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Stuart Teacher

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Commentary on the Contents of the Stuart Teacher Collection

Comments

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[Commentary on items in the Stuart Teacher Collection. Written by Stuart Teacher, 2017]

1. Early address book (cost noted at 69 cents) which pre-dates the 1971 startup of Running Press. At the time I was (legally) selling LP vinyl records of rock concerts including some of the popular bands at the time. I was also a full-time student at the Wharton doctorate program in the Center for Studies in Criminology and Criminal Law. I felt it prudent to keep my way of supporting myself separate from my work at Penn and used the name Uncle Wiggily for my record business. I was interviewed by the press a few times using that name. This address book was used for contacts at the transition between Penn and the start of RP. Under the letter D you see an entry for Time and Life magazines. I have included the Time interview quotes in with the collection.

Under the letter F is a listing of a prominent record store with the notation “won’t buy (buy) for ethical reasons.” This was an interesting time for the copyright laws which were changed right at the time we started RP. At that time I stopped selling “bootleg” records. Entries are also included for some notable people in the music business including Larry Magid, Lou Weinstock and Jerry Spivak.

On the rear left endpaper is a list of encyclopedias I purchased while living in Los Angeles for Larry’s store, the Discount Encyclopedia Center at 38 South 19th Street. This was the original home for Running Press for many years. On the preceding endpaper page are some notes on day to day expenses.

2. Business card for Sky Forest Enterprises. These were the friends in LA who owned the bootleg record business as well as being concert promoters. I had taken a one-year leave of absence from Penn graduate school to live in LA and accumulate some savings before returning to Wharton.

3. This is a print ad for Larry Teacher’s book store. The ad was quite successful in drawing customers and it ran for many years. At the time it was the longest consecutively running monthly ad in Philadelphia Magazine.

I worked at the store part time but was in the photo just to make the enterprise look a bit more substantial. I had conceived the ad headline and it seemed to work well.

The encyclopedia store was a truly worthwhile concept and provided a unique opportunity for consumers to learn about and understand the real differences between the major children's and adult general reference encyclopedias. At the time, most encyclopedia companies sold their products door to door. World Book in particular had a sales force primarily made up of public school teachers who used the somewhat unethical practice of selling to parents of their students. Larry had some exclusive sources to obtain all of the major brands. This is relevant because we later started Running Press as a publisher of nonfiction reference and how-to books.

The store also carried antiquarian reference books such as the Oxford English Dictionary and the highly regarded 11th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica. It was in business for approximately ten years. Larry gave the business to his ex-wife Marilyn when he joined RP to work full time around late 1973.

4. Wind King Lighter. Just at the start of Running Press, Larry and I found and purchased several hundred of these lighters and made money by selling them to head shops.

5. We began RP with \$3200, money I had saved and put away in 1965. The \$3200 was a gift to each of five grandchildren from our maternal grandmother Reba Weisfeld. At the time Larry had created and published an interesting document for a system of rating all of the English language general knowledge encyclopedias. He named it The Laurence Chart. He had it copyrighted and the business incorporated under the name Library Publications Inc., which we later used as the legal entity for Running Press.

We decided to save the expense of starting RP under a new entity (\$500+or-) by using the corporation to include our new publishing venture. This item is the official corporate seal

from M. Burr Keim in Philadelphia. We kept RP under that corporate name for the entire time we were in business, until 2003 when Library Publications Inc. was sold to Perseus.

6. This is a bookmark from Leary's, which was one of the oldest and largest antiquarian bookstores in America. It was a landmark in downtown Philadelphia for more than 100 years. The very first efforts we made to start what was meant to be a short-lived but satisfying and creative publishing endeavor was to find interesting commercial popular material in the public domain to re-package and publish in what was then the emerging large-format "trade paperback" book. This was all made possible by Stewart Brand's *Whole Earth Catalog* which was a sensation and my own primary model to search for nonfiction subjects to start the company with.

I went through virtually every used bookstore, as well as the Philadelphia Free Library, looking for ideas. After almost a month I had come up totally dry. There must have been dozens of possible books to consider at Leary's but I was new to this and only working with the feeling that I might know a potential project when I saw it. I limited my searching exclusively to books with illustration or photography.

Having exhausted the obvious resources in Philadelphia I then expanded my search to include Manhattan. At the famous Strand Book Store I came across a small thick book, in French, and knew immediately it was just what we had been searching for. It was (and still is) Thérèse de Dillmont's *Encyclopedia of Needlework*, a tiny but bulky 800-page book on every sort of needlework, and all illustrated with woodcuts. First published in 1884, this remarkable volume is an exhaustive resource on every imaginable kind of needlework, from crochet to macrame. Thérèse de Dillmont was an Austrian needleworker and writer. Her *Encyclopedia of Needlework* has been translated into 17 languages.^[1] She owned a string of shops in European capitals and was "one of the most important pioneers in the international and multicultural enterprise of hobby needlework in the late nineteenth century."

The book was printed in black and white (practical for us) and published as a promotional item by the French DMC thread company. Best of all, the copy I held in my hand was past copyright protection and legally in the public domain. We had our first book to publish! The Leary's bookmark is included here as a reminder of how we began our search for materials to republish.

7. Two items: An original photo taken at Camp Kittatinny in 1953, and a cover from Publisher's Weekly. This photo was used in the Publisher's Weekly cover ad on November 22nd 1991 to mark and celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of Running Press. Traditionally all front cover ads on PW were businesslike, serious, formal and rather standard advertising. At RP we wanted to have some fun and some levity celebrating this special anniversary and you can see we tried our hand at a bit of humor in the ad. We wanted the readers' attention. On the inside of the cover we stated our mission and philosophy and expressed appreciation to the booksellers that helped get to our twenty year mark.

8. T shirts and baseball style cap with Running Press logo.

Creating, maintaining and promoting our brand was a very important part of our strategy to grow the company. We felt that our book making and publishing efforts would be enhanced if we were able to focus on staff team building, and we looked for tools to help achieve that. Every spring for ten or twelve years we created a different Running Press branded T-shirt. These were given only to staff, family and a few authors. Each year a different member of our design department staff would be selected to create an original T-shirt that was fun to wear. Fortunately I saved many of these, and examples are included.

For about five years we also produced a high quality original baseball style cap each year. These were also for staff and a few authors. To further our team building we had four or five evening parties for employees each year, plus an annual daytime event when we would have a day out of the office and do something interesting as a group. One year we went to a horse racetrack and gave people money to place bets. Another year we went to

a Phillies baseball game. Eventually we settled on a pretty elaborate picnic at a private park on the Delaware River about an hour from our office in Philadelphia. The day was well planned out, with a variety of organized activities including volleyball, horseshoes and tubing in the river. We always hired an outstanding caterer and served a really nice selection of food and beverages. Usually the baseball caps were given out at the picnic.

Each year there were always a few people who were not comfortable attending for social reasons. The relaxing of office hierarchy made Nancy Steele, our most senior person on the publishing side, very uncomfortable and eventually she stopped attending. Larry preferred not to attend the daytime outings.

Long before these outings, back when we first started when there were perhaps a total of fifteen employees, we would have a social event in a bar or club once or twice a year. It was an enjoyable way to get people together and show some appreciation for their hard work and the successes the company was having. These began first at local bars in the Kensington area but later moved to more upscale places like The Continental at Second and Market streets. For several years we took over the entire restaurant for our private party. People were able to order whatever food or drink they wanted: cocktails, wine, beer etc. We did notice initially that employees tended to stay close and socialize with others in their departments so I requested more mingling between departments. My brother and I did not agree about holding these events. He did not think it was worth the money we spent but he went along with it anyway. Most times he did not attend. He tried at first but eventually stopped. In 1998 when I owned the company myself I was able to increase the frequency and quality of these outside-the-office events.

Our Victorian building had a lovely formal front parlor that we used as a meeting room. The staff always celebrated Christmas and Hanukkah together with each person designing a homemade ornament and hanging it on our office Christmas tree. Some of the ornaments were hilarious, making light of the company or some of our books. I think we all looked forward to this, especially since Running Press always closed for the

holidays between Christmas and the New Year. It was something everyone really appreciated and looked forward to. That week was not counted as vacation time.

9. Five-year silver and ten-year gold pin. We designed and had manufactured a five-year sterling silver pin and a ten-year pin in gold in the image of the building façade. The building itself was the company logo and as impractical as it was to use a high styled Victorian home as office space, it served quite an important purpose, especially to visitors. Larry and I were able to have the building listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings.

