

## Time Machines

Six books and films from the Golden Age of Cinema

Michael Gorman

### Collecting Books

There are many reasons why we collect books. Some combination of aesthetics, subject matter and form, favorite authors, association – the reasons are as varied and multitudinous as book collectors themselves. Most of us acquire groups of books because they are defined by one or more of these characteristics. I am more an amasser of books than a true collector but amid those many shelves there are subcollections of value to me if not to the book market. Books by and about P.G. Wodehouse; early editions of books by Victorians – not just the greats (Stevenson, Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope) but also by the likes of Harrison Ainsworth, Albert Smith, Charles Lever, and Edward Bulwer-Lytton; books of poetry; green Penguins and blue Pelicans; books on cricket; English guide books; and books of and on mid-20th-century British politics. I have a few signed copies of books I value – my copy of the published script of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (Faber, 1957) is signed by the lovely Mary Ure – she played Alison in the original cast. I collected Sherlockian apocrypha (spoofs, parodies, and other narrative spin-offs using Conan Doyle's characters) until that market became oversaturated and the supply greatly exceeded my diminishing demand. Among all this clutter, I have one collection that has come about in the past decade – books by forgotten or almost forgotten authors that were the basis of forgotten or almost forgotten films.

When I began library work – as the most junior of assistants in a London public library 60 years ago – indiscriminate reading that was and is my lifelong habit notably increased. This included then current and popular novels by authors who are, at best, dimly remem-



*Kitty Foyle*, by Christopher Morley, was the tenth-best-selling novel of 1939. Shown here: Ginger Rogers (as *Kitty Foyle*), K.T. Stevens, and Mary Treen from the 1940 movie.

bered today. They were mostly Americans and the novels were mostly set in places that I knew only through the writings and from films. They might as well have been set in a faerie kingdom for all the resemblance the settings had to postwar North West London or the action in them to my daily life. Does anyone today read or remember Herman Wouk, James Gould Cozzens, Thomas B. Costain, Taylor Caldwell, Sloane Wilson, or Robert Ruark? They all wrote big books – 600 pages or more of characters, incidents, and, importantly for me at that time, sex. The latter seems mild by modern standards but fizzed in my mind then. The books typically featured in the best-seller lists and book clubs of the 1950s. I also went to the cinema – the Hendon Odeon or the Hendon Central Gaumont – at least once a week, and saw many Hollywood films. The books and films combined to create for me an America that was irresistibly alluring and seductive – a place of guns, villains, mean streets, humor, silken legs, gumshoes, rollicking political campaigns,

newsboys on bicycles, wisecracks, sunshine, cocktails, and adultery – all of which were, in fact or as far as I knew, absent from my dreary suburb. That immersion in middlebrow popular culture ended when my tastes in literature and cinema veered to the highbrow and the pretentious. That was a time when I could be found reading Joyce or Camus and Russian novels in translation; watching Bergman and Fellini films at the Hampstead Everyman (a cinema where bearded men sold little poetry magazines to the people waiting in lines to see the latest Godard or other *nouvelle vague* film); writing execrable poetry; and wearing black turtleneck sweaters.

### Old Films

I often think the only pure blessing of modern technology is the cable channel Turner Classic Movies. TCM combined with another manifestation of modern magic – the ability to record films and view them at will – has enriched my retirement years,

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greatly increased my knowledge and appreciation of films made in the Golden Age (roughly from the first talkies to the mid-1950s), and provoked the reading and collecting of books upon which many of these films are based. Supplementing my TCM viewing with the purchase of DVDs, I watch several old films each week and – once a librarian always a librarian – have kept lists of the films in chronological order with notes on their principal stars and directors. The earliest films in the list date from 1929 – *Bulldog Drummond*, starring Ronald Colman and Joan Bennett, and *The Letter*, starring Jeanne Eagels and Herbert Marshall. The first is based on the rather awful novels by “Sapper” (H.H. McNeil) – the Ian Fleming of his day and an even worse writer – and the second on a short story by W. Somerset Maugham that takes place in one of the sunny locations full of shady people that were his favorite settings. (There is a better-known 1940 version of *The Letter*, starring Bette Davis and, again, Herbert Marshall, though in a different role.) At the end of the Golden Age (arbitrarily decided by me to be 1955), the list contains, among others, *The Man with the Golden Arm*, starring Frank Sinatra and Eleanor Parker, and *The End of the Affair*, starring Deborah Kerr and Van Johnson; adaptations of books by, respectively, Nelson Algren and Graham Greene. Though I own both those books (and a collection of Maugham’s stories) and read them more than 50 years ago, they are not the kind of books I am concerned with here. Those authors and the films made from their books are justly esteemed. I write here of films and books that are all but forgotten.

### Books and Films in One Year

Best-seller lists tell you a lot about their times – mixtures of the famous and forgotten, as are the films to which they give rise. For example, the top selling novels of 1939 in the U.S. were:

1. *The Grapes of Wrath*, by John Steinbeck.
2. *All This, and Heaven Too*, by Rachel Field
3. *Rebecca*, by Daphne du Maurier
4. *Wickford Point*, by John P. Marquand
5. *Escape*, by Ethel Vance
6. *Disputed Passage*, by Lloyd C. Douglas
7. *The Yearling*, by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings
8. *The Tree of Liberty*, by Elizabeth Page
9. *The Nazarene*, by Sholem Asch
10. *Kitty Foyle*, by Christopher Morley

All but two were made into films. As with all such instances, there is no necessary correlation between the quality of the books and that of the movies made from them.

• John Steinbeck (1902-1968) was both a critical and a popular success and *The Grapes of Wrath* (in

my opinion his best novel) was made into a great film, starring Henry Fonda and directed by John Ford, who won the 1940 Best Director Oscar.

• Rachel Field (1894-1942) was a writer of novels, books for children and poems. *All This, and Heaven Too*, a historical novel, was made into a popular film.

• *Rebecca* is a classic case of a middlebrow novel (by Daphne du Maurier, 1907-1989) being transmuted by a director of genius (Alfred Hitchcock) into a great film (starring the luminous Joan Fontaine and Laurence Olivier).

• John P. Marquand’s (1893-1960) spy stories gave rise to the Mr. Moto films and his satirical novel, *The Late George Apley*, was made into a good film starring Ronald Colman (1947). However, *Wickford Point*, his first “serious” novel, was not filmed.

• *Escape*, an anti-Nazi melodrama, was made into a middling film starring Norma Shearer and Robert Taylor. Grace Zaring Stone (1891-1991) used the pseudonym Ethel Vance because her daughter was then living in Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia.

• Lloyd C. Douglas (1877-1951), an ordained minister, was once the undisputed king of middlebrow fiction, famous for his over-the-top biblical epic *The Robe* (filmed in 1953 starring Richard Burton) and the soapy *Magnificent Obsession* (filmed in 1935, starring Robert Taylor, and again in 1954 with Rock Hudson). *Disputed Passage*, another moralistic tale of atonement, was made into a terrible film starring Dorothy Lamour as a Chinese woman.

• Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (1896-1953) won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Yearling*, which topped the best-seller list in 1938 and remained on it in 1939. It was the basis of a very popular tearjerker (1946) starring Gregory Peck and Jane Wyman.

• *The Tree of Liberty*, a lengthy Revolutionary War family saga by Elizabeth Page (1889-1969), was made into the film *The Howards of Virginia* (1940), starring Cary Grant and Martha Scott, each miscast.

• Sholem Asch (1880-1957), a Pole who wrote in Yiddish, was an acclaimed writer of novels and drama about Jewish life in Poland and in the U.S. (where he became a naturalized citizen). The frankness and realism of his stories often got him into hot water. *The Nazarene* (the first of a trilogy, 1939-1949 – the others were *The Apostle* and *Mary*) also caused controversy (he was accused of promoting Christianity). They were biblical epics – then a very popular genre. Given that popularity and that the book was a best seller, it is odd that it was not filmed. Perhaps its origins were too controversial?

• Who now reads Christopher Morley (1890-1957)? He was a prolific novelist, essayist, journalist, and poet who published a hundred or so books. Apart from *Kitty Foyle* and, possibly, *Thunder on the Left*, very few are remembered, and his name lives on, if at all, as an avid Sherlockian and cofounder of the



Baker Street Irregulars. The film *Kitty Foyle* (1940), starring the inimitable Ginger Rogers in her prime and the under-rated Dennis Morgan, is a superior example of what were dismissed, then, as “women’s films.”

## The Forgotten and Half-remembered

I own many books that have been made into films but have never viewed them as part of a discrete collection. After all, many of the best-known films are based on the novels of Dickens, Thomas Hardy, Graham Greene, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Melville, Louisa May Alcott, the Brontë sisters and other brightly shining literary stars. My first conscious attempt to collect lesser-known and forgotten books that were the basis of lesser-known and forgotten films came from watching a film starring Spencer Tracy called *The Seventh Cross*. Intrigued by both the story and the setting, I discovered that the film was based on a novel by a German writer who used the pseudonym Anna Seghers. Thus, my small collection was started not by an American publication but with a book written far from Hollywood’s dream factory and its concerns.

What follows is a list of six books from my collection and the films made from them.

