



Caxtonian

A Newsletter of The Caxton Club of Chicago

Volume III, No. 9

September, 1995

council ends year with policy changes

At the final meeting of the Caxton Council for 1994-95, five major decisions regarding club policy concluded the administration of Robert Cotner's presidency.

The purpose of the policy changes, according to Cotner, relate to the growth of the club in the past two years, the long-term financial stability of the organization, and the preservation and availability of the club's archives.

The first policy change is a membership limit of 400, with 300 Resident and 100 Non-Resident Members built into the limit. Currently, the club has 241 Resident Members and 63 Non-Resident. With a volunteer staff handling most of the details of the organization, such a limitation will keep the club from growing beyond the control of the administration and the Council.

The second resolution establishes an initiation fee of \$100 for all new members joining the club, beginning in September 1995. This fee will cover costs associated with incoming membership.

The third change, one with the most significant impact for the membership, is an increase in annual dues of \$50 for all categories. This will make annual membership for Resident Members \$150 and that for Non-Resident Members \$85. The increase, the first in six years, will provide revenues for the monthly production of the *Caxtonian*, will cover several postage increases over the years, and anticipates increased dinner costs at the Mid-Day Club.

Karen Skubish argued strongly that the increase should be limited to \$25, rather

than \$50, because of possible hardships on members with fixed or modest incomes. The point was made however that, for many Caxtonians who, over the last four years, have been paying an addition \$25 a year with the annual dues as a contribution to the centennial costs, the increase would in fact, be but \$25. And, it was argued, the club's annual dues are among the lowest of all member societies of the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies.

The Sequoyia Alphabet of the Cherokee Indians



The illustration above is from Hermann Zapf and His Design Philosophy (p. 201). The letters were invented by Chief Sequoyia (1770?-1843) and redesigned by Zapf in 1976 for the University of Wisconsin.

Hayward Blake commented that Caxtonians get a great deal for their membership dollar, including the *Caxtonian*, monthly invitations, a membership directory, and subsidized dinners at dinner meetings.

"Even at \$150 a year, we are getting more than most clubs for less than members of other clubs pay," he said. The Council voted on the \$50 increase, effective in the 1995-96 year.

In another resolution, the Council empowered the Membership Committee to screen membership applications in keeping with the criteria established by the Council and, in the order of their submission, recommend to the Council new Resident and

Non-Resident Members as openings occur; working with the Treasurer, notify non-paying members that they are, after two notices, being removed from the club to make room for new members desiring admission, and establish and maintain, in cooperation with the Council, membership procedures, bringing for the consideration of the Council periodically a review of these procedures.

Finally, the Council agreed in principle to donate all of its archival materials to the John M. Wing Collection of the Newberry Library. It further instructed the Archives Committee under Chair Michael Grace, SJ, to work out the specifics of the donation and draft for the Council's future approval a Statement of Gift of the materials to the library. The resolution was approved unanimously.

Cotner stressed that all of these policy changes are in keeping with the new constitution and by-laws and that all but the last one may be amended by the Council at any time.

"I am delighted with the work of the Council during my administration," he said. "We have met 10 times this year, and I believe the club is sounder in all respects than in recent years. On behalf of the entire membership, I thank the Councils, 1993-1995, for their sterling work in the centennial and the general administration of the club."

Editor's note: The headline on this page is set in Victor Hammer's American Uncial typeface.

Caxtonian

The Caxton Club
Founded 1895



President - Thomas J. Joyce
Vice-President - Karen A. Skubish
Secretary - Glen N. Wiche
Treasurer - Bruce W. Hubbard
Historian - Frank J. Piehl
Archivist - Brother Michael Grace, S J
Past President - Robert Cotner

Council

Class of '96

Robert L. Brooks
Eugene Hotchkiss III
Gretchen L. Lagana
Kathleen Lamb
Frank J. Piehl

Class of '97

Brother Michael Grace, S J
John K. Notz, Jr.
Edward Quattrocchi
Florence Shay
Robert Williams

Class of '98

David L. Easterbrook
Susan M. Levy
Jane M. Rosenthal
Susan F. Rossen
Willard E. White

First Fridays Program

Chair - Edward Quattrocchi
Co-Chair - Leonard Freedman

Secy - Bookkeeper - Dan Crawford



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Associate Editor - Michael Braver
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Musings...

