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A monthly online publication (published the first day of each month) devoted to letterpress printing and the [Amalgamated Printers' Association](#).

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Early twentieth century letterpress was taught and learned in a variety of ways. For starters, many youngsters were exposed to letterpress printing in their high school “shop” classes.



This led many on to careers in printing. Others, like our story on Jim Daggs in the last issue, learned the craft coming up through the ranks in a commercial shop or newspaper. There were schools (beyond high school) teaching the craft, most notable probably was Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester New York. The countryside was also dotted with various “trade schools” where the craft was taught. Unions of course played a major role in education with their own educational programs, which usually received high marks. But since the 1970s and the demise of letterpress in the commercial world, learning the craft has largely fell on various colleges and institutions teaching book art. Then there are oth-

ers who simply wanted to get into letterpress, bought a press and related equipment and learned on their own. ¶ Some of the early traditions and the methods of learning the craft

have been lost in many instances. This was to be expected after letterpress lost its dominance in commercial printing. ¶ The following article gives you a very small glimpse into a variety of teaching facilities—from the home shop where one or two students learn, to various art institutions with classes of 15 or 20. ¶ It is hoped that this article will give a bit of an insight into the teaching going on now, but that it will also create a further dialog as to how we might improve on the process for future generations of letterpress aficionados. ¶ We first introduce you to the five “teachers” and then, in a question and answer format, delve into the process each instructor uses to teach letterpress.



...the teachers



Stuart Bradley watching that "impression."

Stuart Bradley taught himself letterpress 35 years ago at Kalamazoo College in Michigan and then was asked to teach other students. After a hiatus from letterpress, three years ago he started his Railroad Station Press. Two years ago he started teaching letterpress. Stuart is an attorney. His classes are given in his home basement in Alexandria, VA and the students use a C&P Pilot press and have access to about 20 fonts of type. At his other shop at the train station, he has a 10x15 C&P and a Poco #2 Proof Press and some 40 fonts of type.

Her full time job is at an offset print shop and has worked in printing for nearly 10 years. She learned letterpress at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Her teacher was a former student of Walter Hamady. About a year after graduation she bought a 10x15 C&P and "relearned platen press printing." The equipment available to students include a 10x15 C&P, 8x12 C&P, a Lino-O-Scribe and a small collection of wood type, ornaments and about 80 fonts of type.



Mike O'Connor on inking the press.

Mike O'Connor started in letterpress as a teenager. He took a two year printing course at a trade school in Minneapolis in 1962 (letterpress was still taught!). A couple of years after graduation and working in the trade, including starting his own shop, he started a newspaper and became a newspaper publisher. At retirement 13 years ago he picked up letterpress again and teaches at [The Paper Studio](#) in Tempe, Arizona. Students have access to two Sigwalts and two C&P Pilot presses. The studio also contains an 8x12 C&P, a Vandercook 4 and about 80 fonts of type. Mike restarted his own shop at retirement and has an 8x12 Golding Official.

Kansas City. Chuck started his shop six years go and owns a Vandercook Universal 1. He teaches a short introductory workshop through Community, which is an adult enrichment program. His other workshop takes place in his shop, located in his basement. He started teaching at home in 2005.



Jessica Spring (right) at the press with a student.

Jessica Spring came to letterpress by way of working as a typesetter (Mergenthaler, Compugraphic) and graphic designer at a firm where she was a partner. They secured a Vandercook 3 for the price of moving it and used the press for self promotion and invitations. She loved the printing but hated doing client work so she left the design firm for grad school in book arts. Now she works as a book artist, prints for a few clients and teaches. The teaching takes place at the [School of Visual Concepts](#) in Seattle and the Elliot Press at [Pacific Lutheran University](#) in Tacoma. She also has informal workshops in her own shop. She has been teaching the past three years but also taught it in Chicago. Equipment at SVC includes three Vandercooks and several platens. PLU has a Vandercook Universal III. Most instruction happens on two treadle C&P's. Her own studio consist of a Vandercook 4, Universal 1, an 8x12 C&P and a Sigwalt. She started printing and collecting in 1989.



Lisa Hasegawa (left) checking the form.

Lisa Hasegawa gives her classes at the [Pratt Fine Arts Center](#) in Seattle. She has been teaching for two years.

Chuck Harper's start in letterpress was taking a class at the University of Kansas' Art & Design School. He is a production manager for a book and calendar publishing company in

...the teaching: Q&A

What is the length of your classes?

Bradley: I teach a hands on workshop from 10 am to 5 pm on a Saturday, twice a month.

Harper: The workshop is set up as a single session that lasts at most four hours. I offer it about twice each semester-fall, winter/spring,

and summer.

Hasegawa: Usually eight-week classes per quarter. Started at four weeks and realized that was just not long enough. Summertime is four weeks. Occasional one or two day workshops.

O'Connor: Four sessions-three hours each.

Spring: SVC classes are usually weekend intensives. PLU classes last a semester, twice a week for two hours.

How many students do you teach at any one session?

Bradley: Two students.

Harper: Ideally, there will be five students, but it typically runs from four to six.

Hasegawa: Introduction: no

more than eight. Continuing: no more than five.

O'Connor: Three to four students.

Spring: SVC limits the class to eight. PLU limits the class to 16, with one or two of those taking the class a second time and assisting.