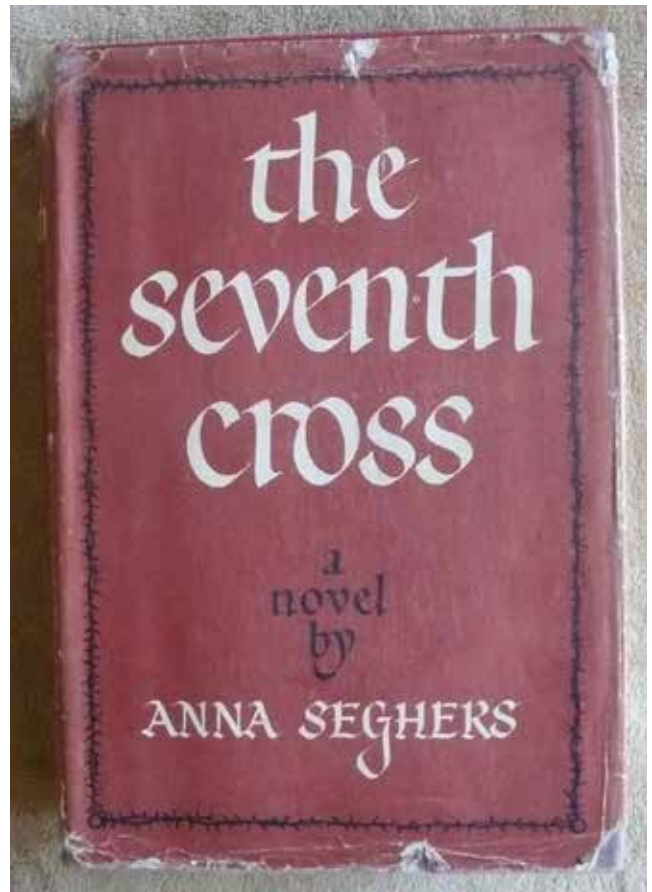
Anna Seghers  
*The Seventh Cross*  
(*Das siebte Kreuz*)

Anna Seghers was born Netty Reiling in Mainz, Germany, in 1900, the only child of Orthodox Jewish parents. Her father was an antiquarian art dealer and her mother from a wealthy Frankfurt family. Although she never converted to Christianity, Catholic Mainz influenced her greatly, especially the writings of Sören Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and Martin Buber (1878-1965). Consequently, her work is full of Christian symbolism and motifs. Influenced by the First World War and its disastrous consequences for Germany, she joined the German Communist Party and remained a committed Communist for the rest of her life. Anna Seghers was highly cultured and educated, graduating from the University of Heidelberg in 1924, where she had studied (incredibly, given our current era of microspecialization) Chinese language and culture, German, French and Russian literature, sociology, and history, ultimately obtaining a doctorate in art history. Her dissertation was called “*Jude und Judentum im Werke Rembrandts*” (Jews

and Judaism in the Work of Rembrandt).

Long before the conservative aristocratic and middle-class elements of interwar Germany awoke to the menace of Hitler and the Brown Shirts, the numerous and militant socialists and communists opposed and resisted the thugs, often in the streets and violently. They included Netty Reiling and the man who later became her husband, the Jewish-Hungarian Ladislaus Rádványi (1900-1978). They married in 1925 and were involved in many of the educational endeavors and political struggles of the Weimar Republic. When the Nazis came to power (let us never forget they were elected), the struggle and the Nazi persecution of the left escalated. Netty Reiling was arrested and imprisoned briefly, then fled to Switzerland and on to Paris. Her husband was imprisoned in a French concentration camp for a time. On his release, the couple and their two children left France and made their way to New York. They were refused entry and perforce joined many European exiles in Mexico, which had a more enlightened policy toward refugees than the U.S. The family spent the war years in Mexico. They returned to Germany in 1947. After the creation of East Germany (the DDR), Seghers was persuaded to move to East Berlin, and the party and state made much of her. Despite her many crises of conscience and disillusionment, she remained loyal to the cause to which she had devoted her life and art. She was given a state funeral by the DDR in 1983.

Anna Seghers’s first publication was the story “*Die Toten auf der Insel Djal*” (The Dead on the Island of Djal), subtitled “A legend from the Dutch, retold by Antje Seghers.” Her first published novel – *Der Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara* (The Revolt of the



Fishermen) – appeared in 1928 under the name Anna Seghers, which she used for all her writings thereafter. (The pseudonym was taken from the painter Hercules Seghers, a contemporary of Rembrandt.) Her last book was *Drei Frauen aus Haiti* (Three Women from Haiti) published in 1980. In between, she wrote a very large number of stories, novels, essays, and other works – her collected works and letters, serially published in Berlin, since 2000, is expected to total 25 volumes. There was an enduring tension in her works between her commitment to the class struggle and the poetic and artistic wellsprings of her cre-

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activity, not to mention the mythic and Christian symbolism that pervades her fiction. *The Seventh Cross* was published in Vichy France in German in 1942. It has been translated into many languages, including several English translations. Other books that have appeared in English include *Revolt of the Fishermen of Santa Barbara*, *A Price on His Head*, *Transit*, and *Transit Visa*, as well as various stories.

The film *The Seventh Cross* was released in 1944. It is both a powerful piece of anti-Nazi propaganda and a compelling story of a hunted man. Seven men led by the main character – George Heisler (Spencer Tracy) – manage to escape from a concentration camp for dissidents. The camp commandant erects seven crosses and, as each man is hunted down by the Gestapo and returned to the camp, he is put to death on a cross. Only Heisler remains at large, sheltered for a time by a sympathetic couple (played by Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy) and a maid (Swedish actress Signe Hasso). As the film winds to its inevitable and unhappy conclusion, the humanity of the couple and the maid are a light in the Nazi darkness and Heisler's martyrdom is, in its way, a beacon of hope for mankind, thus in a veiled way embodying Seghers' Christian symbolism. The film was made by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in Culver City, California. Helen Deutsch (a composer and songwriter as well as a screenwriter) wrote the screenplay; the director was Fred Zinneman.

The first American edition of an English translation of *The Seventh Cross* was published by Little, Brown in Boston in 1942. It was translated into English and abridged by James A. Galston. A fine copy, with dust wrapper, can be obtained for about \$50.

Faith Baldwin  
*Skyscraper*  
 (filmed as *Skyscraper Souls*)

Few of the other writers whose books are in my small collection are of Anna Seghers's caliber. Most were craftspeople writing deservedly popular novels. No-one should underestimate the difficulty of writing well-made popular fiction, especially of the kind that can form the basis of popular films. Faith Baldwin (1893-1978) and Anna Seghers were very different writers. In place of political commitment and literary artistry, Baldwin gave us light fiction and compelling stories about people with money, good manners, breeding, and conventional morality. Her novels all have



happy endings and are infused with the morality of their time, even though there are undercurrents that hint at more serious social and economic topics.

Faith Baldwin was born in October 1893 in New York and died in March 1978 in Connecticut. She came from comfortable circumstances and attended private girls' academies and a finishing school. She married in 1920 and the couple had four children. Her literary career began in the then-lucrative business of six-part romance serials in women's magazines. She published her



first novel, *Mavis of Green Hill*, in 1921; and her last, *Adam's Eden*, in 1978. Many of the titles sound like something Wodehouse would have made up for his fictional romance novelist – Rosie M. Banks. They include *Babs*, *a Story of Divine Corners*; *Testament of Trust*; and *The Lonely Doctor*. It would be easy to make fun of Baldwin's work or dismiss it as simplistic, moralistic, and without literary significance. In modern terms, Baldwin identified and catered to a market – working women and housewives wishing to lose themselves in dreams of wealth, success, and requited love. As anyone who has attempted to write for money can attest, doing that successfully is much harder than it might appear; and doing it successfully for more than half a century argues for a high level of craft and a great deal of sustained hard work. Both Baldwin's output and success are hard to believe. In addition to many novels, she wrote

innumerable articles, stories, and newspaper columns; the *Faith Baldwin Romance Hour* was popular on ABC television in the 1950s; many of her books were made into films; and she made enormous amounts of money. In 1936, for example, three of her previously serialized novels were published as books; five more were being serialized, and four were made into films. She earned more than \$300,000 in that year, in the depths of the Depression – many millions of dollars in today's money.

Baldwin's *Skyscraper* was first published as a serial in *Cosmopolitan* in 1931. It tells the story



of people who work in a midtown Manhattan skyscraper that is “the most recent, if not the last, word in structural engineering” and consisting of “impossible masses of steel and stone... shaped, shrieking their protest, into a pattern of progress, into a concrete expression of man’s upward striving.” (One senses Dr. Freud would have had something to say about that last.) The building has been financed by an unscrupulous bank mogul who encourages his wife to travel the world so he can carry on affairs (one of his previous amours was his secretary) and engage in financial manipulations, insider trading, and the like. The secretary befriends our young, pretty, poor, but honest heroine – Lynn Harding – who is in love with a bank teller called Tom. They are too poor to marry, though, and, even if they could, our heroine would have to give up her job as, in those days for middle-class women, marriage and career were incompatible. Our heroine comes to attention of the mogul and there are misunderstandings, both financial and romantic. All comes right in the end: Lynn – “an honest, resourceful, hard-working, fun-loving, good girl” – and Tom are united, and the mogul’s financial shenanigans are exposed.

