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ABOUT GALLEY GAB...

■ **GG is published** the first day of each month and the free GG PDF file can be downloaded at this site: www.galleygab.net

■ **The editor-publisher** is Mike O'Connor. For story ideas, submitting stories, or anything else related to *Galley Gab*, you can contact the editor by [email](mailto:mike@galleygab.net). His snail mail address: P. O. Box 18117, Fountain Hills, Arizona 85269. 480-837-7074.

■ **Contributing Editors:** Mike Anderson, Gerald Lange, Stan Nelson, Steve Saxe and Jessica Spring.

■ All unsigned articles are those of the editor. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *Galley Gab*.



"The Castle" is now the administrative building for the Smithsonian Institution. It was the first Smithsonian building built and it was finished in 1855.

Letterpress collection lives at Smithsonian; future for exhibition opportunities unclear

[Editor's Note: There have been rumors in the letterpress community for a while about the condition of the substantial letterpress collection at the Smithsonian. Some concern about it being stored in a rented building, the very future of the collection and if parts of the collection would ever be exhibited again. We asked the Smithsonian to update us as to the status of the collection and they graciously accepted.]

By JOAN BOUDREAU

Curator of the Graphic Arts Collection
Smithsonian Institution's National
Museum of American History

THE GRAPHIC ARTS COLLECTION is a collecting unit in the National Museum of American History, one of the Smithsonian Institution's eighteen museums. The collection was established more than a hundred years ago, in 1886, and includes in its holdings international printing and printmaking collections

“The good news is that the letterpress collection in this Museum lives!”

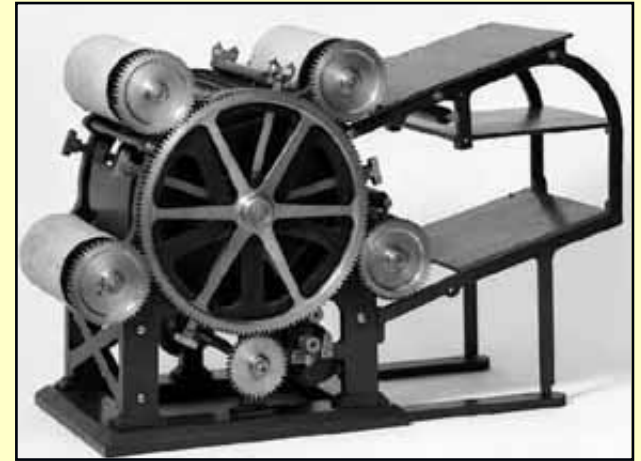
and their related tools and equipment, along with materials from related trades such as papermaking and bookbinding.

The good news is that the letterpress collection in this Museum lives! The future of the Graphic Arts printing and printmaking collections is, at this writing, as certain as ever and there are no plans to dispose of the letterpress collection. Some of you may know that for the last several years the offsite storage location containing most of the collections' printing presses and typography material have not been readily accessible even to staff, because of asbestos issues. We understand plans are in the works to alleviate that situation. These plans are, as always, dependant on Congress and the Smithsonian's federal funding allotment. The rest of the collection is housed in various other secure and climate-controlled offsite locations, or in the Museum proper. The part of the collection housed in the Museum, the entire printmaking collection, and a printing workshop, continue to be accessible.

What is somewhat less clear is the future for long-term exhibition opportunities for the Graphic Arts Collection. Many will remember the Hall of Printing and Graphic Arts which originally, since the 1970s, included four period

rooms: an 18th century printing shop associated with Benjamin Franklin and the press he was purported to have used in London, early in his career, a 19th century news shop, a 19th century printing shop and a type foundry. Demonstrations of printing and type-founding were among the activities prepared for the public in those spaces. As you may know the Hall was dismantled in 2003 along with several other Museum exhibitions in close succession, after the decision was made to move forward with a renovation of the Museum. The history of printing was not the only exhibition subject to be re-examined. As a happy note here, because of the Hall closing we have been able to offer the 'Franklin' press to an exhibition about Benjamin Franklin that is traveling around the country and overseas. This should bring about its own small revival of interest in printing history.

