

Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies

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From the Editor

WE HOPE this newsletter provides information and comments useful to members of the various associated bibliophilic clubs. The modest purpose of FABS is to be of value to each of the associated clubs. We hope to accomplish this partially through these newsletters.

It is important that members of the various bibliophilic clubs respond with their own ideas about the newsletter. Please do not hesitate to submit any reports or articles you think will be appropriate. Comments or questions about any aspect of FABS are also welcomed.

ILAB Reception for FABS Members!

HOSTED by the Book Club of California on Thursday, September 5, 1996, from 5-7 pm, at their rooms in 312 Sutter Street, Suite 510, this open house will allow members of FABS associated clubs to meet with each other. The gathering is set on the eve of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers Fair in San Francisco.

The Value of Trips by Clubs Ensemble

"Camp Bookworm" Brings Greater Fellowship

By tradition, Presidents of Rowfant encourage and lead tours to libraries, collections, and bibliographic sites. This service is part of the act. We have visited places as near as Ann Arbor, Michigan and as far as Rome. Often there is a club at our destination similar to ours and with which we try to coordinate activities.

This year it was a visit to Washington, D.C. in early March. An advance visit was paid to selected libraries in mid-December. Three weeks later our roughly 250 active members were solicited for travel bookings, and on March 7, some 37 members and 20 companions converged on the nation's capitol for three days and two nights visiting six libraries,

and other places of bookish interest, while enjoying a gathering with 14 local area booksellers.

We were given wonderful hospitality by the librarians and curators involved. I had expected that pleasure. There is, however, another surprising effect of an ensemble trip. It is that we got to know and to like each other much better than in the ordinary communion of regular club events.

Rowfant has over 90 events a year. It hardly seems possible to see each other more than that. Yet, becoming companions in travel did pay additional rewards in socializing us. We saw each other in motorcoach, banquet and cafeteria, and shared three meals a day over the three days we were together.

Any vagueness about who came with whom, who collected which kind of book, who had special reminiscences and connections in the Washington area—all were dissolved away by frequent, gentle deadlines. Everyone was convivial at "Camp Bookworm."

The questions to curators, the responses to talks, and breaking off into small groups to make tiny side expeditions—all helped to attach characters to the names and faces we know at the clubhouse. On these grounds alone the trip was a fine bonding experience.

Add in the privileged access to remarkable rare volumes—early Arabian medical writings, a first folio Shakespeare, Lincoln's own scrapbooks on his debates and the benefits of a library tour are clear, whether in Washington or elsewhere.

Many clubs have never traveled together. It may be difficult to obtain an enthusiastic acceptance for a trip from club members. It may seem that group travel, especially to places where one has been, is not necessary. After all, can't we all visit such a place as Washington or London ourselves? True, but not in the same way.

The value of an ensemble trip is twofold: You won't find such a tour or even find individually access to the curator of rare books or the director of the library and also see the high points of a collection. Ours are special interest groups that fortunately get special treatment.

The second point is that a sense of camaraderie and the