The film *Skyscraper Souls* was released in 1932. It starred the then immensely popular Warren William as the sexually and financially immoral mogul – David Dwight – and the Irish actor Maureen O’Sullivan (“Jane” in *Tarzan the Ape Man* and later Mia Farrow’s mother) as Lynn. It was a pre-Hays Code film and the sexual situations are more explicit on-screen than in any of Baldwin’s novels. The film was made at MGM studios in Culver City, California, though such is the skill of the effects that the story’s location in New York is believable. Edgar Selwyn, also a playwright and producer, is the credited director.

In reading *Skyscraper* and watching *Skyscraper Souls* we travel back, not to the real lives of people in the Depression but to their dream lives and the world as it might have been if some of those dreams had come true.

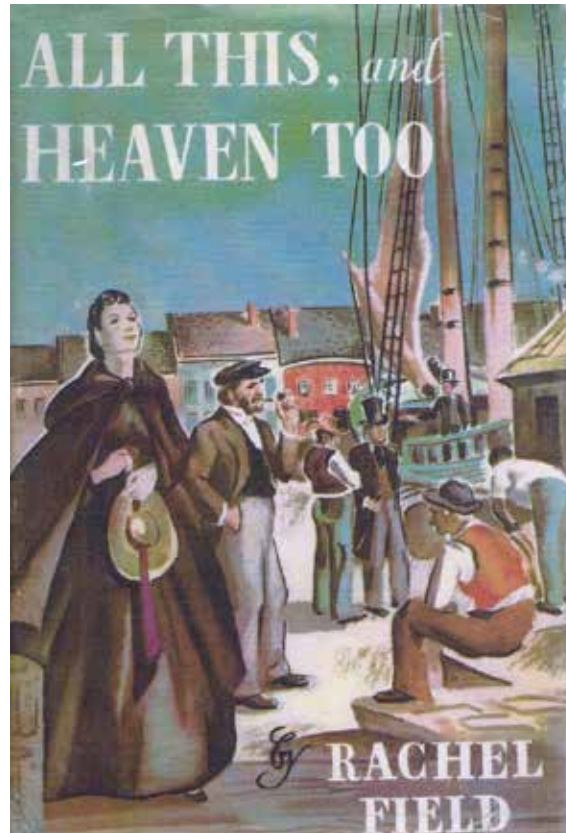
The first edition of *Skyscraper* was published by *Cosmopolitan Book Corporation* in New York in 1931. A good copy with dust wrapper can be had for \$300.

## Rachel Field

### *All This, and Heaven Too*

Rachel Field (1894-1942) was a poet, children’s book author, playwright, and novelist. She grew up in Massachusetts and was educated at Radcliffe. The works

produced during her short life were infused with her enthusiasm for nature, particularly that of Maine, and her fervent Christianity. Both are present in her Newberry Honor award-winning *Calico Bush* (1931), a historical novel for young adults (or “older children” as they were known then) set on the coast of Maine in the time of early settlement. Field won the Newberry Award in 1930 for her children’s novel *Hitty, Her First Hundred*



*Years*, the tale of a doll made in the 1820s. Her posthumously published *A Prayer for a Child* (1944), illustrated by Elizabeth Orton Jones won the Caldecott Medal (for children’s picture books) in 1945. The *Kirkus Review* described it as:

One of the loveliest books of the season – a beautiful piece of bookmaking, with the delicate coloring of Elizabeth Orton Jones’ exquisite drawings perfectly reproduced; and the text, a prayer actually written for one child, but appealing to all, touching as it does on things common to every child’s understanding and experience. The complete prayer is given at the start; then each step is illustrated with a full-page picture, perfectly interpreting the reverent but childlike and human quality of the prayer.

Field had some success as a playwright – her romantic play *The Londonderry Air* was made into a British film in 1938. Three of her novels were also made into films: *Time Out of Mind*

(1935; filmed in 1947); *All This, and Heaven Too* (1938); and *And Now Tomorrow* (1938, filmed in 1940). Rachel Field died in 1942, of complications following surgery, at the age of 47.

The story line of *All This, and Heaven Too* follows from Field’s own family history. On the 17th of August 1847, Charles Laure Hugues Théobald, duc de Choiseul-Praslin, his wife, Fanny Altarice Rosalba, duchesse de Choiseul-Praslin, and their nine children spent the night in their residence in the Faubourg Sainte-Honore, Paris. Before dawn, their servants, awakened by screams, found the duchesse dying of blunt force trauma and many stab wounds; the evidence incriminated the duc. Many scenes of violent confrontation between the married couple had centered on the duc’s relationship with their children’s governess – 35-year-old Henriette Deluzy-Desportes – who was dismissed from the household only two weeks before the murder. The governess had apparently been the duc’s mistress and he was planning to elope with her. The duc was arrested and held in the Luxembourg Palace while awaiting trial by his peers. On the 18th of August 1847 he committed suicide by swallowing poison. Public opinion, especially female public opinion, ran strongly against Henriette and she decided to leave France to settle in

America. She did well in New York, rising to become principal of the Female Art School of the Cooper Union. She met and married (in 1851) a member of a very distinguished family – the clergyman and author Henry M. Field. By the time of her death in 1874, she had become a leading light of New York society. Rachel Field, her grand-niece, wrote a novel based on *l’affaire Choiseul-Praslin* and Henriette’s life in *All This, and Heaven Too*.

Field’s novel was made into a film of the same title that was released in 1940. Even more than the novel, the film skews the story in favor of the duc and his mistress Henriette. The duchesse, as played by Barbara O’Neil (who played Scarlett O’Hará’s mother in *Gone with the Wind*) is a scheming, jealous, possessive harridan and the duc (played by Charles Boyer) a put-upon husband looking for love and finding it (albeit unconsummated) in the demure governess. The latter is

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played by Bette Davis, uncharacteristically sweet, kind, and passive. The film is told as a flashback when Henriette's past catches up with her in New York. Though at odds with the probable facts of the real-life case, the film is a good example of the kind of well-made "woman's picture" that Warner Brothers and other studios created at that time. It was made at Warner's Burbank, California, studios and directed by Anatole Litvak, with a fine score by Max Steiner.

The first edition of *All This, and Heaven Too* was published by Macmillan in New York in 1938. A good copy with dust wrapper can be bought for \$25 or so. The "motion picture" edition, with stills from the film, was published by Macmillan in 1940. A good copy with dust wrapper can be had for about \$20.

Vicki Baum  
*Hotel Berlin '43*

Vicki Baum was born Hedwig Baum to an Austrian-Jewish family in Vienna in January 1888. She had an unhappy but comfortably off childhood, idolizing her ailing mother and dominated by her harsh father. (Revealingly, he had wanted a son and for that son to be called 'Victor.' It seems that Baum's choice of a pseudonymous first name was no accident.) Musically gifted, at the age of 19 she made her debut as the harpist (the only woman) in the 80-strong predecessor of the present-day Vienna Symphony. She performed the premiere of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* in Munich (1911). After a short, failed marriage to a failed author, she met and married Richard Lert, an opera director. She bore two sons amid the hardships of World War I Germany and, always a facile writer, gave up her musical career to be a mother and author. Her first success came with her second novel *Der Eingang zur Bühne* (1920), published in English as *Once in Vienna* (1940). This led to contracts with publishing houses and a succession of novels that combined social realism with romance and melodrama – an immensely popular combination. Her private life and writings were all in the context of the turbulence of post-World War I Germany, the Weimar Republic, and the rise of the Nazis. Already a celebrity and a commercial, if not high literary, success in Germany, Vicki Baum became internationally famous with the publication of *Menschen im Hotel* in 1929. The book, translated into English as *Grand*

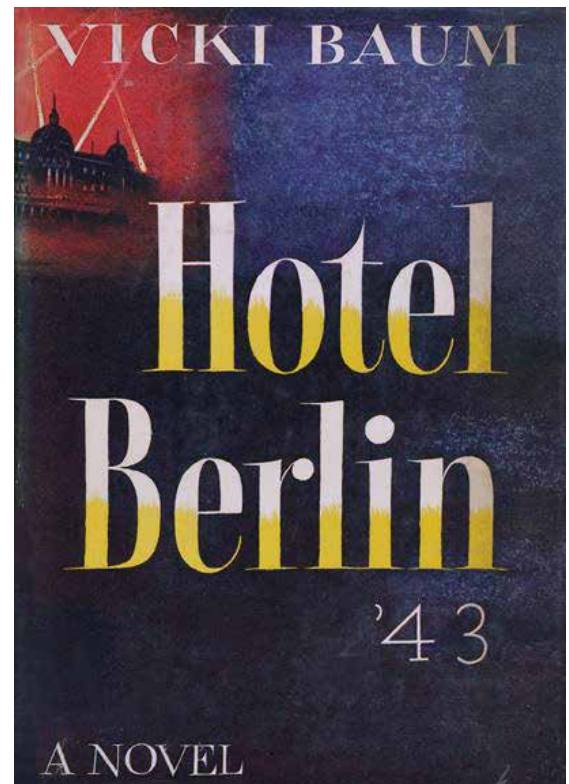
*Hotel* (1930) became an international best seller, was dramatized and presented in Berlin and on Broadway, and was filmed with an all-star cast that included Greta Garbo, Lionel and John Barrymore, Wallace Beery, and Joan Crawford. To Baum, the hotel was as much a symbol of modernity as the skyscraper was to Faith Baldwin. In addition, each allowed the interaction of disparate characters and the interweaving of stories.