Do most of your students come from a particular discipline?

Bradley: It has been at least 50% graphic designers.

Harper: Graphic designers would probably make up the largest single group, but I doubt that it would be more than 50% of those that have taken the workshop.

Hasegawa: It is quite diversified. Several graphic designers, of course, but they really don't make up the

bulk. Printmakers, photographers, people who have never made "art," book artists, everyone really and that is super cool.

O'Connor: Varied. About 30-40% graphic designers, book art folks and others who have heard of letterpress and just want to experience it.

Spring: Students at SVC are generally graphic designers already familiar with some of the terminology. Students at PLU are usually Juniors or Seniors taking a required class for a Publishing Minor-they are often English majors and may have never taken an art class before.

What do students pay to take your class?

Bradley: \$100 for Saturday workshop.

Harper: In all \$34. Commuiversity charges \$14. They say, "This money goes to keep the Commuiversity office open and pay for the catalog printing, mailing, and other expenses." Then, I collect a

\$20 material fee at the time of the class to cover the cost of a handout (photocopies of the ATF classroom posters) and the paper, envelopes, etc.

Hasegawa: \$360 - 8 wk.; \$100 - 8 hr workshop

O'Connor: \$125 for the four, three hour sessions.

Spring: I'm not sure, and SVC isn't running a comparable class right now. Probably \$300 or so.

Give a brief overview of what is taught in your classes

Bradley: We go over key terms and the process of printing, then we discuss projects and look at what previous students have done, then compose, lock up and print. We all participate in the clean up.

Harper: It is a very brief introduction to letterpress. The students set their name or a short phrase in metal type, maybe embellish it with an ornament or two or a cut and print 20 copies of an A6-sized note card.

The press is inked with black ink when they arrive. They set their type on a 20-pica line and I've got the press set up to drop this in and get printing with little makeready. They have their choice of printing on either white or ivory card stock with matching blank envelopes.

Hasegawa: I usually start out with business cards because they

are "simple." We cover setting type in the stick, case layout, locking-up type in the chase, setting up the press (how to mix ink, how to ink the press, set gauge pins, etc), how to not smash hands (safe techniques), how to not smash type (proper impression), building up lino blocks to type high.... Ah, we talk about the importance of ligatures, spacing and letterpress math, sorting type (!), wire and pressure printing on the Line-O-Scribe. Continuing classes learn about justification and setting type into a shape, 2-color printing, and some more advanced problem solving.

O'Connor: First session covers basics: setting type, lockup, printing name and address, distributing type, cleanup press. The next three sessions students select a project or projects of their choosing that they

will be working on for the balance of their sessions. Their projects vary widely thus exposing them to different situations in typesetting, lockup and presswork.

Spring: SVC: We focus on using the press for generating images borrowing from printmaking techniques. Students learn to print with wire, pressure printing, collographs (using objects for relief printing) and usually incorporate wood type or cuts with minimal typesetting. The introductory LP class there focuses on fundamentals, all handset type to create broadsides. At PLU students cover the whole art of the book through lecture and hands-on work: history, typography, graphic design, printing, binding, artists books. Learning to print is one component of the class.

What do students hope to accomplish by taking your class?

Bradley: I tell them that they will know if they enjoy letterpress printing by the end of the workshop.

Harper: Besides coming away with a set of letterpress note cards that they can use or give as a gift to someone, they get the basic knowledge of how letterpress works and some appreciation of the craftsmanship that goes into the printing.

Hasegawa: I think they think

they'll be able to come in any time after the class and use the presses as they see fit. Ha! Some have certain projects in mind, one student said she wanted to find out why letterpress printing was so expensive, one was a designer who worked with a printer and thought it would be wise to get some basics so she could design better for the printer... Most just really love letterpress and want to learn everything they can.

O'Connor: Most seem to be just curious about the process. A few have been so taken by letterpress that they've bought presses.

Spring: At SVC the emphasis is more about experimentation, having some fun and learning how to use the press in new ways. At PLU students leave with a real sampler of experiences and a greater insight into the craft of letterpress.

What type of marketing is involved to find students for the class?

Bradley: A listing on Briar Press as well as my website can be found with a Google search.

Harper: Communiversity publishes a printed catalog of about 35,000

copies each semester. These are distributed via direct mail (about 8,000 copies) and the rest are distributed across the Kansas City metro-area - in public libraries, restaurants, coffee shops, hair salons, etc. They also

have an on-line catalog that is gaining in use.

Hasegawa: Pratt produces a catalog and mails it to their members. They also place the catalogs in local

art supply stores and coffee shops and whatnot.

O'Connor: Web site of The Paper Studio; word of mouth

Spring: SVC students are drawn through the school website and quarterly catalogs. PLU students

are required to take the class for their Printing and Publishing Arts minor.

What do you find as your major challenge in teaching the class?

Bradley: Covering all the material in one day.

Harper: No answer

Hasegawa: The equipment. Our furniture is pretty damaged and I think the cause of several lock-up problems. We don't have a Vandercook and we need more type. These things are expensive and not so easy to find, especially as I have a limited budget.

O'Connor: Patience. I've been involved in letterpress at various stages much of my life. I try not to make too many assumptions as to what they should know. Some things I take for granted. It's important to go slow, be specific and patient. With three or four students, it can be a challenge if one student is having to take your time while

another also needs help.