These pins were always awarded at the Christmas holiday party. At ten years of service an extra week of vacation was applied. At twenty years the employee was invited to plan any vacation they wanted at company expense. Karen Noble, the first to achieve this, picked a trip to Hawaii. It was expensive and a bit of a surprise but worth it as it sent a good message to the staff.

10. Running Press varsity style jacket. When there were perhaps twenty-five or thirty staff we produced one of these jackets for each employee. Each one had the person's first name embroidered on the front. The jacket was designed by my former brother-in-law Whitney Cookman, who became a well-known art director and senior VP at Random House.

11. Here are two objects that commemorated my 1994 purchase of Larry's half of the company. The first is an acrylic block with images of the catalog covers for each of our three imprints--Running Press, Courage Books and Running Press Miniature Editions--along with a notice of the \$21,000,000 bank credit line I used to purchase Larry's shares and to finance the growth of the company.

The second object is a Baccarat crystal paperweight in the shape of a small book. It is inscribed with the same date as the acrylic block, April 12th 1994. I do not remember

who gave me this gift. All of the preliminary meetings around that date can be found in the 1994 Week At-A Glance Appointment book.

12. Counterfeit version of our Miniature Edition on Palm Reading. Larry and I were very protective of the look and feel of our proprietary miniature book format. For sound business reasons, he did not want to take the risk of launching such an ambitious series, but ultimately our sales director Bruce McKenzie convinced Larry it was worth the risk. The risk was present because the books were so small that they needed their own permanent display that would have to be set on a table or store counter, and that was quite a challenging thing to ask the bookstores to agree to because their counter space was so valuable.

Once the series was launched and appeared to be sustainable we had quite a few publishers take notice of our success and, as often happens, try to make similar miniature books to compete with ours. I liked to say that miniature books were far from a new idea and have actually been around for as long as books have in general, but my design director Elizabeth Zozom and I had been working for almost a year to get the size and shape and binding specifications right, and that had been quite an involved and time-consuming project with the manufacturers in China.

We were only working with printers that were able to do the necessary hand work to make such small books. These books were literally bound by hand because there was no binding equipment able to sew such small signatures [pages] together in a standard manufacturers' binding line. Even though the \$4.95 price was more of a "mass market" book product line, I felt that each Miniature Edition had to have its own design and editorial qualities much like any other book we published.

In order to protect what we had invented, we were aggressive about making sure that no other publisher used our exact format, and that no other publisher's books would fit into the expensive counter and floor racks that we provided to retailers for free. Many of the

copycats were persuaded in discussions to either change the trim size of their miniature books or entirely drop their efforts to compete with us. A few, however, would not cooperate and one company, Heartland and another company in Australia (our Australian distribution partner and business associate) felt they should be able to do whatever they wanted to make books that looked just like ours. We took both companies to court and spent approximately one million dollars in legal actions against them. We won both cases and it was worth the cost because our books were selling so well.

This “key chain” style novelty showed up in gift stores and our copyright attorney Arthur Seidel suggested that we file criminal charges of counterfeiting. The FBI took the case, located and raided the company place of business in southern California and confiscated and destroyed all the inventory. This may be the only example to survive.

13. The first book Running Press published was *The Complete Encyclopedia of Needlework*. It was originally produced and published in a small trim size by DMC Thread Company of France to promote their products. I have previously included some narrative about how we came to discover and re-publish this massive 800 page book as a larger format trade paperback. It was a lucky first choice because it fit nicely with the back to the earth / crafts / do it yourself movement started by the Whole Earth Catalog and it sold well right from the start.

Larry and I labored over what the cover art should be. Arnie Roberts was one of the best known art directors in Philadelphia at the time and he did the cover design for us for a token amount of money. Arnie also came up with the name Running Press and designed our logo. We offered to give him a share of the company but he was wiser than us and explained he was flattered but we should not be giving away any ownership, that we needed to keep control of what we were working so hard to create and build. Larry and I have always been grateful to Arnie for that advice. It came in handy later as the company grew and key staff wanted some ownership.

I still love that first cover although, since the book was successful and in print for decades we did completely change the design of the cover three or four times.

We had sent the page mechanicals to Port City Press in Baltimore to be printed and bound and eagerly (an understatement) waited for the first copy to arrive. The first sample left the printer via Trailways Bus to arrive in Philadelphia one evening around 10 pm. Larry and I went to the Trailways station at 10th and Filbert streets and when the bus and package arrived we were thrilled to be holding the object of a year's work. There was a tourist-type souvenir photo booth where for fifty cents you could get your photo taken and framed with a mirror on the back. We went into the booth and took this picture. I believe the date would be October of 1972.

I think our expressions say a lot. We were off to a good start!

14. A small batch of souvenirs. These represent our attempts to compete with the large publishing houses in signing big-name licensed brands for Running Press books and kits.

A. This is a Muppet watch created as a promotional item (not for sale commercially) by the Jim Henson company. It is dated 1987 and was given to me by an employee of the Henson Group. I was not successful in getting the license.

B. A luggage tag from the National Hockey League for the 1991 42nd NHL All Star Game. For a few years RP was the official book publisher for the NHL and my son Matt and I attended the game in Chicago as guests of the League.

C. Lego key chain. While we had many licenses including Disney and Star Wars I tried very hard to obtain a Lego license. At the time the Lego brand was weak and declining, mostly because it was marketing only the generic building blocks and had no characters like Disney and the other big brands had. Today Lego is a remarkable

success because of characters like the one on this key chain. This was a prototype and not offered for sale. I did my best to convince them to let me test these animal characters in the U.S. and U.K in the Running Press mini kit line but I did not succeed. They were too distracted trying to resurrect their products. Lego is the one brand that got away!

D. In 1995, the Philadelphia restaurant Le Bec-Fin celebrated its 25th anniversary with this pin. Running Press published Georges Perrier's classic cookbook *Le Bec-Fin Recipes* the same year. It was one of the books that put Running Press's cookbook program on the map. I enjoyed Georges' enthusiasm and outsize personality.

Note: as of 2016 RP has almost every license imaginable, except Lego.

15. A gold medal from the Art Directors Club of Philadelphia. It's a lovely paperweight. I do not recall if this was for a specific project or more of a general award. Running Press won several design medals in our first few years in business. Joining the Art Directors' Club was an important way to let commercial artists in our area know about us. We were always looking for new ideas.

Unfortunately there was a price to pay from the established "traditional" Philadelphia publishers like Lippincott and Saunders for us "upstarts" walking away with so many of the awards they had previously been receiving each year.

16. Running Press bronze letters. These letters have great significance to me.

Larry and I placed a high value on the importance of our logo and the message it conveyed. Getting the typeface just right was a priority for us. We owned and occupied a historic building and wanted to brand the building in a way that gave the impression of a venerable, well established publishing enterprise. We felt that the building was an important asset in bringing in good staff and authors.

We ordered custom cast bronze raised letters for both the outside by the street entrance door and also a larger version for the lobby, over the fireplace. When the law firm tenant took a lease on 125 South 22nd St. they removed the letters from the outside of the building. These are the original letters: RUNNING PRESS BOOK PUBLISHERS

We always admired this typeface and used it consistently in our books and on our stationery. We never modified or changed it.

17. Week-At-A-Glance Professional Appointments is the brand of calendar and appointment diary I have always used. I began using these in 1971 and continue to use them even now (2017). I depended on this method of keeping track of personal and business appointments, meetings and scribbled notes to remind myself of things I wanted or needed to do. I would have been lost without this very simple system and always took my calendar with me when I traveled. My personal assistant had her own duplicate Week-At-A-Glance copy to mirror mine so she could make sure that all business appointments were properly organized and managed, and that I did not forget a commitment. My calendar, unlike my assistant's, contained many personal items.

These books are as close to a diary as I have. Reading them, you can see that my ways of using the calendar evolved and changed over time. I kept every calendar for each year, and you can see there are many personal notations as well as those related to Running Press business and other day-to-day matters.

These calendars have been very important to me personally and so it is intentional that they are among the last items I choose to place in the collection.

18. Photos 1 through 10. While Running Press was not especially well known for publishing the works of high-profile celebrities we did get to create some interesting and successful books with a number of popular American figures. It was a pleasant surprise to find that people like George Carlin, Fred Rogers, Henny Youngman and others were all

remarkably cooperative and easy to work with. More so than some first-time authors, these and other celebrities had a wonderful sense of trust in us and let our editors and designers do their best work without too much input or interference.