Vicki Baum traveled to the U.S. to publicize *Grand Hotel* at the behest of her American publisher, Doubleday. A combination of the deteriorating political situation in Germany and Austria and a genuine liking for America led the family to move permanently to the U.S. in 1932. They settled in California. Richard Lert pursued his musical career and Baum wrote for films, and published articles and novels. She became a U.S. citizen in 1938. She continued to write in German until 1941, when, unhappy with the quality of the English translations, wrote mostly in English. She had serious literary aspirations, but it was the melodramas for which she was famous that paid the bills. Literary novels such as *The Mustard Seed* (1953) did not do nearly as well as her more commercial work. In her autobiography – *It Was All Quite Different* – published posthumously in 1964, Baum described herself as "a first-rate writer of the second rank," and that she was. Vicki Baum died of leukemia in Hollywood in August 1960.

*Hotel Berlin '43* is obviously a bid by Baum to write another *Grand Hotel*. It has a similar setting but amid the far more difficult conditions of bombing raids and wartime deprivation. Baum writes:

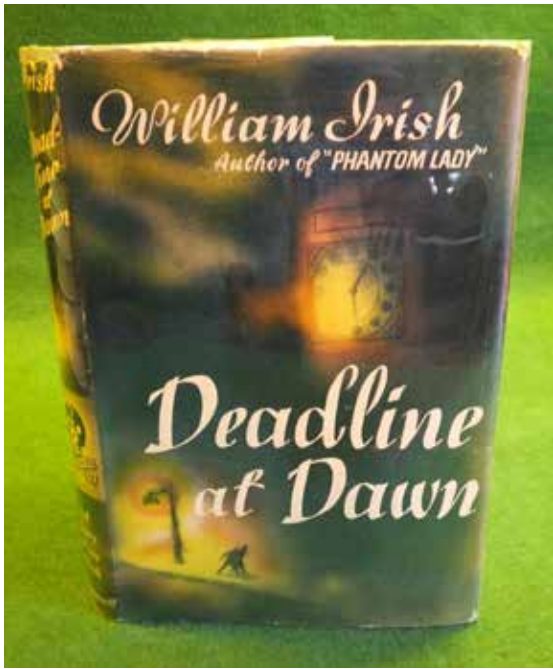
Everywhere in the lobby with its sumptuous marble pillar and gilded stucco were the hidden signs of decay. The elevator bore a sign "Out of order." Some of the window panes were shattered from the last air raid and the windows temporarily boarded up.

The symbolism of a decaying hotel that had been "a comfortable island" and a "show window to put their [the Nazis'] new Germany on display" indicated what Baum



was up to. This is a "hotel novel" but one that sets out to show two things – the rottenness of Hitler's New Order and the fact that not all Germans were Nazis. The large cast of characters includes fanatical Nazis and a British Nazi propagandist (perhaps based on William Joyce – "Lord Haw-Haw"), but also a Prussian aristocrat – a general opposed to Hitler;





William Irish  
(Cornell Woolrich)  
*Deadline at Dawn*

Cornell George Hopley-Woolrich was born in December 1903. He spent most of his childhood and adolescence in Mexico with his father after his parents separated. He returned to New York before attending Columbia for a year. He lived in New York with his mother, excepting one short interlude, for the rest of his life. He published six “jazz age” novels heavily influenced by Scott Fitzgerald with some success. His second novel – *Children of the Ritz* (1927) – led to an offer to go to Hollywood as a screenwriter. While there he married the 21-year-old daughter

of the head of Vitagraph studios. Both his screenwriting career and his marriage failed – the latter (never consummated) was annulled in 1933, long after Woolrich had returned to New York and his mother. His novels sold modestly. When the seventh – *I Love You, Paris* – failed to find a publisher, Woolrich threw the manuscript away and turned to the more lucrative genre of pulp detective fiction. His prolific output appeared in the pulp magazines of the time – notably *Argosy*, *Black Mask*, and *Thrilling Mystery*. His first six detective novels, beginning with *The Bride Wore Black* (1940), all had “black” in their titles. This was symbolically apt for both the noirish and claustrophobically intense nature of the books and their contributions to the film noir boom of the 1940s. His novels and stories were the basis of more films than any other crime writer’s. In addition to the books and stories published under his own name, Woolrich used the pseudonyms George Hopley and William Irish.

Woolrich and his mother – Claire – lived in the Hotel Marseilles in Harlem, described as “a squalid apartment building, among a group of thieves, prostitutes and lowlifes that would not be out of place in Woolrich’s dark fictional world.” This despite his making good money from his writings. His mother died in 1957 and, though Woolrich moved to more salubrious hotels, he became a recluse and declined both mentally and physically. Woolrich was alcoholic, tormented with guilt about his homosexuality (he converted to Roman Catholicism late in life), and diabetic. He neglected to deal with a foot infection that

led to his leg being amputated. Woolrich died within a year of this, emaciated and alone, in 1968, leaving nearly a million dollars to endow a writing scholarship at Columbia – in his mother’s name.

Though Woolrich had failed as a screenwriter, his novels and stories are intensely cinematic in nature, summoning vivid images on every page and eminently filmable. The most famous of those films is Hitchcock’s *Rear Window* (1954), based on Woolrich’s story *It Had to Be Murder* (1942). Among the many other adaptations are: *Black Angel* (1946), starring Dan Duryea; *The Night Has a Thousand Eyes* (1948), starring Edward G. Robinson; *The Window* (1949), starring Barbara Hale and Bobby Driscoll; and the French films *J’ai épousé un ombre* (1983), directed by Claude Chabrol and based on Woolrich’s *I Married a Dead Man*; and, *La mariée éte en noir* (*The Bride Wore Black*, 1968) directed by Truffaut and starring Jeanne Moreau.

Woolrich’s novel *Deadline at Dawn* was published under the name “William Irish” in 1944. It tells the story of a hardened ten-cents-a-dance “hostess,” Brick, who has left her home in small town Iowa to seek fame and fortune and wound up, her dreams all gone, being mauled in a cheap dance hall. Still, she is too proud to admit defeat and return home. One night she meets a naive young man – Quinn – from her hometown and lets him walk her home. He wants to clear his conscience by returning some stolen money. They agree to do that together, then take the bus back to Iowa, but find the man from whom the money was stolen dead in his apartment. They have only hours to find the killer. The book is typical of Woolrich in its seedy milieu, the down-on-their-luck protagonists, the psychological intensity of the compressed time frame, and the convoluted characters and clues found in the ad hoc couple’s brief hours together.

The film of the same name, released in 1946, is substantially different from the novel. The main characters have different names and even the identity of the murderer (a final surprising twist) is different, but the novel’s milieu and intensity are there. The film starred Susan Hayward and Bill Williams as the young couple seeking a murderer, and the Hungarian Paul Lukas as a cabdriver who helps them. One advantage that the film has over the book is that its script was by the gifted (and later blacklisted) playwright Clifford Odets. It is a relatively rare example of a film with better

See *BOOKS AND FILMS*, page 8

dialogue than the book on which it is based. *Deadline at Dawn* was directed by Harold Clurman and made in the studios of 20th Century Fox in Century City, California.

The first edition of *Deadline at Dawn* was published by Lippincott in Philadelphia in 1944. A good copy, with dust wrapper, typically sells for \$300 or more. The "motion picture" edition, with stills from the film, was published by Tower Books (Cleveland and New York) in 1946. A good copy with dust wrapper can be had for about \$50.

## Al Morgan

### *The Great Man*

Al Morgan was born in New York in 1920. He was best known as a TV producer, but was also a playwright, theater critic, journalist, and the author of 11 novels. He graduated from New York University, then served as an infantryman in World War II in Italy (Anzio) and France, and was in Germany for the liberation of the concentration camps. He received a Silver Star, a Purple Heart, and the *Croix de Guerre*. After being injured, he worked as a war correspondent. He completed his service as head of drama for the Armed Forces Network in Paris. After World War II, Morgan had a long career in both radio and television as a producer, writer, and performer at all three of the major networks. At CBS he was writer-producer of *This Is New York* and writer-producer with the CBS documentary unit. He won an award as writer-producer of *The High Mountain*, a CBS documentary on race relations in America. At NBC he was a writer for *The Home Show* and producer of *The Today Show* (1961-1968). At ABC he was a performer and interviewer on the *Late Night Show*. He was also a producer at PBS's Children's Television Workshop. In 1968 he won an Emmy for contributions to television. He said, "in the course of my career I have written or produced in the neighborhood of 5,000 radio and TV programs."