Spring: PLU is challenging because students usually arrive as complete novices and the quantity of students for the size of the shop create limitations—it's really unrealistic. The administration really doesn't understand what goes on at the Press.

What do you feel is the most difficult task students have to perform in class? Any unusual experiences as to how some students perform them?

Bradley: Composing, they will forget to put leading between the lines or get confused about spacing.

Harper: Usually, it's deciding what to print—whether to do something for themselves or for a gift for someone else; or, what typeface to use or what cut to put with it, etc. Sometimes they just get overwhelmed with the possibilities that they can't decide what to do.

By the nature of the quick-and-easy workshop, there's not a great deal of difficulty. But still, there are several that come up with a new way to approach something so straightforward.

Hasegawa: Locking up. Sometimes it works after just one try; sometimes it takes them a couple of hours. One woman worked on it for several hours before I got to her and she had added and subtracted

spacing everywhere and messed it all up. I tried explaining to her that it would be easier and much faster to put each line back in the stick to start over with the spacing but she kept saying, "okay, 15 more minutes." Another 2 hours later she finally gave up and printed it in the Line-o-scribe so she could just get it printed.

O'Connor: Learning to set type, holding composing stick correctly and paying attention to gravity...if the stick not held right, etc. TYPE FALLS! Stabbing gauge pins. One student: I could set type all day!

Spring: I'm consistently amazed at one or two students in each class that are "naturals" with the hand skills, patience and creativity to render quality work with little experience. My students come in with no

prior background and have to, in essence, learn a new language and system of measurement—that's a lot to tackle.



Do you have a sense as to how many students pursue letterpress after taking your class?

Bradley: They all say they would like to buy a press. Some buy a press first and then take the class to learn how to use it.

Harper: I don't think many, if any, go on to pursue letterpress on their own after taking this workshop. There is one who was looking at getting a press and one who had a non-functioning press when she took the workshop and still hasn't had a chance to get it running yet. However, I have had quite a few come back to work on additional projects in my workshop. After

getting their feet wet with printing some stationery, they've come back to print holiday greeting cards, business cards, and wedding invitations. Several have come back to take the same workshop a second or third time.

Hasegawa: I would have to say it's a pretty low percentage of students actually buying a press. I know of one at least. Several students have come back for additional classes and one student has been granted permission studio access.

O'Connor: Probably 10% so far. We have a follow-up and offer studio time but during the short time, no takers. I think the hype of letterpress recently attracts a lot of curious folks.

Spring: I've had several at SVC who take the class because they already have a press and want more instruction or intend to find a press. PLU students may take the class twice, and a very few pursue grad school opportunities in book arts.

At the start of your class, what's a common misconception students have about letterpress?

Bradley: They are confused about a flat bed proof press like a Vandercook and a platen press.

Hasegawa: That it's easy and not time consuming in the least.

O'Connor: Not realizing all the various equipment necessary: furniture, quoins, leading, etc., etc. Seeing all the type and type cases; hard to comprehend coming from the computer age.

Spring: That letterpress is severely punching into the paper, like the greeting cards they've seen printed with photopolymer plates or that book arts is scrapbooking.

What are general comments from students when they've completed the class?

Bradley: All very positive, they are more excited about letterpress than when they started.

Harper: With the print shop being my own personal, hobby print shop and in my home, most comment on how generous I am to allow strangers into my home to share my press and my knowledge of the process.

Hasegawa: I think every single student has said they really enjoyed the class and learned a great deal. Get more presses. Wish there was more time.

O'Connor: All have been very enthused and get excited when they've pulled their first impression. There is also a real sense of accomplish-

ment when a project is completed.

Spring: They usually say they love printing and want to do more. The undergrads are really happy to have a class that is hands on and not about sitting and listening to lectures.

What would you advise anyone contemplating teaching letterpress?

Bradley: Keep the class very small, as the students need a lot of help especially during composing and printing.

Hasegawa: Safety first!

O'Connor: Do it—it's very fulfilling and enjoyable to teach people who are so excited about learning letterpress.

Spring: Patience!! I also have to remind myself to lower my expect-

tations about what can be accomplished in a short time with limited experience and equipment and to celebrate a class full of students who have been "infected."

From the editor

MIKE O'CONNOR

What about those 'good old days'?

I took a short jaunt down memory lane after doing the feature article on teaching letterpress. I learned much about letterpress as a kid with a hobby shop and picking things up from an old printer in town and also from the members of APA.

But from 1962 to 1964 I attended a trade school in Minneapolis—[Dunwoody Institute](#) by name. They still taught letterpress for the most part. There was a hand comp department, linecasting had about a dozen Linotypes and Intertypes and the pressroom had its platens, a Miehle, a large Hiedelberg cylinder and others. Offset was just creeping in with a Multigraph and a Chief plus a camera department.

Considering the school trains for a career, this wasn't the best

training—since letterpress was very much on its last leg. I'm sure a couple years after I left, the printing department made some radical changes and now I wonder where all that letterpress equipment went. Currently they have a class in Flexography and that's it for printing.

My career veered off into newspapering so the training didn't matter (it wasn't much help in my newspaper career either!).