Unlike with some authors we experienced little or no interference on the cover or interior design from the few celebrities we did create books with. On the other hand neophyte authors often had contentious and difficult if not naive points of view on what the jacket or cover art should look like. They sometimes included their friends' or family's opinions too which was not helpful.

I remember us presenting George Carlin with a series of alternative cover designs for *Sometimes A Little Brain Damage Can Help*. He came right back to us saying he had no interest or qualifications to be involved in the choosing the cover, and that it was our job to create a cover that would make the book a success.

#1. Buz and Julia Child at a trade show. Most likely it was BEA (Book Expo America) perhaps in Los Angeles.

#2. Buz and RP editorial and sales staff with Wolfgang Puck at his restaurant Spago in Beverly Hills, California. It was a very special night for me as Tony Curtis stopped to chat with us, curious about why I was the only man dining with four women. He couldn't have been more charming.

#3. One of our first times exhibiting (1978) with a proper ABA (American Booksellers Association) stand designed and built for us specifically for this annual show. We had custom letters and the back wall had doors that opened to a large amount of storage. This unusual amount of available storage led us to an interesting and mutually productive long-term relationship.

A gentleman named Bob Purdum was in charge of the Bantam Doubleday Dell ABA stand and he asked, as a favor, if he could use some of our storage space at the show. In

return he promised to send important customers over to us and to introduce us to people who might be useful to us as a relatively unknown startup publisher. Larry, Bob and I remained friends for many years and he turned out to be a tremendous help to us. Booth placement at trade shows, especially ABA, was a critical element as you strived to be assigned a high traffic spot and wanted to avoid being located off in a quiet corner. Bob helped us with the politics of booth assignment. Later, we often had excellent locations based on our seniority as exhibitors since 1972. When Perseus acquired RP they immediately moved up to a better spot by using the RP exhibit seniority.

#4. I often took my son Matt to ABA and later BEA (the show was sold and changed names from American Booksellers Association to Book Expo America). Pictured here is Matt with me and his school friend. Matt often worked in the RP stand with our team, once wearing a full body costume to promote a children's plush product called Book Buddy. At the shows Matt was always a hard worker and a good sport.

#5. Three photos of our stand at London Book Fair. #5 A&B shows our excellent UK sales director Moira McCann. It took quite a lot of convincing to get Moira to leave her current employment to join RP. With her on board we were able to open a small London office, something none of our U.S. publishing peers had done. We had a staff of three and the London office was successful both in sales revenue and bringing in some new projects from U.K agents and authors. I was always proud that RP had offices in Philadelphia, Manhattan (a showroom) and London.

Photo #5C is Buz and Alastair Campbell at the RP stand in London. Alastair is one of my best publishing and personal friends. He was a long time partner and former co-owner and director of Quarto Publishing. We created quite a few books together. Quarto, a book packager, came up with some of our most successful projects and series. We worked very closely with their book packaging division. Quarto and RP together created a long lasting and innovative children's "book plus" product line. Book plus was a new category in the 1980's and 90's that combined books and toys in one consumer product.

#6. The big trade shows were important to us but BEA was the one we put the most money and staff resources into. It usually moved annually from city to city. Some of the locations were NYC, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington D.C. Miami, New Orleans, Anaheim and San Francisco. I can't remember where this photo was taken but it shows that we brought a rather large staff with us. This photo was after 1993 because Larry and most of his key people are not in it. These are all senior editorial and sales and marketing people. We did a lot of entertaining and took authors and customers out to dinner at the most interesting restaurants we could find in each city.

#7 A&B. Two photos of Jim Wilson. Jim joined RP when we first started in 1972. He took a very small salary and was working full time with Larry and myself. He provided most of the creative energy in the company and was talented and smart. Jim knew a lot of artists and designers and was great to work with. He became a good friend. Jim really should be considered a founder of Running Press as he personally set the look and feel of the company almost from the beginning. Photo A is Jim at some outdoor event and photo B is Jim and Buz.

#8 A&B. Two photos of Jonathan Ervin. John was one of my closest personal friends. He owned and operated a custom leather goods shop on South Street in Philadelphia in the 1960's and 70's. John's shop was best known for making custom sandals, belts and bags. He was much admired by the South Street community. I was riding a BMW motorcycle year round while going to CGS night school at Penn. My cousin Bobby gave me a gift certificate for a pair of leather motorcycle saddlebags to carry my books. That was the first time I met Johnny Ervin and we quickly became good friends. He had little interest in being an author, especially for a book on leather craft, but Larry and I thought it was a good fit with the Whole Earth Catalog consumer and we convinced John to sign up and be our first author.

His book, *Jonathan Ervin's Leather Notebook: Making Sandals, Belts and Bags* was the first entirely original book published by RP. It was published in November of 1973.

John's business was something of a social centerpiece in the Philadelphia subculture of South Street. I spent quite a bit of time hanging out at the store with many creative and interesting people. What I saw and heard there about people's interests played a role in helping Larry and me come up with new book ideas.

John was not a writer and he had a difficult time creating the text for his book. He knew well how to make things but could not easily communicate or explain how to make the items in the book. The writing portion of the project was going poorly and so I stepped in to help John write it. This was the first and last time I ever took a role in writing a RP book. We now had two people, Johnny and myself, working on a project together and neither of us was a qualified writer or editor. The book's text came out okay but it was definitely a chore. Most of the writing was done in tandem and with quite a bit of whiskey to keep us going. Old Overholt rye whiskey I believe.

In the introduction to the book John wrote something like, "I'd rather have to make 10,000 pair of sandals than write another book."

Photo A is a photo of John and his wife and Photo B is of John and Buz, probably in the late 1970's or early 1980's.

#9. This is a contact sheet of photos taken at one of our early sales conferences at the Algonquin Hotel. The Algonquin had a strong literary history from hosting the round table discussions of a celebrated group of writers, critics and actors including Robert Benchley, George S. Kaufman, Dorothy Parker, Alexander Woollcott and others. Larry Teacher and I held our annual spring and fall sales conferences there for years because we thought the publishing history of the Algonquin Hotel sent our sales force a good message. We felt the location made a statement about how we viewed the traditions of book publishing in America. It was a good contrast with our irreverent approach to books and our respect for traditional publishing.

Personally I was in awe of the four sales groups we had assembled. It had been quite a

challenge to convince these seasoned and highly respected salesmen and women to take on a start-up company. There were four groups at each meeting: the Northeast, Midwest, West Coast and South. There were two meetings a year, one to present the new fall titles and one for the new spring books. For Larry and myself the meetings were full of hopeful anticipation of support and approval of the new books being presented. The sales people were often a tough audience and not shy about expressing negative opinions. They all had years of experience and were not shy to criticize the books we were presenting. They were especially vocal about the cover designs.

The early meetings each lasted for several hours but as the company grew and we began publishing up to 125 new titles each year, eventually we took a full day to go through the presentations. While I always felt anxious preparing for the meetings I ended up actually enjoying them. This was a sophisticated sales group with lots of publishing experience and Larry and I were learning a lot from them. We held a dinner after each meeting which was something I always looked forward to. Over the years I came to think of several of our sales people as good friends.

#10. Photo of the original RP brass plaque for the outside of 125 S. 22nd St. I believe this plaque has already been placed in the collection.

19 Confidential memorandum

This significant document contains, among other things, overall financial information that was at one time confidential. In 2002 I, along with help from Al Struzinski (RP CFO) and Herb Rappaport (long term consultant), began planning to sell Running Press and all of its publishing holdings other than the real estate which was two Victorian residences at 125 and 127 S. 22nd Street converted to office space and a 150,000 sq. ft. industrial building at 1300 Belmont Ave that served as our distribution center. After purchasing my brother's share of the RP companies and the real estate in 1992 the company had doubled in both sales and revenue.

I found that I was spending the great majority of my work on business matters and less and less time making and helping to sell books, which is what I enjoyed. That, along with a number of complex financial issues that did not hold much interest for me, led me to want to sell the company. I very much missed making books and working with authors and booksellers. My day-to-day work routine now had much less creative involvement and more time spent on the business of publishing.

We interviewed a few merger and acquisition (m&a) firms and settled on Veronis Suhler Media Merchant Bank (VS) in New York to represent us in the effort to find a buyer. Once they were engaged we began an intense three month process of putting together a very complete memorandum that provided a wide range of detailed information about the company.