In the book arts, a gossamer strand stretches from the days of Charlemagne to our time in The Caxton Club of Chicago. It takes keen insight to see this subtle thread, but it exists everywhere the well-printed word is found. I speak of the artistry and the craftsmanship that allow transformation of thought from language into visual symbols called *type*, the crucial element in the shaping of intellection over the centuries.

Art historian Richard Love and I were talking last month about doing a television documentary on the art of the book for his PBS program, "American Art Forum with Richard Love." "Where would you begin?" he asked. I responded: "With the letters on the printed page." I had in mind the artists who, in imitation of the finest penmen, created families of type as diverse and complex as the people who conceived them.

Recently I was visiting letterpress expert Bruce Beck at his home in Evanston, as I do occasionally when I'm in his neighborhood. We talked about type and printing, as we do always when we're together, and Bruce expressed concern that, in the rush of new printing technologies, people will forget this fact: an alliance links the brilliance of Charlemagne himself, the genius of early print crafters, and the devotion of those in fine printing today.

"This is a central function of The Caxton Club — to remind, to educate people," I suggested. "The Caxton Club has played a key role through people like Victor Hammer, Ernst Detterer, and Robert Hunter Middleton," he replied. He then shared with me a keepsake produced by Caxtonian Bill Hesterberg in his private letterpress shop in Evanston for the Hammer Symposium in 1993. In this magnificent little piece, "The Craftsman and the Punchcutter," Hesterberg spoke of the "mutual reverence for the punchcutting craft" that Hammer and Middleton shared, a reverence that gave us such typefaces as Hammer's American Uncial and Middleton's Eusebius.

This affectionate devotion bonds all Caxtonians with some of history's greatest minds: Historian Kenneth Clark wrote of Charlemagne, whose 8th Century empire stretched across Europe and whose treasures were worldwide: "But in the end it was the books that mattered...." Hermann Zapf, whose life's work has been in the artistry of type, says that what made the *Gutenberg Bible* of 1455 the unparalleled "masterpiece of the art of printing" is its perfection in type that used "several characters of different width combined with many ligatures and abbreviations in his type case."

In the 1985 Caxton publication, *RHM: The Man and His Letters*, Gordon Williams wrote that Detterer, a teacher at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, diverted Middleton from being an illustrator to the "more abstract art of type design." The abstract nature of the typecrafter's art obscures it as art for all but a few, I suppose. But this precious subtlety is both our inheritance and our legacy as we begin the 101st year venerating the book arts through The Caxton Club.

Robert Cotner
Editor

Hermann Zapf Writes to Caxtonians from Germany on the Book Arts

Editor's Note: The following letter was sent to Caxtonian Bruce Beck, but seems unconsciously conceived for the wider audience of Caxton members.

06 May 1995

Dear Bruce,

I do not know how to thank you for the beautiful book on the activities of The Caxton Club. An extremely interesting report on the ups and downs of this association and — excluding myself and Bob Middleton — in the text lots of other people connected with me were mentioned. The information on Harry Owens and Walter Howe was very valuable, particularly if you consider that Harry Owens passed away already. Unfortunately the biographical note on Walter Howe was a little brief. I owe a lot to him who was the first to show me Donnelley's in Chicago when I was there for the first time in the 50s. He must be older than we both are. Should you meet him, please convey my best wishes to him.

I believe that Bob Middleton would also be happy with the digital version of Eusebius as it is very well designed in all details. Maybe this may also be seen as an indication by The Caxton Club showing that it is open to new technologies in the second century of its existence.

I am convinced that the book will continue to hold its dominating position since even the best presentation on a screen will never show the details of an illustration or a typeface — especially with regard to the non-lasting nature of the digital generation [whereas] on a desk I can compare an illustration in various books when working on a project. I hope that we will succeed in convincing young people that it is a unique feeling to have a book in one's hand, to touch the grain of the paper, and to enjoy the quality of printing.

But the visual sense is already terribly affected by TV and many believe that CD-ROM will be the future. I think there is a major task waiting for institutions such as The Caxton Club, [which] may look back to such a long tradition in emphasizing again and again the meaning of book printing.

I still regret that I did not purchase the [Caxton Club] publication *Dr. Faust* in 1953, above all because so many of my closest friends made contributions to this publication. I only want to mention Fritz Kredel, Elizabeth Kner, and Victor Hammer.

Zapf Boasts Early Chicago Connections

Hermann Zapf is the acknowledged dean of world type designers and a master calligrapher. His many faces, including Palatino, Melior, Optima, and Aldus, are used throughout the world and in many languages. They are often standard equipment on computers everywhere. Many of them were first created at a time when lead type was the standard.