In terms of future exhibitions in this Museum, there are a few larger thematic exhibitions, using both social and technological themes, which will be reinstalled at the time of the reopening of the Museum in 2008. It would appear that these larger exhibitions, like "The Price of Freedom: Americans at War" and "America on the Move" (about transportation) will be the main attractions to visitors for the foreseeable future. Current plans include a new and similar exhibition that will look at the subject of "American Enterprise." A sub-theme of information technology is presently being discussed for the show which should allow for a printing history component. There are also

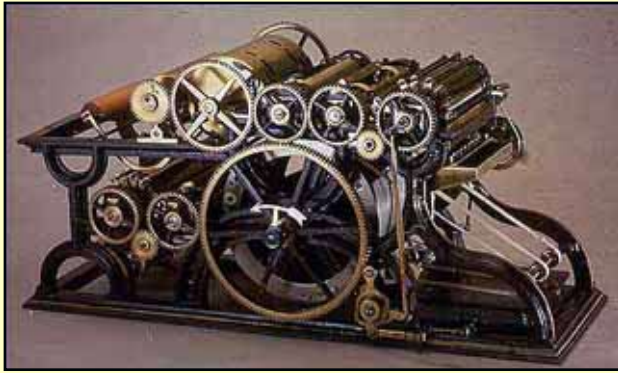


Richard Hoe's patent model for his four-cylinder rotary press, patent number 5199, patent date 1847.

smaller, shorter-term exhibitions being discussed that should also bring printing history back into the public view in the Museum and hopefully more permanently online.

The Museum's larger mission, understandably, is to present as much history as it can to as much of the public as it can reach, and these larger thematic interpretations are a new method of doing so by attempting to broaden the understanding of particular events, cultures, subjects or technologies. Clearly the style of exhibitions echoing a cabinet of curiosities, or the displaying one of every type of printing press, or coin, or light bulb, is no more. Optimistically this new method can be seen as a good

“What is somewhat less clear is the future for long-term exhibition opportunities...”



William Bullock's patent model for his rotary perfecting press, patent number 38200, patent date 1863.

thing as the average visitor will probably better understand or will be more likely to even look at printing objects in the context of more familiar or everyday life settings than in a group of similarly foreign objects such as a row of printing presses. (I presume *Galley Gab*[bers] may think differently about this.)

In terms of hopes for other ways to get printing history out to the public the Smithsonian's directive for an 'increase and diffusion of knowledge' traditionally results in work on projects that are either staff research projects or projects that have become museum priorities. Funding for both of these kinds of work generally comes from the private sector as federal funding for Smithsonian museums generally covers employee salaries and little else. This situation is not a new one, but it tends to leave behind inspired projects without individual or private sector backing.

The *Galley Gab*[bers] represent our public; the faithful, as it were. We hope you will continue to be interested in the history of print-

ing and will continue to promote the cause in whatever way you are able. In the meantime to the best of our abilities the Graphic Arts Collection staff will strive to try to find ways to incorporate printing history into the Museum's exhibitions, both physical exhibition and those presented online.

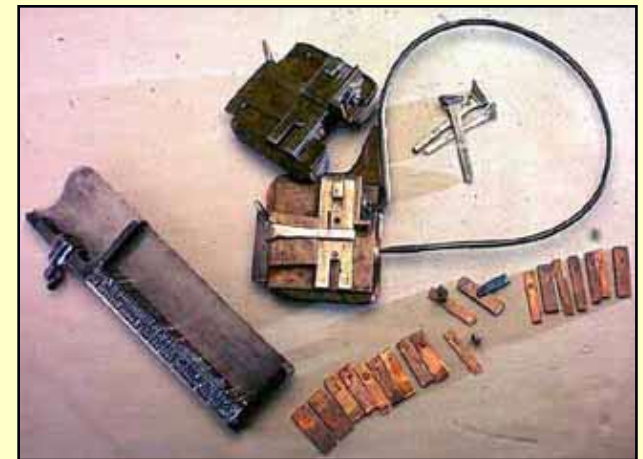
Collection Description

The Graphic Arts Collection includes some 65,000 objects, the vast majority of those being on paper. Aside from the printmaking collections, which also include equipment such as printing plates, and printmaking tools, are the printing machinery and equipment collections as listed in Elizabeth Harris' "[Printing Presses in the Graphic Arts Collection](#)," 1996 ([and part two](#)). The holdings include some seven full size wooden hand presses, 15 full size iron hand presses, 14 full size platen jobbers, 24 card, tabletop and very small presses, five galley proof presses and hand cylinder presses, four printing machines, six lithographic presses and some four copper plate presses. Other printing machinery includes miniature presses, from the above categories, Braille printers, copying and duplicating devices, stamps and rubber type. Printer's shop equipment includes a small collection of composing sticks, furniture, and various other hand tools.