Still, I am pleased I was able to be a part of letterpress and able to participate in its commercial finale—even though one foot of letterpress was already in the grave.

I was never much of a student in high school but I always received high marks in trade school. Wonder why?

Thars grumbling in the ranks!

I received a few complaints recently and that saddens me as I like to keep my readers happy. It's not their subscription dollars I'm worried about—but keeping them in a positive frame of mind when it comes to GG.

Seems that some of you print out your copy of *Galley Gab* on real paper and the amount of ink you are using (because of the colored background) is nearly forcing some into bankruptcy. I can understand and it saddens me.

I'm fighting this one in my own mind. I like the light yellow background as it avoids the stark white glare of the computer screen and it gives me a little bit of a feel that this thing is actually printed on a nice colored paper! I like to delude myself

at times (alas, unlike Speed Gray, I have no Intertypes, Miehle's, etc. to print this with!).

As you can see by this issue, I am still using the background color, as I haven't made any final decisions. However, I am willing to help out those who print this out. If you'll [email](#) me, I'll send you a PDF file of this issue minus the background color.

Another friend emailed me after the first issue and said the format meant he had to do a lot of scrolling. I can also appreciate that problem. I'm not sure what to do—more horizontal layouts maybe (hard to do sometimes)? But I do like the 8.5x11 format, as again, it gives me the feel of a print publication.



...ON WINNING BIDS

By DAVID ROSE

I've been buying letterpress jun... um, "treasures" on eBay for many years, and the biggest tip I have for *anyone* who will be bidding on eBay is: use [eSnipe](#)!

"Sniping" is the eBay specific term of lying in wait until the very last seconds of an auction, and then throwing in a large bid leaving no one else a chance to top you. While it is possible to do this manually by sitting around your computer until the auction ends, it is *much* easier to do this automatically with eSnipe. Here's how it works:

When you come across an eBay listing that you want, simply click the 'eSnipe' bookmark that you've added to your toolbar. This automatically brings up a dialog asking how much you want to bid, and how many seconds before the end you want the bid to be executed. The default time is six seconds, but I usually use 3 and rarely have a problem.

In deciding how much you are going to bid, you *must* put in your *absolute* maximum. This isn't what you would enter if you were manually bidding, and may not even be what you'd tell your spouse, but it has to be an amount such that if you *do* get outbid, you will be perfectly happy to have walked away from the item.

That's all there is to it! At the appointed time, eSnipe's servers will place your bid for you on eBay, and Poof! you get the item (unless, of course, someone outbid you with an outrageous amount, in which case you're happy to have lost.)



The following is part two of a three-part series that will provide a brief overview of the steps and procedures for designing, engraving and casting a typeface. This article describes the use of a Deckel Pantograph to engrave brass matrices to be used on a Thompson Type Caster.

Making the matrices

By MIKE ANDERSON

Once the patterns are made, the engraving process can begin. The first step is to prepare brass matrices blanks, keeping in mind that there are several different types of type casters and it must be determined which caster will be used. This is easy for me as I only cast display mats (14 pt. and larger) on a Thompson caster.

The mats for a Thompson need to be at approximately 1 and 1/8th inch high and wide enough to hold the face with narrow borders on each side. The mat must be between a 1/8th and 5/32nd of an inch thick. Matrices are made of soft brass, often called Alpha Brass or Yellow Brass, meaning that there is less than 34 percent zinc, resulting in a softer brass that is easier to engrave. These blanks are made from flat bar stock by hack sawing the 3/4-inch stock into slightly longer than one-inch blanks. The blank is then milled on the top and bottom (hack sawed areas) to provide a perfect right angle to the

sides. The final result is a blank of proper dimensions for use in a Thompson matrices holder.

Before engraving can begin, cutters must be ground to the proper shape. The cutters are made from 1/4-inch drill blanks and ground to a four-sided point, with a tip width of not more than .01". Depending on the width of the hairline, some points will be .005". The tip is ground on a grinder that has micro-dial control of the grinding wheel index. The width of the tip is checked using a 40X pocket Micro-Mike with division equal to .001". The tip of the cutter is raked at a 15-degree back angle to allow for chips to be removed. The cutter is inserted into a quill and inserted into the engraving arm.



Shown above is the tip of the cutter enlarged 60 times. The back rake is shown, which allows chips to be expelled from the cutting edge without jamming the cutter. The cutting edge of this cutter is .01".

The pattern is located on the Pattern Board of the Deckel Engraver, using a t-square and the pattern Standard to ensure that it is properly aligned. The pattern is held firmly with double-sided carpet tape.

Using calipers, lines are scribed upon the blank mat to indicate the base, x-height, ascender and descender lines. The locations of the lines have been predetermined by computing the point size of the type and the total area occupied



Shown above is the Universal Cutter/Grinder used to sharpen cutting tools. The micro-dial (far left) allows cutting adjustments of .0001". The cutter is held in the Collette (center front) that is indexed by the silver Index Dial at the front. The Collette is pushed forward quickly by hand, bringing the surface of the cutter across the grinding stone. The sharpened cutter is finished by hand rubbing all four cutting edges over the fine grained cutting stone on the table in front of the grinder to remove any burrs.

