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Booklover -- Joy and Against the Grain

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Booklover — Joy and Against the Grain

Column Editor: Donna Jacobs (Research Specialist, Transgenic Mouse Care Facility, MUSC, Charleston, SC) 
<jacobsdf@musc.edu>

Editor’s Note: Donna Jacobs is a medical type whose job title is “Research Specialist, Transgenic Mouse Care Facility.” I first met her over 15 years ago at a friend’s cocktail party. Recently we reconnected and I learned that she is an avid reader and has as her current project to read all the books that have won the Nobel Prize. We began talking and now we have Donna as a regular columnist. Can’t wait to see her perspective on all the books she’s reading! — KS

When a library is in one’s top five destinations while on holiday it makes for interesting conversation. The Book of Kells located in the Trinity College Library in Dublin Ireland, Copernicus’s autography “De Revolutionibus” in the Jagellonian University Library located in Krakow Poland, the beautiful walnut-walled 10,000-volume library of George Vanderbilt located in the Biltmore Estates in Asheville North Carolina are good examples. The fun part is that one never knows what one will find, like being introduced to the Haynes Library on Eleuthera Bahamas or being invited into the personal library of Joy.

Joy — a three-letter word to express delight, elation or to call a unique friend by her name. We often speak of the joy of reading and I have actually met Joy. She inherited her love for reading from her mother, who read to her and her brother from the time they spoke their first words.

My husband and I spend several days in 2003 visiting friends on Eleuthera Bahamas and it was during this visit we were introduced to Joy and her husband by these friends. Joy had arrived on Eleuthera Bahamas in 1946 with her brother aboard a converted Lancaster bomber. The flight was a test flight for British South American Airways and was piloted by Air Vice Marshall Bennett with a crew of 5 and a passenger list of 13.

Joy invited us to their home for cocktails and the promise of a magnificent sunset. Besides the spectacular view of Governor’s Harbour, I was immediately entranced by the library until I was encouraged to come to the patio for cocktails, and “nibbles” made even more delightful by numerous hummingbirds enjoying the hibiscus. The sun began to set and true to promise it was as picturesque as a tropical postcode.

We retied to the main room decorated with books and began to discuss literature; this book and that book read until one book’s title failed to come to mind. Joy disappeared to a more private room and produced a journal. Opening the journal she began running her fingers down the lines of entry — title, author, month, year. This journal was just one in a series that Joy kept since 1946 when she began recording the books that she read. Books of non-fiction, travel to interesting places, biographies about fascinating people. What impressed me was her ability to find the particular journal that placed the book in question in rough chronological order of her reading as this is how the journals
are organized. Title back in her memory bank
we continued our rapid-fire discussion until
it was time to leave. I asked to “check-out”

du Maurier’s The House on the Strand, as

I wanted to reread the book during my stay.

Daphne du Maurier was the favorite author
of my youth and The House on the Strand is a
drama about history and time travel, an ideal
book to pair with my holiday on Eleuthera.
At our farewell party I returned the book and we
exchanged addresses both electronic and postal
with promises to stay in touch.

Once back in the states electronic conver-
sations continued about books both read and
recommended. One recommendation was
Ryszard Kapuscinski’s The Shadow of the
Sun. The Shadow of the Sun is a fantastic book
about Africa during the beginning of the colo-
nial revolutions. Kapuscinski was a young
journalist when he secured the opportunity
to travel to Africa to report on the end of colonial
rule. This is Africa as seen through the eyes of
a young novice foreign correspondent eager to
to see the detail of real African life. Kapuscinski
was so intrigued that he spent a lifetime report-
ing from Third World countries for the Polish
news. His romance is palpable as one reads
the particulars of the tough life of the African
people during this period.

In my continued search for books that tax
my mind, give pause for thought, stimulate dis-
cussions, and intrigue my soul, I find joy in the
occasional electronic suggestion of “something
to read.” Joy’s most recent “e-suggestion”
is Beyond The Sky And The Earth by Jamie
Zeppa. She briefly describes the book as a
journey into Bhutan. Now I begin my search
for this book after I finish the current book
I am reading authored by a Nobelist: Doris
Lessing’s, On Cats.

Every year Eleuthera beckons and I hope
soon to able to return. I might even join Joy
for the regular Tuesday morning coffee at the
Haynes Library (http://www.hayneslibrary.
org/). The library was reopened in 1996 and is
“dedicated to the advancement of education,
the sharing of knowledge and the broadening
of minds.” It is housed in a classical Bahamian
structure built in 1897 and painted bright pink
to match the sand that beckons just a few feet
from the front door. One can lose one’s self
in the books and the view. Truly holiday. And
after our coffee we could add another line to
her journal and I could add another library to
my discovery. 🎉

Rumors
from page 65

And many thanks to John Riley <jdriley@comcast.net> for pointing this out!

Richard Bodien has been appointed Di-
rector of Marketing at Serials Solutions
in Seattle, WA. Richard has twenty-five years of
experience with software and high technology
companies including Microsoft, AOL Mobile,
and The Boeing Company. As Director of
Marketing, Richard oversees all Advertising,
Event, Marketing, Press, and Web activities
for the company.

http://www.serialssolutions.com/press/
press11-20-08.html

It’s been a while since we heard from
Phil Davis, but guess what? His lovely wife,
Suzanne Cohen <ssac29@cornell.edu> (Col-
lection Development, Catherwood Library,
Cornell University) was at the 2008 Charles-
ton Conference instead! (shh… she is a lot
prettier than Phil). Suzanne had left Phil
at home with their two kids! Sounds like a
good plan! But I told her that next year they should
all come and enjoy Charleston!

The awesome Professor David Nicholas
< david.nicholas@ucl.ac.uk > sends word that
as of January 1st, 2009 the UCL School of
Library, Archive and Information Studies will
change its name to UCL Department of Infor-
mation Studies. We had a great dinner at Pan
e Vino in Charleston after the Conference. We
talked about the Charleston Observatory.
www.against-the-grain.com

I am going to close with Rumors of two
of my favorite places in the world. First,
West Point where my son, Raymond, went
to College. What a lovely place overlooking
the Hudson River. A perfect place to visit.
Anyway, I have just learned from the CHE
Wired Campus (December 3, 2008) that
the US Military Academy at West Point
will collect the stories of soldiers of all ages
and make them available online to students,
historians, journalists, and the public. See—
“West Point Oral-History Project Will
Make Soldiers’ Stories Available Online,” by
Lawrence Biemiller.

http://chronicle.com/wiredcampus/arti-
cle/3497/west-point-oral-history-project-will-
make-soldiers-stories-available-online?utm_
source=at&utm_medium=en

And, second, the Pensione Bencista in
Italy mentioned in this New York Times travel
article. This is where the Fiesole Retreats are
held every third year, right across the street
from Casalini Libri headquarters! Breath-
taking! Delightful! Wonderful! I want to go
there NOW!

http://travel.nytimes.com/travel/guides/eu-
rope/italy/tuscany-and-umbria/florence/hotel-
detail.html?aid=1154654576157&inline=nyt-
classifier

30Florence.html?em

http://chronicle.com/wiredcampus/arti-
cle/3497/west-point-oral-history-project-will-
make-soldiers-stories-available-online?utm_
source=at&utm_medium=en

Speaking of traveling, have you reserved
a hotel room for 2009 yet? The Conference
will be November 4-7, 2009. Come on down!
and if you have a suggestion for a theme,
please send it to me!

HAPPY NEW YEAR! HERE’S HOP-
ING 2009 IS GOOD TO ALL OF US! 🎉