The typography collection includes some 15 typesetting and typesetting machines, more than 4500 foundry fonts and cuts with some 3000 sets of type matrices, some 30 sets of

wood type, some 500 sets of type pattern drawings, both ATF and Monotype, and a library of some 2000 publications. Elizabeth Harris' "[Patent Models in the Graphic Arts Collection](#)," 1997, includes a listing of the collection's four hundred and fifty some patent models most of which represent printing-related inventions and include models for printing presses, press-related paper delivery, typesetting equipment, and bookbinding.

Graphic Arts Collection staff continues to collect for both the printmaking and printing collections. Because of space requirements, most machinery became almost impossible to collect years ago however we are still interested to collect unusual pieces and smaller printing tools and equipment. We also continue to be interested to document printing history in general.



Typofounding materials made by artist and paper historian Dard Hunter about 1915.

Getting “with it”...online!

For our regular readers, did you notice a slightly different orientation this issue of *Galley Gab*?

Since the first issue, some readers have mentioned that the publication was set up more for print than online as one had to scroll quite a bit. Truth is, up until now, it was set up for print!

FROM THE EDITOR



MIKE O'CONNOR

Chalk up my 45 years in various aspects of the print industry. Setting up *Galley Gab* in the 8.5x11 format was natural to me. Taking online characteristics into consideration—well, what did I know about online publications?

Simply put, this new format should make it just a little easier to handle on screen where the vast majority of our readers read the publication.

Who knows what other changes are coming? I was in community newspaper publishing for nearly 25 years. Every couple of years I would completely redesign the publication. One year Cheltenham was my headline face and I liked it, so there! I guess the subscribers didn't mind as we kept growing in circulation. I tell you this so you are prepared for future *Galley Gab* design changes!

A favorite typeface

Peter Fraterdeus has been reviving some old typefaces into digital. What caught my eye on his [web site](#) was Parsons. Unfortunately he doesn't have the extra long ascenders and de-

scenders yet but he hopes to add these in the not too distant future.

Parsons has been a favorite of mine and it's a great period typeface and a period in typography which I like very much. Maybe it's the novelty of the long ascenders/descenders that attracts me? I was able to buy four fonts of the face in metal type a few years back. The type was well worn but still prints. I love it. For the metal type aficionados, there is still a chance some sizes may be cast. Theo Rehak of the Dale Guild has the matrices. It might not be a good idea to hold your breath but there's hope.

Comments, ideas welcomed

My mailbox doesn't exactly explode with email after an issue of *Galley Gab* comes out and that's to be expected and certainly not unusual. However, your comments and ideas relating to letterpress and *Galley Gab* are very welcomed and don't be shy about [emailing me!](#)

Printing out GG

There seems to be a few folks who print out *Galley Gab*. If you'd like a PDF file that has a white background, thus making it less expensive to print out, please [contact me](#) and I'll send it.

Watch for September issue

Next month an interview with Gerald Lange and his switch from type to digital/polymer and more. Also an interesting article on paper-making for you printers who haven't made it.

ReadersWrite

[Email](#) your thoughts, questions

Improving polymer shoulders

Jason Wedekind in his article in July's issue mentioned that he wished to get a better shoulder on his photopolymer plates using a single lamp source. Before I had a commercial photopolymer exposure/washout unit, I used a single lamp and found that laying a frosted mylar film over the top of the glass when making the exposure (a bit longer due to the extra film) would diffuse the light enough to get decent shoulders on the plates.

John Henry

Mason City, Iowa

Question on Pro-Line PPI ink

I enjoyed the recent article on letterpress ink.

I recently bought some resin-based ink (Pro-Line PPI) from Graphic Chemical and Ink Co. As promised, it does behave like Van Son rubber based ink; remaining open on the press and drying only after contact with paper. The color choices are remarkable; listing PMS equivalents as well as more traditionally, named ink colors (including process colors) as well as six or more metallics.

I am curious if anyone has any archival information on resin based ink.

Eric May

Kent Ohio

Vandercook-Moxon announcements

■ Paul Moxon will be doing a two-day Vandercook Maintenance workshop at the Columbia College, Chicago on October 13-14. [Contact the College](#) for more information.