PART ONE—If you missed part one of this series, you can go to our [archives](#) and read it in the February 2007 issue.

by the face upon the body. The ascender line is the first line and is measured from the head of the blank to a point that the ascender would be located on similar 24 pt. matrices. Face location on a mat is dictated by point size; this is to allow for alignment of the mat in the matrices holder when casting.

The settings of the two arms of the pantograph are calculated based upon the ratio of the overall size of the pattern to the overall size of the face. For example, say we have a 2-inch pattern and a body size of 1/4-inch (.25-inch). Dividing the .25-inch face into the 2.0-inch pattern results in a ratio of 8:1. Each arm would be set at the 8:1 ratio.

The follower traces the incised shape of the pattern and controls the movement of the cutter in the mat. Two things determine the diameter of the follower: 1) the width of the cutter tip, and 2) the desired width of the hairline. If the hairline is .007" and the cutter tip is .007", then the diameter of the follower will be as large as possible to pass through the narrowest portion of the pattern—the hairline. However, you must also ensure that the weight of the stems is correct with

the cutter and follower combination.

Once the blank has been marked and set in the Engraving Board, the follower, which is fixed to the top arm, is inserted into the Standard, and held at the top, while the blank is moved into position by geared wheels which move the Engraving Board. Once the top of the Standard places the tip of the cutter on the ascender line, the follower is then moved to the bottom of the Standard and the tip of the cutter is checked to ensure that it is on the

descender line. This ensures that the arms are set to the right ratio. The follower is then moved into the face of the letter and the blank is adjusted to the proper left-right position.

After adjusting the blank to the proper location, the Engraving Board is lowered, the cutter is lowered to the cutting position,



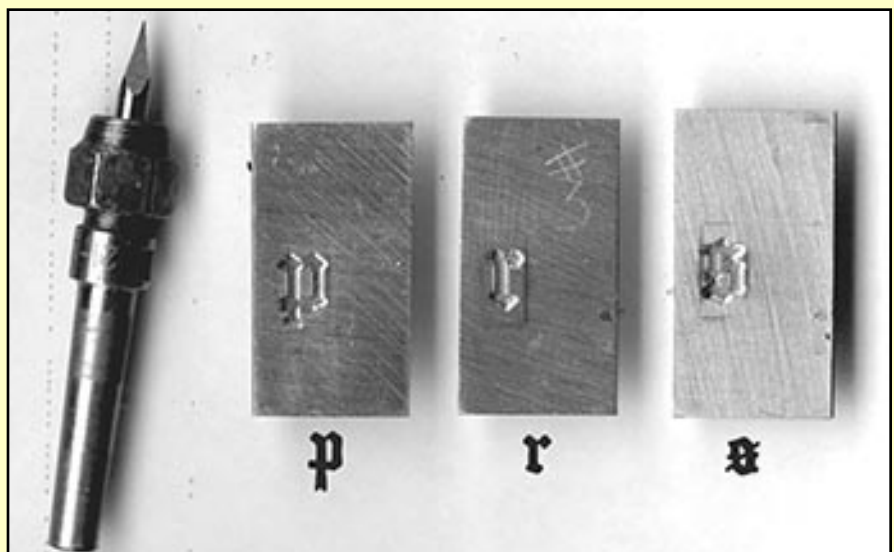
A close up of the Cutting Arm of the Deckel Pantograph shows the quill with cutting tool positioned on a blank matrix. Once the cutter has been properly positioned, the Cutting Board will be raised .015" and the cutter lowered into cutting position.



The Deckel Engraving machine (above) that is used in making matrices. The Pattern Board is on the right holding tool used in the making of matrices. The Engraving Board is to the lower left. The Air Compressor, used to remove chips, can be seen on the floor.



Above are shown two quills with different size cutters inserted, the mini-vice and a blank matrix. Top are three different followers, the main body, or button, fits on the end of a brass rod on the Follower Arm of the Pantograph, the follower itself is the needle like projection in the center. The smallest of these three followers (right) measures .00135". Also shown is a 1/4" Cutter and the 40x Mini-Mike.



Three finished matrices shown with the cutting tool used to engrave them. These matrices are part of the 206 engraved for

the Gutenberg Donatus/Kalender (DK) replica type.

and then the Engraving Board is slowly raised until the tip comes lightly into contact with the blank. The height dial is set to zero at this point, and the cutter is raised up. The Engraving Board is raised .015," a small amount of cutting oil is placed on the blank, the machine turned on, the cutter lowered into the blank and the pattern is traced with the follower and the cutter following the motion of the follower. The cut is made by smooth movements of the wrist, resulting in a cutting that would resemble the shading of a pencil if you were to rapidly move a pencil over a piece of paper covered with a cutout pattern.

Once the initial cut is made, the cutter is raised, the motor turned off, a blast of compressed air cleans out the chips and the oil and the cutting is inspected. The Engraving Board is raised another .015" and the process is repeated. Again the board is raised another .015" and the pattern is followed again. The cut is now .045" deep. The target depth is .050," so the final cut is made by raising the board .007," the extra .002" is a safety zone and will be removed later.

Once the last cut is made and cleaned, the cutter is again lowered into the pattern. This time, however, the follower is moved over the pattern in small circular motions, first clockwise, and then counter clockwise. This action "polishes" the face, removing traces of the left-right cutting performed during the initial cutting. After polishing, the cutter is run around the parameter of the engraving to remove any burrs.