From the Penn Library perspective this document would be a key source for anyone interested in understanding what independent commercial book publishing was like in the second half of the twentieth century. The Veronis Suhler memorandum is well organized with a useful table of contents. Helping to create the memorandum or “book” was a tremendous undertaking especially since Buz had made the difficult and risky decision not to tell any of the staff other than Al Struzinski that he was contemplating a sale of the companies.

In most cases this private and quiet approach to seeking a buyer eventually leaks out and becomes known to staff and others, but we had a good team working on the potential transaction and one key to not having any leaks was to limit the number of publishers that were invited to consider the purchase. I believe we selected six to eight companies to approach. Once the potential buyers were contacted they were invited to the VS offices to view financial information and other relevant materials. Eventually we met in person with the folks from Perseus Books, received a fair offer and sold the company to Perseus Capital whose founder and CEO Frank Pearl had been assembling a group of publishing companies under the general imprint of Perseus Books.

Most of the publishing companies Perseus owned were focused on politics or serious fiction and nonfiction. Perseus' other imprints lacked the exciting and edgy commercial approach of Running Press, but they were now able to fill that niche with the four imprints of Running Press. The terms of sale negotiations were a lengthy, several month long process and it took quite a toll on me and on Al. We had a series of well organized meetings and presentations to prospective buyers along with our law firm Blank Rome as well as our representatives at Veronis Suhler. The meetings were all held at the VS offices in Manhattan.

Al, Herb and I were ultimately successful in getting the sale completed without any of the staff knowing what we were doing. This was especially important to me because RP had finally developed an excellent group of department heads (our management team) and there was concern about them losing focus, being worried about their careers, or lining up job interviews with other publishers.

I had been up signing the transaction documents most of the night and was at work the next day attending our three hour weekly new titles meeting when the news came that Perseus had signed all the paperwork and that the sale had been completed. I excused myself from the meeting saying that I wasn't feeling well and returned to my office and shut the door. It was a hugely satisfying moment for me. I'd been at RP for thirty years. I turned off the office lights and just sat and absorbed the moment and what might lie ahead with this life changing event. That was a wonderful day.

An hour later I met in private, one at a time, with each of the key department heads and gave them the news that the company had been sold to Perseus. The top five executives each had profit incentives as well as phantom stock that would provide substantial additional compensation to them from the sale. All five took the news well and agreed to stay on and work with Perseus to grow RP. The sale was a great relief to me and to my wife Janet. The timing could not have been better for us.

One important footnote: There were real ups and downs that followed the sale but a

feeling of well being and satisfaction over RP's new ownership has never left me.

The first year of the transition went well but soon Perseus made some poor business decisions the RP management team and I did not like. The most significant one was to close our distribution center. That was a big mistake since it eliminated one of our most important special competitive assets. We were one of the only independent publishers with our own distribution facility and staff and it had served us well and provided competitive advantages for our customers.

I was able to maintain a very good relationship with everyone at Perseus even though I resigned after three years. Later when it became clear that RP had been mismanaged by Perseus the owners met with me and asked if I could fix "what they had broken." I agreed but only if our management team had autonomy. In the end they wanted to keep day-to-day control in New York with the new group president, and I resigned from the company.

To this day I still care deeply about the people and the success of Running Press and continue my efforts to bring them new projects and to be supportive in any way I can.

20. Document of sale Library Publications Inc. T/A Running Press. Sale of stock by Lawrence Teacher. April 12th 1994

One day my brother announced in a matter of fact way that he thought now was the right time to sell the company. Larry and I had never discussed this and I came to realize that he had always assumed that we would someday sell Running Press and both retire or move on to some other work. I thought that we would both stay in this for the long term and that quite possibly my son Matt and perhaps Larry's daughter Rachael would join the company after college to continue RP as a family owned publishing house. someday sell Running Press and both retire or move on to some other work. I thought

that we would both stay in this for the long term and that quite possibly my son Matt and perhaps Larry's daughter Rachael would join the company after college to continue RP as a family owned publishing house.

I was encouraged by Herb Rappaport, our long time management consultant, to keep an open mind about Larry's interest in selling. The short version of this story is that Running Press was privately offered for sale and that in fact a sale was eventually arranged whereby RP would join and be owned by the prestigious family owned French publisher Flammarion. Some of the Flammarion family were after a strong foothold in the U.S. market. Larry, Herb Rappaport and I went to Paris to get to know the three brothers who owned and ran the company, and a month or so later the terms of a sale of RP to Flammarion was agreed to.

It was agreed that I would move to Paris for one year to work directly with the Flammarion family on integrating RP into the French company and helping to build the U.S. publishing business with Flammarion's own books as well as bringing RP books into the French market. I had arranged with my ex wife to have our son Matt spend the year with me in Paris. It was all very exciting. Larry and I were each to receive about \$2,500,000 and an employment agreement.

Tony Schulte, whom I greatly admired, and his associates had arranged the sale and negotiated all the terms. It was father's day weekend of June (**fill in day and year) and Larry and I had signed all the documents on Thursday. The Flammarions were to sign and finalize the sale on Friday. It was to be quite an eventful day!

As it happened every year on Father's Day both Larry's family and my family went to Atlantic City to spend the weekend with our parents and celebrate both Father's Day and Matt's birthday.

At about 3 pm on Friday we received a call saying that the Flammarion family had changed their minds. The matriarch Mrs. Flammarion was not at all fond of Americans or

our culture and at the last moment had convinced one of her sons that this purchase of an American company was a bad idea that their father would not have approved of.

The deal was off. No discussion or new negotiations. They just changed their minds at the signing. I was disappointed about not moving to Paris but happy that the company was not being sold.

Larry never lost his desire to take the value of his half of the company and leave. This led to a period of some substantial strain and business disagreements between us. Eventually we knew that one of us had to buy the other out and since I wanted to stay we began what became a lengthy year-long negotiation to do just that. Work became unpleasant for both of us and Larry came into the office less and less frequently. That was a problem because we had a staff culture that was divided both in loyalty and reporting structure and I now had a bigger role in managing some of those that reported to Larry. It was not working.

This bound agreement does a pretty good job of providing insight into what was going on at Running Press between the two founders. In particular tabs 2, 4, 5, 9 and 12 are interesting. Tab 5 is a non-compete for Larry with some unusual provisions. The month that the five years were up Larry began to publish titles in direct competition with the Running Press Miniature book series.

In the sale one non-negotiable issue for me was that Larry sell me his half ownership in the RP building on 22nd St. which he did. I have always admired and appreciated our historic Victorian building. Over a period of twenty or more years we had, in phases, taken on specific restorations of the building including restoring the center staircase, replacing and opening the leaded glass skylights and restoring the intricate carved stone facade. Matt Teacher now owns the building and also the 127 S. 22nd St. building which had been the RP design studio.

You can see on page 2 that RP was quite profitable at the time and we had each been taking substantial salaries. The company was financially healthy at the time of the sale.

21 Publisher's Weekly announcements

The best and most effective way to let bookstores and other retailers know what each publisher had planned in their forthcoming publishing programs was to take space and advertise in the Announcements issue of PW. There were two special issues each year, spring and fall. The ad space was expensive but almost every publisher felt the need to participate. In addition to showing the individual titles it was also a good opportunity to show your general publishing style and company branding. The retailers used these issues throughout the year as reference. The publishers' ads were in alphabetical order to make it easier for retailers to find what they were looking for.

I always looked forward to poring through these two special issues to see what new releases were coming from each publisher. In particular we looked for trends or competition with the other independent trade houses like Workman, Chronicle and Ten Speed.

If you spend a bit of time looking at the nonfiction that was being published in these issues below you get a pretty good sense of what subjects the U.S markets were interested in at that time.

Here are three sample issues that I had kept:

August 1983 Fall Announcements

February 1984 Spring Announcements

August 1986 Fall Announcements

22. Visits to China book manufacturing plants.

Beginning in the late 1980's RP began publishing books in full color for the first time. At that time, and still to some extent now, book manufacturing plants in the Far East and some parts of Europe far eclipsed both the manufacturing economics and production values available in the U.S. Back then every major Chinese-owned book manufacturer was located in urban Hong Kong or in the nearby New Territories. That made for rather easy and geographically condensed trips to visit the print and bind manufacturing plants. All of the printers (see the enclosed lists) made every attempt to be very gracious hosts. All one had to do was to arrive in Hong Kong and literally every detail from hotel accommodations to meals would be preplanned by our hosts, each vying for our time and our business.