■ Proof press owners: Visit [Vanderblog](#) and add your data to censuses for these brands: Asbern, Canuck, Challenge, FAG, Hacker, Korrex, Reprex, Vandercook and Western.



TIP...

on saving ink!

By AMY E. REDMOND

Ink can easily be saved for future use by carefully wrapping it in foil. Taking the time to wrap the ink carefully will give it a longer shelf life and make it easy to re-use.

How to wrap ink in foil:

Get a large piece of foil and fold it in half. Folding it in half makes the foil sturdy enough to withstand the ink knife scraping against it.

Place the folded piece of foil on the edge of the ink glass so that half is on the glass and half is hanging off the edge of the table. Using the ink knife, gather all your ink and wipe it onto center of the foil, drawing the knife off the edge of the table to get all the ink cleanly off the knife.

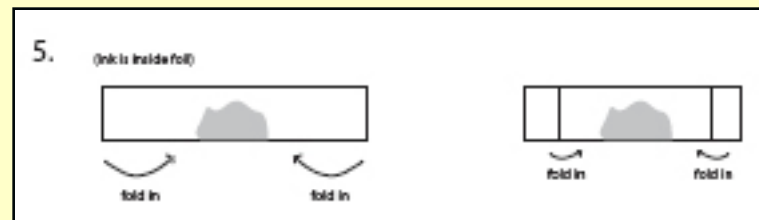
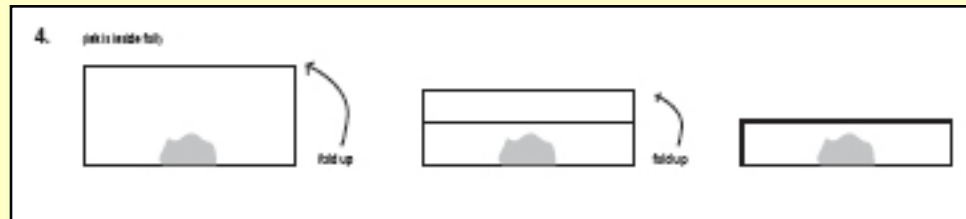
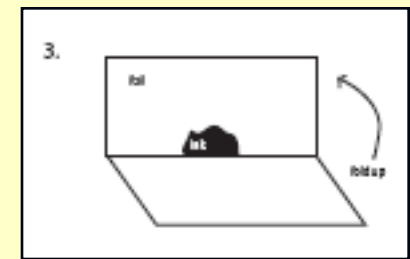
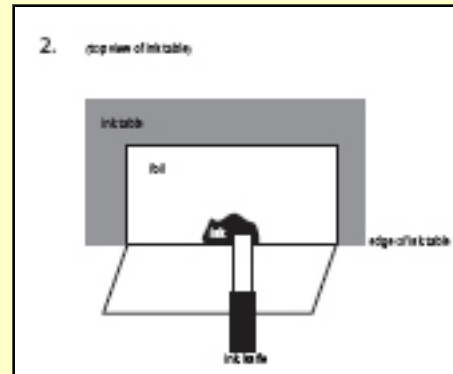
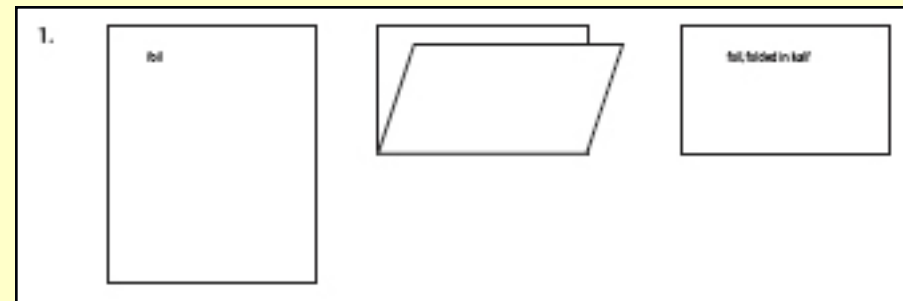
Fold the foil in half. Be careful not to squish the ink; you do not want it to ooze out the sides.

Fold the end of the foil with the ink up towards the edges of the foil, as if you were rolling a blanket.

Fold the sides of the foil in on themselves, so that they are tightly sealed.

On a piece of paper tap down a tiny amount of ink, write the PMS number, and affix with tape.

It pays to use good foil for this as thin, cheap foil will defeat the purpose. I've had some inks that have been wrapped for four years and still good!



