February 2004

Lost in Austin

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Recommended Citation

Leonhardt, Thomas W. (2004) "Lost in Austin," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 16: Iss. 1, Article 28.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.5431>

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tered, then had him pose for his photo, all a more time consuming process than it should have been. After more than an hour, he got the card, and began his descent "into the vast underground caverns" of the reading rooms.

The books are all located up in the towers, and the reading rooms are located deep into the earth. There was no signage to assist him. The floors are described as "spiked metal" and he went through several turnstiles and several doors before getting on an escalator for a ten-story descent into the basement. Two more turnstiles, two more windowless metal doors. He requested a seat in the reading room from a computer, inserting the card into a turnstile to access the room. He described the rooms, built around a grass court, which opened to the sky, dizzyingly high above. In the glassed-in court he found a small forest of immense trees, all chained to the concrete floor. As he progressed to the seat he had reserved, he felt "more like an ant than an archivist."

His experience using the computer to make his reading selections was also full of frustration with non-working equipment, delays in retrieval, depression from the feeling of no air and light, and so on. He noted the lack of a cafete-

ria, "only an appalling, gloomy little café near the subterranean entrance, with a view of the gagged and bound trees straining toward the invisible sky."

He described how rich the materials used to build and furnish the Library are but declares it "the largest and most depressing of all the monuments of pompous official French culture that have been produced in France since the war, the administration's revenge on the individual. All that French wit, all that charm, all that gaiety, all that somber pessimism, even all that intelligent despair sunk deep into the earth like a missile installation, with bad sandwiches and a chained and bound garden."

His use of the word monument in describing the Library prompted me to search the Web and sure enough under one locates the *Bibliothèque Nationale* under Monuments. In spite of his descriptions, or maybe because of them, this is one National Library I've added to my list to visit some day.

As an opposing view, though admittedly there is no actual description of the Paris library in this book, author **Dan Brown** acknowledged the assistance of the staff of several institutions in performing research for his best seller, *The Da Vinci Code, A Novel* (Doubleday, 2003; ISBN 0-385-50420-9), including the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, (as well as the Gnostic Society Library).

He also has a librarian character in this novel, and describes the library and the librarian in Chapter 92. While this is a work of fiction, much of what he wrote sounds more factual than fictional. The library is described as one of the "most complete and electronically advanced religious research libraries in the world," located at **King's College** in London. The primary research room of this library is a "dramatic octagonal chamber, dominated by an enormous round table around which **King Arthur** and his knights might have been comfortable were it not for the presence of twelve flat-screen computer workstations. On the far side of the room, a reference librarian was just pouring a pot of tea and settling in for her day of work." The librarian is described as having a genial, erudite face, a pleasingly fluid voice, and thick horn rimmed glasses hanging around her neck (ouch). The description of the reference interview, and the search process, both appear to be accurate portrayals. The only two items that seemed off were: the librarian asked why the two protagonists were seeking the information they were seeking (do we normally do that?), and, while the system was working, offered them both a cup of tea. A rather civilized way to conduct our business, don't you think? And the round table and reading room sound much cozier than those of the *Biliotheque Nationale*.

Lost In Austin

by **Thomas W. Leonhardt** (Director, Scarborough-Phillips Library, St. Edward's University, 3001 South Congress Avenue, Austin, TX 78704-6489; Phone: 512-448-8470; Fax: 512-448-8737) <leonhard@libr.stedwards.edu>

Another Midwinter Meeting of the **American Library Association** has been logged, a bit earlier than usual, but not a bad way to start the new year. We have been to more than twenty five midwinter meetings but fewer than thirty. In other words, I don't remember exactly and am not going to try to reconstruct my life from that angle.

It is unfortunate that the midwinter meeting has grown so large. Again, I can't remember exactly which year it was but it was an inaugural year and we met in Washington, D.C. For the first time, the meetings could not all fit into the Shoreham and the Sheraton and we could meet everyone we knew either in the exhibits or crossing the street going from one hotel to the other. There was a People's Drug Store right near the Metro station before the metro existed where we would go for breakfast, a home cooked meal with eggs fried just so, over medium with grits and bacon on the side and crispy toast that picked up the yolk that the grits didn't. The women behind the counter were friendly and easy going but efficient, too, traits that came straight from home. All things considered, it is my favorite breakfast spot of all the places I have eaten at conferences over the years with second place going to The Ferris Wheel, that great, Greek-owned eatery near the Palmer House in Chicago. Grits were not served but everything else was good. Both places, too, had regular

clientele who came in for coffee to go and perhaps breakfast, too.

San Diego is a good place to visit in the winter but it doesn't have soul. Give me Chicago in the winter anytime for a meeting. Or Washington, D.C. with its presence created by those rock solid government buildings. I hate, though, to think what it must be like right now, more a fortress than a city. I hope that I am wrong.

"There Ought To Be A Law Department"

It was my good fortune to attend Department of Defense high schools in what was then West Germany. I began as a freshman at **Wuerzburg American High School** in 1958 and graduated from **Karlsruhe American High School** in 1961. The base at Wuerzburg (I actually lived in Schweinfurt) is still there but the one in Karlsruhe was closed around 1994. The post library, instead of being disbanded like the others that were being closed, was offered to and accepted by the **Karlsruhe Public Library** and opened its doors as a branch in 1996.

Without going into details, I have developed a correspondence with the president of the **Freunde der amerikanischen Bibliothek Karlsruhe e.V. (Friends of the American Li-**

brary in Karlsruhe, tax exempt) whose name is **Karen Adams-Rischmann**. She has lived in Karlsruhe for twenty five years (she teaches English there). She worked it out for me to become a friend by letting me buy a book on **Amazon.de** and having it shipped directly to the Library. Otherwise I would have had to find a way to send 25Euros and incur currency conversion charges.

