

# THE Exchange

THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY PRESSES

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## Contents

<i>The Year of the University Press</i>	1
<i>Building a Library/Press Partnership at Penn State</i>	1
<i>Publishing First Books</i>	4
<i>2004 Annual Meeting Preview</i>	5
<i>The Next Thoreau</i>	6
<i>Beacon Press at 150</i>	7
<i>Edvard Aslaksen</i>	8
<i>Calendar</i>	8

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## The Year of the University Press

The Association of American University Presses (AAUP) and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) are pleased to announce the designation of 2004 as the "Year of the University Press."

This year-long focus on university presses is intended to celebrate the important role presses play in the scholarly communications process. The campaign is an outgrowth of a recent formal recognition by the two organizations of their complementary roles in the scholarly communications system and the need to work together in this time of economic and technological turbulence to ensure a strong system for the future.

Throughout 2004, libraries will seek to raise the visibility of presses on campus by featuring university press works in exhibits, inviting university press authors and publishing professionals as speakers, publishing articles about innovative library-press partnerships in library and campus newsletters, and fostering local and national discussions on scholarly publishing with press and library participation.

Through these activities, the AAUP and ARL hope to:

- build an appreciation of the depth and breadth of works published by university presses;
- increase understanding among faculty, students, administrators, and librarians of the mission and function of university presses;
- stimulate serious discussion of the future of university presses within their institutions and in scholarly communication; and
- encourage innovative projects in scholarly communication among libraries and presses.

In this issue of *The Exchange*, the Libraries and Press of Penn State University describe their ongoing successful partnership: how it developed and several of the projects that have resulted. Many other such campus—and intercampus—partnerships are featured on the AAUP & ARL joint projects web site, [www.aaupnet.org/arlaaup](http://www.aaupnet.org/arlaaup).

## Building a Library/Press Partnership *Pennsylvania State University*

by Bonnie MacEwan and Peter J. Potter

The Libraries and the Press at Penn State have built a working relationship that has resulted in a number of joint projects in recent years. To date these projects have been modest in scope, but they have served the altogether important job of testing the waters of collaboration, establishing what we now take to be a solid basis for an ongoing library/press partnership—a partnership that we hope will grow into something more ambitious and far-reaching in years to come.

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## *Building a partnership, continued*

In this article we offer a brief overview of our partnership at Penn State, how it has evolved, where it may be headed, and the challenges we face as we look to the future. We do so not because we see our experience as the model that all libraries and presses should follow. Rather, we believe that there will be numerous models of successful library/press partnership, and ultimately we need them all if we are to rebuild the scholarly publishing system, which we all agree is broken.

The question of how libraries and presses might collaborate is not “merely academic.” Behind our efforts at Penn State has been a sense of urgency prompted by a few basic realizations. First and foremost we agree that university libraries and university presses have a shared stake in the future of scholarly communication. Without this belief, we would have little basis for partnership. At the same time, we understand that Penn State must be proactive if it wants to shape, and not simply be shaped by, the dramatic changes that are transforming the scholarly community’s information landscape.

For guidance, we have looked to initiatives such as SPARC and the Tempe Principles; in addition, journal projects such as Project Muse and JSTOR have been models of technology and leadership. CIAO at Columbia and Romantic Circles at the University of Maryland have given us new ideas and inspiration. We have found projects with library and press involvement to be of particular interest, especially Project Muse and the Electronic Publishing Initiative at Columbia (EPIC).

The seeds of our working relationship at Penn State were actually sown back in the 1970s, when a librarian first began serving as a member of the Press’s editorial board. The practice, which continues to this day, has proven to be invaluable in opening up dialogue between our two organizations. For librarians the give-

and-take at meetings affords an excellent opportunity to witness firsthand the editorial operations of a university press, and Press staff members begin to see how their colleagues in the Libraries view many of the same issues of scholarly communication but from a different vantage point. In addition, the director of the Press and various senior Library administrators have frequently participated in joint discussions at the university level regarding intellectual property. And the director of the Press and the dean of the Libraries were instrumental in bringing together their counterparts at other Big Ten institutions for face-to-face meetings beginning in the early 1990s under the auspices of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC).