Lockup. Furniture? Quoins? HA!...

PLASTER OF PARIS!

By MIKE O'CONNOR

She wanted the number "2s" of various sizes and styles scattered around the birthday invitation as background. Hum, how to set that up? The birthday invites were for [The Paper Studio](#) located in Tempe, AZ where I teach letterpress classes and do a little other letterpress printing.

How it came to me, I don't know (with my

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The chase with type inside. I put tape around the edge to protect again seeping but it wasn't a concern. Chase is on glass (shown is white paper under the glass—the plaster hasn't been poured yet).

poor memory). I do remember reading or hearing about using Plaster of Paris to hold the type in place with such a crazy makeup. I tell you this as I certainly don't want to pass this idea off as an original.

I had never done it before but it sounded reasonable. The invitations were going to be printed on the Vandercook 4 in the studio.

I decided to use one of the 6x9 Sigwalt chases to put the numbers in and then pour the

plaster into the chase. I used a piece of glass for the "stone." One reason to use the glass was that there was a portion of the invitation where the owner did not want numbers to appear. I used a magic marker I marked this area and then I put the numbers in at various angles and scattered about.

I followed directions as to mixing the Plas-



Chase with plaster is locked up ready to print. That type wasn't going anywhere!

ter of Paris. Having to do it over again, I might add just a tad more water than the instructions mentioned. It would make it easier to pour and if using smaller type, help in keeping all the type on its feet and in place. The only downside I see if you did that is that it would take longer to dry. However, I had no real problems in following instructions.

The day this was done it was 110 degrees in Tempe and the humidity was about 10 percent. It dried in about 15 minutes!

The plaster held the type firmly and there was no problem in handling it. It printed fine. For what could be a complicated lockup, it worked very well and took hardly any time at

all—compared to locking it up in a more traditional manner.

When finished, a hammer and screwdriver (used as a chisel) easily broke up the plaster. (This is perhaps taking the term “breaking up the form” to a new literal high!) There really wasn’t any plaster residue on the type but if there had been, it would have been easy to wash off. Obviously in using the wet plaster, this is not something you’d want to put wood type into or a wood based engraving.

Last month *Galley Gab* carried an unusual lockup. This episode qualifies in this category but in this instance, the type held well and was securely locked up on all sides.



Easy to break up the form—a couple of blows with the hammer!



A portrait of Gutenberg in type!

A couple of Monotype enthusiasts in Germany set the type to do the portrait of Gutenberg. You can read their story [here](#).





'Baby' has arrived!

BY MIKE ANDERSON

Several years ago my wife, Suzanne, and I attended the American Typecasting Fellowship (ATF) gathering at Provo, Utah. On the way, we stopped at Steve Pratt's Press and Wagon Works, near Cove Fort, Utah. One of the many highlights of the visit was a personal tour of his workshop where he manufactures iron and wooden hand presses. Among the iron presses he and his son, Ben, make from original press patterns is the tabletop Albion originally made by D & J Greig, Edinburgh, Scotland. The original is located at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

The press so impressed us that over the

years we have discussed getting one. Then, while attending a gathering of Maryland Printers, Steve Heaver presented a number of us with a certificate of membership in the Nuthead Society of Maryland. The certificate had been printed on Heaver's Pratt Tabletop Albion press.

After talking with Heaver about his Albion I called Pratt the following week and ordered one. Pratt figured he could deliver the press himself around July 6th since he was scheduled to deliver a wooden common press to the Park Service in Philadelphia, PA, about 165 miles north of us.

Several of the local and not-so-local printers know of Steve and wanted to meet with him. So the logical thing to do, of course, was have a "Wayzgoose" to celebrate the new press.

Steve and Ben arrived Friday night, July 6th, and we sat up late into the night talking presses, printing and the state of the world. Saturday morning we moved the Albion from their trailer into my basement print shop.

Stan Nelson, Atelier Press and Typefoundry, MD and Rich Hopkins Hill & Dale Press and Typefoundry, WV arrived early and helped with the moving and setting up of the

press. The 380-pound Albion had been disassembled by Ben in the trailer before moving into the shop. Ben and Steve put the Albion together and Ben made the necessary adjustments. The press was about ready for its first “pull.” However, with others slated to arrive over the next couple of hours, we decided to wait for them before inking a form. Steve and Ben took the opportunity to look over my Wooden Common press. We talked over some of the problems I was having and they pointed out what the real problems were and that they would be happy to “tune up” my press while we waited. Wonderful idea!

