

# The Aldus Society

A Columbus Book Club

## NEWSLETTER

Spring, 2000

INAUGURAL ISSUE

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### President's Message

By Geoffrey D. Smith

It is strictly impressionistic, but it seems to me that the nearer we approach the putative end of the print age, the greater the interest in the print medium. Various university departments routinely offer courses on the history of print, and new academic associations are dedicated to the preservation and celebration of the print era.

Entry to the new millennium, whether you count it as this year or next, elicited a myriad of lists including *Time* magazine's choice of Johann Gutenberg as the person of the millennium. All told, then, it seemed an auspicious time for Columbus to have a book society.

The end of the last century saw the origin of many prestigious book clubs that still exist today: the Grolier Club of New York in 1884; the Odd Volumes Club of Boston in 1886; the Rowfant Club of Cleveland in 1892; the Philobiblon Club of Philadelphia in 1893; and the Caxton Club of Chicago in 1895.

Near the close of this century, these earlier book societies joined in an association—the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies (FABS), that welcomes new society members and encourages the formation of new book clubs, still another sign of the fortuitous timing for the creation of a Columbus book club.

Thus, the formation of The Aldus Society: A Columbus Book Club.

Over the past several months a corps of dedicated bibliophiles have worked toward the creation of the Aldus Society. By-laws have been written, we have been accepted as a member of FABS, and an initial

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### Welcome to the Aldus Society...

Columbus has been singled out as one of the top ten markets in the nation for the sales of books. Now book lovers in Columbus have a new organization dedicated to their fascination with the many aspects of books.

The Aldus Society has been formed for the edification and continuing education of those interested in books, and will promote the perpetuation of the book arts through the dissemination of knowledge. Programs will cover all aspects of books—from the historical, aesthetic, physical and cultural, to manuscripts and other original textual and graphic materials.

Over fifty people have already joined the Society. We will be meeting eight to nine times a year for programs which celebrate various aspects of the book, including book-making, book illustration, book collecting, and many other areas.

Our society is named after Aldus Manutius, an innovative 15th century Venetian printer who conceived the prototype of the modern printed book; introduced a series of inexpensive classics; and invented italic type (*see article on page 3*).

Membership is open to all who love books. If you have not already joined, a membership application form is included on the back page.

### May 16th Program Announced

Robert H. Jackson, past President of the Rowfant Club of Cleveland and a founder of the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies (FABS), will address the Aldus Society's first program on Tuesday, May 16th, at the Upper Arlington Public Library, 2800 Tremont Road. The program will start at 7:30 p.m.

A knowledgeable and focused book collector, Mr. Jackson has applied great energy and delicate taste in the development of two major book and manuscript collections: Victorian literature; and Beat Generation literature, which features an exceptionally fine William Burroughs collection. Mr. Jackson will be speaking about his Victorian literature collection at our meeting.

A knowledgeable and focused collector, Mr. Jackson displayed his Victorian serial publications at New York City's Grolier Club in 1996, an exhibition that is documented in his monograph *Serial Publications: Essential Parts of the 19th Century Imagination* (New York: The Grolier Club, 1996).

**The Aldus Society**  
A Columbus Book Club

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If you have submissions or ideas for articles, please contact George C. Bauman, NEWSLETTER EDITOR, 488-1860/or at [booknman@aol.com](mailto:booknman@aol.com)

**The Aldus Society**

*Mailing address:*  
Box 1150  
Worthington, Ohio  
43085-1150

Geoff Smith can be contacted at 292-5938 or [smith1@osu.edu](mailto:smith1@osu.edu)

*“Books are the main source of our knowledge, our reservoir of faith, memory, wisdom, morality, poetry, philosophy, history, and science.”*

— Daniel Boorstein

(MESSAGE, from page 1)

membership drive has resulted in over 50 members in this fledgling book club.

Programming is an essential mission of the Club, and two sessions are planned for this spring: an inaugural meeting on May 16th with guest Robert H. Jackson, past president of the Rowfant Club and one of the founders of FABS; and a June exhibition and lecture honoring the Logan Elm Press. For more programming information, see other stories in this newsletter.