Morgan was theater and film critic for CBS Radio and reviewed books for the *New York Herald Tribune* and the *Saturday Review of Literature*. He was briefly the drama critic for *New York Magazine* and *Show Business Illustrated*. He wrote two Broadway plays – *Minor Miracle* and *Oh, Captain!*, a musical cowritten with José Ferrer based on the British film *The Captain's Paradise* (1953). Al Morgan published 11 novels, including *Cast of Characters* (1957;

the story of the premiere of a film and the screenwriter, director, editor, and actors who made it); *One Star General* (1959; a journalist discovering the complicated story of a national hero); and *The Whole World is Watching* (1972; TV journalists reporting on the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago). All, to a greater or lesser degree, tell stories in which mass media play a part. Al Morgan died in March 2011 in Vermont.

Arthur Godfrey (1903-1983), "The Ol' Redhead," was a very popular radio and TV host and pitchman. He started as a local radio personality who played the banjo and the ukulele on air (he was later inducted into both the radio and ukulele halls of fame as well as having three stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame). Godfrey was known for his folksy sincerity (he made his name at his seemingly heart-felt and touching commentary on the funeral of FDR for the CBS radio network) and his identification and promotion of talent. In his prime, he emceed several media shows running simultaneously. As is not uncommon, his public persona was at odds with his actual nature – that of a manipulative and controlling bully. This aspect came out when he fired, live on air, one of the acts he had nurtured, because the individual involved had the temerity to hire an agent. That began the erosion of his reputation, though he died a mostly popular, if only half-remembered, favorite. He had the dubious distinction of being both part of the inspiration for the "Lonesome Rhodes" character in the film *A Face in the Crowd* (1956), starring Andy Griffith and Patricia Neal, written by Budd Schulberg, and directed by Elia Kazan; and the inspiration for the Herb Fuller character in Al Morgan's novel *The Great Man* and the film made from it.

*The Great Man* relates the making of a radio memorial to a beloved broadcast personality who traded in corny jokes, flag-wagging patriotism, and a down-home personality.



Writing about what he knows gives us a clear and candid picture (albeit fictional) of the people and milieu of a fictitious version of the Big Three TV networks in the 1950s. When the book begins, Fuller has just died in an



automobile accident and Ed Harris, a cynical show business reporter, is assigned to make the memorial program. A disclaimer prior to the contents page reads "All characters and incidents in this novel are fictional and any resemblance to any persons living or dead is purely coincidental." This legal boilerplate is even less truthful than usual. There are many precise parallels between Fuller and the real Arthur Godfrey. Ed Harris, who starts by taking the assignment simply as a necessary chore, finds that the "beloved" Fuller was cordially hated by almost everyone with whom he came in contact. There is the singer Fuller discovered, made his mistress, and then ruined when she left him for another man. Then there is the local radio owner who gave Fuller his first big break but has become disillusioned by his heavy drinking and promiscuous life. A war correspondent tells Harris that Fuller's intrepid reporting from battle zones and tales of comforting a dying soldier were all fabricated. More sordid details emerge with each person interviewed. Harris, enmeshed in the politics of network TV, on a tight deadline, and anxious to prove himself as a worthy successor to Fuller, is torn between his desire to tell the world how phony Fuller was and the network's wish to preserve the lucrative image of a national folk hero. Will he be an Ed Murrow-like figure, telling the truth despite the consequences, or will he advance his career telling the comforting lies that his bosses and the public want to hear? The book ends with a one-page epilogue. Its last lines are:

All I have to do is pick up that script in the drawer, walk round to Studio 23, read the hour from ten to eleven reading it into an open mike and I've started the wheels turning. It's simple.  
That's all I have to do.  
The question is, will I do it?  
Will I?

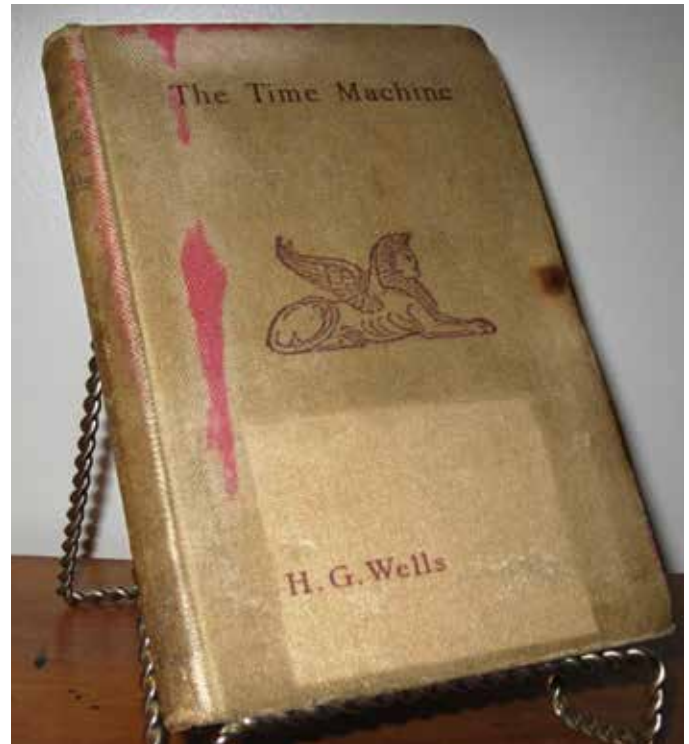
"When the legend becomes fact, print the legend," words said by the newspaperman Maxwell Scott (played by Carleton Young) in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence* – a magnificent film that deals with the difference between what is generally believed, what people want to believe, and what is the truth. *The Great Man* (1956), a good but not often remembered film, has essentially the same subject. The network executives want an hour long eulogy (essentially a broadcast version of printing the legend) of the warm, folksy, patriotic, and morally admirable Herb Fuller, a hero to the American public (referred to by the media insiders as "the Great Unwashed").

The reporter Joe (not Ed as in the book) Harris, played by José Ferrer, sets out to provide what they want. The film, which has something of the documentary feeling of *Citizen Kane*, among others, moves almost as snappily as the novel. Harris has memorable meetings with Fuller's discarded lover (played by singer and actor Julie London), the small-town radio station operator (played by Ed Wynn, whose son, Keenan Wynn, plays a scheming network executive), and the people who know the truth about Fuller's wartime broadcasts. Those encounters persuade him to write a script telling the truth about Fuller. The film reaches a climax in which we find out what Harris decides to broadcast (unlike the novel) and what the consequences are. José Ferrer, a wonderful actor, not only plays the hero, but also directed and, with Morgan, co-wrote the screenplay.

*The first edition of The Great Man was published by E.P. Dutton in New York in 1955. A good copy, with dust wrapper, can be bought for \$50 or more.*

### Time Travel, an Addendum

I was eight or nine when I read H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* and Alison Uttley's seldom remembered *A Traveller in Time*. I have read many books and stories that center on time travel but these two have stayed most in my mind. Even at an early age, I was skeptical about the possibilities of travel into a future of events that had not yet happened and to my mind could not exist. I found Wells's contraction that took his hero far into a dystopian future much less convincing than Uttley's Penelope slipping into an Elizabethan past by stepping through a door in an ancient manor house. (*A Traveller in Time* doubles the contemporary reader's time travel in England of the 1930s and during the 16th-century in the reign of Good Queen Bess.) We know what the Elizabethans wore, but the best we can imagine about the clothing of future beings (in sci-fi films) seems to be zippered plastic onesies in pastel colors. Absent parallel universes, wormholes, and the like, it seems to me



now, as it seemed to me then, that the past is all we have, the only place we can visit and that only in our minds. In fact, obstinate rationality dismisses even the slightly more plausible idea of traveling back in time leading to a conviction that the only true time machines are books and films. Books set in the times in which they were written can bring the dead, their lives and ideas, their aspirations and dreams, and the places in which they lived to life in our minds. Films set in the times in which they were made can enable the young Clark Gable, Bette Davis, and countless others to live again for 90 minutes and show us the clothes they wore, the places they ate and worked, the teeming life of a long dead era, and how the people then wished life to be. When we read those books and watch those films, we can travel back to know the reality of the public, private, and inner lives of the people of the past and begin to understand the truth of their dreams.

*H.G. Wells' The Time Machine, was published in London by Heinemann and in New York by Holt, both in 1895. Alison Uttley's A Traveller in Time was published in London by Faber & Faber in 1939.*

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*Unless otherwise credited, all photos are by the author, of books in his collection.*

# How to Write Better

A Review

*The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century.* Steven Pinker. New York: Viking, 2014.

Reviewed by Wendy Cowles Husser

In case you have not heard of him, or read anything by him, a few sentences will introduce you to the author of *The Sense of Style*. For those who are interested in words, literature, and books in general, meet Dr. Steven Pinker. He has written nine books and edited four. He says, "The writer can see something the reader cannot and he [the writer] orients the reader's gaze so that she can see it for herself." This entertaining book attempts to reveal what is good English rather than what is simply correct English. Actually, he makes several assertions this reviewer does not fully accept, and there may be a few you won't accept either. It is also important to know that Pinker punctuates like a European; though born in Montreal, Canada, his family immigrated to Canada from Poland, which explains his punctuation.

In a review of *The Sense of Style*, Tom Chivers wrote in the *Times Literary Supplement* in January 2015 (kept by the reviewer and her reason for buying the book), that Pinker's book "is scientifically informed in how to construct sentences; for example, it draws on neuroscientific findings to help writers put as little strain as possible on readers' working memories – but it is not a rigorous academic work." Which doesn't make this a See Spot kind of book either.

