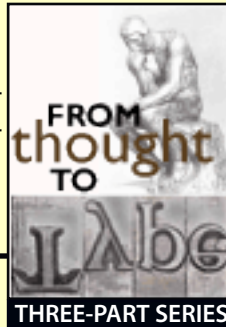


INSIDE: The passion never died / p 4
"This was one of those projects I'll never do again." / p 8

See Goudy on film / p 3
Lance Williams' new job / p 7
Letterpress tips and tricks / p 10

The following three-part series will provide a brief overview of the steps and procedures for designing, engraving and casting a typeface. Part one explains how to use the computer to design and make patterns that will be made into photopolymer plates to be used in the engraving process. Part two describes the use of a

Deckel Pantograph to engrave brass matrices to be used on a Thompson Type Caster. Part three, will explain the workings of the Thompson Type Caster and the casting of type. It is hoped that this series will provide the reader with a better understanding of the processes used to put type into the type case.



THREE-PART SERIES

PART ONE

Designing the typeface

By MIKE ANDERSON

EVERY NOW AND THEN YOU "need" a typeface that isn't in your case and cannot be found in any of the catalogs of the few type foundries doing business today. My need for a very early face led me down the road to designing, engraving and casting my own typefaces.

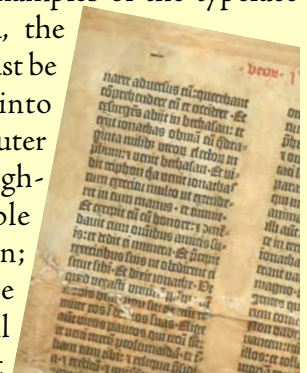
The first phase of making a new typeface is settling on the design and finding examples of the face. If you choose a typeface that was used in the past, then pattern making becomes much simpler. If you select one where original artwork is needed, then the path becomes longer, and more challenging.

Let's assume that a typeface from the past is wanted, such as Johann Gutenberg's Donatus/Kalander (DK) type (my choice); the first fount of type used by Gutenberg. Finding examples of the typeface was not difficult, but finding good ones was. Early printing methods resulted in ink slur caused by soft packing and very damp paper, making a perfect impression difficult to find. The best examples I found were those taken from vellum printed sheets. Also, the methods used in reproducing samples in various books can present problems that must be taken into account.

I do almost all of my pattern design and pattern making on the computer. There are several pro-

grams available that make the task easier, including Fontographer, Coral Draw and others. However, these are expensive programs and if you are only making one font, then a good paint program will do the trick nicely. I use Fontographer and Paint Shop Pro, but mostly Paint Shop Pro.

Once examples of the typeface are found, the images must be scanned into the computer at the highest possible resolution; all future scans will be done at



the same resolution for consistency, i.e., 3200 dpi. This is also true for original designed patterns.

Once the scanned images are brought into the paint program, the best examples of each letter are selected, copied and stored. Then all the images of a letter are brought onto the screen, compared and from these the best sample is kept.

The anatomy of the typeface is determined next, i.e., x-height, length of ascender and length of descender, and Capital Height is fixed. These measurements result in four lines that fix the proportions on the face. Using the paint program, clean copies of the face are made by re-

moving traces of ink slur, correcting portions of the image that may have dropped out and filling in parts that are missing. Most of this is subjective work, the result of many hours of studying and comparing the images. Also, the weight of the letter is determined and all images are kept within the tolerances set.