Several hours later, after a few modifications and changes had been made to the press, it was fine-tuned and declared ready to print. What a difference! I could pull the bar without straining my back, and it had the “spring” (rebound) upon returning off pressure.

While the changes and tune-up to the wooden press were happening, the others arrived: Jim Walczak, Sycamore Press and Typefoundry, MD; Chris Manson, Crooked Crow Press, MD; Roland Hoover, Pembroke Press, MD; Mike Denker, Stoney Creek Press, MD; and Stuart Bradley, Railway Station Press, VA. Later in the afternoon, Steve Heaver, Hill Press, MD arrived.

After lunch everyone gathered around the Albion and looked over the excellent workmanship, and marveled at the smoothness of



Steve and Ben Pratt makes final adjustments.



Chris Manson and Mike Anderson locking up the chase.



Press owner Mike Anderson pulls the first proof.



The Albion with tympan and frisket attached.

the running of the bed and the pull of the bar. The most asked question was “why the shade of green?” The answer is simple: you can get it in black or the original color green. According to Hopkins, “Kind of like Henry Ford’s Model T—any color you like, as long as you like black or green.”

We all gathered around the press and I placed a form on the bed—well, actually a second form was placed on the bed as I had pried three lines of the first form I put on. The chase was set in place and the form locked up.

Using some of Steve Pratt’s homemade ink (Steve has spent more than five years researching early ink production), and my handmade paper we pulled the first proof. The form was the Provinciale romanum, one of Gutenberg’s early printings using my cutting of the Donatus/Kalender type (DK-type). The ink was black and lustrous, imprinting a dark form to the paper. Everyone pulled their own copy, while Chris Manson did the honor of inking the form.

Suzanne had opted to take the granddaughter to the Water Park (as it was 92 degrees with humidity around 55%), and besides, she didn’t want to listen to a bunch of guys talk type. Upon her return she stopped in the basement and started to laugh. “This looks like a baby shower—and the baby has arrived!”

Thus the press got its name – “Baby.”



Some of the boys at Baby’s shower. At far left, back to camera: Roland Hoover (back to camera), Chris Manson and Mike Anderson. Rich Hopkins, Stan Nelson, Steve Pratt, Ben Pratt,



Chris Manson inking the form.



Jim Walczak takes a turn at the Albion Press.

My print shop in a box

By CRAIG STARR

Just before I semi-retired in 2003, I set up this little letterpress print shop near my home so I could continue printing whatever and whenever I wished to. I had hoped to advertise and sell some antique-style printing, mostly postcards. In two years, I had spent more for advertising than I had made, so I dropped that idea. It's just too easy for everyone to do at home on a computer now. I do get a few jobs from the folks who bought my commercial print shop, and I have one pet project—about five times a year, I get an order from the local livestock auction for 5000 bid cards.

All the equipment and my collection of old type—(some 640 fonts of foundry type and 66 fonts of wood type) is housed in an 8'x48' insulated cargo container. There are two reasons for this: first, I may not want to live the rest of my life in Masonville, IA; I might want to pick it up and take it with me. Second, if I should kick off unexpectedly, I have told my son to contact some APAers and try to sell “a print shop in a box.” I'm sure I will never move all

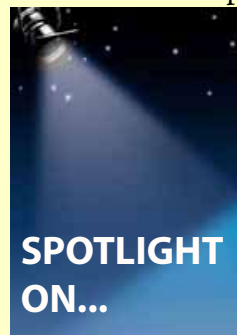
that lead and cast iron out the door again, and I don't want to make my son do it.

When I was planning this, I wasn't sure there would be enough room in the aisle to handle a standard size type case without skinning your knuckles, but it turned out just perfect; no wasted space. My wife told me I was nuts to

even consider such an idea, but now she tells everyone “it really turned out pretty nice.” It's a great place for me to spend my spare time.

MORE PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE

(Craig can be reached via his [email](#).)



**SPOTLIGHT
ON...**



Here's the shop showing the walk-in door and two opening windows. I left the heavy doors on, so I can lock it up securely.



This photo shows the rugged solid oak floor. There is one small window cut in the wall just behind the Kluge, and the two large windows were installed beside the door after this picture was taken. At the very back end, there is a hanging LP gas furnace and an air conditioner. Both will do their job, and bring the temperature to a comfortable degree fairly quickly. The container has an aluminum outer shell, with about 4" of foam insulation, and 1/4" plywood on the inside. I painted it all white and installed 4 - 8' fluorescent light fixtures and plenty of outlets.



