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## ATG Interviews Alice and Klaus Peters

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**ATG:** *What can we expect in the future for CM? For Blackwell's Book Services?*

**GR:** We will continue to enhance **Collection Manager** to make it a valuable tool that supports many aspects of a library's workflow such as selection, ordering and interfaces with other systems. We are currently researching the next level of support academic libraries need from **Collection Manager**. You can expect **Blackwell's Book Services** to innovate and continue to create intelligent solutions for building and managing library collections.

**ATG:** *What are Gary Rautenstrauch's greatest strengths?*

**GR:** Probably my insight into many of the products, services and technology used by libraries today, as well as some basic management skills to develop strategy, execute and help colleagues and customers to be successful.

**ATG:** *Philip what are Gary's greatest strengths? Why did you hire him?*

**PB:** Gary is the most important hire we have made in the last six years and as you can imagine the due diligence process was lengthy. We asked Gary to join **Blackwell** on the strength of his excellent track record in a number of fields in distribution and his

experience in dealing with a number of issues the business faces. His insight will give us a better competitive edge in this market. But above all his abilities as an outstanding team leader capable of leading the business in its next stage of development.

**ATG:** *What will Dan Halloran really be doing? Dan has been the face of Blackwell's for nearly twenty years. Are you making him the scapegoat at this point in time?*

**GR:** I know **Dan** agrees with me that there is no one single face of **Blackwell's**. Rather, there are hundreds of dedicated team members, all striving to deliver the best value we can to our academic library customers. Joining such a great group is one of the key reasons I came here. **Dan** continues to work with our customers and provide guidance to many of us at **Blackwell's**.

**ATG:** *Philip, comments?*

**PB:** Gary's appointment strengthens the management team and his skill set is complimentary to **Dan's**. And although with the pace of change it may seem like twenty years we have only been working with **Dan** for six years — last time I counted.

**ATG:** *Gary, seeing that you oversaw the acquisition of Yankee and PMS by B&T in '98 and '99, and were involved in the acquisition of B&T by the Carlyle Group, we are curious. Is the next step a sale of Blackwell's?*

**GR:** My time at **B&T** started about ten years before the **Carlyle Group** acquisition. **B&T** acquired **Yankee** and **PMSC** in those days to expand its offerings to public and academic libraries. Acquisitions by financial sponsors are often done for different reasons. A company sale is not the next step here.

**ATG:** *Tell us what you do for fun, Gary? Do you ever have any or are you always rescuing companies?*

**GR:** I enjoy running (I ran a marathon last year), camping and an occasional round of golf. And, I often enjoy working. Based on my first thirty days here, I think I will really enjoy **Blackwell's**.

**ATG:** *How about you, Philip?*

**PB:** We will continue to serve our academic customers for as long as they value what we have to offer and want to buy from us. Every year we have to work harder and faster to remain relevant in this digital age, but we are not unique in that respect. It is the many dimensions of this challenge that get me up in the morning and keep me awake at night. I have a young family that fill in the gaps and luckily we enjoy many of the same activities — skiing, sailing and books of course.

**ATG:** *Thanks so much for your comments and cooperation!* 🐼

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## ATG Interviews Alice and Klaus Peters

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### Publishers, A K Peters

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by **Richard Abel** <kstrauch@comcast.net>

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**ATG:** *What is the subject and intellectual level of the current AKP list?*

**AKP:** Reflecting the background and interests of its principals, **Alice** and **Klaus Peters**, **A K Peters** focuses on books and journals in the mathematical sciences and computer science. Most of our books are directed at professional readers who are involved with research and development, stressing cutting edge material in computer graphics, with applications in animation, computer games, and virtual reality, and research monographs in pure and applied mathematics. We also believe that the mathematical sciences form an integral part of our culture, not only because mathematics is at the root of many scientific and technological advances, but also because it's universal manifestation of human nature and its connection to the arts and philosophy. For that reason we try to advance the awareness and education of the intellectual public in things mathematical. Our strong list of biographical works, for example *The Honors Class: Hilbert's Problems and their Solvers* and the autobiography of the influential mathematician *Saunders Mac Lane: a Mathematical Autobiography* and books on advanced mathematical puzzles and origami will help to further that awareness.

**ATG:** *What is the present organization of the firm?*

**AKP:** **A K Peters** is a privately held corporation which is directed by the two publishers **Alice Peters** and **Klaus Peters**. In order to optimize our services we handle all aspects of editing, production, and customer service in-house using some freelance services for copyediting and design. Our order fulfillment is handled by a large warehouse and shipping facility and is connected to our electronic ordering system.

**ATG:** *How did you and Alice come to form the firm?*

**AKP:** Both **Alice** and I came to publishing from the academic environment, teaching at universities in the US and Germany, respectively. Starting **A K Peters** is literally a direct result of the merger and acquisition trend in publishing. After twice experiencing a takeover of the company where we worked in responsible and rather independent editorial positions we decided to start our own company where we could pursue our idea of publishing in the service of the academic community without restrictions other than economic restraints.

