



Behind the Wheel of a Bookmobile

a multimedia project by Laufer and Corwin

Behind the Wheel of a Bookmobile, a quixotic journey by authors Peter Laufer and Tom Corwin, honors the place books *still* have in our national consciousness.

It began with the whimsical idea of buying a vintage bookmobile, stocking it with donated books from publishers, and driving it cross-country through small towns with well-known authors taking turns at the wheel. At each stop Laufer and Corwin open the bookmobile's doors inviting the public in to take their choice of digital and analog titles in exchange for an interview about what books have meant in their lives. A documentary film crew and a radio production team capture those stories, along with conversations with those authors along for the ride.

"Books influence our lives in ways too often untold," says Corwin. "Our trip is designed to tell some of those stories." Laufer says the back roads route connects the project to America's literary history, "The rural landscape, small towns, and a road trip are a heritage that fuel our cosmopolitan lives, and we aim to capture it."

Laufer and Corwin have a growing list of American authors who have signed on to support the project and in most cases take a shift behind the wheel of the bookmobile: including Pulitzer Prize-winners Lawrence Wright, Michael Chabon & Juno Diaz, as well as bestselling authors Tobias Wolff, Annie Lamott, Daniel Handler, Ayelet Waldman, Arthur Phillips, Peter Coyote, Robert Anderson, Dave Eggers, Vendela Vida, Scott Simon, Mark Kurlansky, Tamim Ansari, Amy Tan, Andrew Sean Greer, and Michael Pollan – with more joining the trip day by day.

The project has received the hearty support of the American Association of Publishers as well as the American Library Association (with marketing and promotion to their 66,000 member base) – and a deal has been consummated to purchase a beautiful used bookmobile (bio-diesel ready, capacity 3,200 volumes: see below) in Chicago. National Geographic has committed to feature the journey in *National Geographic Traveler* magazine.

The journey begins in September, following the Lincoln Highway, America's first cross country roadway, and concludes in mid-October in San Francisco at San Francisco's literary festival Litquake, where Laufer and Corwin's bookmobile will be a float at the concluding "lit crawl," cruising up and down Valencia Street loaded with authors.

An ongoing literacy education and outreach program will be designed around *Behind the Wheel of a Bookmobile's* continued travels. As the bookmobile tours coast to coast, its video travel blog, interviews, and webisodes will be distributed to schools, teachers, and classrooms across the nation through the affiliations with the American Library Association and the American Association of Publishers existing school outreach programs.

Bios

Tom Corwin is an author, musician, and music producer. His credits include work with artists such as Bonnie Raitt, Patti Labelle, Booker T., and Stevie Wonder. Tom is the author of the bestselling book *Mostly Bob* (New World Library) and *Mr Fooster: Traveling on a Whim* (Doubleday). In addition he was consulting producer on “Emile Norman: By His Own Design” which had a national PBS airing in fall 2008.

Journalist, and broadcaster Peter Laufer is the author of over a dozen books dealing with social and political issues worldwide; his latest book *The Dangerous World of Butterflies* (Lyons Press). He co-produced the documentary films “Exodus to Berlin” and “Garbage”. Among his credits as a globetrotting correspondent for NBC News was the George Polk Award for his study of Americans in prisons overseas.



Our Moroney BF-240 was recently decommissioned by the Warren-Newport Library after 15 years and 70,000 miles of faithful service in the Chicago suburban landscape. It has carried and distributed countless volumes in its campaign to educate children and adults about the world including and beyond the Great Lakes region.

As the heart, soul and center of *Behind the Wheel of a Bookmobile* it will now be carrying great writers and readers across the United States to take its first look at the Pacific Ocean.

Chassis

- Navistar 3800 chassis
- International engine – 185 horse power w/ block heater
- Allison AT545 automatic transmission
- Fiberglass body
- Two (2) cross-view front mirrors
- Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR): 25,500lbs.
- Tires: 6 – 255/70R27.5F
- Dimensions: 33' long x 8' wide
- Year of manufacture: 1993
- Mileage: 72,000
- Fuel: 65 gallon diesel (engine + generator)
- VIN: 1HVBPEP9PH479

Features

- Beautiful condition; well maintained
- Two (2) seating locations; Driver + passenger
- Book capacity: 3,200 volumes (minimum)
- Oak shelving system
- Kohler generator (needs repairs)
- Copeland air conditioner
- Dual battery systems; 2-12V batteries + deep cell
- On-board power inverter
- Shoreline connection

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