University, regarding the increased availability of clothing rags, used to make paper due to the changes in attire occasioned by the 'social migration from rural to urban areas in the thirteenth century'.

(Brought to our attention by the Bulletin of the Bibliographical Society of Canada)

Nicholas Basbanes to speak in Vancouver

Board member Richard Hopkins is working on bringing to Vancouver Nicholas Basbanes of whom Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and biographer, David McCullough, has written, "Nicholas Basbanes has become our leading authority of books about books." It is hoped he will give a variety of talks in the Vancouver area in October 2008.

He has written six critically acclaimed books so far and is working on a seventh on the centennial history of Yale University Press and an eighth on the history of papermaking.

For more information contact:

rhopkins@interchange.ubc.ca

May we have your e-mail address?

We hope that this three times per year Newsletter will be able to keep members up to date with all upcoming events but there may be times when certain news cannot wait for these publication dates.

In such cases, to save the costs of mailing, we would like to communicate with members, where possible, by e-mail. If you wish to receive such information (your privacy will be respected), please send your e-mail address to hgreavesster@gmail.com

2007 Alcuin Award Presentations

This year, the Alcuin Society has decided to make some changes to the presentation of awards to the winners of the 2007 Book Design Competition.

The awards will once again be presented to the winners both in Vancouver (as they have been since the inception of the competition) and in Toronto (as they have been since 2006). However, until this year, the Vancouver ceremony has taken place in conjunction with the Society's Annual General Meeting in June; now the two events have been separated. They will be

presented at an evening event this fall, at the conclusion of a day of free book-related workshops at Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

One workshop will be given by award-winning book designers Peter Cocking (Douglas & McIntyre (Vancouver)) and CS (Scott) Richardson (Random House (Toronto)). The second workshop will be given by Celia King (Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design). Further details will be announced later.

The keynote speaker at both award ceremonies will be CS (Scott) Richardson, book designer and author of the acclaimed novel *The End of the Alphabet* (Random House, 2007). The Vancouver event (October 2, at Emily Carr University) will also feature Robert Bringhurst, book designer, essayist, and poet, who will give a brief informal talk about his forthcoming book, *The Surface of Meaning: 25 Years of Book Design in Canada*, which contains photographs of some of the many Alcuin award-winning books housed at SFU's WAC Bennett Library. In Ontario, The Arts and Letters Club of Toronto will once again co-host a dinner for us (October 6th). The awards will be presented there by Martin Levin, book editor of *The Globe and Mail*. All events will be open to the public, and everyone is encouraged to attend.

Aeroplan Points Donation Request

The managers of Air Canada's frequent-flyer program, Aeroplan, have kindly supported arts groups recently by permitting groups to pool donated points to fly certain people to specific events. They allowed us to ask members for point donations earlier this year in order to bring Tim Inkster, of *The Porcupine's Quill Press*, from Ontario to Vancouver, to be a judge in the 2007 Book Design Competition. Again, this fall, we will bring Scott Richardson from Toronto to Vancouver to be the keynote speaker at our Design Awards Ceremony.

We need to make separate requests each time we

want to do this. For the initial two requests, we were able to get the points we needed from members of the Board, but we have used up most of the Board's excess points. We would very much like to apply in the spring to bring our judges to Vancouver again for next year's competition.

We can't accept any points until we make the application. However, if any of you think that you might have any points to spare, even a small number, we'd really appreciate it if you could let us know now, so that we can plan. (Please note that Aeroplan points expire if you don't use them within a certain period of time, and this would be a generous way for you to use whatever points you might not be able to use yourselves.) Please contact Leah Gordon, at awards@alcuinsociety.com, if you would consider giving us some points early next year. Thank you!

The Alcuin Society Endowment Fund

This Fund is being set up to ensure a future predictable revenue for The Society to securely accomplish its many activities. The Fund will be administered by The Vancouver Foundation (www.vancouver-foundation.ca) which has assets of \$785 million, distributing \$59 million per year in 3,029 grants.

As was announced at the 2008 AGM, before the Endowment Campaign had even got under way, nearly \$1,000 in donations had already been received. At that point in the proceedings, Dr Yosef Wosk generously donated \$9,000 in honour of his son Avi thus creating the initial \$10,000 necessary to activate the Alcuin Endowment Fund account at the Foundation. As a result, the revenue flow will soon commence.

Also the Fund will benefit from the revenue from the sale of its first art donation - a numbered linocut of 1950s Vancouver produced by George Kuthan. It was donated by NWT member Ib Kristensen.