

The Art of Belonging: A Memoir*Robert W. Cahn**(The Book Guild, 2005)*

178 pages; \$40.00

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As founder and editor of four materials journals, editor of three materials encyclopediae, and editor of materials book series for three different publishers (Cambridge University Press, Pergamon, and VCH), Robert Cahn has clearly had a significant impact (apart from that of his own research) on the field of materials research, which he helped initiate and define (see a review of Cahn's 2001 book, *The Coming of Materials Science*, in the September 2001 issue of *MRS Bulletin*, p. 727). In *The Art of Belonging*, Cahn has written an intriguing memoir describing his life (>80 yrs.), interests, and activities, not chronologically, but thematically. As indicated by the book's title, he has chosen to describe his reminiscences

on most of his chosen themes in the sense of "belonging"—to a broad family; to his personal family; to England (his adopted home after his birth and very early years in Germany); to the world of science, particularly materials research; to his favorite sport, mountaineering; and to the world of art.

Cahn's comments on these themes are both fascinating and insightful. Contrasting his father-in-law and his father, for example, Cahn writes, "Daniel was a cautious, wise man, who reflected before he acted, while my father was a generous, instinctive man, who acted before he reflected." And on science, he writes, "Good books and review articles keep the huge accumulation of published knowledge manageable. Scientific editing is not an arid, mechanical occupation, but central to the concerns of what I call the commonwealth of science."

The book incorporates a foreword by

Freeman Dyson, a one-time colleague of Cahn's at Cambridge University; and it is illustrated with about two dozen family photographs.

The work consists of 16 chapters averaging ~11 pages each. The book would have benefited from the inclusion of several appended items: a concise chronology of Cahn's life, a list of his publications, and an index listing the many people and organizations cited with whom Cahn has had significant interaction.

In addition to the publisher, the Book Guild of Lewes, East Sussex, United Kingdom, the book is also available from amazon.ca (Canada) and amazon.co (U.K.).

Reviewer: Jack H. Westbrook is owner of and principal consultant with Brookline Technologies, a consulting firm in Ballston Spa, N.Y., where he consults on materials and technical information systems. He is chair of the MRS Bulletin Book Review Board and serves on the MRS Bulletin Editorial Board.

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