It was always an exciting trip that I really looked forward to. There was a lot for me to learn. It was better and easier to be traveling in a small group. I usually traveled with one or two other publishers or my wife Janet (once) or my son Matt (a few times). Arriving as a group made it easier and more productive for our hosts to do the work and the entertaining. The meals were often quite memorable and sometimes extravagant banquets.

Before China took back possession of Hong Kong in 1997 the book printing and binding factories were crammed into small, old, vertically oriented industrial buildings. Later, HK real estate became so valuable that most of the Chinese printers sold their properties and relocated to impressive, brand new modern buildings on the mainland, mostly around the huge industrial areas of Guangzhou and the city of Shenzhen.

This item #22 is one document of a later trip I took in 2009 as a consultant on behalf of Perseus (then the owners of Running Press). They hired me to introduce them to the printers and advise on the proper ways to negotiate with the Chinese, which was and still is quite different than how one would work with a U.S. printer. For example it was expected that when visiting China you would bring each printer a special gift which you presented to them at the first meeting. It was important to hand the gift to the recipient using both hands as that is how they also preferred to receive a gift. I always enjoyed

picking out the gifts, trying to make them as special and personal as possible.

One time I was in the midst of a very contentious billing dispute with one of our most frequently used printers and the RP production team was unable to resolve it. I made an appointment with the printer, went to Hong Kong and met him and his staff at my hotel lounge. I handed him the gift, apologized and explained that I was very sorry that Running Press would no longer be able to do business with them because of the unresolvable dispute. I explained that I would never deliver such an important and sensitive message by fax or email, and that I had come in person to do it myself out of respect. He immediately waved his hand, smiled and said there is no problem and agreed, in this case, to reprint the book for no charge. The whole exchange took only a minute. I always found it a wonderful learning experience to work closely with the Chinese book manufacturers, and two printers in particular became long time family friends.

RP products that involved hand work were usually manufactured in Singapore and Malaysia, and I did also travel to those factories as well as to Shanghai once.

23 Shanken/Wine Spectator

One of the most exciting publishing partnerships of my career was with Marvin Shanken and his staff for an exclusive arrangement with M. Shanken Communications to publish Wine Spectator and Cigar Aficionado books together as a partnership. It took a year of regular written and phoned requests to them for a meeting before we were finally invited to their offices to make our presentation. Shanken was notoriously wary about sharing his valuable brand with any book publisher, and had turned down several offers from other publishers.

My associate publisher David Borgenicht, later founder of Quirk Books, was finally able to get a meeting date. He and I had planned to take an early train from Philadelphia to Manhattan. I awoke that morning to a blizzard, with more than a foot of snow already on

the ground and no signs of it stopping. We had quite a time getting to the train but we made it and showed up for the meeting, much to the surprise of the Shanken staff who assumed the snow would force us to reschedule—remember this was in the time before cell phones. Showing up that day sent a great message about our determination to work with them, and it seemed to set a positive tone for getting the partnership underway.

David and I met with Michael Moaba and another senior staff member, and made our presentation for about an hour. When we finished they called Marvin in. He said hello, sat down and asked me a few questions, then left. He was in the room for less than five minutes. When he left Michael said with a smile, “Congratulations!” I asked what for and Michael said, “You just made the deal. You and Marvin are partners now.” Obviously what had occurred had gone over my head, and so Michael rang Marvin’s office again and asked him to come back to the meeting. With Marvin standing in front of me, Michael said, “Buz wants to know if you and he just made a deal?”

“Yes,” Marvin replied. He shook my hand and left the room. It was a wonderful moment and the beginning of nearly a decade of successful publishing together.

At that time it was an especially good fit editorially for Running Press, which was already an industry leader in publishing books about beer, spirits and wine by the well-known British writer Michael Jackson and other respected authors. Our primary competition was with Simon & Schuster. Getting this partnership with Shanken was quite a feather in our cap. Their new magazine *Cigar Aficionado* also turned out to be a great source of new books for RP.

This file presents a good example of the RP style of “mining” intellectual property. You can see a long list of project ideas and concept descriptions.

Included in the file are details for a *Wine Spectator* menu/recipe book which was never developed, and one for building a wine cellar which also was not created. This is not at all unusual in book publishing: to thoroughly explore a concept but in the end decide not

to make the editorial and financial investment. *Wine Spectator's Armchair Vintner* was also never approved for publication.

There is also a single page chart showing books that were in production with proposed pub dates, as well as a page titled Book Project Proposals. Most of these came to fruition.

There are also several pages of meeting notes from different dates. Please note that many of the documents are faxes, not emails.

I am very proud of the excellent relationship our two companies worked so hard to achieve. Marvin was known as a very aggressive businessman and for some people he could be emotional and difficult to get along with. He and I made a good team because I always appreciated that it was his brand that he entrusted to RP and I made it a priority to carefully protect it. We were 50-50 partners in the profits and we all worked especially hard to make good books that sold well.

24 Treasure Chest series

One of the best ways to build a strong backlist (books that sell year in and year out) is to create successful ongoing series. That's a double-edged problem because if you attempt to launch a series and the sales performance is poor, the losses are much more costly and can easily stress the finances of any publisher. Series launches are a very serious undertaking but most successful publishing programs have some strong series to support the overall program. Think of Modern Library at Random House for example.

RP from our beginning had a stated goal to be 60 percent backlist sales. That would provide stability and allow us to take more risk on stand-alone titles. We were able to achieve this goal almost every year because of a conservative strategy, and planning, and a bit of good luck. Looking at our catalogs you can see a number of strong series, the strongest by far being the Miniature Editions. The Courage Children's Classics were always strong sellers too.

For us one of the easiest ways to build a series was with kids' nonfiction and the Treasure Chests are a good example. The Treasure Chest product line was much too complex and had high development costs and required more effort than we could possibly expend on our own. We worked very closely with the book packager Quarto in London to develop many new "book plus" product lines for children. Quarto had (and still has) the editorial staff and design and production sophistication to make kids' kits that were this complex.

If you look inside any of the kits you see many custom cast pieces made of different materials: metal, plastic, paper, cloth etc. That is challenging to accomplish, especially for a product that retails for \$19.95. Quarto was able to accomplish this because they had international publishing customers in every major country, from Germany to Australia, and while RP first printings for the U.S. market were typically perhaps 20,000 to 25,000, the total first print runs for Quarto were in the 100,000+ range. This allowed them to economically create the necessary custom dies and other pieces included in each kit.

There is an editorial proposal for the Leonardo Treasure Chest included in the file. The main item in the kit was a buildable "flying machine" that taught children about the principles of flight and how human flight might work someday. Also included in the file are a few long lists of proposed topics for the series. Most of them were weak ideas and ultimately passed over, but you can see what our process for selection was and how we worked hard to come up with viable new concepts.

RP was Quarto's largest U.S. customer and I went to London two or three times each year to work directly with the creative staff on ideas for new projects.

RP was more or less the first publisher to enter the market for this type of book-plus product, children's nonfiction kits. For some time, years actually, the bookstores resisted buying these, saying they were toys not books. Eventually companies like RP, Workman and Chronicle wore the customers' resistance down with such good products they just

could no longer resist carrying them, and book plus became an accepted category in book and gift stores.

25. The New Titles meeting was the heart and soul of how our publishing program was determined. This was a weekly meeting, usually on Wednesdays from 11:30am to 2 pm. There was always an agenda but we frequently strayed from it when new ideas emerged in the conversation. A nice lunch was always brought in.

The meetings had a formal structure and protocols but were also relaxed enough to allow for creativity. Members of this group were selected by me in a rather unconventional way. That is, rather than have it be a meeting run by the editorial staff, I selected those employees, from whatever department they might work in, who had a track record of coming up with good ideas for new book projects. We considered ourselves book inventors.

Some participants were well prepared and some were better at off-the-cuff thinking. Often, more often than one might think, a book concept would be put out for discussion that seemed to make little sense, but five or ten minutes of open and creative discussion soon led to making it a worthwhile project to consider. Since I had responsibility for running the meeting I found that giving a bit of latitude to the discussions was a key to us coming up with or finding good projects.

We rarely took votes, but sometimes I was convinced to take on a project that I had real concerns about. In the end the New Titles group was the primary key to our successful publishing program. We were always after “the next thing”.

Here are three folders that illustrate part of how our process worked.

*The first (labeled Quarto Museum Guides) is an agenda for discussion of a Museum Guide series we were considering doing with Quarto. In the end none of the concepts were deemed strong enough and we passed on the idea.