These modest personal interactions still served as valuable points of contact and created a basis for mutual understanding. Even though we may not always see eye-to-eye—for example, on issues of copyright—the fact that we now have a history of informed cooperation has been essential to overcoming our differences and fostering mutual respect. In the process, we have come to realize that we each have unique skills and abilities to bring to the table.

Two years ago, we decided to take on a project or two that might test and perhaps extend our ability to work together. Our idea was that if we could successfully collaborate on a few relatively limited endeavors, we would then have set the stage for more ambitious and systematic collaboration. Hence we chose projects that required little in the way of extra funding but that nevertheless forced each of us to move a bit beyond our usual comfort zones. In the process we began to better understand each other’s areas of strength (and weakness) and simultaneously learned more about our respective institutional cultures.

One of our first partnerships involved a book and a companion web site. The book, *Times of Sorrow and Hope: Documenting Everyday Life in Pennsylvania During the Great Depression and World War II: A Photographic Record*, published by the Press in 2003, is devoted to federally sponsored photographs of Pennsylvania from the 1930s and 1940s. The Libraries host a web site (<http://alias.libraries.psu.edu/ebooks/timesofsorrowandhope>) that supports and expands the research value of the book. Whereas the book features a selection of 150 of the photographs along with descriptive essays, the web site contains a complete bibliographic catalogue of the more than 6,000 photographs taken in Pennsylvania during the Depression and WWII years. At present, the catalogue is available on the web site as static PDF files, but our goal is to move from PDFs to a full-fledged database that links directly to the web site of the Library of Congress, which owns all of the photographs.

The book, of course, is something the Press could have produced on its own. The innovative part of the project lies in creating the online catalogue, which the Libraries are much better prepared to undertake, as they have the technical expertise to create the web site and the storage/archiving abilities to house it. At first, the Press had discussed putting the catalogue in the book, but we soon dismissed this idea: it added too many pages. Also, the catalogue contains an enormous amount of data that may in fact require updating and revision over the years. The flexibility that an online database permits thus proved too attractive to resist.

It is worth noting that this one project led to a number of offshoot activities that further helped to deepen our partnership and build collegiality among our two staffs. We held a joint lecture and reception for the project in the Libraries, which was well attended by the university

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## *Building a partnership, continued*

community. In conjunction with this lecture we displayed a selection of the photographs and mounted an exhibit of WPA-era books from the Libraries' holdings. The photographs are now traveling to other sites throughout the state, including the State Museum in Harrisburg, the Lancaster County Historical Society, and the Altoona Public Library.

Building on this experience, we have several more initiatives under way that promise to expand the Library/Press partnership in new directions. For instance, two of Penn State's engineering librarians recently co-authored a book, with a Penn State professor of nuclear engineering, on the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island. The book, to be published by the Press in March 2004, draws extensively on the Libraries' Three Mile Island Recovery and Decontamination Collection and web site ([www.libraries.psu.edu/tmi](http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tmi)). The book and the website should bring attention to each other, especially this year, which is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the accident. We also plan to make the book available in electronic form as part of the Libraries' growing e-book collection.

The Three Mile Island project has further emboldened the Libraries and the Press to explore a more ambitious e-publishing partnership. The Press is looking more and more to use print-on-demand technology for its backlist books, and we hope to make a large percentage of these titles available electronically via the Libraries' web site. Using technology developed by the Libraries, some titles will be accessible only to members of the Penn State community; others will be available to all users. A link to the Press's web site will make it possible for people to buy print copies of books directly from the Press, and these titles will be printed "on-demand." Over time, we will gather data on sales and online usage in order to assess the effectiveness of this program.

Each of these projects has brought the Press and the Libraries closer, helping us understand our strengths and the areas in which we need to develop greater expertise. The Press has considerable experience working with authors, managing the peer-review process, creating attractive and readable books, and marketing them to diverse audiences. The Libraries bring expertise in digitization, knowledge of access mechanisms including indexing and metadata, and knowledge of user behavior and demands. Together, we are developing a core of shared knowledge about the economics of a successful business model, the intellectual property issues, and how to manage these complicated projects successfully.

