

June 2017

The Scholarly Publishing Scene- PSP

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Recommended Citation

Kutz, Myer (2017) "The Scholarly Publishing Scene- PSP," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 29: Iss. 3, Article 59.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.7798>

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The Scholarly Publishing Scene — PSP

Column Editor: **Myer Kutz** (President, Myer Kutz Associates, Inc.) <myerkutz@aol.com>



Andy Neilly was the first nonfamily member to assume the presidency at **Wiley**. That was in 1971, five years before I joined the company as an acquisitions editor for professional and reference books in mechanical and industrial engineering. Those were heady days. The hours were 8:30 to 4:30 and the floor I was on seemed empty a few minutes after closing; commuters were already on their way to their trains from Grand Central and Penn Station. As he was leaving one day, I heard **Andy** crack that he was heading home because “you can’t make any money around here,” but the reality was that the dollar spigot was running just fine in those days, when the **Wiley** family was ceding day-to-day control to professional managers.

Andy still lives in Connecticut. He’s 94 and sounds sharp and hearty on the phone. His eyesight isn’t great, so he’s had to give up his watercolors. He devotes his time to family now.

I called him the other day because I wanted to talk about the origins of the **Association of American Publishers (AAP)**, which **Brad Wiley**, who remained **Wiley’s** CEO until **Andy** succeeded him in 1979, co-founded in 1970. “I was on the fringes,” **Andy** said when I asked him who the other co-founders were. “**Curtis Benjamin** was probably involved,” he went on. The legendary **Benjamin**, who, among other things during his 38-year career at **McGraw-Hill**, had been responsible for the company’s entry into multivolume reference publishing in the 1950s, had retired as **McGraw-Hill’s** chairman in 1966, I found out after the phone call. So I can only guess about his involvement in **AAP’s** founding. **Andy** also mentioned **Bob Bernstein**, another legendary publishing figure, who was **Random House** president and CEO at the time. His Wikipedia page mentions **AAP** involvement in the early 1970s, but not at the founding. No matter. “**Prentice Hall** was involved,” **Andy** said. “They were difficult,” he chuckled. “They wanted to be in charge of everything.”

In any case, as **Andy** recalled, **Brad Wiley** was instrumental in merging the mainly trade **American Book Publishers Council**, which had been started in 1945, with the older **American Textbook Publishing Institute** to form the **AAP**. “We were not organized on copyright,” **Andy** said in recalling why **Brad** created the merger. “The textbook publishers were mostly interested in the domestic market,” he went on, “but the merger brought in people who cared about international markets.”

As I have tried, with the help of old friends and colleagues — **Andy Neilly**, **Eric Swanson**, now retired from **Wiley**, **Dick Rudick**, retired **Wiley** chief counsel and now on the board of the **Copyright Clearance Center**, **Judy Platt**, an old **AAP** hand, who is now Director, **Free Expression Advocacy**, there, plus **John Tagler**, VP and **PSP** Executive Director, who’s been at **AAP** for the past nine years, and **Sara Pinto**, **PSP** Director — to piece together the

story of the **AAP** and of the publishers group within **AAP** that became the **Professional and Scholarly Publishing Division (PSP)**, money issues have always been present. “People didn’t like to pay their dues,” **Andy Neilly** said about the early days, but over the years the issues have gone beyond that.

To be sure, there has always been enough money to hire high-profile men and women as **AAP** President. (The head of a publishing house or an otherwise senior executive serves as chair.) **Edward M. Korry**, a U.S. diplomat who served under **Kennedy**, **Johnson**, and **Nixon** was **AAP** President after the organization’s founding in 1970 until he was replaced by **Townsend (Tim) Hoopes** in August 1973. **Hoopes** served from 1973 to 1986, followed by **Nicholas Veliotos** (1986-1997), **Pat Schroder** (1997-2009), **Tom Allen** (2009-2017) and **Maria Pallante**, who has been installed just recently. **Tim Hoopes**, a distinguished author of important books on Vietnam-era diplomacy and military matters, had served in government and worked in the private sector, before his stint at the **AAP**. I remember noting, the first time I saw him, the stately manner with which he walked into a room. I see him now in my mind’s eye, dressed always in a safari jacket over an Oxford shirt. **Nick Veliotos** had been a seasoned diplomat before taking over from **Tim Hoopes**. The early portion of **Nick’s** tenure coincided with my terms as chairs of the **PSP** executive council and the **AAP** copyright committee. I consulted frequently with **Nick**, who always had a small pad and pencil in his hands. He once called me his “godfather,” much to my delight. **Pat Schroder** and **Tom Allen** were both multi-term members of **Congress** before their **AAP** days. I would see them once or twice a year and enjoy talking politics. **Maria Pallante** has most recently been U.S. Register of Copyright at the **Library of Congress**.