* The second folder (labeled Chrysalis) shows lists of projects under consideration. We did many big book projects for the Courage imprint with Chrysalis. Checking the sales records Encyclopedia of Golf Techniques sold 90,000 gross and 73,000 net. Harley Davidson had two titles, each with sales of between 75,000 and 100,000. The Indian motorcycle book was a failure and we should have known better than to do a book on this obscure brand.

* The third folder (labeled CLB for Colour Library) contains projects we discussed with Colour Library, which was, along with Chrysalis, a primary supplier of promotional books for our Courage line. They were great to work with and I sometimes spent time in their offices outside of London. This fax, sent to a hotel I stayed at in London, contains a few good proposals that we ended up publishing.

CLB was privately owned and at one point, at their request, we had a serious exploration of the concept of a merger between our two companies. In the end I decided against it. We were better suited to being their customer instead of their partner.

26. LT book concepts

Following Larry Teacher's sale of his 50 percent ownership in RP there was a contractual obligation for him to continue to provide ideas and proposals for new book projects. This file contains those submissions for a period of two years beginning in 1994.

The file speaks for itself. Most of the suggested concepts were either not a good fit for our programs or just not commercial enough for us to support. Unlike the informal notes that usually came out of the New Titles meetings, Larry's proposals were carefully documented, tracked and responded to in writing.

We instituted a procedure with a New Titles Routing Slip which each meeting attendee received and was required to comment on as it was circulated from one member to the

next with each participant being able to see the preceding person's comments.

The one big success was Larry's idea for a slim, saddle-stitched book with George Carlin (60,000 sold) called *Sometimes a Little Brain Damage Can Help*. Best of all I got to spend time with George who was wonderful to work with. When he guest hosted the 20th anniversary show of Saturday Night Live he invited me as his guest, including back stage after the show, which was quite a special experience.

27 New Titles Meeting "indefinites" lists. This folder is rich in intellectual property concepts. These lists were one of our most valuable editorial assets. Since Running Press often preferred to work in series, we constantly added classic or timely ideas for new books in each of our imprints and existing series. Reading these files, one gets an accurate sense of what RP was after for trends and for new book ideas.

You can see we were using internal sources and staff ideas for new book concepts almost exclusively. Some of the contents show how we adapted certain staff ways of coming up with new ideas as in the single page that says Toby in the upper left corner. Toby Schmidt was our outside art director and she was very creative but undisciplined in how she presented or structured new proposals. She often came up with good ideas for new books. This page is just Toby's out of the box and off the cuff thinking with a pencil.

28. Sample publishing agreement

I thought it would be helpful to include one of our standard author contracts in the collection. This one happens to be with my son Matt Teacher for *Song Writer's Journal*. Running Press's agreements were much shorter than those of most publishers, and written in a way that we hoped the authors and agents would find easy to read and understand. We printed them on good quality paper with our embossed logo hoping that the document would make a good impression. This is an original signed agreement.

29. RP termination. This folder contains a handful of documents that tell the story of how I came to terminate my employment at Running Press and why.

RP was in a financial crisis solely because of mismanagement by the new owners. As commonly happens, Perseus Capital felt it best to combine some of our in-house functions such as production with their own existing departments. That might have worked, but the Perseus departments we now depended on had little or no notice or time to prepare for their new responsibilities. Staff morale on both sides became a big problem as various departments could not function together properly. The CEO of Perseus in New York City made a few poor decisions and our publishing activities were disrupted to the point where the owners at Perseus Capital came to me to say that the CEO was being replaced. They asked if I would help them “put Humpty Dumpty back together again.”

I met with my senior department heads and we came up with a plan that we thought might possibly work, although we were not at all certain it would.

I went in person to Perseus Capital in Washington, D.C. with my suggestions and requirements to implement our proposed plan, which included autonomy and additional compensation for four of the senior publishing team given the hard work and challenging task they would face. I also included my notice of termination of employment in case they did not agree with my proposed plan to attempt a turn-around.

The main sticking point was autonomy which, in the end, they would not give in to. I wanted to report directly to Perseus Capital management in Washington but they drew a line in the sand requiring that I report to the new incoming CEO David Steinberger in New York. The result was that I resigned and left the company.

From the time I left until now I have maintained a very good relationship with David and the staff at Running Press. I have met with each new RP publisher to give support, history and any help I can provide. As these things go it was and still is quite an amicable relationship and I do believe that things have worked out for the best in the end. Credit for that goes to the staff at RP!

30. Here are two early production (printing quotes) files. One is for the *Malibu Tiles Coloring Book* in 1980, and the other for our very first completely original title *Jonathan Ervin's Leather Notebook*, published in 1973.

The only job I was ever really fired from was at a small commercial printing shop in Bethesda, Maryland, where I worked when I was fifteen. I loved the work but I was too slow putting paper in the letterpress, one sheet at a time, for fear of getting a finger caught. "This work is just not for you," my boss told me. It was a real failure that I never forgot because I love the smell of ink, the look and feel of metal type and printing in general. When we started Running Press I was excited to have the opportunity to get back into the world of printing and more specifically to begin learning about the traditions of bookmaking.

I visited as many commercial printers as I could and happily put a lot of time into building relationships with some of the larger ones as you can see by the contents of these two files. Sitting here in 2016 I'm amused by how many printers' quotes I would get for each book. In part because we were just starting out and in part because I enjoyed the production work so much and wanted to make the effort to find the right printer and the right price.

For a book on Malibu Tiles I had twelve (unsuspecting) printers quoting on a single 8 1/2" x 11" one-color title. There are eleven printers' quotes for the Leather Notebook so this must have been the way I worked for many years. Apparently most printers never gave up trying to get our business.

It's interesting to see that the quotes do vary in price. Keep in mind this (1973 not 1980) was during a period of severe paper shortages and paper allocations were in place to all the printers and publishers. It was also well before we started printing full color books offshore in Hong Kong and Singapore. Personally I always preferred to do as much of our printing as locally as possible. We made our first books at

regional commercial printers, in particular Pearl Pressman Liberty (who are still operating in Philadelphia), but they had no book binding equipment and had to send our book work to an outside bindery. I soon saw that this was substantially more costly than working with experienced book manufacturers. For our one or two color books we ended up working mostly with Port City Press in Baltimore for sheet fed books, and with Command Web Offset for web printed books. Sheet fed for smaller quantities (5000 to 20,000) and web for print runs at 20,000 and above. Both companies had sales people that I really enjoyed working with.

On the quotes you can see how much I enjoyed reading them and making notes. I also appreciated learning about how books are made and took as many visits and press checks as I could get.

31. This file contains three sections all related to Nancy Steele. This is a painful topic. Nancy was editorial director reporting to my brother Larry. She, Larry and I usually got along well. We did good work together. When Larry retired I wanted to focus expanding RP's business and since I have no professional editorial skills I asked Nancy to take the title of publisher. To be fair, she had serious reservations about assuming those responsibilities and as I was sometimes not a very intuitive listener I talked her into taking the job. I was really thinking more about my own needs than Nancy's.

After some time in her new role it became apparent that her management style was a poor fit for the job and since I felt I needed the skills she did have, I offered her a new position as contracts manager. That way she remained a department head and I could go to her for help and judgment as I had previously done.

Nancy had been with RP for thirteen years and I placed a high value on that. She was smart and knowledgeable.

In 1998 and 1999 I had pushed plans to expand the business too far and the company found itself under critical scrutiny from our bank, CoreStates. We needed to cut expenses

quickly by a significant amount and the solution we chose was to downsize the staff.

After looking at several alternatives by department I had what I thought was a feasible plan. Rather than look at tasks by department and downsize across the board by function, we made a list of all employees who had expressed concerns or negative views about how the company was managed. That made the task easier (in most cases) because I began each interview with the question, “Do you agree with how the company is being run?” Always getting some form of a no answer, we were able to give severance payments and letters of recommendation, shake hands and have people leave on reasonable good terms.

The one conundrum I had was Nancy Steele. Nancy, as you can see in 31B below, was not viewed as a good part of the management team by her peers. Personally I felt I needed her continued services but realized that in eliminating a dozen or so employees I was forced to include Nancy.

31A includes documents showing how and what we were publishing in the late 1990’s.

31B is Nancy’s legal action against the company for age discrimination. I was torn about whether or not to include this file but have included it as it gives some good background information about how RP management functioned at that time.