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### *Building a collaborative relationship takes time and patience*

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Having taken such significant strides forward, we have just begun to explore a more ambitious electronic publishing project, one that attempts to address the crucial problems facing scholarly communication in the humanities. Until very recently, the Press published a distinguished monograph series entitled Penn State Studies in Romance Literatures. Books published in the series were well reviewed in scholarly periodicals and often played a favorable role in tenure and promotion decisions for their authors. After thirteen years and more than twenty books, however, the Press was forced to discontinue the series: rising costs and declining sales made it no longer viable financially. In its place we are proposing an online Romance Literature series to be co-

sponsored by the Press, the Libraries, and the Departments of French and Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. Again, the Libraries will bring considerable expertise in e-technology, collection development, and electronic archiving to the project; the Press will contribute its own expertise in peer review, content development, design and production, and marketing. And, of course, the academic departments will provide the scholarly "stamp of approval" in the form of an editorial board and the jurying process.

Some of the longer-term considerations we must evaluate are:

- Press use of electronic repositories hosted on the Libraries' servers and network.
- Digitization and joint access via the Libraries' e-repositories for back titles of the Press and digitized texts from the Libraries, using a shared print-on-demand and e-commerce capability.
- Online e-journals, a three-way partnership between faculty, the Press, and the Libraries.

At Penn State, then, we've learned that building a collaborative relationship takes time. It takes the patience to "start small" and to move forward only as the partnership has matured sufficiently to provide solid footing for the next step. Of great importance is the encouragement and support of senior administrators. At Penn State we would not have been able to move forward without the backing of the Dean of University Libraries, the Director of the Penn State Press, the Vice President for Research, and the Provost. If, indeed, we in the scholarly community mean to ensure cost-effective and integrated access to the research we produce, we will need to initiate more and more of these partnerships throughout ARL institutions.

*Bonnie MacEwan is Assistant Dean for Collections and Scholarly Communication at the University Libraries, The Pennsylvania State University. Peter J. Potter is Editor-in-Chief, The Pennsylvania State University Press.*

# Publishing First Books

By Peter Givler, AAUP Executive Director

Recent discussions about the difficult economics of publishing scholarly monographs have focused on the cruel dilemma this may pose for junior faculty seeking tenure. Many university departments in the humanities and social sciences require the publication of at least one scholarly book, preferably by a university press. In almost all cases that book would be the author's first. Are promising young faculty being denied tenure because university presses are economically unable to publish their first book, regardless of its scholarly merit?

A sensible question to ask but a difficult one to answer, because the process through which universities grant or deny tenure is so complex and many-layered. Recently, though, AAUP undertook to shed some light on a corner of this question by surveying its members about one aspect of their publishing practice. Members were asked how many new nonfiction titles they had published in 2002, and of those, how many were the author's first published book.

Forty-five presses responded to the survey. Highly representative of AAUP's entire membership, they ranged in size from presses publishing fewer than five books a year to those publishing over 200. Collectively the respondents had published 2,716 new nonfiction titles in 2002. Ranking the responses from lowest to highest by total number of new nonfiction titles published, the ratio of first books to total was remarkably consistent across the entire range: the median and mean, respectively, were 28% and 26%; the ratio at the first quartile was 24%, and at the third, 27%.

There were variations outside this range, of course. Four presses reported publishing no first books, and eleven reported 40% or higher. Overall, though, one of every four new nonfiction titles published in 2002 by the responding presses was the author's first book.

As far as I know this is the first time such a survey has been done, so it's impossible to say whether these figures are lower or higher than previous years. Much anecdotal evidence tells us that it *ought* to be lower, and it may well be in fact. At the same time, though, it is hard to imagine that if university presses published a higher percentage of first books in the past, it was very much higher. First books have always been financially more risky to publish than books by authors whose previous work has established a reputation and created an audience for their new work. This is as old a story in getting a book published as it is in life itself: it's harder to get known than it is to get better known. The publishing of scholarly monographs in the humanities and social sciences is indisputably under more severe economic strain now than it was thirty years ago, but first books have always been hard to place with a publisher.