If you would like to join, I am sure that **Karen** will be happy to accommodate you and if you can send her 25Euros, you needn't go to the trouble of buying an American book through a

German outlet. But that is not the main intent here. The main intent is to find an American publisher for **Karen**. Here is some background in her own words.

"I've lived in Karlsruhe for twenty five years, longer than in any other place. This has not made me feel German, if anything more American, but I do like Karlsruhe, more in fact than most Karlsruher, who seem to have a complex about their provincial city. I wonder if you have seen or read about the recent film *Buffalo Soldiers*, which is not about

continued on page 64

ATG Profiles Encouraged

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EARLY LIFE: Grew up outside of Philadelphia. Lived in Atlanta for nearly 20 years with a brief stint in Houston.

FAMILY: Immediate family lives in Southwest Florida. One sister who's a family practice physician.

EDUCATION: B.S. Villanova University, M.S. Georgia State University

MOST MEANINGFUL CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Bringing online searching to physicians. My former employer, BRS Information Technologies, pioneered the development of online research for the medical community. I've always been proud of having been part of the start-up group.

WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: I see library patrons being able to link seamlessly among aggregators. The recent collaboration to integrate OpenURL has been a major step in this direction. I anticipate that most of the technical and organizational issues relating to linking will be resolved.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES: Volunteer at the Atlanta Midtown Assistance Center providing emergency help to people who've recently been unemployed. (I've been very busy lately!)

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS: Become an advocate for the poor and those with special disabilities.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Play 40's music on piano and organ. Practice Iyengar yoga several times a week with very stringent female teachers.

PHILOSOPHY: Live in the present moment. 🍷

Lost In Austin from page 63

the Black American regiment but about soldiers stationed in Germany in 1989. It was shot in Karlsruhe at the abandoned Gryzinsky Barracks, at the Tulla Bad, and many other locations in and around the city. I worked on this film in "Local Crowd Casting", it was my job to find extras to play American soldiers. My daughter was the set production assistant to the director. That was an exciting few months for us!

I have written a "krimi" (mystery novel, as I'm sure you know) set in Karlsruhe. It was translated directly from the English manuscript into German and will be published in November (**Karen Adams**, *Straßenfeger*, Heyne Verlag). It's really just an excuse to portray Karlsruhe from the point of view of an American private eye named McAdam. I'm still looking for an American publisher, but so far no agent has thought the American public could be interested in a tale set in the German provinces."

Well, I have a copy of *Strassenfeger* and can vouch for its quality. I have read many a mystery with settings in exotic locations not of the author's origin. Many of us like to read about places we have never visited and we also like to read about locations we have some familiarity with. **Joe Gores** writes about the Bay Area where I went to school and worked for a number of years so he is fun to read at that level but I wouldn't have read two of his novels if they hadn't had good characterization, a plot, and a mystery.

On the other hand, I have never been to Paris but Maigret mysteries fascinate me and they were written not by a Parisian, but by a Belgian. Mon dieu! What is wrong with American publishers? What **Karen** fails to mention but is included in her book is the fact that her book was well on its way to winning a contest with a \$20,000 prize and an American publisher but someone, a committee no doubt, decided that it was too provincial for American audiences. *Strassenfeger* has great characters—McAdam, his wife Uschi, and Connie, the female police officer who leaves the force because, as a woman in a male organization, cannot get a fair shake. There are great descriptions of Karlsruhe and of the street car system. I know people who would read it for the streetcars alone, for goodness' sake. *Strassenfeger* is a good read and I hope that some publisher reads this and decides to take a look at the manuscript. **Karen** would be great on a book tour, too. Think of it, an American expatriot of sorts writing mysteries (there will be more McAdam books, I am sure) in German. Let's strike a blow for internationalism here and move away from the isolationist trend (except when there is oil) that seems to be ailing the United States.

If you want to find out more about this **American Library** in Karlsruhe, please visit www.american-library.de.

Aufwiderschen! 🍷

Rumors from page 57

(**California Public Interest Research Group**) is a statewide consumer organization with campus chapters at seven universities around the state. <http://calpirg.org/CA.asp?id2=11988&id3=CA>

Texas Christian University (TCU) has selected **ALEPH 500(tm)** as its next generation library management system, together with **SFX(tm)** as its context-sensitive linking solution. Texas Christian University, located five miles from the heart of downtown Fort Worth, has a total enrollment of approximately 8,200 students. TCU offers 82 undergraduate majors

and 16 graduate degrees in 50 areas, including nine doctoral fields. Total faculty and staff number approximately 1,460, of which 392 are full-time faculty. The **Mary Coats Burnett Library** physically houses more than 1,900,000 items. The library's holdings are greatly augmented by online electronic resources including thousands of electronic books, electronic journals and full-text databases. Outstanding special collections of the TCU Library include the William Luther Lewis Collection of English and American Literature, the Speaker Jim Wright Archives, and the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition Archives. www.exlibrisgroup.com
www.lib.tcu.edu

Maybe some day my day will come and I'll

be able to attend The Acquisitions Institute at Timberline Lodge. The upcoming Institute is Saturday, May 15, through Tuesday, May 18, 2004 and Timberline Lodge, one hour east of Portland, Oregon on the slope of Mt. Hood. Keynote address will be given by **Henry Yapple**, College Librarian, Penrose Library, **Whitman College**. Registration is now open and the preliminary program is listed at <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/events/aitl/Preliminary.pdf>.

The **American Psychological Association (APA)** will license content contained in the former **e-psyche** database from **EBSCO**, the new owner of the content. Most of the content licensed will be used in APA's new gray literature database **PsycEXTRA**, which **APA** plans

continued on page 65