As far as I can tell, the **PSP Division** dates back pretty much to **AAP’s** founding days. I attended my first **PSP Annual Conference** in 1977, at **Absecon**, **Grace Kelly’s** father’s favorite watering hole, or so I was told. In those days, the small houses hadn’t been gobbled up yet by the giants, and the meeting was populated by publishing buccaneers who seemed more interested in their poker games than anything else, except making money, of course. One evening, **Andy Neilly** gave a riotously funny address filled with stories that enabled him to employ an array of pitch-perfect tongues, particularly from the auld sod. And all the stories would have been suitable for your great-grandma.

PSP’s very existence didn’t seem to amuse **Brooks Thomas**, from **Harper & Row**, who was **AAP** Chair around 1983-84. **AAP** maintained two offices — one in Washington, at the federal government’s doorstep, and the other in New York, where many publishers had their headquarters. **Eric Swanson**, who was **PSP**

executive council chair then, recalls **Thomas** showing up at the **PSP Annual Conference**, which was held for a few years in Hershey, PA, to hector the council. He wanted to close down the NY office and spend more money on lobbying. He threatened to go to council members’ bosses to get them to order their employees to accede to his demands. “Look around the table,” **Eric** recalls telling him, “these *are* the bosses!” There was a fight over money. The marriage that **Brad Wiley** had brokered brought money into the **AAP** from the textbook publishers group, and **PSP** claimed that money as its own. **Eric Swanson** told me that **Brooks Thomas** should have gotten people to raise the dues and hire a competent lobbyist. **Thomas** did manage to interrupt the **PSP Annual Conference** for a couple of years, folding it into a Consolidated Divisional Meeting, but the prohibition ended when I became executive council chair. We went back to Hershey for a year, and we started a quarterly newsletter. (To be fair, **Brooks Thomas**, trained as a lawyer, did have a productive career at **Harper & Row** — until it was taken over by **Rupert Murdoch**, of all people. The plot always sickens, as an old friend of mine often muses.)

“The Year in Review” **AAP** annual report highlights from 1983/84 and 1984/85 that **Judy Platt** emailed to me don’t explicitly discuss the tension and the fights. (In both cases, the first paragraph, which discusses publishing industry financial results, covers only book sales; of journal subscription sales, there is nary a peep. Such innocent days.) There’s talk in both years of budget cuts, staff reductions, and “realignments” of programs and division staff heads’ responsibilities.

The Year in Review for 1984/85 mentions the New York office’s move from One Park Avenue, where the rent was scheduled to quadruple, to 220 East 23rd Street. Later, the office moved to the corner of Fifth Avenue and 15th Street, where it’s been until now. You’d have to admit that this second-floor space is quite generous, with a large kitchen area, mail room, comfortable individual offices for staff members, and a double-sized conference room that is used for executive council and committee meetings, the annual two-day judging for the **PROSE Awards**, and the many workshops that **PSP** operates for junior staff members at publishing houses, covering such topics as finance for non-financial professionals, publishing professional, scholarly and academic books, and publishing journals. The latter two workshops have been running for many years.

AAP budgetary constraints are forcing closure of this New York office. Staff members are working at home and at desk space 16 blocks uptown. So far, they’re coping quite well. Now you’d have to admit, when you look at the long list of public policy and legislative letters,

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Little Red Herrings — Biases, Oxen, and Being Gored

by **Mark Y. Herring** (Dean of Library Services, Dacus Library, Winthrop University) <herringm@winthrop.edu>

In politics, as in most things in life, it depends on whose ox is being gored, and that going often is colored by our biases. The going may not even fall along party lines. If the matter isn't about you, about your interests, or about someone who you are interested in, you are as likely to dismiss it as you do the sunrise.

This point was recently driven home to me by a fake news story about the Super Bowl Champions visiting the White House. It ran a non-story, a story that did not happen by focusing on those who were not going to the White House rather than on those who did. In the end, they got it wrong, making it seem that there was a protest vote against the President when, like almost every year since this silly event has been going on, there were about the same number who show up every year. The last time the Patriots were there, 36 appeared with **Obama**; this year, 34 appeared with **Trump**. No news here.

But the story sparked a point in my mind about biases. If I'm a Republican, I cannot let a Democrat look good. Likewise, if I'm a Democrat, I cannot allow anything good to pass about a Republican, and especially *this* Republican. For those of us in the business of ferreting out the truth for folks, or at the very least, truthful information, this becomes critically important to avoid. It isn't so much that fake news has emerged; the fact of the matter is that this is the first year people have begun to pay attention to it, but, alas, only in a party line, biased way.