On the evidence of this survey, though, far from impossible—so far from impossible that one might even wonder, why so many? Is it economically rational for a business to base one fourth of its new business each year on products with such predictably uncertain sales? Probably not. So why do it? One might be tempted to observe, after Dr. Johnson, that it represents the triumph of hope over experience, but after all, that's not necessarily a bad thing. The decision to publish a first book is a decision to accept the financial risk of publishing an unknown author because the work she has done deserves to be better known; because the work is the first step in what editors and reviewers and members of the press board expect will be a life of productive scholarship; and because if there are no first books, very soon there will be no second or third books, either.

There are more stringent business reasons for publishing first books as well. One might predict that those presses publishing a higher-than-

average ratio of first books were smaller, lacking the resources to attract or compete successfully for more experienced authors. This has some truth, but a close reading of the data also shows that those presses, regardless of size, with large lists in new and rapidly developing disciplines—cultural studies, gay and lesbian studies, and so on—publish a higher-than-average percentage of first books. Presumably this is so because the number of new scholars entering these fields is high in relation to the number of previously published, mature scholars. Publishing a high proportion of first books appears to be as much a business decision driven by a commitment to particular disciplines as it is a function of overall press size and resources.

If first books are still being published in significant numbers overall, though, we also hear that there are certain fields in which it is increasingly difficult to publish any book, let alone a first book; fields in which manuscripts by even senior and well-known scholars are placed only with difficulty, and often after long delay. A study by the Modern Languages Association reported that the difficulties of publishing had become especially acute for scholarship in literatures other than British and American, and for works in translation. A survey by the American Historical Association had complementary findings. Their members who specialize in U.S. and modern European history report little or no direct awareness of a crisis in scholarly publishing, while those who specialize in earlier periods and less familiar areas, do.

If this is true, then it suggests a more systemic quandary: that the economic obstacles to getting published in certain fields may be placing more at risk than individual careers, as troubling as that may be.

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## *First books, continued*

To the extent that the growth of future knowledge requires the dissemination of current scholarship, the withering of publishing opportunities in those fields may be embargoing their development altogether. For anyone who believes in the value of basic research, this is a far from trivial problem, no matter how small and specialized those fields may appear to us at present. Who, given the tumultuous world we live in, would dare predict that this or that branch of knowledge is irrelevant and that we can get along perfectly well without it?

At the same time, though, it's not a problem that university presses—or any of us—acting alone are likely to solve. There are too many actors involved for any one group of them

to make much headway; ultimately, it comes down to a question of university priorities and how university budgets are to be allocated. In seeking to influence those decisions, the larger the constituency, the better the chance of being heard.

But before moving toward a solution we need first to identify the scope of the problem. What fields are so endangered? One might think that data on rates of publication in various fields would provide some clear answers, and it may yet; AAUP has one such study underway now. But the first pass suggests that the current data may lack sufficient granularity to tell us a great deal about the specific disciplines where the problem may be most acute, and

the task of getting data that could tell us poses a number of challenging methodological problems.

However, it may be that scholarly societies, research libraries and university presses working together could seek to identify these fields by triangulation rather than direct measurement, and once they are known, make a joint argument for whatever support they may require. AAUP would be delighted to collaborate in such an effort.

In the meantime, though, untenured scholars generally can be assured that university presses, despite the current economic turmoil of scholarly publishing, continue to publish a hefty number of books written by previously unpublished authors.

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## 2004 Annual Meeting Preview

*Vancouver, June 26-29*

The 2004 AAUP Annual Meeting will be held June 26-29, 2004 in Vancouver, British Columbia. The program committee, chaired by Christine Szuter of the University of Arizona Press, has been developing a program filled with valuable information.

The educational sessions are designed to appeal to a broad range of university press personnel. Registrants, from presses large and small, will find topics that address their areas of expertise, as well as sessions that will improve their understanding of overall university press operations, and trends in scholarly communications.