Equally important as national and international lecturers, the Aldus Society also hopes to engage its members in regular meetings on topics associated with text and image, collectors groups, local tours and other activities — some events that most members may wish to attend, while others may be planned for smaller groups.

In short, we wish to provide a forum for the fellowship of Columbus book lovers throughout the year, each year, for years to come. We have only just started, but enthusiasm is high and ideas are flowing.

Again, welcome to the Aldus Society.

Geoffrey D. Smith, President  
Head of Rare Books and Manuscripts  
The Ohio State University Libraries

If your mailing to the Aldus Society has been returned from the post office, please re-send it. Our address (Box 1150, Worthington, 43085-1150) is indeed correct, and the kind people at the post office have learned who we are!

## Questions & Answers About The Aldus Society

**Q:** What do I receive in return for my dues?

**A:** A lot. You will receive a membership card which will entitle you to free admission to all programs sponsored by the Society.

In addition, you will receive quarterly issues of the Society's newsletter which will keep you informed of our activities and bring you articles by members who have a particular passion for books or subjects that they wish to share. In addition, Aldus members will receive two yearly newsletters from our affiliated national association, FABS.

Also, from time to time the Society hopes to publish keepsakes and other relevant materials.

**Q:** What topics will the programs cover?

**A:** We have an article on that very subject on page four of this newsletter. Check it out for more information about the quality programs we're lining up.

**Q:** How often will programs be scheduled?

**A:** We are planning eight to nine events each year, which will be held throughout the autumn, winter and spring quarters.

**Q:** How can I become involved with The Aldus Society beyond being just a member?

**A:** Like all non-profit organizations, we rely on members to carry out our programs. Every committee needs volunteers to achieve their goals. Right now, we especially need more members for the Programming Committee, the Membership Committee, and the Communications/Publications Committee.

Your reward is seeing our Society fulfill its ambitious goals to celebrate books and images in all their wonder and glory.

If you would like to join a committee, contact Geoff Smith at 292-5938 or at [smith1@osu.edu](mailto:smith1@osu.edu).

**Q:** How can I pass along names of persons who are interested in becoming members?

**A:** Contact Paul Watkins, Membership Committee Chair, at 291-9528/or at [sbx@sbx-osu.com](mailto:sbx@sbx-osu.com), and your recommended member will promptly receive an invitation.

## Aldus Manutius Pioneers the Production of Books

We have been asked how our organization chose its name. We decided to name our book club after the man we consider among the most distinguished contributors to the history of books.

Aldus Manutius (1450-1515), regarded as the most famous of early Italian printers and the developer of italic type, fairly earned this distinction during his lifetime for the good service he gave as editor, educator and publisher. Aldus left the formal tutoring of individuals to educate entire generations with his accomplishments as a publisher. Aldus employed competent scholars as editors, compositors, and proofreaders to ensure accuracy in his books.

In 1490, around the time that he left Capri for Venice to establish his printing career, Aldus wrote: "I have resolved to devote my life to the cause of scholarship. I have chosen, in place of a life of ease and freedom, an anxious and toilsome career. A man has higher responsibilities than the seeking of his own enjoyment; he should devote himself to honorable labour. Living that is mere existence can be left to men who are content to be animals. Cato compared human existence to iron: when nothing is done to it, it rusts; it is only through constant activity that polish or brilliancy is secured."

He devoted himself to publishing Greek and Roman classics in editions noted for their scrupulous accuracy. Aldus was a pioneer in the printing of Greek when few Greek texts were available in print. A five-volume set of the works of Aristotle, completed in 1498, is the most famous of his editions. To save space in Latin texts, he had a type designed after the Italian cursive script; it is said to be the script of Petrarch. This was the first *italic* type used in books (1501).

Aldus was gifted with a sense of practical values and he intended that the books he made should not be the expensive playthings of learned amateurs, but marketable merchandise. He conceived the idea of printing all the best works in handy size, rather closely printed in small type so that the roaming scholar, for instance, could easily pack a dozen such volumes in his saddlebags and thus carry his working library with him.