Yet today he is a leader in digital technology. In addition, he has been a friend and supporter of type enthusiasts everywhere, especially in the United States — particularly Chicago. He has taught in many U.S. universities and is an enviable and indefatigable correspondent from his 13th century home in Darmstadt, Germany.

The English language version of *Hermann Zapf and His Design Philosophy*, published in Chicago by the Society of Typographic Arts, 1987, is dedicated by Zapf to Robert Hunter Middleton.

It is such a pity that Chicago is so far away from here. I have always wished to visit the Turtle Press [Beck's letterpress shop] one day. But I hope that some day there will be an opportunity. It is a pity that it will not be possible in October when a meeting with Paul Duensing and Herb Johnson might have been arranged.

Under separate cover I will send you my catalogue of the permanent exhibition at the Herzog-August-Bibliothek at Wolfenbüttel and, since I am no member, I am sending it to your private address.

Attached is also a description of my hz-Programs which will certainly be of interest to you as a typographer. Unfortunately in our day such quality is no longer in demand and the company [that] developed the program went bankrupt in January. I do not know how things will be handled now. I hold a European patent for the program, but it is still uncertain what the people now responsible will do. The program was very positively commented on in the Seybold report, but people were reluctant when they learned that due to the composing program, process time was reduced by 5-7%. People should think about the costs usually associated with a later typographic modification or a correction, which [are] incorporated in this program and [are] automatically processed.

Unfortunately the situation does not look good, and today alphabets are used by everybody without asking whether they are copies, but I hope that The Caxton Club will attach great importance to the old standards of book art in the next century.

All the best to you and your friends at the Club.

Yours sincerely,

Bruce Beck

Hermann

Caxtonian Visits Mainz, Germany, and the Gutenberg Museum

Caxtonian editor Robert Cotner asked me to record my observations on a trip to Mainz, Germany, May 20-27, when I attended the 5th International Symposium on St. Thomas More. It was my pleasure, as well, to visit the famed Gutenberg Museum during this trip.

Fifteen countries were represented at the symposium, including four people from Japan and two from Australia. The greater number of participants were from Germany, where there is a society called "Thomas Morus Gesellschaft." This group holds its annual meeting in Brixen, Italy, and publishes annually *Thomas-Morus-Jahrbucher*.

Following the opening address, given in both German and English, sessions were offered in either language. On May 24, all went on an all-day bus trip to Strasbourg and Selestat, France. The first stop on the trip was to visit the European Parliament Building, where we heard a brief talk by Pierre Pflimlin, one of the organizers of the parliament.

We then boarded the bus for Selestat, where the group visited the Humanist Library, called the "oldest public library in Alsace" — founded in 1452. This library comprises two libraries from the 15th century. The first comes from the Latin School, founded in 1452, and the second is the library of Beatus Rhenanus (1485-1547), son of a butcher, a humanist, a philologist, and a close friend of Erasmus of Rotterdam. The library's holdings consist of 450 manuscripts, 530 incunabula, and 2,000 printings from the 16th century. Viewing the collection was a great delight; a visit to this city is a "must" for the bookperson.

My observations are all favorable. Music, and especially singing, seem to play an important part in the life of Germans. I was reminded of this when, at the evening meal of the last night of



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the conference, the Germans sang a very rousing benediction before the meal. The non-Germans were so struck by this singing that our applause led to another song.

Each night after the sessions, most of the symposium delegates would retire to the cellar of the Erbacher Hof, the conference center, for a bit of wine or beer and singing in German and English. They were great evenings!

Prior to the symposium, I happened on the famous Gutenberg Museum located opposite the Dom (Cathedral) and close to the Erbacher Hof. I spent time there looking at the various book exhibits and then returned to the museum with the group for a lecture, "Thomas More

and the Printing Press," given by Richard J. Schoeck, University of Kansas. It was a great talk delivered in no better place for press-related talk.

The Gutenberg Museum is well worth the visit, as there are four floors with various kinds of books. The collection of books on herbals was especially attractive to me. Naturally, the museum exhibits the *Gutenberg Bible*, which is located in a walk-in safe — and a very large one at that.

The press and printing are still a part of the culture of Mainz. Across from the museum is the printing center, which seems to encourage printing as an art form and also as a practical tool. On a Sunday afternoon walk to the Rhine, I came across the 25th annual small- and hand-press meeting. While most of the exhibitors were from Germany, there were three presses from England, including the Clarion Publishing Ltd. of Neatham Mill, Hampshire. The director of this press is a retired medical doctor.