The following is a sample of session topics: library purchasing, regional publishing, international sales, managing electronic journal content, “green” production, cost-effective copy editing, marketing to web vendors, the smaller university press, income goals for acquiring editors, fundraising, business models for digital publishing, generating useful reports from your databases,

and the future of scholarly publishing. Panelists will include experts from within AAUP and representatives from other institutions and companies.

Pauline Yu, the new president of the American Council of Learned Societies, will address the attendees at the first plenary session, tentatively titled “On Synthetic Technologies: The Book, the University, the Internet.”

Additional highlights will include a display of the 2004 AAUP Book, Jacket, and Journal Show and the AAUP Exhibit Hall with vendors showcasing their latest products and innovations.

Prior to the general meeting, there will be three workshops starting on June 25. The 2004 pre-meeting workshops will focus on book publicity, text design, and the business challenges of publishing.

Along with the panels and roundtable discussions, one of the most valuable components of the meeting is the informal exchange of ideas among colleagues. There will be plenty of opportunities to do so at

group meals, as well as during receptions sponsored by Thomson-Shore, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *The New York Review of Books*.

Attendees will also enjoy the meeting's setting. Vancouver is a beautiful city with both water and mountain views easy to find. The meeting will take place at The Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, a historic downtown hotel within walking distance of restaurants and shops. NYRB will host a reception at the Museum of Anthropology, located on a cliff overlooking the Georgia Strait, and home to one of the best collections of West Coast Native art.

This year AAUP will again offer grants to qualified minority staff members at AAUP member presses to attend the annual meeting. Application forms will be available on [aaupnet.org](http://aaupnet.org) in March.

More information, including a program and registration forms is available at [www.aaupnet.org/programs/annualmeeting](http://www.aaupnet.org/programs/annualmeeting). Questions? Contact [annualmeeting@aaupnet.org](mailto:annualmeeting@aaupnet.org).

# The Next Thoreau

## *Place-Based Personal Essays with the Power to Change Us*

by Ann Wendland

*This is the final article in a series about publishing creative nonfiction that emphasizes place and nature. The first article shared the viewpoints of acquiring editors, the second featured interviews with booksellers with outstanding records selling this genre, and the third focused on marketing. This final article takes a step back to suggest the telltale signs of the next Thoreau, analyze the earlier articles for an overall look at trends, and offer a few compelling reasons for University presses to publish in this genre. The writer, Ann Wendland, has been Publicity Manager at the University of Arizona Press for three years. She is moving to Boulder, Colorado, and would be happy to respond to any comments on this article; e-mail her at [wendland@earthlink.net](mailto:wendland@earthlink.net).*

Jacket-copy comparisons of new nature writers to Henry David Thoreau or Rachel Carson (if female) have been made on such a regular basis as to keep both of these greats in a perpetual spin in their graves. In fact, Thoreaus and Carsons aren't popping up daily. Many place-based memoirs and collections of personal essays run thick with rhapsody, enlightenment, moral outrage and despair, but very few generate sweeping activism and alter our views of nature and of ourselves the way that Carson and Thoreau did.

How can publishers identify stand-out work with potential to make a tremendous social impact—in advance of the rapid-fire of reviews, the J-curve of sales, and the appearance of the author on the Today Show and the House and Senate floors?

The old-fashioned way, say editors: look at the writing. And what do they look for?

Verve, irresistible style and personal magnetism, transcendence, masterful storytelling, and fluid, intelligent writing are the qualities editors singled out when interviewed for the first article in this series.

The booksellers who shared their experience selling place-based writing agree with the editors. Their reports from the field show readers turning away from "general feel-good work that's less grounded" and toward writing with strong, well-written narrative, a reflective, personal style and lots of interesting detail. Linda Ramsdell, a bookseller in Vermont, sees clienteles merging as more science shows up in essays and more reflection appears in science-writing. Melissa Sanders, in Salt Lake City, believes that customers involved in

activism and environmental work relate more easily to writers whose work includes deliberation on culture than to the earlier naturalists.

Editors and readers are looking for the same traits in these books: powerful narrative, fascinating information, and insightful reflection.