31C shows the ongoing bitterness on the part of the original U.S. publisher of Peter Rabbit. Frederick Warne & Co. had lost the case against Running Press in 1987 in U.S. federal court and kept a close eye on our publishing program hoping we would make some mistake that would let them take us back to court. We were careful and that never happened.

32. This is the original stock certificate for Library Publications Inc., the corporate entity that owned Running Press.

33. Page 7 of Publishers Weekly lists all of the significant publishing acquisitions for 2016. Included is the sale of Burgess Lea Press to Quarto on May 26th. Janet and I sold

the company hoping our innovative not-for-profit cookbook concept would be adopted and expanded with a larger international publishing company.

34. The largest international gathering of book publishers takes place each October in Frankfurt Germany at a convention center called the Messe. The fair's exhibits are organized by country and by far the busiest and most productive English language displays were always in the UK section. Running Press's strategy was that because we had an office (albeit a small and modest one) in London, we were qualified to set up our stand in the UK section where we would get more attention and hopefully do more business.

Meetings were always set on the half hour and most people made a real effort to be punctual. Our small booth was staffed by two or three salespeople and my job was to look for new projects. I did not have a wristwatch and talked my friend Bob Morley, one of the founders and owners of Quarto, into lending me his beautiful Longines watch. I liked the watch so much that as a memento of the fair that year he made it a gift to me. I used it for every fair I attended for many years after that.

35. This is one of my most prized items in the collection. Before cell phones and apps that kept track of addresses and contact information, many business people used the Filofax organizer.

The one included here is unique as it's a very limited edition made of (now illegal) shark skin. I purchased it at the Filofax stand at London Book Fair. I liked it particularly because it was so durable and could take quite a bit of use without showing wear. I outfitted it with a small silver Tiffany pen. It was a nice metaphor for what I was trying to accomplish. I have always prized it.

36. *The Key to the Kingdom*. For a number of reasons, *The Key to the Kingdom* was by far my all-time favorite book project.

In the 1990's I was working on a few projects with a U.K. illustrators' agent named Nick Dawe at the Folio agency in London. Nick had a stable of well-known and successful artists. One that I most admired but had not worked with was Tony Meeuwissen. Tony's work was detailed and engaging, and he was in demand as an illustrator. At the time he was working on a set of postage stamps for the Royal Mail. I was not alone in thinking his art was extraordinary. He only painted at 100 percent and always in watercolor--quite a risky venture, especially given the incredible detail his work was known for. One mistake with a brush stroke and Tony, a true perfectionist, would have to start over.

Nick knew for a long time that I wanted to do a book project with Tony but there was no specific proposal or book concept on offer. Nick invited me to lunch at the RAC (Royal Automobile Club) on Pall Mall in London. I had been there a number of times for dinner and it was always a memorable experience, perhaps my favorite place in London.

At the RAC, Nick refused to discuss publishing or Tony or why he had invited me in the first place. When lunch was done Nick led me to a private room he had reserved with a large conference table. On the table was a folder, unopened. He said, "Open the folder, take your time. I'll be back to get you in an hour."

Nick left and I was alone in this beautiful Victorian room. I opened the folder and inside were a dozen or so original paintings of transformation cards that had been commissioned by the Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum of Childhood. The art was stunning.

[Wikipedia defines transformation cards as "a type of playing card where [sic] an artist incorporates the pips of the non-face cards into an artistic design." There was so much detail, so much to look at and it had a powerful trompe l'oeil quality.

The message from Nick was, how do we make a book out of the playing card art? Tony had only done perhaps a dozen or so of the cards and it seemed we would need a complete deck of 52 which would take some time to conceive, plan and paint. It was at once a gift and a challenge. One requirement Tony had was that the art could only be used at its original size, 100 percent. When Nick returned I expressed my admiration for

the paintings and before I could tell him I had no idea what we could do with it, he said, “Take the art back to Running Press with you and see what you can come up with.”

At my hotel I had the paintings set out on a table to look at for a few days. I just knew we had to come up with a book concept. On my flight home I had the art out on my lap and began to consider how we could create an idea to make the project commercial enough to publish. To make the P&L work we would need to sell a minimum of 25,000 copies.

When I returned to Philadelphia we scheduled a special new titles meeting specifically to discuss Tony’s art. I don’t remember us ever having done that before. The consensus was that everyone really loved his work, and we brainstormed to create a book concept where there was none. After great consideration and debate we came up with a proposal to fund Tony to complete the deck of cards and publish the project either as a small stand-alone art book or to also include a deck of cards with the book. We ended up hiring an outside company to examine the art and come up with a puzzle that had its answer in clues located in the art and the included nursery rhymes. This was truly working backwards as Tony had no puzzle or riddle in mind when he conceived the art.

In addition, we retained a company legally certified to administer contests under federal guidelines in the U.S. There was to be a \$10,000 prize offered in the U.S. and a £5,000 prize in the U.K. from Pavilion books, the company we had licensed to publish *The Key to the Kingdom* in the U.K. market.

At the financial level there were some doubts about the costs, revenue and sales. One person with a vote said no but I pleaded that we had to do this. A project like this was just too special to pass up. A compromise was agreed to between my brother and myself. We would publish the book alone without the cards. However, at sales conference we received strong unsolicited encouragement from the sales force to do a boxed set with book, cards and a contest.

In the end the book was a real success, although I was somewhat disappointed with the physical production values of the product. It looked nice but I wish we could have used more substantial material for the box and the cards. We sold 70,000+ in the U.S. and Pavilion sold perhaps another 20,000 copies. The U.K edition had an award winner, but none of the contest entries in the U.S. gave the right answer and we never awarded the \$10,000 prize.

During the 18 months it took Tony to do his paintings, he and I spent some time together and I brought him to the U.S. for a visit. He and his agent Nick stayed with me at my home. It was Tony's first trip to America and everything was new and exciting to him. What a nice time we all had. I have always been grateful for the opportunity to do this kind of publishing and grateful to work with someone with the genius of Tony Meeuwissen.

*From Wikipedia: "One of the more notable contemporary sets [of transformation cards] is the award winning *The Key to the Kingdom*, a semi-transformation deck commissioned by London's V&A Museum of Childhood and created by Tony Meeuwissen. It won the WH Smith Literary Award for best illustration and The Designers and Art Directory Association of London gold award.[10] This set of cards was created around the theme of nursery rhymes and poems. The cards were sold with a book containing each poem and a picture of the corresponding card on the opposite page. Additionally, the deck was constructed as a puzzle contest laid out in the form of an original poem. The poem gave clues to pick certain cards, which then could be decrypted into a secret message."

37. Private ledger. This ledger journal dates from the mid 1980's. It documents my personal and business expenses that were somewhat outside the realm of what the two Running Press partners were willing to consider exclusively as business expenses.

Therefore whatever was recorded in this ledger was paid for as a business expense by RP and there are entries showing what monies Larry was entitled to receive back from me for the accommodation.

I include this ledger with some reluctance as it is quite personal. However, there are some entries that help illuminate how the publishing company was operating at that time. The entries for George Harrison refer to custom books published by Genesis in London. The company specializes in signed, limited edition books that were more or less handmade, and provided good examples of what could be done with custom books and bindings. The production values were inspiring.

There is a charge for an original N.C. Wyeth illustration, and a Sobek river wilderness trip that resulted in us doing a book with Sobek. On the last page is a listing for Phillies baseball tickets; we ended up doing two books, one with the All-Star relief pitcher Tug McGraw and one with Richie Ashburn. Both books were successful.

Jan I have changed this so that I can include the saddlebags which really did lead to us making our first original book. Should we move #8 A&B out of photos and include them with the bags or do it separately? I like keeping the bags and photos in one entry. YES

38. Saddlebags and two photos of Jonathan Ervin. Before Running Press was formed, John was one of my closest friends. He owned and operated a custom leather goods shop on South Street in Philadelphia in the 1960's and 70's. He was best known for making custom sandals, and was much admired by the community of merchants in and around the east section of South Street.

I first met John because my cousin gave me a gift certificate to have a pair of traditional leather saddlebags custom made for the BMW motorcycle I rode year round. This pair of bags is what led to the idea for Running Press to do its very first original book, *Jonathan Ervin's Leather Notebook: Making Sandals, Belts and Bags*. It came out on November 1, 1973. The book had strong sales and having our first original title be successful is what led me to change course and leave the program at Penn to work full time at RP.

