



## **Ann Arbor Independent Booksellers Association**

*A community rooted in books*

### **August Newsletter**

Greetings! We are delighted to bring you the first issue of our monthly newsletter, in which we hope to share with you captivating interviews, history, events and more. If you have ideas for future features, or a local book-related story you'd like to share, we'd love to hear from you at [rachel@a2books.org](mailto:rachel@a2books.org). Don't forget to check our all-inclusive events calendar often for updates on events at Ann Arbor's independent bookstores!

[Events Calendar](#)

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**Snapshot of the Past**

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Wahr's University Bookstore February 1967

Courtesy of the Ann Arbor District Library's [Old News](#) site

### **Wahr's Bookstore - Ann Arbor's Longest Lasting Bookshop**

The busy years of the seventies saw a renaissance in bookshops in Ann Arbor, with such well-known names as Borders, West Side Books, Dawn Treader, and the Little Professor shops appearing. But the early part of the decade also saw the end of a very long lived bookshop, Wahr's, which had been an Ann Arbor landmark bookseller and publisher for almost a hundred years.

Wahr's was founded in January of 1887, when George Wahr bought out two partners in an earlier venture, called George Osius & Co., at 4 North Main. From the beginning it provided books both for the university and the town, but wallpaper was also a major part of the shop. Christmas time and spring were the big sales periods for wallpaper, while the books sold year round, with peaks at Christmas and the beginning of university terms. Pens and stationery were also staples, and for a time Wahr's was also a major seller of sporting goods. .

In 1892, Wahr's opened a shop on South State Street at 310 (the current building houses Get Your Game On and SEE), and probably moved to 20 South State by 1895, based on an ad in THE OMEGA from Ann Arbor High School. Wahr's then moved to its lasting location at 316 South State in 1903. In the 1930s it also had an Old and Rare shop at 306 S. State, but selling used and rare had been a regular, though small, part of the company for much of its life.

Wahr's was also active in publishing, starting in the 1890s. The firm focused on textbooks, but also included novels, histories, and children's books. Over 250 different titles were eventually done, along with calendars showing university buildings. A scarce calendar from 1903 was made in the shape of a football.

Wahr's remained the flagship store of the city, surviving the depression and continuing to sell stationary, textbooks and sports equipment. It eventually shut down the original Main Street location, and focused on more university sales, and still published the odd book as well.

By the early seventies it was over. George Wahr Sallade, the grandson of the original George, sold the stock to Tom and Louis Borders in 1975, and closed the eighty-eight year old business. At one point the Borders brothers had a used and rare bookshop there called Charing Cross Books at the old Wahr's location, though it was ran by other people while they concentrated on their new bookshop across the street at 303 South State. Wahr's is still fondly remembered by a number of Ann Arbor residents, and the occasional bookmark, bag, letterhead, or even box can turn up at resale shops or in estate sales.

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*Gene Alloway*

*Owner, Motte & Bailey Booksellers*

## On the Shelf



*Look Who's Back* by Timur Vermes

Maclehose Press, \$14.99

Available at [Bookbound](#)

In this smart and entertaining first-person narrative, Hitler reappears in Germany, hasn't aged a day and has no memory of the years since 1945. As he realizes where he is in time he believes obscure forces have put him there because the German Volk still need him and his message. People assume

he is a performance artist and before long he has a prominent media presence. People even begin to thrill to his 'act'. In the wrong hands, the premise of this satire could have easily led to a goofy or offensive novel but thanks to Vermes it is a funny and timely, if disconcerting, commentary on demagoguery.

--Megan Blackshear, co-owner of Bookbound

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## Upcoming Events



### **Kerrytown BookFest**

**Sunday, September 11th**

**10:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

<http://www.kerrytownbookfest.org/>

In preparation of the upcoming Kerrytown BookFest, we spoke with Linda Kimmel, the exhibitor coordinator, to find out what to look forward to at this year's festival. Linda has been involved with the Kerrytown BookFest since 2011 and works as a social scientist at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.

### **What year did the Kerrytown BookFest start?**

The first Kerrytown BookFest was held 2003 and the 2016 BookFest on September 11th will be our 14th annual Kerrytown BookFest.

### **How many exhibitors will there be at the festival, and what kinds of exhibitors will be represented?**

There will be approximately 120 exhibitor booths. The mission of the Kerrytown BookFest is "to stimulate and promote interest in the educational, artistic, and cultural role of the

book and printing arts; authorship and writing; book preservation; reading; publishing; and libraries.” We try to stay true to that mission in our exhibitors, and this year the exhibitors represent the full array of the book world, from printers to book artists to authors to booksellers to publishers to libraries to literacy groups to writers groups.

### **What types of events will take place during the festival?**

In addition to the fantastic array of exhibitors there is a full schedule of panels focused this year on the theme Travels With Books. The panels take place in three separate venues: the Main Tent and the Children’s Tent in the Farmers Market and another series of panels in the nearby Kerrytown Concert House. The panels offer a little something for every reader, focusing on such diverse topics as The Quest for Identity, A Mysterious Sense of Place, Travel through Time, and Writing for Hire....and that’s just the beginning! The full schedule of events is available at our website

here: <http://www.kerrytownbookfest.org/activities/event-schedule/>

### **What aspect of the festival are you most excited about sharing with the public?**

Because I’ve focused the last year on recruiting and communicating with a great set of exhibitors, I’m very eager for the public to check out all of the exhibitor booths. As I’ve communicated with the exhibitors I’ve learned how excited most of them are to be participating in the Kerrytown BookFest, and how much they truly want to talk with those in attendance.

### **What do you hope visitors of the festival will take away from their experience?**

I hope visitors will take away from the Kerrytown BookFest an appreciation for the vibrant, diverse book culture that exists in the area. In addition to a large number of independent bookseller and authors, we’re also fortunate to have a large number of individuals devoted to the book arts including illustrators, printers, papermakers, and paper artists.

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***Be sure to check out the A2IBA booth at the Kerrytown Bookfest!***



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