After the engraving is finished, the mat is removed and checked

for proper cutting with the pocket Micro-Mike to ensure width of the stems (weight) and to check hairlines. Then the overall cutting is checked using a microscope mounted on the pattern board. Once the cutting is approved, the depth of the cut is measured using a micrometer mounted on the Pattern Board. The desired depth is .050" to produce a piece of type .9185" in height. If the depth is less than this, the mat is returned to the engraving board, additional depth is added and the finishing process is repeated. If the depth is over, which it nearly always is, the depth is adjusted by clamping the mat between the jaws of a handheld mini-vise and rubbing the face over a piece of 250 grit sandpaper. A method of sanding has been developed which allows the mat face to be reduced by .001 per pass. The cut is cleared of grit with the air hose, the depth checked and the process repeated until the depth is correct.

Again, the cut is cleared of all grit and oil, and then a wax impression is made of the engraving, using the



Shown above are three gauges necessary to produce good type. From left to right: Point Micrometer that is marked in points on the barrel and the micro-dial is divided into 1/8th of a point for fine measurements in set width of the type body. The second tool is a normal Micrometer and used to measure type high (.918 +/- .005) of newly cast type. When working with newly engraved matrices, this is critical to ensure correct height to paper. The bottom gauge is an Alignment Gauge, used to insure that the face of the type is cast correctly on the body, i.e., baseline.



The Matrix Holder, Point Blades (5 pt. to 48 pt.) and the three sizes of Jet Blades.



The author is shown at the Deckel Pantograph engraving a matrix. The Engraving Board is brought into position by the three wheels (two in front and one crank handle

to right). The cutter arm is centered over the matrix. The Pattern Board is to the rear, where the follower is being guided over the pattern. (Photo by Suzanne Anderson)

drippings of melted wax from a candle. The face is studied, looking for faults in cutting. Then several pieces of type are cast in a hand mold and ink proofs are pulled to see how the impression looks.

If the mat passes all tests, it is placed in the mat box and the next pattern is placed on the Pattern Board along with a blank mat on the Engraving Board and another mat is engraved. This process is repeated approximately 87 times with a modern face, but the DK Type required 206 matrices. When all the mats have been made, the next step is casting them.



Shown above are samples of the various matrices that can be used in a Thompson Type Caster. (Top row Left to right): Original Thompson, Chromed Plated Electrodeposited Thompson, Linotype, English Monotype, Foundry, Ludlow; (bottom Row left to right): engraved, blank, engraved border, engraved border, Lanston Display. The linotype, English Monotype, Foundry, and Ludlow matrices each require a separate Matrix Holder.

APA WAYZGOOSE

May 31, June 1, 2 — Oklahoma City

Non-members
welcomed!

Huge Swap & Sell meet
Tours of interesting letterpress facilities
One of the biggest letterpress auctions!
Much more—a packed weekend!
And the best: visiting with other
letterpress fanatics!

SEE THE WEB SITE FOR INFO.

Questions? Email Don Tucker

When contacting Don, put "APA Goose"
in subject line or your email may not be opened.



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

<http://www.galleygab.net>

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Where's our stuff going?

By **BARRY SCHRADER**

A recent encounter with an antique dealer at a Rockford, Illinois shopping mall gave me food for thought about the future of old cuts and wood type. I came across a collectibles fair in the mall where a dealer from Kansas City had a booth with hundreds of copper engravings of all sizes, type cases, ornate wood type, and even personalized Ludlow slugs available for sale.

The shock was today's prices antique dealers are asking: California job cases for \$45, two-third size cases for \$30, wood type for \$2 per linear inch, engravings about two bucks a square inch, even higher if they are a popular product brand, sports logo or scenic linecut.

This caused me to ponder the future of the hobby of letterpress printing and collecting old type, cuts and job cases, presses and related equipment. My wife and I, and suspect many other hobby printers, have had uneasy conversations about "What will I do with



An antique dealer displays hundreds of copper engravings, wooden type fonts and job cases in a shopping mall in Rockford, Ill., a

scene repeated all over the country at collectibles shows, fairs and flea markets. Where will it all end?

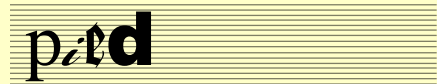
all this heavy stuff when you are gone...." Most printers can only mumble something about other APA members buying the ton or more of metal type, wood cases and cast iron presses, or some may claim a nearby museum would take it. But have you checked with your local historical society lately and found any interest in moving such a weighty mass of metal and how much room it would take from their limited floor space? Then who in the museum or society would be able to interpret it or demonstrate how to print with it? Very few.

So the looming question remains: Are we doomed to having our ornate wood type fonts, delicate engravings, restored type cabinets and well-oiled printing presses sold to a lurking antique dealer or on

eBay to the highest bidder by our heirs? Then there are the toy soldier casters and Civil War re-enactors who would dump our used type into buckets to melt down for their hobbies, disregarding whether it is Parisian, PT Barnum or Bembo.

This has caused sleepless nights for me. Do I revise my last will and testament to be sure a printing museum in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, Carson, California, or Zion, Illinois gets first chance at the collection (if they are a 501c3 tax deductible entity). Or do I leave a detailed list with digital photos of each font, cuts, type cases and tools so my family can easily put it all on eBay for sale to pay my funeral expenses?!?

