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Thursday, Mar 24, 2005

## The Beacon Journal

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### Go on safari for inky treasure

**Antiquarian Book Fair features 60 book dealers with cornucopia of reading from all over**

Connie Bloom  
Beacon Journal

Like most book dealers, Jim Best wears a look of satisfaction when he holds a fine volume in his hands.

It needn't be a precious, priceless book such as *The World in Miniature: Africa*, published in 1810 with 45 colored engravings, a gem at this weekend's Antiquarian Book Fair.

It might even be a potboiler by contemporary author Elizabeth George, whose mysteries he has devoured with a passion. "My wife and I have more than 1,000 mysteries in our house," he said. "When we find a mystery writer we enjoy, we try to read everything he (or she) has written."

Best is an antiquarian book dealer and retired professor of political science at Kent State University, where his wife Lynda, also retired, was an administrator. He is a founding member of the Northern Ohio Bibliophilic Society and a molder of the book fair, but no longer sells in a shop. He has moved into cyberspace and morphed into the Bookman of Kent at [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com).

This year's book fair is the 23rd and will feature 60 dealers from Ohio, Michigan, New York, Connecticut, Tennessee, Illinois, Florida and Indiana. It'll be a romp, like browsing 60 different book shops in one location, a cornucopia of reading confections for every appetite.

The world has changed profoundly since Best began selling books in 1978, but the joy of reading remains constant. Books are the common denominator of humanity.

An unopened book is an incomplete mission, its presence chiding the owner until shame or curiosity overwhelms. Books wield the power to inform, amuse, inspire, challenge and change lives, but cannot unfurl their magic with their covers closed. In their many forms from art objects to parts manuals, they connect people, ease their journeys, guide their quests. So you see a lot more is going on at a book fair than meets the eye.

"We were surprised the first one was so well attended," said Best. The location has changed over the years, but the joy of the hunt remains the same. Book hounds can sleuth for treasures costing from \$1 to \$12,000 and perhaps even higher. "If you can't find what you're looking for in one booth, maybe it will be down the next aisle," he said.

"It's fun for me because it's an opportunity to meet people I haven't seen since last year," he said. "I rarely get to meet my customers face to face. The Akron book fair to me is a charming opportunity to meet another set of people I sell to and to renew acquaintances."

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The Care Bears Live, 'Caring and Sharing Friends' comes to Cleveland this weekend and is geared to more intimate theater, rather than arena setting.

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Most book hounds are addicted to the faint smell of the ink and the crisp rattle of the dust jacket. I always want to gaze at the title page, then skip immediately to the inside back to see the photo of the author. The last thing I do at night is read a few paragraphs in bed. I have come to enjoy the way a book imprints my cheek when I fall asleep on it because I couldn't keep my eyes open any more.

### Care Bears New

The Care Bears Live, *Caring and Sharing Friends*, is the newest stage show for small children from Vee Entertainment Corp., producer of the Sesame Street Live song fests. It opened in Minneapolis in March and comes to Cleveland this weekend.

"We currently have three Sesame Street shows on tour, plus Care Bears," said Jane O'Hara, publicist. "This show, given the logistics, is on a smaller scale than Sesame Street, geared more to a theater environment as opposed to the arena."

Kids will love the stage set with its pretty clouds and rainbow and beautiful lighting, she said. "There are eight different bears, performed by adults, and two little girls, who alternate playing Lindsay, the heroine. Lindsay is sad because her best friend has moved away. Before she knows it, she is whisked away to Care-a-lot, home of the bears."

The young actresses are Kelsey and Hayley Smith from Murrieta, Calif., 9 and 8 respectively. "They are doing their homework on the road and we do our best to make sure they get their rest," said O'Hara. Their mother is traveling with them. "They are well versed in the show and memorized their lines and sing and dance like clockwork at the next curtain call. They are both very cute and strong performers."

The show is full of catchy songs that the bears have reworked slightly. One is *Ring Around the Rainbow*, also known as Ring Around the Rosie.

"The second half of the show is upbeat with pop songs. There's even a rap song," she said. "It's really funny. We go from classic to current music. People in our office have had the songs in their heads for days on end."

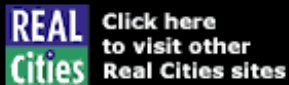
### Thomas 2005

Tickets are on sale now for 25-minute excursions on Thomas the Tank Engine, the full-size steam locomotive, which will be in Peninsula at the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad May 21-22. Get 'em while they're hot. They sell out quickly.

This year is the 60th anniversary of *Thomas & Friends*, the classic storybook series created by the Rev. W. Awdry. Families will be riding a real train that has been made to look like Thomas.

Tickets are \$14 for ages 2 and older. Call 866-468-3401.

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