**ATG:** *What was Alice's previous back-*

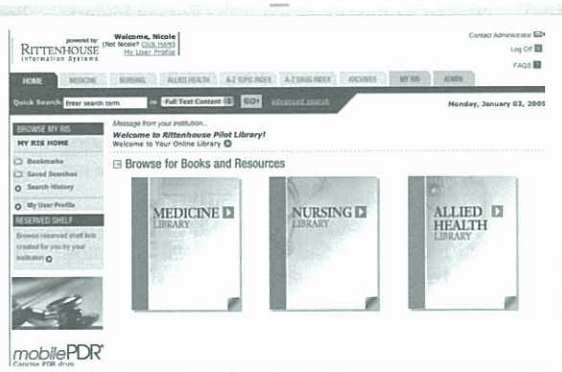
*ground in mathematics publishing? What was yours?*

**AKP:** Actually our background is very similar, except for a phase transition. I was invited by **Springer Verlag** in Germany in the year 1964 to become their first in-house mathematics editor. Incidentally this was the year when **Springer** established a foothold in New York by starting its North American operation. In 1972, **Alice** was hired in New York as the mathematics editor. Later that year she moved to Germany to take responsibility for the mathematics program when I became the director of **Springer**. I should mention that **Springer Verlag** was run in an extraordinary collegial way in those days which allowed the second mathematics editor in Heidelberg, **Walter Kaufmann-Buehler**, to move to New York and assume **Alice's** position there. **Alice** and I have continued our cooperation through the founding of **Birkhäuser Boston** and **Academic Press** until we started at **A K Peters** in 1992.

**ATG:** *I understand that you have recently completed a very successful private investment placement. What are your publishing and editorial plans for use of this new capital?*

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**AKP:** The plan of a private investment placement grew out of discussions with members of the scientific community who are concerned about the cultural change in STM publishing away from the symbiotic relationship between authors, publishers, and libraries to a short-term business relationship based on accounting principles and profit maximization. The desire of the scientific community to further the growth of publishers who continue to work in partnership and the need for capital investment to allow growth led to the idea that the scientific community established equity in a commercial publishing company. Our plans are simple and grow out of this idea: To publish more books while maintaining high standards in those areas in which we are confident of making the right decisions. At the same time we want to maintain a pricing policy that optimizes the distribution of the works that we are publishing.

**ATG:** *What new mathematics publishing specialties are you entering with your new editorial program? How and to what audiences do you intend to market your extended list?*

**AKP:** Our program, based on our personal background and expertise, has always been focused on the mathematical sciences (we include theoretical physics, and applications of mathematics in this concept) and computer science. We will continue publishing in these core areas and hope to expand publications on the research

level because there is a particular need for publications at affordable prices for students and individual scientists. In view of the significance of mathematics as the basis for science and technology and for its general philosophical and cultural relevance, we believe that the intellectual climate for the acceptance of mathematics deserves improvement. Following the great German essayist and poet **Hans Magnus Ezensberger** who said: "... we are developing a program that brings such exercises in the form of mathematical puzzles (in the tradition of **Martin Gardner**) to the general public and into the classroom."

**ATG:** *Are you publishing any mathematical journals? If so, what are their titles?*

**AKP:** Yes, we publish three journals: Two in mathematics, *Experimental Mathematics* and *Internet Mathematics* and one in computer sciences, the *Journal of Graphics Tools*.

**ATG:** *Do you intend to increase the number of journal titles you will publish, given your increased publishing activity?*

**AKP:** The introduction of new journals in the current economic climate is extremely difficult as the readers of this publication know all too well. We are open to new ideas and will pursue them with long term commitment if the subject and approach (see *Experimental Mathematics*) represent a need rather than the desire to create an outlet for difficult to place papers. We are also open to support journals whose editorial boards are looking for a new home.

**ATG:** *Will your journals be available in both print and on-line, Internet versions?*

**AKP:** We believe that the formats, in which journals are distributed, print and/or on-line, are determined by many factors, among them cost, space, convenience, archival security, and emerging technologies. We are flexible and offer currently three "formats": print (for all journals), free electronic access to ToC, abstracts, or full text (varying by journal), and inclusion in existing databases (e.g., **EMIS** and project **Euclid**).

**ATG:** *Do you plan to make any of your book titles available in some form of downloadable Internet version?*

**AKP:** We have done so in cooperation with some of our authors and we are monitoring the effect. So far, sales patterns seem to be unaffected but our sample is certainly not statistically significant. I believe that the current state technology does not encourage the publication of books on the Internet, except for reference works. I am sure that this will change with the development of more user-friendly devices and publishers will adjust their formats to such opportunities.

Let me emphasize my credo that the main functions of a publisher are:

- Manuscript selection and the building of a distinguished list thus creating an environment in which individual books are recognized and can thrive.
- Adding value by the careful editing of manuscripts for language, clarity, and organization (bibliography and indexing).

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# From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 29401; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

**Oxford University Press** recently released a set that any library supporting African American or Women's Studies will find essential. The second edition of *Black Women in America* (2005, 0195156773, \$325) updates and enhances the 1994 **Dartmouth Award** winning, two-volume set. It also reflects the growth of reader interest, as well as the expanding scholarship in this area over the last decade.