Books produced by him are called Aldine, and bear his mark, which was a dolphin and an

## Logan Elm Press Exhibit and Lecture Set for June 14 at OSU's Main Library

The Aldus Society is pleased to announce that its second program will feature the renowned Logan Elm Press and its publications, as well as the long-time director of the Press, Bob Tauber.

Tauber, a master of the book arts, was Director of the Logan Elm Press at The Ohio State University from 1980 until its closing in 1994.

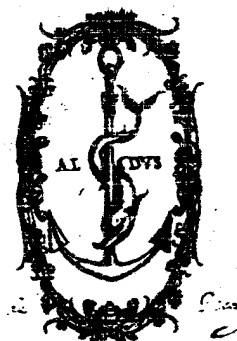
The Press was created to celebrate and preserve the book arts, which some fear could be lost in this age of mass production and technology. The books created at the Press were printed by hand in the same way Gutenberg's were, often on paper made at the Press; they included original art and were hand bound.

Logan Elm Press books have been widely recognized for their excellence. They were featured in a traveling exhibit, "Book Arts USA" and in a New York Public Library exhibit, "Eighty from the Eighties: A Decade of Fine Printing."

Tauber has promoted the book arts, not only through the Logan Elm Press, but also through his sponsorship of a two-day seminar on "The Art of the Contemporary Book" in 1991. He also created "The Art of the Book" exhibit for the Upper Arlington Cultural Arts Commission in 1994.

He's an entertaining speaker who conveys authority on all aspects of the book, its history, its manufacture, and its future.

The exhibit will be running during the month of June in Bricker Hall at OSU; and the evening program (which will include viewing of the exhibit) will be held on June 14 at 7:30 p.m. in Room 122 of OSU's Main Library.



anchor. The Aldine Press was later managed by other members of his family including a son, Paulus Manutius (1512-74) and a grandson, Aldus Manutius (1547-97), who continued the press through the 16th century.

ABOVE: The Aldine logo was changed a number of times throughout the years, but has always remained recognizable through its use of the dolphin and anchor.

## Volunteers Needed

The Aldus Society is an organization of book-loving volunteers, and as such, will be relying on our members to keep the club functioning.

We are seeking volunteers to help produce this newsletter and work on other publications for the society. We would like people to help out on the Membership Committee, and would welcome additional people to serve on the Board of Trustees. We need *your* ideas for programming, as this is *your* society!

Above all, we welcome your enthusiasm... an enthusiasm for books and text and images and for this society of fellow bibliophiles.

Any questions? Phone/e-mail Aldus president Geoff Smith (292-5938 or at [smith1@osu.edu](mailto:smith1@osu.edu)) and let him know what you'd like to do for our organization!



## Future Programs Reflect Broad Range of Interests

The Aldus Society is dedicated to providing programs of interest to its members. We are working on several interesting possibilities for this fall, including a program presented by British printer Graham Moss, and a program by Bruce McKitterick, a prominent bookseller with a specialty in sixteenth and seventeenth Continental books.

We hope that Aldus members may be able to present programs based on their bibliophilic interests, as well.

Among the many program ideas we are working on are:

- Collecting various authors such as James Thurber and Mark Twain
- How the Internet has affected book collecting
- History of women's roles in the book arts
- Reference material helpful to collectors
- History of illustrated books
- Collecting children's books
- Preservation and restoration of books
- Making fine papers
- Calligraphy and history of scripts prior to printing
- History of typography
- Early printing in the Ohio Valley
- Trips to interesting collections/exhibitions
- OSU Collections
- Illuminated manuscripts

If you have further suggestions for programming, please let us know!

**Not a Member Yet? Copy or Clip this Form and Return it TODAY!**



**The Aldus Society**  
*A Columbus Book Club*

"May you find yourself always in the company of good books and kindred spirits."

— Colleen Sell

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests or Meeting Ideas:

#### Yearly Dues:

- \$25 - Individual
- \$40 - Family
- \$50 - Patron
- \$100 - Founder
- \$10 - Student

*We welcome the names and addresses of anyone you think would like to join our organization.*

**Return this form with your check to the Aldus Society, Box 1150, Worthington, Ohio 43085-1150**