Craig and Shirley Starr



This photo shows most of the length from just inside the door. It's hard to get it all in a picture. You see two 24-case type cabinets of modern "utility" type with a sign press on top. Then you see the cabinets that came out of our kitchen when we re-modeled. Next beyond that is my Hamilton Composing Benches, with all my furniture and spacing at the back of the stone table. Beyond that, hidden in the picture, is a c. 1900 Victor 6x9 hand press, which is handy for imprinting calendars, napkins, etc. Then you see the "production" press, a 1924 Chandler & Price Kluge, 10x15". Behind that is a 1880 patented Rosback Perforator, which makes a handy workbench when not in use. Completely hidden at the far end is a c. 1900 GEM 23" cutter.



Here is where the business is conducted. The rolltop desk supports a barrister's bookcase full of printing books, the computer is used for bookkeeping, etc., and the copier gets a lot of use, even though it doesn't "fit" in a letterpress printshop.

L.A. Type—winning the war

By ROBERT TROGMAN

It all began in 1944 with signing on as an apprentice at the historic plant of L.A. Type.

Walt Gebhard and his wife were running a growing business and needed employees. I jumped at the opportunity to learn the type casting business while at the same time attending Linotype classes at Frank Wiggins Trade School in the summer.

I was indeed fortunate to have Don Winter as a mentor. He had recently returned from the Navy as an essential worker because he could set complicated mathematical formulas on the Monotype composition casters. The firm had contracts with defense firms and yet was able to cast enough type to satisfy both North and South America. The thought of being around wonderful machines and experienced journeymen satisfied my 16 year-old curiosities.

The daily routine for me was going to high school on my battery-operated scooter and then ride to work at the foundry. I was a husky lad about 200 pounds and Walt put me through quite a body building routine by lifting some very heavy boxes of metal into the pig pouring crucible. After this chore he allowed me to go into the casting room and work on a Monotype display caster. Another one of my chores was to go to the local bar and fetch “Ernie” the Giant

Caster machinist. He was fortunate enough to have a cot about 10 feet away from his machine. Meanwhile three material makers were pumping away with the extrusion of strip material.

Historically, L.A. Type was recognized as the first foundry to cast Times Roman, a face that I was very bored of casting. The Monotype Company in England was able to export matrices during the war because of the value of the printed word during wartime.

Walt had a practice of changing the names of these English matrices. For example, Figaro was changed to Old Towne and Matura was changed to Pagoda. These pseudonyms still exist.



Don Winter

The plant was located underneath the German language newspaper California Staats-Zeitung that was under constant surveillance of the F.B.I. In those days the type cases were open to anyone who walked in the door. Usually on Saturdays printers came to set type and go to the scale and were “weighed out”. One of those days I noticed that a person came in and bought a pound of capital “B’s” and some numbers in Franklin Gothic – the same font as used on the B series ration stamps. The F.B.I. was notified and the next time he came into the plant he was arrested for counterfeiting.

Unfortunately, Walt Gebhard had quite a bout with alcohol and many a night I had to

A SHORT HISTORY OF L.A. TYPE

For over 60 years the printers in Los Angeles were fortunate to capitalize on the assets of a company that began with a man in a station wagon picking up printer’s metal. One of the founders of Los Angeles Type & Rule, Walt Gebhard began a business during the late period of the depression, and then becoming a leading type supplier on the west coast for over 50 years. In the late 40s the firm became known as L.A. Type. Unfortunately, the company ended up as an asset for sale to a lone bidder.

help his wife and go on a neighborhood search. He was a generous man and later on in life we were very close friends. Walt was divorced and later remarried. When he died she took over the business and Don Winter became the operations manager.

I visited Walt when he was dying in the hospital and I was told to bring in a bottle of Scotch in order to ease his pain. He said that he regretted that we were unable to go to England as planned and with tears in my eyes I said goodbye. His funeral was very flowery and the presiding minister painted a very angelic picture of Walt while the audience was snickering because the deceased was known for his explosives.

L.A. Type and Walt Gebhard deserve a significant place in history of letterpress printing. I know how my life was enriched by my experiences in the old building on Pico Blvd. between Los Angeles Street and Santee (once a printing center and now a garment district).