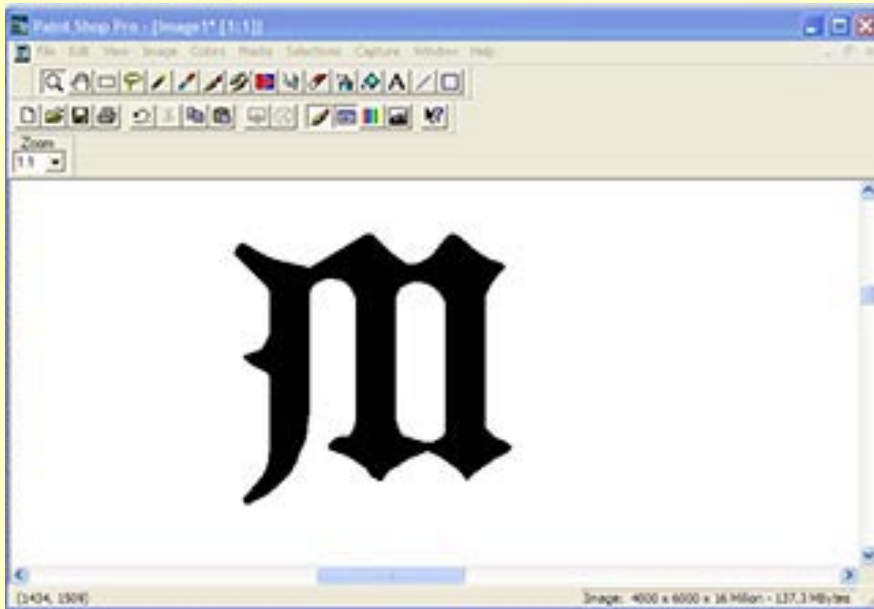
Once there are samples of type representing the total picture, i.e., m (x-height), p (descender), h (ascender), A (capital height), and possibly Y and/or P (Capital descender), you place these individual letters on a baseline. (I used the transparency mode in the paint program). Once these letters are placed

on the baseline, I then draw the x height line, ascender line, and the descender line. I use these lines for guides to ensure that the letters are correctly aligned in the pattern.

Having determined the proportions of the letters, I then draw a "Standard," a black column from the top line down to the bottom line, ensuring that this column is exact. Then the letter is copied, using the Standard as the guide. This ensures that all patterns are made to the exact same height. I paste the copied letter as a new image and all the guidelines are erased.

A mirror image is made and printed on an inkjet printer using transparency film. This provides a very black image for use with photopolymer plates in the next step. The images are printed to an exact height, usually between 2 and 2.5 inches, determined by the size of the type to be made, the width of the hairlines, and weight of the body.

The film is then placed upon the photopolymer plate, and the image is turned over so that the ink side is against (down on) the plate. This will present a right reading image when viewed from the top. The photopolymer plate is placed in a vacuum frame. Ultra Violet (UV) lights are then placed over the



Computer screen photo doing pattern design using Paint Shop Pro.

About the author: Mike Anderson

Born in Salt Lake City, Utah in 1938 and at 17 joined the Navy. After that stint, at 21 years old, he became editor of the *Parker Pioneer*, Parker, Arizona. He was recalled to active duty in 1961 and decided to make it his career. He retired in 1976 and went back to being an editor and



then managing editor for a group of small weekly newspapers. Later he returned to Salt Lake City and taught Graphic Arts and Printing (offset) at the Utah Technical College. The urge to travel struck again and he moved to Anchorage, Alaska working for the Federal Communication Commission. While there and working on his Masters at the University of Alaska, he met Suzanne and they were married in 1995. He retired from the FCC

in 2000 and with Suzanne's daughter Jessica, moved to Maryland. Printing has always been his passion and once in Maryland he started collecting printing equipment. Finding a need for quaints, sorts and typefaces he could not buy, he turned to designing, engraving and casting his own type. He prints on an Iron Hand Press and a Wooden Common Hand Press in addition to a Vandercook Universal I. [Email Mike.](#)

frame and the plate is exposed for a predetermined time (six minutes in this case). The plate is washed in hot water, removing those parts of the photopolymer that were not exposed to light, i.e., the image, and leaving the exposed parts which are now hardened.

The result is an incised image of the character, with the Standard, which is used as a mounting guide and checkpoint for insuring that

the reduction ratio of the engraving machine is set to the correct measurements.

If original drawings are to be used for patterns, the size of the pattern to work with initially must be determined, i.e., 3 inches. Also, one more line needs to be added to the pattern at the top of the type body. This additional line will give a perspective on how the typeface will relate to the type body. Frederic

Goudy addresses this in his “Typologia: Studies in Type Design Type Making,” University of California Press, 1940.

At this point the patterns are ready to go to the engraving room where the photopolymer plates will be engraved in brass matrices.

PART TWO COMING IN MARCH:

Making the matrices

From the editor

MIKE O’CONNOR

After producing the first issue of *Galley Gab*, a friend wrote and said that I have too much time on my hands. He was right of course, but this “extra time” is during the wrong part of the day.

I’ve found as I age that my sleeping habits are not what they used to be. There are mornings when I awake at 5 a.m. or so (sometimes earlier). That never used to be the case.