Pinker is chair of the usage panel of the *American Heritage Dictionary*, an award winning cognitive scientist, and a public intellectual. He is the author of *The Language Instinct*, *Words and Rules*, *The Stuff of Thought*, *How the Mind Works*, and other texts. He holds the Johnstone Family Professorship in the department of psychology at Harvard University. Imagine being his student!

Because Pinker is a psycholinguist and a cognitive scientist, he says that he is trying to explain style – which he believes is nothing more than the effective use of words so that our human minds can engage. He discusses in the prologue how in debt he has always been

to Will Strunk (of the brilliant lifelong bible to many of us: *The Elements of Style*) and regales us with tales from their relationship.

One of Strunk's associates, E.B. White (Elwyn Brooks White), who was instrumental getting *The Elements of Style* published, reminisced about Strunk (1869-1946), who had been his teacher at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. One of Strunk's most pervasive intentions, as everyone then and now surely knew, was to "omit needless words." This became meaningful to his associate, White (1899-1985). Apparently, Strunk was a man of few words himself, and in his teaching the only way he could highlight his mandate for brevity was to repeat to his classes, "omit needless words" at least three times at each class meeting. Additionally, he said those words very slowly to take up more class time.

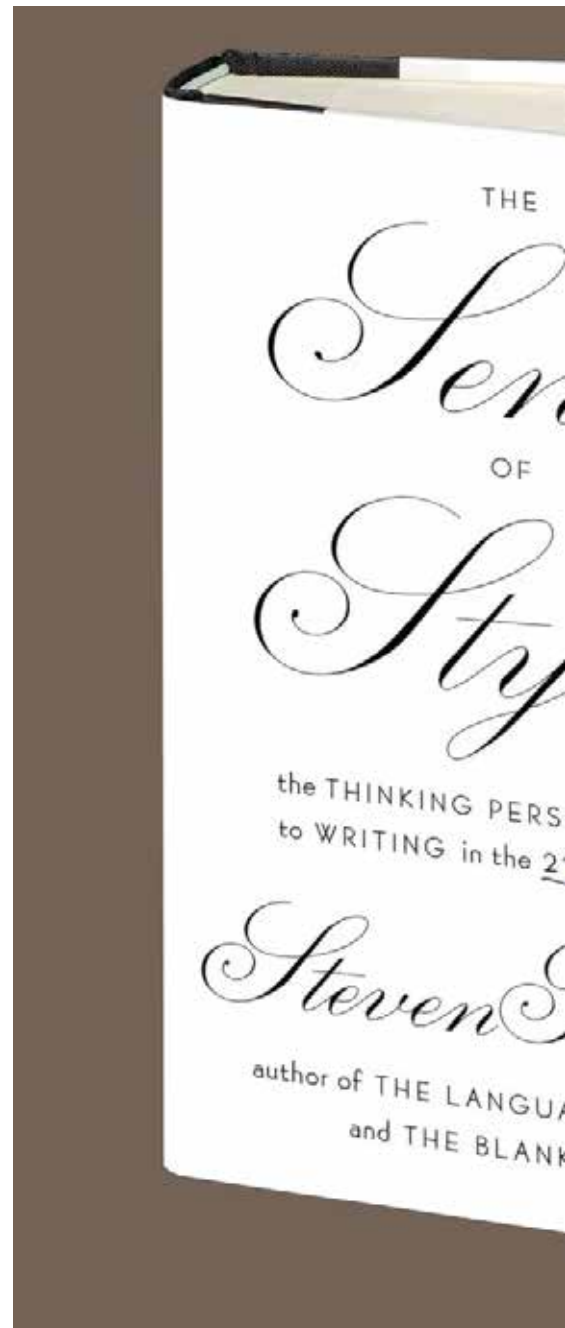
*The Sense of Style* is a 300-page fully loaded book, with six chapters, nine pages of prologue, 60 pages of notes, acknowledgments, and a ten-page glossary. The six chapters are: (1) "Good Writing", (2) "A Window onto the World" (discussing academese, bureaucratese, corporatese, legalese, officialese, and other stuffy prose), and then:

Chapter 3 is called the "Curse of Knowledge." Imagine what it is like for someone else not to know something that you know. Pinker says, "The inability to set aside something that you know but that someone else does not know is such a pervasive affliction of the human mind that psychologists keep discovering related versions of it and giving it new names." Pinker's advice is always to remember the reader over your shoulder.

"Your readers know a lot less about your subject than you think they do, and unless you keep track of what you know that they don't, you are guaranteed to confuse them."

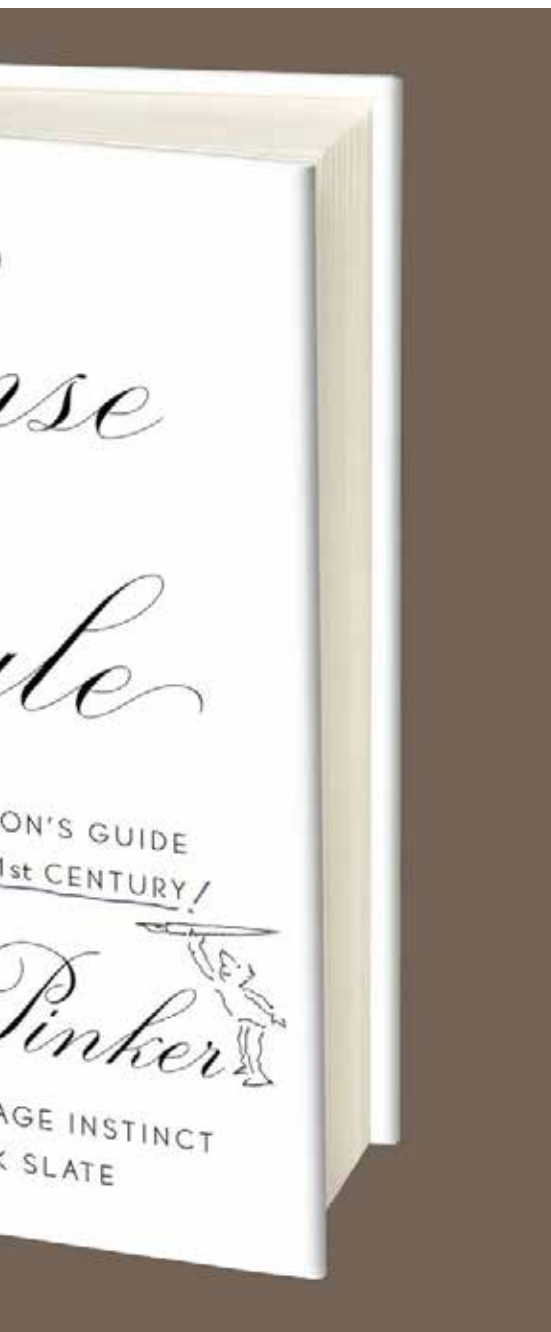
In Chapter 4, "The Web, The Tree, and The String," Pinker focuses on how understanding syntax can help a writer avoid ungrammatical (currently ungrammatical having lost the double adjectival endings during the last year), convoluted, and misleading prose.

Chapter 5 is entitled "Arcs of Coherence," where Pinker examines how to ensure that a topic has a chance to be understood. Get to the point, keep track of the players, and be



aware of how one idea follows from another. This particular chapter is hard reading, filled with trees of diagramming that are fairly foreign to me, and probably will be to most. Diagrams have not been taught since the 1960s, but perhaps some study of them could bring results. Pinker says: "...words of a sentence are placed along a kind of subway map in which intersections of various shapes (perpendicular, slanted, branching) stand for grammatical relations such as subject-predicate and modifier-head." There are pages of different kinds of trees that show relationships beyond most of us, although some manage to write well. If you love noun phrases, verb phrases, and clauses, this chapter is for you. Not for this reviewer.





*The Sense of Style's* final chapter – “Telling Right from Wrong” – details how to make sense of the rules of correct grammar, word choice, and punctuation. The preferred dictionary for Pinker is [surprise!] the *American Heritage Dictionary (AHD)*, whose editors decide what goes into that tome, making their choices by listening to the way people actually use language. There is no board sitting on high to mete out rules. And I know that the word “mete” is arcane, but I love it. No one grammarian is ever entirely right. This long chapter is my favorite because it attempts to delineate, in a long stretch of examples, a word, in its purist sense, the sense commonly used, and a comment. (My PhD son and I have argued endlessly about Webster versus *AHD*; I am

Webster, he is *AHD*.) Naturally I have not told him about Pinker’s book (and just won’t “get around” to the discussion) so that he won’t be able to say, “I told you so.”

Here are a few examples of Pinker’s use of his three evaluators.

Example 1: convince, the word, in its **purist** sense is: cause to believe. (She convinced him that vaccines are harmless). The **commonly used** sense is: to cause to act. (She convinced him to have his child vaccinated). The **comment** Pinker gives is that the word convince supposedly contrasts with persuade, in the sense of encouraging to act, but apparently few writers are interested, at least according to him.

Example 2: momentarily: **purist** sense: for a moment (it rained momentarily). **Commonly used** sense: in a moment (I’ll be with you momentarily). **Comment**: that “in a moment sense” is more recent and less common in Britain than in US, but completely acceptable. The two meanings can be distinguished by the context.