Curse those damned antique dealers! They will give us all nightmares....



■ Michael Russem of the Kat Ran Press published an article in the Caxton Club's journal titled "The Failure of Fine Printing." You can read the story [here](#) and there is a follow-up discussion on the [Typophile forum](#).

■ How many more styles of type cases are there besides the Califor-

nia? David Bolton from England has a web site that shows over 200 of them. [Check it out](#).

■ Most expensive books of 2006: Shakespeare's *First Folio*, printed 1623 sold for \$5.1 million. Read the [story](#) and then check out the [slide-show](#) of all 10 books.

■ A number of Iowa printers have made real headway in setting up [Printer's Hall](#) at the Old Thresh-

ers Reunion grounds in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. They held the Midwest & Great Northern Printer's Fair there last year. You can see photos of their progress that has been made in setting up the facility.

■ Lance Williams has a web site titled, "[Letterpress Printers of the World](#)" and you can be one of them! It lists short autobiographies of today's letterpress printers. An interesting site.



This column usually deals with an item or items from the recent [APA](#) bundle (for those unaware, this is a monthly envelope mailed to APA members containing the printed efforts of members). When we see an unusual piece, we find out how it was done. This month the question is not HOW?, but WHY? The first article deals with

Michael Langford, who is not only a new member of APA but new to letterpress and for his *very first* letterpress effort undertook a project most new letterpress printers would only dream of doing much later in their experiences. The second deals with Dave Peat and his beautiful calendars that have been published since the early 60s.

First letterpress effort: A chapbook!

By MICHAEL LANGFORD

I came to letterpress by way of the bookbinding group at Yahoo.com. In my retirement, I had become interested in the binding side of books and began studying that about a year ago. In that process I developed a product I call a “preprinted journal page” to fill what appeared to be a niche for the bookbinding crowd. I put that into production with a local offset printer and it’s working well but I wanted a little better print quality and someone suggested letterpress.

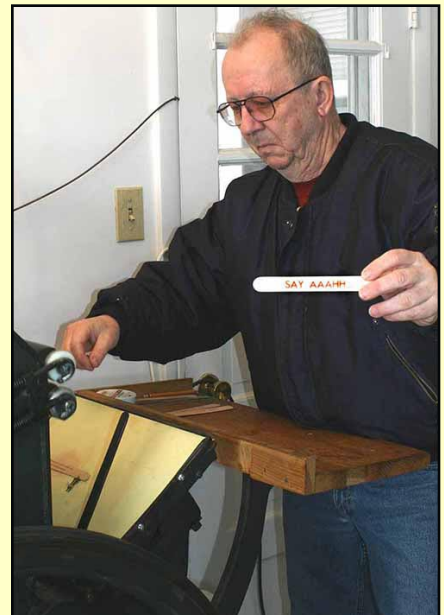
So, here I am in letterpress land! I started reading the Letpress list

and digging for more information on the subject and ran into a local fellow who collects type and press equipment. Maybe you’ve heard of him—Larry Raid of Linotype University and Working Linotype Museum fame in Denmark, Iowa. Well, itch led to scratch and the scratch was purchasing an 1893 Golding Pearl Model 14 press from a gent in Cleveland.

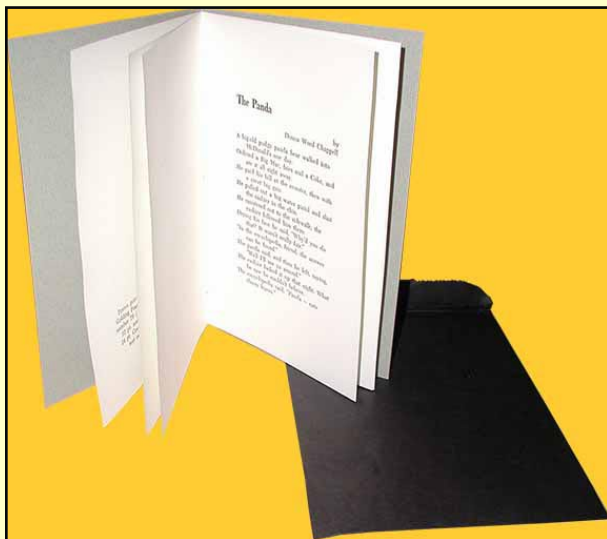
In studying about letterpress I decided I needed a “master sample” against which to compare anything I might be able to print as well as set up a personal goalpost to aim for. I must have intuited buying a couple of chapbooks from a press on the

East Coast because when they arrived they were absolutely, stunningly simple and yet oh! so elegant and I immediately fell in love with the format. I decided to copy the format and voila! APA submission #1, not that it’s that stunning or elegant!

I decided to make the chapbook my very first letterpress project because I’m sort of stupid that way; I see something I really admire and then go try to do the same



Variety is the spice of life. Above, Langford is printing on tongue depressors!



Langford’s chapbook, “Panderings” measures 5.5x8.5.”The cover is printed on Neenah Classic Laid and the text on Wausau Royal Linen. The cover has a gold foil stamp of his pressmark. The chapbook was presented to members in the bundle in a black bag shown above. Wonderful presentation. For binding, the chapbook was sewn.

thing. And, besides, God takes care of his fools, don’t you know!