At that time of morning, I have a difficult time getting into reading. It is also too early to head to the print shop (for me anyway—I take a little while to warm up!) and television is absolutely the pits! What to do those couple of hours?

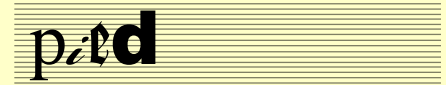
I thought about conjuring up some sort of “blog.” Eventually that concept translated into *Galley Gab* (the name is also an early morning contrivance!). Interestingly, in e-mail correspondence, I’ve found other early morning folks. I know this to be the case as they send some of their e-mails

at 4:30 a.m. or even earlier than that!

Excuse typos and other errors. The majority of work done on *Galley Gab* is in the wee hours of the morning when most normal people are still sleeping.



If you think this *Galley Gab* is a one-man operation, you are very wrong. With this issue we start an excellent series by Mike Anderson. He not only wrote the entire series but did an excellent job on the photography (yes, he’s another one of those who is a very early riser!). Not to forget Jim Daggs and the article on his commercial/hobby printing. He was pestered with many e-mails from me and never blinked an eye about answering them and giving me everything I asked for—not to mention the photos he had taken and a few special ones he dug out of the old albums! Lance Williams took time from his new duties to write an article. The cooperation has been terrific. Many thanks to all who have helped!



APA Wayzgoose

■ Oklahoma City—May 31, June 1, 2, 2007. Non-APA members interested in attending should contact **Don Tucker**. In your e-mail subject line put “APA Wayzgoose” or else the e-mail is likely to be deleted. A **web site** is up and you’re invited to check it out.

Goudy on film

■ See a 1930s **silent film** of Fred Goudy designing a typeface—from drawings, engraving of the working pattern and the matrix to the casting and proofing.

Quote of the month:

■ Graham Moss commenting in the Letpress List on trial and error in overprinting color:

“You get a great amount of experience quickly if you recognize that it is a pleasure to learn from your mistakes!”

Printing/book arts books

■ Frank Anderson said he has donated about 400 of his books to the Wofford College and that these will be auctioned off in March with proceeds to be used to start a scholarship fund at the college. Check out the **auction site**.

A *Passion* FOR LETTERPRESS

It started at 12 years old and 39 years later it still remains as strong as ever

JIM DAGGS, AT THE AGE of 12, contacted an addictive disease and at 51, he's still hopelessly afflicted. There is no known cure. Letterpressitis. Hopeless!

This Eldora, Iowa native began his "apprenticeship" in letterpress at the age of 12 with a master printer in his hometown. The old printer set all his type by hand and owned a 10x15 C&P and a Miehle V-45. The apprenticeship was only the start of his love of letterpress. His early experiences led him on a path to becoming both a newspaper publisher and a commercial printer—one who bucked the trend in the 70s to scrap letterpress and jump 100% into offset.

Daggs is currently the owner of Ackley Publishing Co. in Ackley Iowa (pop. 1,800). His commercial printing company has five employees and a full range of offset and letterpress equipment. He also owns a shop in nearby Iowa Falls that has one employee.

His letterpress work includes: perforating, die-cutting, foil stamping, numbering, etc. and such things as raffle tickets, short run envelopes and the "usual" run of job shop work. The letterpress operation also targets commercial customers to print such items as paper sacks

and napkins. Letterpress stills plays a substantial role in his commercial operation but he said it is also his hobby.

Daggs found his way into letterpress one summer evening as the old printer in downtown Eldora was working in his shop. The door to the print shop was open and he could hear the press clanking away as he stood outside the screen door watching the printer at work. "I guess I got mesmerized by the rhythm of the press and the pungent smell of the ink," he said.

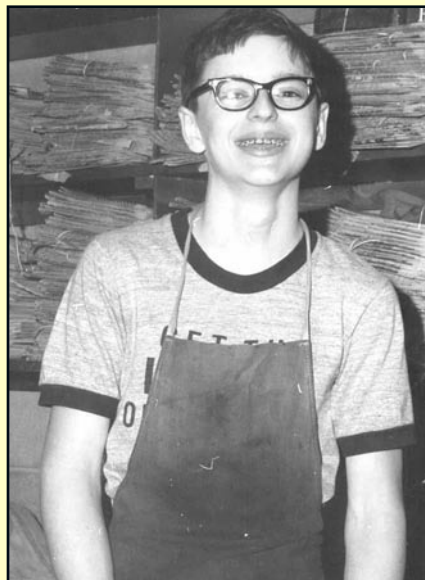
Daggs recalls that the printer invited him in and this launched his lifelong letterpress odyssey. After the initial visit he would go down

there after school where he watched and learned. To assist in the learning process Daggs went to the school library and read everything he could on printing. He said he even made a copy of the California job case and practiced setting type from that. It didn't take long before he mastered hand setting type.