Example 3: nauseous: **purist** sense = nauseating (a nauseous smell). The **commonly used** sense: nauseated (the smell made me nauseous). **Comment**: Despite furious opposition, the nauseated sense has taken over.

Example 4. A contentious one I often face, one that makes my blood boil. Presently in the **purist** sense = soon. In **commonly used** sense = now. **Comment** says: the more transparent “now” sense has been in continuous use for 500 years, particularly in speech, and the word is rarely ambiguous in context. Half the Usage Panel reject it. Book reviewer is with them.

Example 5. And another of my red pen corrections: loan. To the **purist** = a loan (noun). The sense **commonly used** makes it into a verb, “to loan.” Ugh. **Comment**: the verb use goes back to 1200 CE but after the 17th C was lost in England, though preserved in the US, and that alone was enough to taint it. Your book reviewer early was taught that a loan is a noun and lend is the verb and always fights for that distinction.

The final chapter ends with a discussion of the ongoing fight arising from two distinct verbs, lay and lie. Even people you know will say, “I think I’ll lay down for a moment.” We were told in my day that the word lay meant to place, as in, please lay your coats in the den. Pinker’s recommendation is not to blame Bob Dylan’s “Lay, Lady, Lay.”

And for some of us who simply cannot get enough examples of good versus not so good writing, the author has a lot to say about sup-

plementary phrases poked into the middle of sentences. We refer of course to a phrase that has to be set off by two commas, as in: “My father, who gave new meaning to the expression, ‘hard working’ never took a vacation. The comma is missing after the word “working,” of course.

Pinker touches on what composition teachers have long tried to help us understand. Good writing does not, for example, run two sentences together, as in: “There is no trail, visitors must hike up the creek bed.” That comma should be a period, of course [*ed note: or maybe a semicolon*]. Both parts of the sentence can stand alone.

Another comma issue (and one that receives tireless nagging from me) is the serial comma that few writers seem to like. An example, “This book is dedicated to my parents, Ayn Rand and God.” By omitting this most important serial comma, the result is ambiguous at best and laughable at worst. Here is another of Pinker’s examples: “Among those interviewed were Merle Haggard’s two ex-wives, Kris Kristofferson and Robert Duvall.” The reviewer rests her favorite case.

This book has a helpful glossary in alphabetical order to reinforce some of the terms used throughout the book, done this way:

----- **discourse**, a connected sequence of sentences, such as a conversation, a paragraph, a letter, a post, or an essay.

----- **government**, a traditional grammatical term covering the ways in which the head of a phrase may determine the grammatical properties of other words in the phrase, including agreement, case-making, and the selection of complements.

----- **voice**, the difference between and active sentence (beavers build dams), and a passive sentence (dams are built by beavers).

And here are Steven Pinker’s final words in *The Sense of Style*:

“All of these principles lead us back to why we should care about style in the first place. There is no dichotomy between describing how people use language and prescribing how they might use it more effectively. We can share our advice on how to write well without treating the people in need of it with contempt. We can try to remedy shortcomings in writing without bemoaning the degeneration of the language. And we can remind ourselves of the reasons to strive for good style: to enhance the spread of ideas, to exemplify attention to detail, and to add to the beauty of the world.”

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http://amyatshkin.livejournal.com/260185.html



**ON THE MOVE:** January 4, 2018  
**Where:** Towner Fellows' Lounge, Newberry Library  
**Social Gathering:** 5:30 PM; **Program:** 6 PM  
**Peter Hiler on the Life and Work of Jo Mora**

Peter Hiler has been enamored of Joseph Jacinto Mora (1876-1947) since discovering his maps in the mid-1990s. Hiler is curator of the Jo Mora Trust archives, and the results of his research are the basis of an extensive biography being published by the Book Club of California.

Jo Mora had a boundless talent, the creative versatility of which is reflected in pictorial maps, book illustrations, painting, sculpture, and printmaking. Mora ventured west to explore the changing land of the cowboys and Indians that so fascinated him as a child. It was at this time that he passed through Chicago, making connections the nature and evidence of which will be revealed at this event. Mora's later life centered on the history of California, his family, and his abounding creativity. On the approaching 50th anniversary of the Byrd's famous album of the same name, join our Map Society colleagues as we explore the man who really created the "Sweetheart of the Rodeo."

**Event Free.** Cash Bar with Appetizers

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# Caxton Club COUNCIL NOTES

*Leora Siegel, Secretary*

The Caxton Council met on November 15, 2017 at the Union League Club. By unanimous vote, the Council awarded a lifetime Honorary Membership to Jacqueline Vossler for her extraordinary service and exceptional contributions to the Club. She currently serves, or has pre-

viously served as Vice President, Chair of the Grants Committee, Co-chair of the Membership Committee, Chair of the Finance Committee, Chair of the Budget Committee, Chair of the Program Committee, Chair of the On-the-Move Events Committee, and Secretary. She devotes her time, energy, and support to Club activities with her intelligence, patience,

and loyalty. This is the Club's highest honor and Vossler is only the 46th Caxtonian to receive it since it was first bestowed in 1896. Additional Council business included reporting from the Archivist who provided a draft of guidelines for records retention. Updates from the Exhibitions, Development, and Luncheon committees were also presented. §§

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**ON THE MOVE:** February 1, 2018  
**Where:** The Art Institute of Chicago  
**Time:** 5:30 PM in the Michigan Avenue Lobby

Tour "**The Medieval World at Our Fingertips: Manuscript Illuminations from the Collection of Sandra Hindman.**" Tour will be led by the collector and fellow Caxtonian Sandra Hindman and Art Institute curators Victoria Lobis and Martha Wolff.

Three-course dinner with Hindman and the curators at Tavern on the Park immediately to follow the tour and presentation. Cost with dinner is **\$60 per person**. Reservations are required as space is limited. Cancellations made after January 30 will be billed. As space is limited please e-mail [jv.everydaydesign@rcn.com](mailto:jv.everydaydesign@rcn.com) or phone 312-266-8825 to make a reservation.





# Russell Maret and Scholarship Winners, Nov. 15



The November dinner meeting was all about the book arts: the featured speaker was renowned bookmaker Russell Maret, and the Club's 2017 grant recipients were feted and given their scholarship checks.

**1** Martha Chiplis looks through Maret's *Hungry Bibliophiles*. **2** Russell Maret. **3** Arthur Frank, Kazumi Seki, Kazumi Wilds, Michelle Moode, Christine Manwiller, Sonia Farmer, J. Dakota Brown. **4** Melissa Potter, Kazumi Wilds, Teresa Pankratz, Bryan Saner. **5** Prior scholarship recipients Ben Blount, José Resendiz.

# Book- and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Lisa Pevtzow

(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit.)

**American Writers Museum**, 180 N. Michigan Avenue, second floor, Chicago, 312-374-8790: “**Capturing Stories: Photographs of Writers by Art Shay**” (recording the bombast and energy of postwar America), Meijer Gallery, through spring.”**Roberta Rubin Writer’s Room/Laura Ingalls Wilder: From Prairie to Page**,” ongoing.

**Art Institute of Chicago**, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600: “**Color Studies**” (use of color in the history of architecture and design from the Bauhaus and Swiss typography to postmodern architecture and contemporary graphic design), through February 25. “**Revolutsiia! Demonstratsiia! Soviet Art Put to the Test**” (works of art and life-size reconstructions of early Soviet display objects or spaces), through January 15. “**Art of the Letter Form**” (explores the fascination with the alphabet), Ryerson & Burnham Libraries, through January 29. “**The Medieval World at Our Fingertips: Manuscripts from the Collection of Sandra Hindman**” (nearly 30 manuscript illuminations showing a microcosm of medieval life), January 27 to May 28.

**Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library**, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: “**Curtis’s: The Longest Running Botanical Magazine**,” through January 21. “**Asian Orchids Illustrated**,” January 26 to April 15.

**Chicago Cultural Center**, 78 E. Washington Street, Chicago, 312-744-6630: “**Stand Up for Landmarks! Protests, Posters & Pictures**” (images, artifacts, and ephemera relating to saving Chicago landmarks), ongoing.

**Chicago History Museum**, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-266-2077: “**Chicago Authored**” (works by writers that define the character of Chicago), ongoing.

**Chicago Printmakers Collaborative**, 4912 N. Western Avenue, Chicago, 773-293-2070: “**28th Annual International Small Print Exhibition and Holiday Sale**” (new work by locals and invited others), through January 27.

**DePaul University John T. Richardson Library**, 2350 N. Kenmore Avenue, Chicago, 773-325-2167: “**Stories Shared: Highlights from the Arnold and Jane Grisham Collection**” (rare first editions, texts inscribed by their authors, and galley proofs of books describing the African-American diaspora), ongoing.

