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Booklover -- Joy and Against the Grain

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financial terms. **Mellon** did not have much excuse for entering upon this project if it were to be judged by those criteria alone because it had fair warning of the odds against its succeeding in that manner. Even **Kate Wittenberg**, who ultimately became the project's manager, testifies in her own post-mortem (appearing in the December/January issue of *Learned Publishing*) that "the long-term business model for this enterprise was never the main focus of **Gutenberg-e**."

Should it therefore be considered a failure? I think not. What really lay at the heart of this initiative, I would argue based on what I know about how the project was developed and about what I understand **Robert Darnton's** passion as a bibliophile to be, is the desire to advance scholarly communication by experimenting with a "new kind" of book — the multifaceted, multilayered document that **Ross Atkinson** had dreamed about in 1993 and **Darnton** had elaborated into a fuller vision in his 1999 article that was itself written in part as a justification for **Gutenberg-e**. No one on the advisory committee expected this project to be sustainable without, as **Colin Day** argued, ongoing subvention. Yet everyone on the committee still believed it to be a worthwhile undertaking, if only to "generate the knowledge necessary to...open the way to a new kind of scholarly communication, the well-wrought electronic monograph." And I feel confident that, if polled today, the committee members would agree that in these terms it was quite a success, giving us all more hands-on experience than we have ever had before in developing this cutting-edge form of monograph — if, indeed, it is even correctly or adequately described by that tradition-freighted word. The **AHA's** own post-mortem also credits these achievements. Its brief "Conclusion" reads: "At this late stage, we feel the project succeeded in its central goal — demonstrating the value and merits of digital publication of monographs. These books stand as models of exceptional scholarship in the discipline and rich examples of how new media can transform the traditional monograph form. The ancillary studies conducted in the course of the project, as well as the effort spent working with journal editors and crafting a better system for assessing these sorts of publications, have helped to secure the future for publications of this kind." And, from a publisher's viewpoint, I would add that Appendix 4 laying out the actual expenses of the project is alone bound to prove a valuable, as well as sobering, document for any other press brave enough to help carry this vision forward to the next stage. **Kate Wittenberg**, too, in her recent post-mortem, views the experiment in just these terms: "This project was, rather, designed to lay the groundwork for future programs in born-digital scholarship, to create models for others to follow, and to communicate the lessons learned in this early experiment. The goal of this project was to break new ground, learn from successes and mistakes, provide a group of scholars with

well-edited, innovatively designed, and professionally produced publications, and offer a new model of scholarly communication in the digital environment."

Robert Darnton thus has good reason to feel proud of this experiment, which was undoubtedly the crowning achievement of his year as **AHA** president, and so too does the **Mellon Foundation**. One would hope, if there is a lesson to be learned here, that the folks at **Mellon** would treat their projects as successes even when they do not perform according to strictly economic criteria. We are still a long way from finding a solution to creating a viable transition for monographs from print to electronic environments even when the electronic does not do much more than mimic the print version (as, indeed, most electronic journals merely mimic their print counterparts), let alone realizing **Ross Atkinson's** dream of a document embodying "concentric stratifica-

tion." But the **Gutenberg-e** project, together with **Darnton's** own forthcoming eBook, should remain as a source of inspiration and experiential knowledge for many years to come and will undoubtedly prove to have been well worth the investment in the long run.

*I wish to thank **Robert Townsend** at the **American Historical Association** and **Donald Waters** at the **Mellon Foundation** for giving me permission to quote extensively from their organizations' reports, **Kate Wittenberg** for sharing a draft of her own post-mortem prior to its publication, and **Robert Darnton**, **Colin Day**, and **Ann Okerson** for allowing me to quote from their emails and other private communications during the deliberations of the **AHA's Electronic-Book Prize Committee**. 🌿*

Booklover — Joy and Against the Grain

Column Editor: **Donna Jacobs** (Research Specialist,
Transgenic Mouse Care Facility, MUSC, Charleston, SC)
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*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 discovery. 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 Bahama 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 walls of books in the main room of the house. Unable to help myself, I began walking along one wall scanning the titles in this private 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 postcard.

We retired 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** had 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



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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 fantasy 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 conversations 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 colonial 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 see the detail of real African life. **Kapuscinski** was so intrigued that he spent a lifetime reporting 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 discussions, 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 be 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
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And many thanks to **John Riley** <jdriley@comcast.net> for pointing this out!

Richard Bodien has been appointed Director 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.serialsolutions.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** <sac29@cornell.edu> (Collection Development, Catherwood Library, **Cornell University**) was at the **2008 Charleston Conference** instead! (shhh ... 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 Information 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/article/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! Breathtaking! Delightful! Wonderful! I want to go there NOW!

<http://travel.nytimes.com/travel/guides/europe/italy/tuscany-and-umbria/florence/hotel-detail.html?vid=1154654576157&inline=nyt-classifier/>

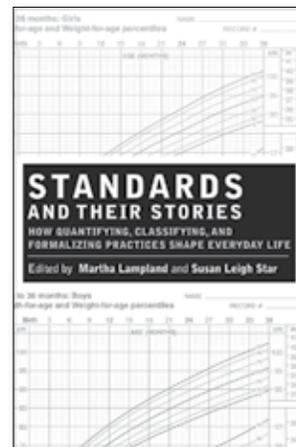
http://travel.nytimes.com/2008/11/30/travel/30Florence.html?em_

http://chronicle.com/wiredcampus/article/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 HOPING 2009 IS GOOD TO ALL OF US! 🌸

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