Schoolwork didn't suffer from this new affliction. The aspiring printer said he did quite well with regular class work because he didn't want to be bogged down with homework, as it would take time away from his "passion." He remembers that he knew his dad would approve of his print shop escapades if he kept up his grades.

One day, Daggs recalls, the old printer allowed him to feed the job press. He recalls that they pulled over an old wooded Bingham roller box and he stood on it and away he went.

The compensation for his work wouldn't even pay for a trip to the movie theatre, as the old printer never paid him. That mattered



Happy at his work, is 12 year old Jim Daggs and also happy at his work is 51 year old, Mr. Daggs.



In the backroom of his father's sporting goods store, Daggs moved in and erected this Model 15 Linotype in 1972.

little to Daggs; he was learning his new found passion.

About this same time he also bought an 8x12 C&P for \$25 and kept it in the basement of his dad's sporting goods store. The press was used for a variety of work, a lot of it being for his dad's business.

After his "apprenticeship," at the ripe old age of 14, the letterpress veteran was hired at the local Eldora newspaper.

He worked for the letterpress-produced newspaper through high school and then for another year after he graduated. During his final year he was involved in converting the newspaper to offset.

One year out of high school, in 1975, an area newspaper publisher and letterpress equipment dealer made him an offer. The dealer would buy the nearby Ackley newspaper, if Daggs would run it. That was an extraordinary offer to such a young man. "After a year of offset production, computers and cutting type with scissors at the Eldora newspaper," Daggs said, "I jumped at the chance to get away."

It took some work to bring the Ackley newspaper along to a suc-

cessful small town newspaper. "It was a disaster when I started," he said. A local shopper had most of the advertising and the content and appearance left much to be desired.

For a period of time the type for the paper was set hot metal and then proofed, pasted up and then shipped off to be printed offset.

During this time Daggs' boss had been acquiring choice letterpress equipment and he came across a Miehle #2 flatbed cylinder press and it was decided to print



At 16, Daggs had become a proficient Linotype operator at the twin-weekly.

the newspaper letterpress.

Going back to letterpress and working with the Miehle proved to be a challenge at first in getting the makeready, ink setting, press packing and folder all working to produce a good product. But the shop was now a well-equipped letterpress production facility.

With the demand for commercial work increasing, they soon realized they needed to get an offset press. As to the newspaper, it became more difficult to buy flat sheet newsprint for the Miehle and the decision to go web offset was necessary.

(Cont. next page)

Equipment at Ackley Publishing

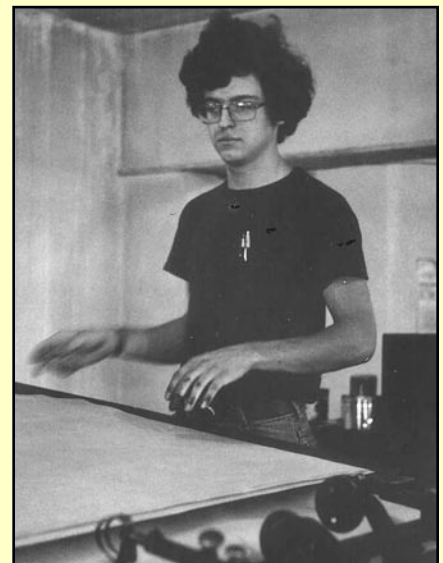
Letterpress—3 10x15 Heidebergs, 1 13x18 Heidelberg, V50 Miehle Vertical, 14x22 C & P Craftsman, 10x15 C&P Craftsman, Challenge Proof Press, stones, furniture cabinets, galley cabinets, and drying racks. In foiling and embossing presses we have a 14x22 C&P and a 13x18 Heidelberg.