At the time I started printing the project I had just screamed for help on the Letpress list because I couldn’t understand the concept of “packing.” I got that problem sort of squared away, though in the actual book it doesn’t appear so because I didn’t know quite how to adjust it properly so you can see examples of debossing right away in some of the copies.

Then there was the problem of over-inking with subsequent off-setting, which again can be seen in some copies, and any of a myriad of other problems that beginners *always* have.

19th century type decorates annual calendar

Members of APA await Dave Peat's calendar every year. He started doing these in the early 1960s.

One very unique aspect of his calendars is the beautiful type, borders and various other elements he uses for each month. He is fortunate in that he can choose from nearly 4000 fonts of type (most all are 19th century faces).

Peat said he started the annual project to first show off his type and borders and also to have something for a Christmas card that would not be thrown away. He said that a third reason has been added and that is that people remember his unique calendar and when it comes to disposing of their printing equipment, they remember him. He said

much of his collection was acquired this way.

Most of his pages are printed on his 8x12 Globe and all the others on his 7x11 Pearl.

Asked how he approaches each page design, he smirked: "Very unprofessionally." He said he usually starts with a border and then a one line specimen or cut and then the calendar font itself. He tries to use a variety of paper stock and says he seldom has to buy any except for handmade paper.

Peat said when he was still working, he started the project in October but now that he's retired, he doesn't have time and starts it in early December. It's a labor of love and he has never kept track of the hours involved. This year he had 30 press runs and last year there were 44 runs.



Photo by Greg Bessell

Dave Peat with a couple of his antique presses behind him...no doubt contemplating the 2008 calendar!

Actual size of calendar page is 5x8." Shown are four of the twelve months.



MONOTYPE UNIVERSITY 2007

Call for applicants



If you have a serious, compelling reason to learn how to operate a Monotype hot metal typesetter and if you have a good background in letterpress printing, please consider applying to be a student at the seventh biennial session of Monotype University, tentatively scheduled for August, 2007, at the Hill & Dale Private Press and Typefoundry at Terra Alta, West Virginia.

Interested potential students are encouraged to apply immediately. The intense week-long sessions, first begun in 1995, are designed to give a detailed introduction in Monotype typesetting equipment to individuals expressing a solid commitment to learning the process and having a goal of actually becoming a typesetter upon completion of the course. Highly personalized instruction can include the Monotype keyboard, Composition Caster, the Monotype Sorts Caster, and the Monotype Thompson Sorts Caster.

Rich Hopkins, proprietor of the Hill & Dale Private Press and Typefoundry, and editor of the *Newsletter* for the American Typesetting Fellowship, serves as host and "dean" to the sessions. He says, "of course we would give preference to younger individuals, but first and foremost the person must have a very keen interest in becoming a typesetter himself or herself. To date, over 30 persons have completed instruction

and Hopkins boasts that over half of these individuals now are making type on their own equipment.

It is necessary that all applicants have a good working knowledge of letterpress printing before attending the sessions, and applicants are asked to submit samples of their letterpress work as evidence of this hands-on experience. Having typesetting equipment is a "plus" for any applicant, but not mandatory for acceptance in the program.

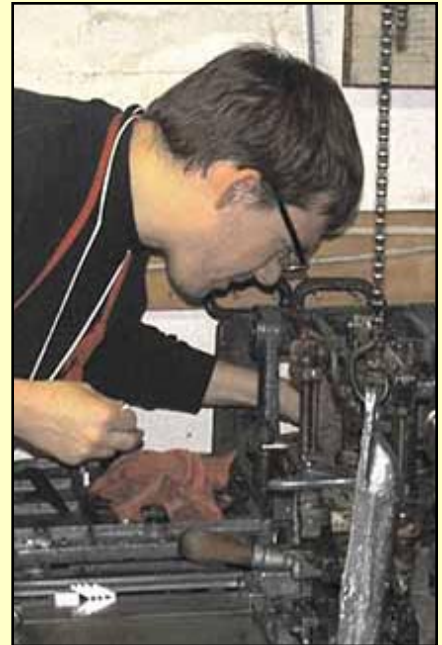
Students are responsible only for their food and lodging for the week, and that expense is kept to a minimum by housing students in a nearby resort community where they are able to share a modern vacation residence with cooking facilities. Expenses generally range between \$300 to \$400 for the week. There is no tuition fee, although Hopkins does request that each student bring at least 50 pounds of type metal to help maintain his supply, noting that most students carry away more than that in new type cast during the session.

My effort is to restrict enrollment to no more than five students to assure close personal attention. In recent years, Mono U Graduates have returned to assist in instruction for the week and thus there is generally a one-on-one student-teacher ratio.

Specific dates for this year's session

will be established once applications are received and individual preferences of applicants and potential faculty members are considered.

Individuals interested in attending should contact Hopkins immediately at P.O. Box 263, Terra Alta, WV 26764. Evening telephone is (304) 789-6153, or you may contact him via email: wvtypenut@aol.com



Ian Schaefer studies operation of Monotype Sorts Caster.



Rich Hopkins (left) explains intricacies of Monotype Keyboard to Rob Buchert.



Mike Anderson (right) is instructing Paul Brown on use of the Thompson caster.