John's business was something of a social centerpiece in the Philadelphia subculture on South Street. I spent quite a bit of time hanging out there myself with many creative and

interesting people. What I saw and heard about the interests of this group played a role in helping Larry and me come up with new ideas.

John was not a writer and he had a difficult time with the text. He knew well how to make things but could not easily communicate or explain how to make the items in the book. The writing portion of the project was in trouble and so I stepped in to help John write it. This was the first and last time I ever participated in writing one of our books. We now had two people working on the project and neither was a qualified writer or editor. The book text came out okay but we paid a price. Most of the writing was done in tandem and with quite a bit of whiskey to keep us going. Old Overholt I believe.

In the introduction to the book John wrote something like, “I’d rather have to make 10,000 pairs of sandals than write another book.”

Photo A shows John and his wife.

Photo B is of John and Buz in the late 1970s or early 1980s.

39. These two volumes are the completed documents and agreements for the sale of Running Press to Perseus Capital. The law firm that handled the sale was Blank Rome in Philadelphia. I was asked what color bindings I preferred and requested bright red to reflect the excitement, happiness and good will I was feeling about the sale.

Much of what is included here are straightforward legal requirements for both buyer and seller but I felt that there was other information that both gave a feel for what Running Press was doing at the time and how we supported our key managers to share in the profits from the sale.

There is a complete index in each of the two volumes. Tabs that may be of special interest are (by tab):

1. Stock Purchase Agreement. This outlines the basic terms of the sale of each of the RP entities.

9. Norton Rose Opinion. At the time RP owned and operated a separate publishing company in the U.K., Running Press Limited. That company was also included in the sale and while RP U.K. was profitable doing books for the U.K. market, Perseus used it to expand the marketing reach of some of the publishing companies they already owned.

11. Teacher Employment Agreement. This outlines my responsibility after the sale as well as compensation, bonus potential and limitations as to what I could and could not do with relation to future and ongoing publishing activities.

12. Struzinski Employment Agreement. Al Struzinski was Running Press CFO and COO and was highly valued by Perseus. This agreement was to make sure Al stayed on after the sale.

13. & 14. Lease Agreements. The buildings that housed the publishing activities were seen as a key asset to our success. Perseus wanted (at the time) to keep our classic publishing environment.

41. Sunflower Book Corporation. Sunflower was a New York corporation that oversaw certain publishing and sales activities in NYC. Its primary function was as a sales showroom for all of our books. Every title in print was on display, and while the space and staffing were expensive the increasing sales results justified the expense, time and trouble of maintaining an office in New York City.

47. Teacher Investments Member Agreement for key executives. The success of Running Press was largely due to the commitment and hard work of Carlo DeVito, Al Struzinski, Don McGee and John Whalen. For that reason I included them each in receiving financial benefits from the sale, the details of which are in section 47.

40 First Publisher's Weekly ad: **Running Press is Off and Running.** We placed this ad in PW just before our first two books went to the printer. We wanted to announce the new company and our mission. The copy is friendly and meant to be engaging. I still like the way we positioned our editorial point of view.

I particularly like the sentence "We make books that people buy." We never forgot that message and I used it sometimes when asked, "What kinds of books do you publish?"

The cover of *The Complete Encyclopedia of Needlework* states at the bottom: "Over one million copies in print." That was true but misleading in that we were referring to the original DMC publication.

41. Book Fair meeting schedules. These meeting schedules for the annual London Book Fair provide a good look at the companies we were working with, both to acquire new projects and to sell our book rights overseas. They also show a bit of my social schedule and the London restaurants I enjoyed, as well as some special parties and events.

42. Book Fair meeting schedules. These meeting schedules for the annual London Book Fair provide a good look at the other publishing companies we were working with, both to acquire new projects and to sell our own books' rights to foreign publishing companies overseas. They also show a bit of my social schedule and the London restaurants I enjoyed, as well as some special parties and events.

43. Special Favors. Special Favors was the name given to a new business we tried to start. We were not successful in getting the patent we needed to move forward. Essentially the idea was to allow someone to visit the website and put a custom designed cover on one of our miniature books to create a special personal gift of the book, much like a greeting card. We spent quite a bit of time and money trying to get the patent but failed in the end.

44. John Whalen This file labeled John Whalen contains a variety of documents. John was our sales director, but he had many additional responsibilities and made an important contribution to the overall success of Running Press during the time he was there.

45. Book idea folders. These folders each contain ongoing collections of topics, concepts and proposals for new book projects within existing series. Our publishing team worked diligently to keep any of our existing series successful and growing because that is always the best way to build backlist sales, which help keep revenue and profits stable and predictable. It's also easier to project than stand-alone, or single title books (which we also published).

Included here are folders containing new ideas for the following publishing programs within the various Running Press imprints:

Courage Classics. These were new editions or reissues of classic literature, mostly out of copyright protection but not necessarily always.

Photo Essays. We had one of our best selling books with the publication of *Sisters*. We eventually published *Mothers & Daughters*.

Kits. These were both kids' and adult concepts, everything from build your own wind chime to making aromatherapy lotions. The file also covers projects proposed by outside providers like Quarto and Ira Cooper Inc, a company we had several successes with.

3D Journals. These were strange (and mostly unsuccessful) journals with three-dimensional rubberized covers.

Big Scribbles. This product line was never approved. Just an idea from our publicity department. Not a bad idea but too generic for us.

Block Books. We had a hit with the *Writers Block* which sold well. We tried to make this into a series with different topics but none of the other two “block” books sold well.

W.O.W. (Writers on Writing). *Writers on Writing* was a success but we were never able to turn this into a series. You can see that most of the proposed new projects for a potential series were quite ordinary and never pursued.

Running Press Journals. These were a key, early success for us. The *Woman’s Notebook* was the start of a very good selling series. Two keys to why they performed so well were the subject and the physical production values. Even though the books were priced at \$5.95 we used costly parchment paper for the interior because it felt nice to write on and also had beautiful specialty faux endpapers. See the first page where Carlo DeVito, our associate publisher, points out that sales are flat and we need to be more inventive, and make a better marketing effort with the series if we are to keep it going.

Coloring Books. Dover Books were the first company, perhaps in the 1960’s, to publish inexpensive adult coloring books. Running Press later took the concept and marketed most of our coloring books as a way to introduce a non-fiction topic for educational entertainment. Our first was the *Gray’s Anatomy* coloring book and it was quite a good seller. We did several more and the series was later labeled “Start Exploring”™ coloring books.

Postcard Books. This series gave RP a marketing foothold and was a crucial element in establishing the company. At the Frankfurt Book Fair, wandering the booths in the various halls, I came across a German publisher doing a line of post card books of historical graphic material and some fine art subjects. I liked the idea of postcard books and wanted to get the line for the U.S market. It was my first experience negotiating a licensing agreement. We needed a translator to aid in negotiations as the publisher did not speak English and I did not speak German.

I learned a lot from that meeting and subsequent negotiations with foreign publishers. We started our licensed product line using his graphic materials but the full extent of his own projects were too specifically German and we quickly moved to our own topics like a Barbie post card book, Audubon, Impressionists etc.

You can see in the folder that no idea, good or bad, was ignored. We liked to make lists of ideas for any series. Norman Rockwell was a good seller. Cats were always a good topic and we did several including Victorian cats (whatever that was). That was our publishing style in general. Get every idea down on paper and try to identify the ones that might be worthwhile.

Eventually we got a Disney license and the postcard series became financially meaningful. We developed and offered our own metal spinner rack. It was also a big lesson for me in manufacturing these because our specifications were not an easy fit for most printers. We ended up printing them mostly in Singapore. The first document in the folder shows that we did almost a million dollars in sales early on. We thought of these books as small gift art books and did not believe that many people actually took the postcards out and used them. We were quite fortunate to have this series.

Book Buddy™. This plush cloth item, meant to be a child's first book, was a success and you can see from the folder that we had lots of proposed ideas to develop it into a series. The combination of high manufacturing costs and a lack of strong new concepts stopped us from doing more with Book Buddy. I include this in the historical materials to make a point that this was always a common problem or fork in the road for most commercial publishers: whether or not to turn a successful single book into a series. Sometimes it worked and sometimes not. One had to be careful and strategic. In this case we chose not to take the risk.

46. Philadelphia Inquirer article. This article was published December 30th, 1996. Unlike a lot of the mainstream press coverage RP received over the years, this article is almost

entirely accurate. I think it tells a good story and provides information about how I viewed the publishing industry and where we fit in at that time.