Linecasting: One Ludlow and 30 cabinets of mats, five Intertypes: C4, G2, H4-4, G4-4 30 pica, G4-4 42 pica, and 600 plus magazines in storage racks.

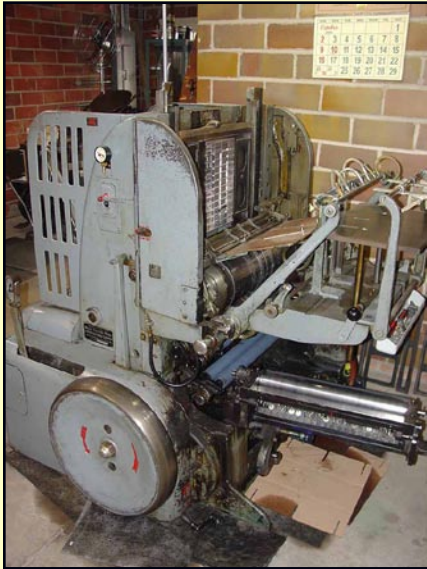
Offset lithography—one Heidelberg KORA and two Heidelberg two-color Quickmasters. Also a conventional offset darkroom and process camera and metal plate-making equipment, and a Presstek computer-to-plate system.

Bindery: Two Baum table-top folders and one Baum 20x26 folder with right-angle, Challenge drill, Seybold round corning machine, Baum 30.5" programmable cutter, Rosback Auto-Stitcher, Acme Calendar Stitcher, Stuebing calendar tinning machine, Acme wire stitcher, GBC and plastic spiral coil punching and inserting machines.

Paper warehouse include 45" Seybold Precision cutter and 40" Seybold cutter.



Young Jim Daggs feeding the 32"x44" four-page Miehle flatbed in the Ackley pressroom.



The V-50 Miehle Verticle in the Ackley Publishing letterpress shop gets a lot of use these days doing perforating jobs.

In 1983 Daggs bought the newspaper and shop from his former boss. He kept all the letterpress equipment.

In 1993 he sold the newspaper and since then has run the commercial shop plus he purchased another small shop in nearby Iowa Falls.

Offset printing accounts for nearly 75% of his business with letterpress and digital taking the rest.

Daggs sees the future for offset in larger presses while digital is taking over the small runs plus the on-demand work for such items as

short runs and books. He plans to continue with letterpress and expects to have a web site up soon promoting letterpress—especially the deeper impression variety geared to business cards, invitations, etc.

Through all the changes in the printing industry, letterpress remains his passion. Daggs says and he still buys letterpress equipment but is very selective as his free space is filling up. He does confess to hoping for a Heidelberg cylinder press some day, but he's holding out for the right one.

Oh, and that 8x12 C&P that young Mr. Daggs bought at 14? He still has it and plans to restore, polish and paint it and then rig up a trailer to put it in parades someday with a little gas engine running it. "I want to print while riding in a parade!" Daggs exclaimed.

Pat, his wife of five years, handles the accounting and typesetting at the company (she gave up a 26 year nursing career to join Daggs at the shop). He has two step-daughters and a granddaughter.

Daggs joined the Amalgamated Printers' Association in 1999 and is currently a director. He often prints an extra 150 of a job he may be doing for APA as he thinks it might be good for other members to see potential for revenue for those who do letterpress on a commercial basis.

Besides family and his printing business/hobby, what does he do in his spare time? Did we mention he is the Mayor of Ackley!?

It's unfortunate there weren't more "Jim Daggs" around during the 1970s—we might have a few more presses and typesetting equipment still in active use. At this point, we suspect there are a number of commercial printers around who regret their scraping of letterpress equipment.

Certainly his generation is the last to be exposed to extensive commercial letterpress from days gone by and Jim Daggs was one of a small breed at that time to fall in love with this age-old method of printing and has never let go of it. [E-mail Jim Daggs.](#)

*I want to print
while riding in
a parade!*
JIM DAGGS



A 14x22 C & P handfed and a 13x18 Heidelberg platen have been fitted with foiling stamping units, and provide a specialty niche for the company.



One of five Intertypes in the hot metal composing room is this G-4-4 Mixer, which was built to set complex grocery ad type.



AS APA MAILER

(Editor's Note: APA mails out envelopes or "bundles" to its members every month. These bundles contain the letterpress efforts of the membership. Items are mailed to the Mailer who collates, stuffs, addresses and mails the bundles to the membership. January was the first time serving as Mailer for Lance Williams so we asked him to give us a rundown on his efforts.)