A final note about the Dom: The construction of the cathedral began shortly after 975 A.D., as the church for the Archbishop of Mainz. The patron of this church is St. Martin of Tours. The church is a very large, clean, and bright house of worship. The exterior reminded me, with its small buildings housing stores and shops surrounding the central edifice, of a hen with its chicks beside it. Another church which impressed me is St. Stephen's Church, where stained glass windows designed by Marc Chagall — the blue glass surrounding angels and biblical figures — impress all who see it.

These are a few of the highlights of my visit to Mainz. Would I go again? You betcha!

Michael J. Grace, SJ

Caxtonian Bill Hesterberg Remembers Victor Hammer and RHM

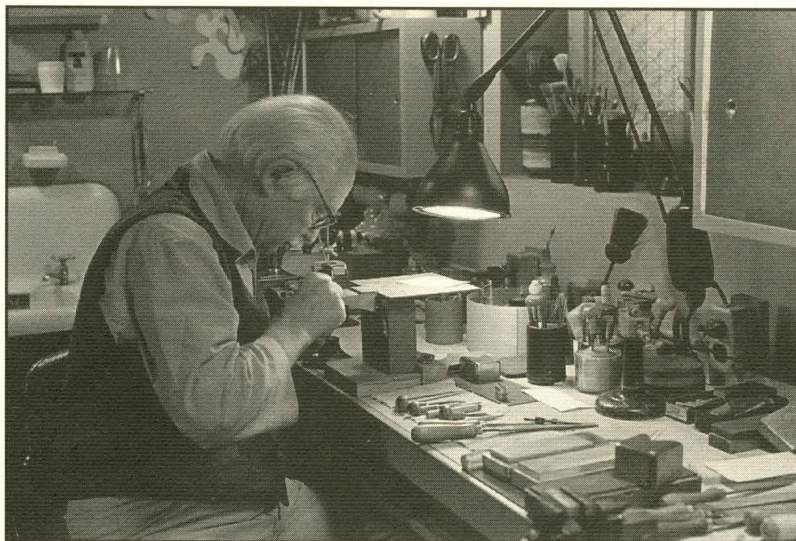
In a January 1944 letter to Victor Hammer, informing him of the STA's [Society of Typographic Arts] decision to sponsor the casting of his American Uncial typeface. R. Hunter Middleton added almost as an aside: "My latest and most current ambition is to find a way to study punchcutting with you. Would you consider such an annoyance, should I be able to come to Aurora?" In June of that same year Middleton traveled to Aurora, New York, and began his five day apprenticeship with Victor Hammer.

The experience would have a profound effect, not only on Middleton but Hammer as well. It brought the two men closer together through a mutual reverence for the punchcutting craft and created a sympathetic and knowledgeable patron for Hammer. In the ensuing years Middleton's generous assistance would extend from equipment, tools and materials to introductions, which eventually brought Hammer and his family to Lexington [KY] and Transylvania University.

Chicago Public Library Features Civil War Exhibits and Talks

"Lincoln and His Contemporaries," photographs by Mathew Brady, a traveling exhibit organized by the Smithsonian Institution, opened in the Harold Washington Library Center on September 2. The exhibit, in the Special Collections Exhibit Hall, 9th Floor, will run through October 14.

In conjunction with the Civil War exhibit, a number of activities are planned. **September 10**, Civil War Day at the library, will feature a re-enactment presentation, the simulated firing of the James cannon, as well as concerts and lectures.



One of a series of photographs of Robert Hunter Middleton at the Cherryburn Press, Chicago, May 1982, by William Hesterberg.

During this period of time Middleton's punchcutting skills, encouraged by Hammer, became quite accomplished, broadening his already considerable expertise and knowledge of type design and production. So it was not surprising on that day in May, 1982, when this writer, camera in hand, arrived at the press to find Bob finishing the punches for the numbers 1, 2 and 3 in a 14 pt size. Fittingly, the numbers were for the American Uncial, the typeface that he had been instrumental in having cast in

Chicago many years before. The punches were being cut at the request of Carolyn R. Hammer who needed extra numbers for her 1984 book *LIPO*, and being unable to acquire more sorts from Stempel, had gone to Bob for assistance.