The reflection in place-based writing is unusual. It sustains a singular cultural conversation that's important to American identity and social development. Writers speak from a specific place—as small as Thoreau's reflecting pool or as large as Carson's U.S. farmland—to show us how we look from the outside and how we're operating in relation to other life. The intertwined reflection on people and nature distinguishes nature writing from science writing, which shines its light at natures other than our own, and from outdoor sports writing, which focuses on empowerment and really big blisters, with nature as enabling mechanism.

Another identifying characteristic of books that shake up culture is that they sell. Any book that's going to make a big difference in a place has to get a critical mass of people in that place talking. Editors can predict marketability through their long perspective on developments in the field. Booksellers can help by telling us what their readers want from those shelves of nature writing and regional books.

Readers want imaginative, enthusiastic engagement, but in this genre, there's a hurdle for writers to leap before they can provide it. They must suspend our disbelief that nature matters. It takes a dose of disbelief in the significance of nature just to get through a day. Mind-boggling impact to the places we live

combines nastily with increasingly busy lives; and both the casual indifference of industry and the moralistic orientation of the environmental movement have made intimacy with place seem a tedious and discouraging duty, not a continuing pleasure. So, how do writers suspend our disbelief and reengage us?

Writers recognize that their greatest strength lies in writing about a place they feel inside their bones, says Milkweed Publisher Emeritus Emilie Buchwald. Great work, she feels, is crammed with details about a highly localized place, each chosen to bring readers there in their imaginations. The writers *live* for the places they write about. The initial attraction of their strange ardor turns to intrigue and then to full engagement for the reader.

Two western booksellers, Utah's Sanders and Cathy Langer of Colorado's Tattered Cover, share the sense that people increasingly want to experience the place they live deeply. Now that nature writers are publishing work set in cities, rural places, and suburbs (a trend confirmed by every editor interviewed), they're in a perfect position to answer this hunger for connection.

Booksellers from Vermont to Utah to Washington say that they're finding the clientele for place-based nonfiction expanding and diversifying. The wider audience expects exploration of issues from a variety of viewpoints, even opposing viewpoints. Rather than reading broadly in the genre, a growing number of customers select titles that offer more thoughtful, well-rounded

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# 150 years: A Beacon of Good Publishing

by Brenna McLaughlin, AAUP Communications Manager

*Information on the history of Beacon Press was gathered from the pamphlet “A Brief History of Beacon Press,” Susan Wilson (2003). All quotes refer to this publication. Read more at [www.beacon.org](http://www.beacon.org).*

In the course of 150 years, a lot of history can be made. From its earliest mission to publish and distribute books that would “explain and defend Unitarian thought and promote... ‘more reasonable’ thinking,” to the full flowering of its contemporary commitment to “publish intelligent, eloquent answers to the pressing questions of the day,” Beacon Press has been making publishing and intellectual history.

Established in 1854 as the Press of the American Unitarian Association (AUA), Beacon celebrated its sesquicentennial this January. The Press’s initial publishing program consisted mainly of religious works on doctrine and theology. But Beacon Press, even at its birth, was interested in social reforms such as temperance, abolition, women’s rights, and the education of the working class.

One interesting early AUA Press publications was *A Soldier’s Companion*, a booklet of hymns, poems, and practical advice (such as “wear flannel all over in all weathers”) distributed free

of charge to Union soldiers throughout the Civil War. An intriguing later parallel was the 1969 *Guide to the Draft*, which explained the laws, government forms, and options to young men of draft age during the Vietnam War.

Over the years, while the Press has retained its commitment to religious scholarship, Beacon has become well known for its support of powerful progressive thinkers. Books such as Cornell West’s *Race Matters*, James Baldwin’s *Notes of a Native Son* and Jürgen Habermas’s *Toward a Rational Society*—among many others—confirm Beacon’s place at the forefront of American publishing.

Publication of the *Senator Mike Gravel Edition: The Pentagon Papers* in 1971 tested the strength of Beacon’s principled willingness to publish important books that other publishers couldn’t or wouldn’t. And the principles stood, despite political pressure, threats of jail, and financial risk.