**Northwestern University Block Museum**, 40 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, 847-491-4000: “**William Blake and the Age of Aquarius**” (Blake’s impact on American artists in the post-



Northwestern University Block Museum / William Blake  
“THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL,” PLATE 2, 1795. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



American Writers Museum / Art Shay Photographs  
GWENDOLYN BROOKS

World War II period), through March 11.  
**Northwestern University Library**, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, 847-491-7658: “**On Board with Design: Passenger Transportation and Graphic Design in the Mid-20th Century**,” ongoing. “**African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean: Culture, Resistance, and Survival**” (aspects of the history, culture, and religion of people of African ancestry in subject areas) Herskovits Library of African Studies, ongoing.  
**Pritzker Military Museum and Library**, 104 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-374-9333: “**Hunting Charlie: Finding the Enemy in the Vietnam War**” (explores U.S. opposition to the war through rarely seen original art pieces), ongoing.  
**Smart Museum of Art**, University of Chicago, 5550 S. Greenwood Avenue, Chicago: 773-702-0200: “**Revolution Every Day**” (features works of graphic art, film, and video focusing on the experiences of women under and after communism), through January 14.  
**University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library**, 1100 E. 57th Street, Chicago, 773-702-8705: “**Well Equipped: Library Technology from Days Past**” (latest library technology from years ago), Crerar Library, through June 8.

Send your listings to Lisa Pevtzow at [lisa.pevtzow@sbglobal.net](mailto:lisa.pevtzow@sbglobal.net)



# Caxtonians Collect: Scott Koeneman

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

Our club has been blessed recently with an influx of newer members associated with the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. They've started turning up at luncheons and dinners despite the campus being 140 miles away. One of these newbies is Scott Koeneman, who is Assistant Dean of Libraries for Advancement.

In our interview, I began by taxing him with his title. What is advancement anyway? He was prepared with an answer: "Think of it as a stool whose three legs are increasing visibility, establishing relationships, and raising funds. It's like any other three-legged stool: it doesn't work unless you have a strong leg in all three positions."

He started working at the university as communications manager for the Institute of Government and Public Affairs, the university system's public policy think tank, in 1999. He began his work in advancement there and moved into a full-time advancement role with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in 2007; then he

moved into international fundraising for the College of Engineering, and then for the entire campus. But when he heard of the opening in Libraries, he began seeking the job the next day. He had known Vicki Trimble, his predecessor there, and thought hers was the best job at the university.

He had met Trimble when he first moved to

Champaign to work at the *News Gazette* as city editor. "The reporter who covered the campus gave me a tour that began with the library. Her recognition of its role in education and research as the top public university library in the country stayed with me."

He began his life in Des Moines, Iowa. He knew he wanted to escape to the larger world, and chose the Marine Corps as the way to do it. "I liked their focus. The whole was greater

than its parts, the mission was always the primary goal. And besides, it was the smallest branch of service, but with a huge responsibility. I wanted to see if I could make it," he says.

Once he completed his four years, he mustered out in Hawaii, where he lived in an apartment on Waikiki with five other vets. "It was a lot of fun, but I could tell we were living on the outskirts of society." Next, he tried California, where he had two full-time jobs at once, as a security guard and on a furniture loading dock. A return to the family home, and college, started to look more appealing.

One of his first jobs back in Iowa was waiting tables at a TGI Fridays, where he met Nancy, who would become his wife.

He had decided he wanted to attend journalism school, and though he applied to and got into Iowa, Northwestern, and Missouri, he chose Drake in Des Moines at Nancy's urging. Besides, they offered him a scholarship, and they gave a journalism degree in only four years. "It turned out to be a good choice. I was able to intern at the *Des Moines Register*, which had only recently been absorbed



into Gannett and therefore had many of its newsroom traditions still intact." After graduation, he worked at the *Joliet Herald-News* and suburban Chicago's *Daily Herald* before moving to Champaign and the *News-Gazette*.

After about four years of running the reporting staff, one day he looked around the newsroom at the *News-Gazette* and did an inventory of the writers who worked around him. Some were divorced, others

had family stress... all caused by the pressure of the newspaper job. Perhaps there would be some other use of his skills that would allow more family time. So, in 1999, he joined the University's Institute of Government and Public Affairs, where he held a variety of positions, until he moved to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

There are five people who work to encourage giving to the university library. "We raise

5 to 10 million dollars a year, so what we do is important. It underwrites acquisitions and events which the basic budget doesn't cover. The Library is a huge factor in what makes the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign such an interesting place to be," he says.

When you look for Koeneman on Twitter, you discover another side of his life: he is an avid cook and baker. He explained how it came about. "I always loved food. The Marines and working on a loading dock had me eating a huge number of calories, but when I became a journalist I stopped burning as many as I needed to for my consumption. The things I liked to eat were killing me, so I decided to look for things which were healthier but still tasted good."

When his wife took a job that meant she would not be home to cook dinner regularly, he rose to the occasion. "Spaghetti squash two ways: pesto w/ mushrooms and asparagus, and pad Thai" and "fontina-stuffed polpettini made with beef and pork with homemade marinara and pasta" are a couple of Twitter-pictured examples of family favorites. He also explains that the Champaign-Urbana area is a great place to shop for healthy food: in summer there are three farmers' markets, and even off season there is one every other Saturday.

And cooking has supplied him with a gratifying book-collecting specialty: community cookbooks. "There are so many, most aren't very expensive, and they're so interesting!" he exclaims. When friends and relatives hear about his collection, they just give him items!

As it happens, the University of Illinois Library has an excellent cookbook collection as well. "The donor had a huge collection of culinary 'high spots' that are there to be examined. But the donor had collected local cookbooks just like I do," he says. He also confesses that he does have a few prized "real" cookbooks: first editions by Child, Beard, Olney, Fisher, and Waters, the chefs who have been a counter influence in American culture. As mainstream groceries have grown more and more processed and packaged, these five have stressed the importance of cooking the best available ingredients from scratch.

His Julia Child volume is signed, but not only by the chef herself. It bears the signature of Paul Cushing Child, her husband. "I like that," he says. "It's a reminder that behind every important person there's usually somebody who was a great help and influence."

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## Bookmarks...

**Luncheon: Friday, January 12, Union League Club  
Steven Tomashefsky on "Children's Audubon"**

**"D**id you say this guy is famous for two pictures of elephants?" "No. I said that his reputation was made on the double-elephant folio."

His names graces a society that is dedicated to protecting the birds that skim the skies and paddle in the ponds. His works are eagerly sought by collectors. He's John James Audubon and he was as American as apple pie. Except he wasn't. From whence did he spring and how did he become one of our most famous artists and ornithological experts?

Caxtonian Steve Tomashefsky will be talking about the many biographies of Audubon published from 1856 to 2017 and what they tell us about his character. It's not surprising that Steve gravitated to Audubon, who was the first to put bands on birds, given that he started his own career by helping to put bands on record labels. After graduating from the U. of C. Law School, he's won over stone-faced juries and hard-nosed judges, but at January's luncheon, he'll be making the case for collecting, for a crackling good story, and for J.J. Audubon!

*January luncheon: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Luncheon buffet (main dining room on six) opens at 11:30 am; program (in a different room, to be announced) 12:30-1:30. Luncheon is \$35. Reservations or cancellations by noon Wednesday for Friday lunch. Call 312-255-3710 or e-mail caxtonclub@newberry.org .*

### Beyond December...

#### FEBRUARY LUNCHEON

On February 9 we'll have "Portrait of a (Bookbinding) Artist as a Young Man." You're bound to enjoy this fascinating tale of the book arts and the remarkable path to a career as a bookbinder as Caxtonian Samuel Feinstein unfolds his story.

#### FEBRUARY DINNER

February 21, Union League Club. Sandra Hindman on "Medieval Manuscripts at Our Fingertips – Reflections on a Collection." The catalog accompanying Hindman's collection and Art Institute exhibit, authored by Christopher de Hamel, will be available for sale and signing.

**Wednesday, January 17, Union League Club  
Stephen Grant on the Origin of the Folger Library**

**B**rush up your Shakespeare collecting with author Stephen Grant as he shares with us the remarkable story of Henry and Emily Folger. The Folgers' devotion to each other was matched only by their passion for Shakespeare. Working as a team, the two carefully managed Henry's fortune as a Standard Oil executive to assemble a fabulous collection for the American people.

Secretly the Folgers acquired the prime real estate by the Library of Congress for their elegant library, reading and exhibitions rooms, and Elizabethan theater. Stephen Grant was given unprecedented access to the Folger's materials to tell the story of the collection and the lives behind it. He is a senior fellow at the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and his warmly received book *Collecting Shakespeare: The Story of Henry and Emily Folger* will be available for sale and signing.

*January dinner: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Blvd. The evening will follow this order: social gathering, 5-6 pm; program 6 pm; dinner to follow. Program is free and open to the public. Beverages \$6-\$12. Dinner: \$63. Reservations are required for either the program only or the dinner/program combination. RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN NOON, MONDAY, JANUARY 15. Payment will be required for dinner cancellations after the deadline and no-shows. To reserve call 312-255-3710 or e-mail caxtonclub@newberry.org .*

#### MARCH LUNCHEON

March 9, at Union League Club: Since the dark ages, libraries have been a source of light in the world. But at this luncheon we'll step back to regard another source of light... as Caxtonian Tad Boehmer reveals a Window into a Library.

#### MARCH DINNER

March 21, Union League Club. Liesl Olson, Newberry director of Chicago Studies, will discuss Chicago's contribution to mid-century culture. Copies of her new book, *Chicago Renaissance*, will be available for sale and signing.