By LANCE WILLIAMS

As of January 4, it already looked like the January bundle was going to be a nice package. I had 51 pieces for the bundle. There was a great turnout for the business card project.

On January 4, I started collating the bundle on our nice big 15'x4' table at work. It gives me room to layout all the pieces for the bundle and arrange them for the best fit in the package down the center of the table, and then I have room for 2 rows of 24 packets on each side of the table. I can collate 96 packets at one time this way.

On January 5, I spent about 2 hours playing with the bundle contents and



Mailer Williams, hard at work.

managed to get six more pieces added to the 96 packets on the table.

By January 9, I had 72 pieces for the bundle. But, it's 72 pieces for me to collate. I ran out of room down the center of the table for the pieces and had to move onto another table to

arrange pieces for the bundle. In the end the January bundle had about 82 pieces.

I figure it takes me about 4 minutes per item to cover the table, so 6¼ minutes per item for 1½ tables. 82 items takes about 8½ hours to collate the 150 bundles. Next time I will recruit my wife to help, and the man-hours will still be the same, but the elapsed time will be cut in half. Stuffing the items into the envelopes, sealing, applying address labels and stamps took another hour or so.

It must be everyone thought an extra large January bundle was a good initiation rite for a new mailer, as I don't think a January bundle has been that full in a long time.

So far it has been fun, but it is just the first month. I have a small stack of items for future bundles already. Now I have to find an organized place to store these items.



Salute to past mailers!

APA bundles are the lifeblood of the organization. Below is a list of past mailers who are still members of APA (and the years they served). Our salute to these hard working and dedicated members who mailed our bundles:

Maurice Carmichael
2005-06; 1993-94

Andy Vanable
2003-04

Bob and Carole Mullen
2001-02

Pat Molitor
1999-2000

Ernie Blitzer
1997-98

Chuck Wendel
1995-96

Dave Peat
1991-92

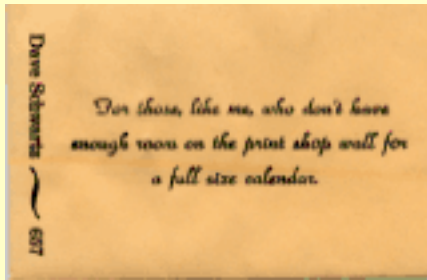
Mike O'Connor
1958-59



Bundle pieces being gathered.

JANUARY APA BUNDLE

'The' calendar



Dave Schwartz's contribution to the January bundle was unusual and to quote him: "The idea was greater than the results. It was kind of a pain in the butt to do."

He had a small calendar inserted in an envelope. The calendar measured 7/8" x 2 1/4." The calendar pages were 3/4" square. Here's Dave explaining how it was produced:

"The pages were printed from little cuts made for printing pocket calendars. I assembled them with extra space around them to allow

for cutting. The whole thing almost got scuttled when I discovered I didn't have a full set, but I figured no one is actually going to use it, so they may not notice the two typos. They were printed all twelve months up and gang cut about a dozen sheets at a time. This didn't work as easily as I thought



it would. Just couldn't seem to get them to align properly. Luckily I had printed about twice as many as needed so I could throw a lot out. The back was printed on a much larger card and then cut down to the small size. I had printed about 50 of them before discovering I left the year out. So got to start over

HOW Inquiring minds want to know and *Galley Gab's* HOW? gets you the answers. When a particularly interesting piece appears in the bundle...we'll find out how it was done!

again. Usually I get a job completely done before discovering a major typo. The round top was done with a corner rounder and the hole drilled with a paper drill. I would like to have had a smaller hole, but only have the one size drill.

"The assembly was done a little at a time over a three-day period. I picked the months up one at a time starting with December and jogged them with my fingers before attaching them to the back with a hand stapler. Had planed to use a stitcher, but they were just too small to hold in.

"This was one of those projects I'll never do again."

The business card



John Horn contributed six interesting business cards to the January bundle. One especially caught our eye. The type was reversed. One's first reaction would be that John used the computer and software, flipped the type and had an engraving made. No, that wasn't how it was done. The type is indeed metal type. John asks that folks check McGrew's "American Metal Typefaces of the Twentieth Century." On page 234 there are two faces: Offset Gothic and Offset

Pastel that are indeed reversed.

