Hi there,

Eighteen Bookies met on September 6 to discuss THE MAP THAT CHANGED THE WORLD: William Smith and the Birth of Modern Geology, by Simon Winchester. We were joined by Dr. Robert Shuster, Chairperson of UNO’s Geology Dept. Bob gave a brief introduction to Smith’s extraordinary underground mapping achievement. He suggested some overreach on the part of Winchester in overlooking James Hutton’s likewise pioneering research on geological time and rock formations in Scotland. Bob also clarified the important role of an early 20th century geologist, Alfred Wegener, who first developed the ground-breaking theory of techtonic plates, then referred to as “continental drift.”

There was an extended discussion of established scientific paradigms: both furthering and impeding the development of new theories for verification, modification or rejection. Donna made the cogent observation that William Smith was “in the right place at the right time,” to conduct the necessary field work regarding fossil layers, that provided Smith’s singular contribution. Kathleen commented about the extraordinary analytic and critical thinking skills shown by Smith in his underground mapping. It raises the question: “Are we training our youth to recognize and adopt these scientific skills in their learning process?

A new member, David W. McCord, an electrical engineer and published author, made a unique offer. He donated to requesting members a free copy of his 2002 book entitled: “THE DREAM FILLERS, issued by a Crete, NE publisher. David is contemplating a revision of his 422-page tome and requests feedback from the Bibliophiles. He welcomes comments of all types, most notably regarding the perceived genre of the title on which he and his wife spent many devoted hours. You may consider those questions for future discussion if you requested a copy.

Our next great read will be THE INVENTION OF NATURE: Alexander von Humboldt’s New World, 2016. The book has been critically acclaimed and will be available from the Book Worm in paperback for $14.55 (20% discount). I have requested ten copies that should be available on the shelf to Bibliophiles soon after September 14th. I was told their Indiana warehouse will have forty-eight copies available, so you might check first with our local, independent bookstore before you buy it on the Internet.

Our next meeting will be at 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, November 1st at Spezia. I look forward to seeing you there.

Bob R
9/8/17