There are some 475 articles in this new edition and while this is a decrease from the number of articles in the 1st edition, there are numerous comprehensive entries that incorporate many previous articles. And of course, there are completely new entries that add valuable content. The thorough treatment of larger themes is obvious in articles ranging from Affirmative Action to the Visual Arts and from Colonial America to the Civil Rights Movement. There are also articles on topics as diverse as Legal Resistance, Domestic Workers, Suffrage, Broadcast Journalism, the Jim Crow Era, and Entrepreneurs. But the bulk of the articles are reserved for the women themselves. There are close to 350 individual biographical entries dis-

cussing women as varied as the **Forten Sisters**, **Leontyne Price**, **Althea Gibson**, and **Condoleezza Rice**. In addition, there are numerous shorter sketches within the longer thematic articles. For example, in the article on the Blues there is a two-page section featuring brief biographies of nine blues performers not covered in separate entries.

The set is handsomely produced with over 500 illustrations and black and white photos. The bibliographies, some of them substantial, have been updated and contain references to books, articles and Websites. Given that many of the thematic articles in this edition are more comprehensive, indexing is important. Luckily, there is both a useful general index pointing to specific volumes and page numbers, as well as thematic outline of entries. There is also an impressive chronology of Black women's history and a selected bibliography as added features.

*Black Women in America* is a definite choice for most public and academic libraries, as well as those high school libraries that have the necessary money in their budgets. There is nothing quite like it for thoroughness and comprehensive coverage of the Black woman's experience in America. Of course, the first edition is still useful and those libraries that have it may want to place it in circulation.

**Routledge's *Encyclopedia of Modern Jewish Culture*** (2005, 041529813X, \$425) is another worthy second edition. Edited by **Glenda Abramson**, this offering updates the *Blackwell Companion to Jewish Culture*, published in 1989, also edited by **Abramson**. Expanding the original single volume into a two-volume set, **Abramson** and

her contributors have increased content by two-thirds with updated and added entries. The result is a well-rounded, scholarly overview of Jewish culture from the 18th century to the present.

Culture here is broadly defined as "literature, language, music, the performing and visual arts, philosophy, and scholarship in the humanities." And reflecting the far reaching breadth of Jewish culture, coverage is international. The articles are of three major types, brief biographies and topical essays ranging from 200 to 1000 words and longer survey articles that can be as long as 5000 words. Thus along with a biographical sketch of the British composer **Ronald Senator**, readers will find a survey article on Serbian-Jewish Literature, and next to the article on **Marcel Proust** is an essay on Psychoanalysis and Judaism. There are also numerous articles that are country specific like *Sectarian Trends in Modern Israel*, *French-Jewish Intellectuals after 1968*, and *Jews in British Cinema*. And while one would expect articles covering Great Britain, Europe, Israel and America, there is also recognition of the Jewish culture in places like Australia and South Africa with articles like *South African Jewry after Apartheid* and *Australian Jewry*.

The organization of the book is alphabetical by headwords. "See also" references are provided within the text of the articles by printing related headwords in small capital letters. However, sometimes access is problematic. In looking for information on the Borscht Belt, famed hotbed of Jewish comedy in early 20th century America, the index is no help. The article on Jewish comedy discusses it and the various Catskill summer resorts where it was centered, but there is no reference to the Borscht Belt or the Catskills in the index. Obviously more thorough indexing would be helpful. Other features that would be useful in future editions would be a topical guide of the articles, as well as an alphabetical listing of entries.

Nonetheless, the *Encyclopedia* is a worthwhile addition to collections supporting Jewish Studies programs and interests. It successfully offers a collective definition of modern Jewish Culture, as well as a gateway to more comprehensive study. The articles are clearly written, factual and cover a diversity of topics while providing useful bibliographies. With its focus on cultural issues, the *Encyclopedia of Modern Jewish Culture* also acts as a helpful complement to the highly praised *Encyclopedia of Judaism* (2001, 0826415148, \$335) published by **Continuum**. (This edition includes the 4th volume which was first published as a supplement. There is also a 5th volume supplement published in 2003, 0826415806, \$150.)

The *Greenwood Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy: Themes, Works and*  
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- Optimizing distribution through project oriented international marketing and a pricing policy that affords purchase by individuals.

**ATG:** Will you be offering additional material to the electronic versions of journals and books?

**AKP:** Yes, our journals offer images, programs, extensive tables of data on their official Websites. Similarly we offer electronic data on CD with our printed books, including software, images, and audio clips and in some cases searchable full text versions of the book. Other books have dedicated

Websites with supplementary material, solution manuals, and searchable texts.

**ATG:** What other information about your present plans do you wish to share with librarians?

**AKP:** I believe your questions were very comprehensive and allowed me to present our current plans and ideas. I believe that librarians and publishers work on the same side of the information challenge and that we need to listen to one another and make use of new technology to benefit our common constituency, the reader. Libraries struggle with space and budget constraints and publishers incur increasing costs in the attempt to maintain the quality of their product. Together, we will meet these challenges. 