Beacon Press has been an associate member of the Association of American University Presses since 1988. This is a

category reserved for non-profit presses of non-degree granting scholarly institutions or associations whose publishing programs reflect the high standards and scholarly rigor otherwise required for AAUP membership. Associate members include museum publishers, historical societies, research institutions, and scholarly associations.

The missions of these presses is that of all AAUP members—to facilitate the creation and preservation of knowledge to the highest standards of scholarship, writing, and production. The depth and variety of their publishing programs add immense value to *Books for Understanding* bibliographies. The experience, knowledge, and collegiality of their staffs is a boon to professional development throughout AAUP. The importance of Beacon and other associate members to the AAUP community is immeasurable.

The Exchange and the AAUP join in the celebration of Beacon Press this year, recognizing the Press’s lasting importance to American publishing and the Association.

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## Next Thoreau, continued

and innovative look at particular issues that are important to them.

Editors are looking for work to match these readers’ interests—timely, issue-driven work that investigates many sides of a problem. Mary Elizabeth Braun, of Oregon State University Press, sees writers tackling health, food, agriculture, environmental justice, and quality-of-life issues. Buchwald looks for ideas for how to preserve, rebuild, rewild and rethink. And Barbara Ras of Trinity University Press wants work that not only informs but instructs people about how to be in the world. Rachel Carson might have been excited to see this confluence in the interests of readers, writers, and

publishers, the new energy pouring into the search for ways to think about and address issues.

Readers *are* looking for the next Thoreau, the next Carson, the next great writer who can tell powerful stories, reflect on our culture in relation to the rest of life, teach and provoke us.

University presses, as regional publishers, have a perfect opportunity in this field because we know the places, know the markets, and can take risks on publishing books that might or might not break out to a national audience. The books answer our commitment to help to preserve the distinctiveness of local cultures through publication of works on our home regions. We’re good at

discovering talent; once in a great while, we’ll find even those writers who can shake up culture with a book of nature writing.

In *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*, John Steinbeck says: “A child’s world spreads only a little beyond his understanding while that of a great scientist thrusts outward immeasurably. An answer is invariably the parent of a great family of new questions.” University presses exist to perpetuate questions, analysis, reflection, and cultural conversation. Place-based creative nonfiction sustains a singular line of inquiry with its intertwined reflection on people and nature. It’s a perfect match.

## *Edvard Aslaksen*

Edvard Aslaksen passed away on January 11, 2004, at the age of 79. Aslaksen was a longtime director of Universitetsforlaget, the Norwegian University Press. He was educated at Little Norway in Canada, and graduated from the law school of the University of Oslo in 1951.

For many years he was the president of the International Association of Scholarly Publishers (IASP). The IASP aims to assist scholarly publishers in developing countries with the production and distribution of scientific literature.

In 1990, AAUP awarded Aslaksen an honorary prize for his valuable work in promoting scholarly publishing internationally. The Aslaksen Award was established to honor such international contributions to the field.

## Calendar

*AAUP Financial Officers Meeting*  
March 4-6, 2004  
Savannah, GA  
Contact: Phyllis Wells  
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*IASP International Conference on Scholarly Publishing*  
March 18-20, 2004  
Leuven, Belgium  
[www.iasp.at](http://www.iasp.at)

*Humanities Advocacy Day*  
March 15-16, 2004  
Washington, DC  
[www.nhalliance.org/had](http://www.nhalliance.org/had)

*Printmedia Conference & Expo*  
March 15-17, 2004  
New York, NY

*AAUP Production Managers Meeting*  
May 5-8, 2004  
Montreal, Quebec  
Contact: Susanne McAdam  
[susannem@mqup.ca](mailto:susannem@mqup.ca)

*BookExpo America*  
Chicago, IL  
June 4-6, 2004

*2004 AAUP Annual Meeting*  
June 26-29, 2004  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
Contact: [annualmeeting@aaupnet.org](mailto:annualmeeting@aaupnet.org)

*The Second International Conference on the Future of the Book*  
August 29-31, 2004  
Beijing, China

*2005 AAUP Annual Meeting*  
June 16-19, 2005  
Philadelphia, PA



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