BIBLIOPHILES Meeting #16

It was **STEVE JOBS by Walter Isaccson** that was the basis for an active and extended discussion on Wednesday, September 5, 2012. Almost everyone enjoyed this comprehensive biography by the notable biographer of Benjamin Franklin and Albert Einstein.

Several readers were impressed with Steve Job’s single-minded dedication to designing, producing, branding and marketing unique, computer and networking tools (Apple computers and related devices). Early on, in his intense pursuit of an entrepreneurial career, he developed a vision of user-friendly, artfully designed and powerful, tools, that would allow individuals to innovate and become creative persons in a complex and changing world.

Lowen Kruse reviewed the extraordinary new world of technology that effectively began with John V. Atanasoff’s invention of the electronic digital computer in 1939. It was he that pioneered the theoretical concepts marrying the binary number system and related software, with rapidly evolving hardware developments in calculators, and later in digital computers. Atanasoff’s humility as a scientist, stood in contrast to the intense ego of Jobs in his many business ventures.

The personality difference between Jobs and Steve Wozniak, the co-creator of the Apple II, was also in stark contrast: whereas Wozniak was generous and somewhat childlike in his vision for his innovative hardware and software designs, Jobs was ambitious and obsessive in his passion for recognition and commercial success.

Some readers chose to emphasize the brilliance and far-reaching effects of Steve Job’s many ground-breaking achievements, but others also found certain aspects of his behavior repulsive, ie. obsession with control, narcissism, meanness, vul-
garity, apparent disregard for personal sensitivities both in professional and family relationships, etc.

Kathleen Vance observed that the real genius in the book may be Isaacson himself: a writer who is able to artfully and judiciously represent all sides of his complex and conflicted biographical subjects with exquisite prose, clarity and understanding.

A desire to select a novel as our next great read was offered and followed up by Terry Haney, with two book recommendations. His promotion of William Faulkner’s THE SOUND & THE FURY, was seconded and acclaimed by others. This 1929 book is the first departure from our announced focus on recently published books. It will be our subject when we meet again at 11:30 on Wednesday, November 7.

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