As librarians, we cannot afford to take sides. We have to remain as neutral as is humanly possible while at work, as partisan as we want to be after hours. A trend is mounting, however,

among some librarians, mainly but not exclusively younger ones. They believe that now is the time to draw a line in the sand, to take a stand, to unseat this President; and that is not only a really bad idea in general regardless of who is in power, but also a terrible idea for the profession. Although he did not always follow his own advice, **Francis Bacon** is pertinent here: "if a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties."

Not to compare small things with great, but a book that recently came out, drove home this point to me even more. **Clara Bingham's** *Witness to the Revolution: Radicals, Resisters, Vets, Hippies, and the Year America Lost Its Mind and Found Its Soul* (Random House, 2016) is a collection of hundreds of interviews with sixties revolutionaries. It's a movement I know a little about since I lived through a good part of it. While the peace movement was bustling right along and gaining tremendous momentum, a combination of biases within the movement, and an undisciplined view that it had to be all or nothing, blew up that missile as soon as it began gaining altitude.

For example, women involved in the peace movement soon discovered, as the movement gained musculature, that they were important as ... only women who got coffee, ran errands, and took dictation. Of course, the free love aspect also proved advantageous ... to men, who could walk away when they pleased. Women, on the other hand, were stuck raising children, or having abortions, alone. Add to this the

all-or-nothing attitude of the Weathermen, and disaster loomed. Once they blew up Sterling Hall (aka, Army Math Research Center) on the campus of the University of Wisconsin, killing a married graduate student and father of three children, **Robert Fassnacht**, the movement tanked, and quickly. Most movement members saw it coming; some got out, others did not. It's not a stretch to say that internal biases killed everything.

I see the small but vocal group of librarians wanting to "do something" making a similar mistake on a smaller scale culturally, but a potentially more massive one professionally. Professions that are typically apolitical should remain that way.

It serves no one to draw a line in the sand because more often than not that alienates that part of membership on the "wrong" side of that line. Our membership needs to remember that in whatever library we work, we serve everyone: Democrats, Republicans, the far right, the far left, the alt-right, the alt-left, Libertarians and Independents. Assigning ourselves to one side or the other will only force the snubbed side to make a decision against us. If my patrons know I am decidedly and very publicly left wing and fiercely anti-**Trump**, how can they ever trust anything I say about him, his presidency, or the right in general, even (and especially) when I speak truthfully?

It's helpful to remember that our funding comes without partisan colors. It remains green from whoever has the will to fund us. In tough times that are sure to become tougher still, this may well be the most important thing about which we can remind each other. 🌱



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submissions, and statements that are available on the **AAP** website, that all staff members need to get such jobs done is a telephone, a computer, and an Internet connection. **PSP** also oversees important surveys, including roundups of journal publishing, which involve extensive reporting from publishers. Again, you don't need a suite of offices in Manhattan to get these jobs done either, although you do have to continually keep on top of busy staffers at publishing houses to obtain extensive data.

What also concerns me, as someone with years of history with **PSP**, is the continued functioning of the valuable workshops, the **PROSE** awards program, and the annual conference (with over 250 attendees this year). The workshops are to be held in publishers' conference rooms. Which sounds fine until some staff member complains about the un-

availability of a conference room when an important book author team or several journal editorial board members are in town. Moving **PROSE**, which has blossomed in recent years under the leadership of **John Jenkins** and with **PSP** staffer **Kate Kolendo's** organizational skills, presents other potential problems. There are well over 500 entries annually, most of them books, which have to be logged in and then boxed up and sent out to judges. It takes a great deal of coordination to put on the annual conference and make it as successful as it's been for so long. (I've reported on the conference for many years.) I wonder how easily all that's going to be handled in the future.

I've been told that the New York office expenses were not sustainable, and I'm sure that **AAP** leadership can justify the closing in financial terms. When I hear that, I think about **Andy Neilly's** comment about publishers' dues-paying reluctance, at least back in the day. To be sure, **AAP** has accomplished a great deal in the past nearly half century, particularly with

anti-censorship, copyright, and educational efforts. But it did appear to me, in the days when I was running **AAP** committees, that the movie industry, with smaller annual revenues, I believed, had a more visible and powerful trade organization.

I understand what **AAP's** top priorities should be. I agree with the answer recently retired **AAP** president **Tom Allen** gave to a question that alluded to them in his *Publishers Weekly* "exit interview": copyright and intellectual property protections. But also important to **AAP's** — and the publishing industry's — survival are the long-standing educational, informational, and promotional activities that **PSP**, arguably **AAP's** staunchest division, has carried out so successfully. And yes, camaraderie is also an essential ingredient. I hope these activities and spirit aren't allowed to wither away, much less diminish. After all, isn't a knowledgeable, informed, and collegial workforce a bulwark against an industry's destruction? 🌱