McGrew in his book states: "Around the turn of the century, a number of faces were cut in reverse—that is, reading from right to left—for a process of transferring small types to lithographic stones before the development of photolithography and rotary offset printing. *Engravers Roman* and various gothics were among those cut this way in addition to their normal forms. Some were available until 1950."

John said he has three fonts of this reverse type.



Specimen from McGrew's book.

WORTHY WEB SITES:

- [BRIAR PRESS](#)
- [INTRODUCTION TO LETTERPRESS](#)
- [AAPA-LETTERPRESS](#)



GG is published the first day of the month. It's free and can be downloaded as a pdf file from this site:

<http://www.galleygab.net>

The editor is Mike O'Connor. Readers can e-mail the editor or contact by snail mail: P. O. Box 18117, Fountain Hills, Arizona 85269. All unsigned articles are those of the editor. While there is some concentration on APA in GG it is also meant for the broader letterpress community. All letterpress printers are invited to comment and participate in each issue.

ON TYPEFACES

By J. HILL HAMON

Does the typeface in the heading look familiar? Here's how it looks when you see it on TV.

WALT DISNEY PRESENTS

I doubt that this face ever existed in a metal font because it is not a particularly good looking face. It is obviously a titling font and would never be considered as a book face. I like it when used very judiciously.

This brief article is about some of my adventures in type faces. When I first joined the [AAPA](#) many moons ago, letterpress reigned. There were a few papers reproduced by mimeograph, which many members seemed to consider second-class publications. Typewriter faces were so ordinary, and had very little beauty. Besides, with fixed inflexible type sizes and spacing, either pica or elite, lines could not be justified without inserting ugly extra spaces between words. Justification always looked artificial.

I knew virtually nothing about typefaces, but as a beginning hand press printer, it was fun to study the history of typography and learn about the venerable tradition of the hand punch-cutters who were reported to have created beautiful type faces. I had little understanding about what beauty meant, though some faces in the small bundle papers looked better than others to my inexperienced eye. It took me a while to learn the basic faces. There were many articles in the bundles extolling My Favorite Typeface. I read them avidly and in a short time the typographic prejudices of the few active members became mine. I

began buying types that were praised and learned there were some faces that had to be avoided at all costs.

Century Expanded was damned by one self-appointed expert who said it was a poor book face. And there were some really ugly faces that no self-respecting hobby printer should ever consider, the chief example of which was Cheltenham. One only had to glance at a lower-case g to see why it was a lousy face.

g

I avoided the face for years and collected traditional book faces which I was told I couldn't go wrong in choosing. I truly learned to love Garamond, Caslon, Baskerville, Centaur and a number of other classical faces. I found great beauty in a Garamond lower case g, and even wrote about it once.

g

After a while I had to admit that I had become a type snob. I couldn't stand to read a page of typewriter type, nor would I write a letter with such a face. Courier was better than the old standard face, but only marginally so.

Through the years I have created a few lengthy books with hand-set type, which was more a test of discipline than anything else, and discovered that Century Expanded, Kelsey's old Century Roman face, was superior in legibility to most other faces I had. It just had to be leaded an extra 1 point,

and often 2 points and it looked like a completely different, easy to read face. Fred Little put me onto that fact, for which I was appreciative. Cheltenham proved to be a beautiful, very clean and evenly spaced face that I have used successfully despite the bastard g. I began to question many of the authoritative proclamations and evaluations of type faces by some amateur journalists.

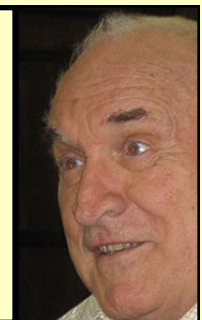
The revolution in printing that has occurred in the last 30 or so years, and the evolution of computers and digital typography freed me to experiment endlessly with faces I never had hopes of owning and using. We have witnessed the near abandonment of letterpress printing in the AAPA bundle, and the ardent embracing of desktop publishing using true-type fonts. Still, I don't recall reading any My Favorite Computer Type Face articles.

Most hobby printers seem to avoid some excellent faces, such as Times Roman and Baskerville. Times is the most basic Roman face today in computer generated copy. For the purist, of course many true-type fonts are not really authentic reproductions of the metal versions. Some are though. Check out Harold Segal's Baskerville 353, which is a true copy. His digital typography, like his metal, is impeccable.