The punchcutting connection that began in Aurora, New York, continued to produce significant results for the Hammers. For the rest of us it has provided an opportunity to experience

an extraordinary level of letterpress craftsmanship, never more vivid than on a Hammer page.

William Hesterberg

Editor's note: This is the text of a keepsake, "The Craftsman and the Punchcutter," created at the Hesterberg Press, Evanston, for the Hammer Symposium at Wells College, Aurora, NY, 1993. Hesterberg wrote a thesis on Hammer's American Uncial. (Used with permission of the author.)

Street Named in Aurora for V. L. Parrington



The grandson of scholar Vernon Louis Parrington, Stevens Parrington Tucker of Pacific Grove, CA, unveils a new street sign in Aurora, IL, on August 3, as Caxtonians Harrison Hayford, Robert Cotner, and Donald Yannella look on. The day was proclaimed "Vernon Louis Parrington Day" by Aurora Mayor David Pierce. Photo by Caxtonian Michael Sawdey.

Caxtonian Glen N. Wiche will present two lectures. He will speak on "The Prairie President and the City: Abraham Lincoln and Chicago" at 2 p.m., **September 10**, and will give a Gallery Talk at 3 p.m., **October 13**.

On **September 13**, 12:15 p.m., in the Winter Garden, Barbara Geary will perform a Louis Moreau Gottschalk Gala, a concert-narrative featuring music from the time of Lincoln. For more information on these and other programs, contact Caxtonian J. Ingrid Lesley, Chief, Special Collections & Preservation Division, 312/747-4740.

Book Marks

Luncheon Programs

All meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Mid-Day Club, 56th floor of the First National Bank of Chicago, Madison & Clark, Chicago. Luncheon and discussion, 12:30 p.m.

September 8.

Caxtonian Paul J. Gehl, Curator of Special Collections at the Newberry Library, will talk on "What Computers Can Tell us About the Renaissance Book Trade."

October 13.

Mark Olson, Director of the ARTFL Project, University of Chicago, will speak on "The Computer in Research in Humanities Texts."

November 10.

Ed Quattrocchi will conclude a three-part presentation on the use of the computer in the study of the humanities. He will focus on great works of art as they relate to Renaissance literature.

*Ed Quattrocchi
Leonard Freedman*

Important Note: Members planning to attend luncheons must make reservation in advance by calling either the Caxton number, 312/255-3710, or Quattrocchi's number. Luncheon for members and guests, \$20.

Lauds Tribute to Poet

Dear Bob,

How wonderful that Gwendolyn Brooks has become an honorary member of The Caxton Club, thanks to your initiative. She is a great human being and a gifted poet and a champion of causes.

I remember her chiefly because of her interest in Paul Crump, whom I succeeded in getting out of prison after he had served over 40 years. Gwen visited him and encouraged him constantly. To ease his efforts at authorship, she gave him a typewriter. This was characteristic of her efforts for all persons, whether living in freedom or in straightened circumstances.

As my wife Mamie says, a rose for the living is better than a posthumous tribute.

Elmer Gertz

Mid-Day Club Dress Code

The Board of Trustees of the Mid-Day Club announced in July that a dress code for members and guests dining in the club include for men business casual dress — which is closed-toes shoes, slacks, collared shirt, sweater or jacket. Ladies are to dress in similar style. Blue jeans, sandals, and T-shirts are not appropriate dress.

Dinner Programs

All meetings, unless otherwise noted are held in the Mid-Day Club, 56th Floor of the First National Bank, Madison and Clark streets, Chicago. Spirits, 5 p.m., dinner, 6 p.m., lecture, 7 p.m.

September 20.

Joseph J. D'Ambrosio, noted artist in the book art field, will speak on "Radical Explorations in the Book Arts." A printer, binder, artist, and writer, D'Ambrosio is formerly from Chicago and now lives in Phoenix, AZ.

October 18.

Philip Smith, British bookbinder and author of *New Directions in Bookbinding*, will speak on "New Directions in Hand Bookbinding."

Karen Skubish

Advance reservations, which are absolutely necessary, may be made by calling the Caxton office, 312/255-3710. Any special meal requirements (such as vegetarian) need to be made in advance. Members, \$25, guests, \$30.

The First National Bank of Chicago's parking garage, 40 S. Clark Street, offers a special parking rate after 5 p.m. to guests of the Mid-Day Club. When you leave, please tell the parking attendant you were at the Mid-Day Club, and your parking fee will be \$5.25



The Caxton Club
60 West Walton Street
Chicago, IL 60610