What are my favorite digital typefaces? I will compile a short list:

Garamond, Bookman Old Style, Baskerville, Bembo, Caslon, Cheltenham, Californian, Century Expanded, Janson, Perpetua, Times New Roman, and Georgia. (Continued next page)

J. Hill Hamon of Frankfort, Kentucky is a former member of APA. The above article appeared in his *Whippoorwill E-Comment* distributed to the AAPA. [E-mail J. Hill.](#)



As you can see, I still prefer the classical type faces. The face used to create this small journal is Palatino. I found that most typefaces look much alike in very small sizes, and the personalities of the letters are not detectable until they are, much larger. Note that my changing typographic tastes preferences still militates against sans-serif faces. Surely the most attractive such

face is Hermann Zapf's Optima. And I believe that the sharp even appearance of a laser printed page of a choice typeface on a decent paper is something that many letterpress hobby printers would trade their souls to accomplish. I find the greatest beauty of printing that is done on large flatbed hand presses on dampened handmade

paper.

I urge you not to accept uncritically, the recommendations of self-proclaimed typographic experts. And most certainly, not mine! The operant word is uncritically. Experiment with different type faces and make up your own mind as to what looks attractive. This is easily done on a computer.



Tricks and tips to help your letterpress performance.

It's like magic...

If you haven't discovered it on your own, I highly recommend 3M's Scotch Removable Magic Tape (blue box, product number 811) to add to your printing toolkit for your Vandercook. Made with the same adhesive used on Post-It Notes, the tape is ideal for tacking down paper tails as they wrap round a cylinder. The tape peels right off your paper—especially fine printmaking paper that would be ruined with masking tape.

I also use the tape to tack down envelope flaps when I feed them through a cylinder: Use a 2-inch strip of tape with adhesive face-up. Tape that down on either end with masking tape to the cylinder, positioned just under the envelope flap, tape parallel to the envelope's length, and clear of any area to be printed. As you feed your envelope, gently tack the flap to the removable tape. It will hold against the cylinder, eliminating drag, and can be lifted with your finger (a little nail is helpful) at the end of the press bed.

The same piece of tape usually lasts through the whole run.

—Jessica Spring
Tacoma, WA

Feeding the platen

Instead of messing with rubber finger cots or bands of sandpaper around the finger when hand feeding, just use some glycerin on your fingers. It takes very little on your fingertips, and it's easy to replenish. Don't use very much. I'm still using from a little bottle I bought ten years ago.

—Chuck Wendel
Amana, IA

Different gauge pins

I got a very interesting idea from an old printer in Ecuador. You can use crossed straight pins (inserted in an X shape) as very effective gauge pins. What I like about use of the pins is the very light "damage" to the tympan they cause—much less than most other styles of gauge pins. The pins are inserted so the printing paper sits on the heads, which are easily moved and adjusted up and down. Also if one tries to keep their standard gauge

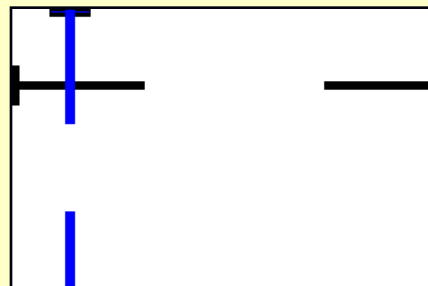


Illustration supplied by Bob shows pins stuck through and into the tympan.

pins in a fixed position for multiple jobs, the straight pin option allows insertion of gauges for a smaller or narrower job without damaging the tympan over the printing surface. This may not be a routine method of positioning the paper for printing, but as a quick, easy, and inexpensive backup and a gauge that is will below type high for close in work, it makes keeping a small package of pins in the shop a useful addition.

—Bob McGill
Union, MO

From Type & Press:

To restore tack to old glazed rollers, rub them with vinegar, using a clean rag. It really does work!

—Jane Roberts
Fitswilliam, NH

To prevent offsetting, sprinkle a very small amount of powdered alum on the ink disk.

All readers are invited to send in their tips or "tricks" regarding letterpress operation. [Email](mailto:editor@galleygab.net) the editor.



All readers are invited to express their opinions on articles in this issue or anything else related to letterpress or APA.

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