

# Caxtonian

Journal of The Caxton Club of Chicago

Volume V, No. 2

February 1997

## Prize-Winning Poet Envisions Chicago in 1999 as 'Senior Adventure'

By Gwendolyn Brooks  
Illinois Poet Laureate

It is 1999. All that poisoned the city is gone. The doubt, the distancing, the loathing of what was opposite or new, suspicion, sellout, cardboard courtesies, soul-disease, smiles flimsy or unreal, vice and its heap of nausea — over.

Chicagoans are reasonable, now. Styles are compatible at last. Hispanic, Black, white corporate head, Chinese restaurateur — all honorable folk who now compute.

Observe our streets. Our streets, at last, are clean. Our streets look as though meals may be served from them, which is the way streets looked in Kiev, Ukraine, when I was there in 1982.

Jobs? There is work aplenty. All Chicagoans for whom work is appropriate are at work, and are proud. The Myth is done. The Myth that this one or that one *prefers* not to work is forgotten. The contented Chicagoans go out of their doors, glad to be part of the general march to survival. There are no food lines, no hot soup kitchens. Prosperity has long since been assured, developed by the minds of men and women who are statespeople truly, who believe in the commonweal truly — who have labored for the commonweal, the humanweal.

Today, Chicagoans walk anywhere, freely! There are no more little Poison Places, providing peril to body and self-esteem. *All* precincts are smilingly hospitable to any visitation. Black legs need not be hasty. Black backs need not be braced for assault by fist or brick or

worse. And the police are not longer Stressed.

“Housing project”...no longer a phrase to chill the city spine. There are no more “housing” highrises with broken elevators. There is now scant “project” housing; such as remains rises no higher than a second floor.



*Gwendolyn Brooks speaks at the Marcy Newberry Association, Chicago, June 1, 1993. Photograph by Chicago photographer Eric Werner, who gave special permission for its use in the Caxtonian.*

Woman is not ward nor slave nor toy nor curio.

Crime is minimal, for drugs and guns and hates are minimal (and remember: work is plentiful). There are no more bars-of-iron against doors and windows.

The ill and the indigent old are provided for according to need, with meticulous and earnest concern.

Schools are open the 12 months of the year: education is endorsed and enjoyed. Arts forces, city-endorsed, state-endorsed, have reached into the schools, enhance the

schools on a natural *daily* basis, as do the sciences and the necessary aspects of our expanding technology.

Government is intelligent, is an ardent exercise in cooperation and sweet reason. The elected, seated at conference tables, know themselves to be adults. Their conduct is adult.

The citizens are interested in the care and progress of their city. “Block Mayors” abound, maestros over efficient and serious “block clubs,” “block committees” — to orchestrate, to inform, to represent, to guard.

Roads are in recurrent repair. Garbage does not tarry. Rats do not trot, fat and debonair, down Langley nor down State Street nor down Michigan Avenue, any longer.

Great laws of nature are Variety and Change. A butterfly is not an elephant, nor should be. Spring does not last three quarters of the year, and should not so survive. At last, Chicago understands and AGREES! At last, Chicago is equal to Variety and Change. At last, with decency, dignity, and decorum — able models for our young — we strong Chicagoans proceed in unison — a comfortable unison, *our senior adventure!*

We move into the future. We look at the door of the new Century, yet another Century. We are not afraid.

*Editor's note: This essay appeared in Tribune Books, August 25, 1996, pp. 4-5. Used by special arrangement with the author, Caxtonian Brooks.*

# Caxtonian

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Founded 1895



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# Musings...

A couple of weeks before my wife Norma and I left to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary on Maui at the beginning of October 1996, I discovered on a map of Maui a "Whaling Village," located between Lahaina and Honokeana Cove, where we were to stay. A thought flashed to mind: "Whaling Village = Herman Melville."

I called Caxtonian Harry Hayford, who is in the midst of the final volume of his 15-volume, definitive edition of Melville's writings, and I asked, "Did Melville spend time on any of the Hawaiian Islands?" "Oh yes," Harry replied. "He was in Lahaina a couple of weeks and then went to Honolulu. He wrote his first two books, *Typee* and *Omoo* as a result of that trip in the 1840s."

"I'll have to dig up my copies of those books," I said. But Harry, in his typically generous way, replied, "Oh no, I've copies here that I edited a while back. If you come to Evanston, I'll give you these." Harry and I had lunch that day, and he gave me the two signed (by HH, not by HM) books, and loaned me two collections of essays on Melville in the South Pacific. I read the two non-fiction books before leaving and finished *Typee* on the flight to Maui. Finishing *Omoo* while there, I bought in Wailuku a new biography of Melville, in which Caxtonians Hayford and Donald Yannella were acknowledged as contributors.

Norma and I visited the Whaling Village and the splendid museums at the Whale Center of the Pacific in Kaanapali, and we discovered the excellent print and map shop, Lahaina Printsellers Ltd. The owner, a Scotsman named Alan Walker, gave us a good deal on a carved white-whale wall hanging by Wick ("Moby-Wick") Ahrens — my anniversary gift from Norma.

Learning that Walker was a map aficionado, especially the maps of Cook's voyages to the Sandwich Islands, I asked, "Do you know of Ken Nebenzahl?" "Of course," he replied. He spun on his heel, signaled me with uplifted index finger to follow him to a work area at the back of his impressive shop, and there pulled from a narrow bookshelf, a large, slender volume wrapped in protective acetate, Caxtonian Nebenzahl's 1986 *Maps of the Holy Land*. "Nebenzahl's fame precedes him," Walker said. "He is preeminent in our business — he puts us all to shame." We found a kinship in Walker. He promised to visit The Caxton Club one of these days, and I promised him a host of new friends in books — and maps.

In the midst of Melville's third book, *Mardi*, which some think longer than his voyage to the South Pacific, but others consider *the* book that made *Moby Dick* possible — in the midst of *Mardi*, this luminous sentence appears: "...to make an eternity, we must build with eternities;..." Reading it the other evening, I wanted to shout from the topmast, "Thar she blows!" — to arouse the whole listless crew on this long voyage, to bring them to the rails in search with me through the haze and over the heaving seas for the shapes of Melville's "eternities."

These are the contours I perceive: the enduring love of a life-mate and family; the companionship of great minds, past and present, through the printed word; the camaraderie of people of books, of all races, persuasions, and gifts, claimed wherever found in our wanderings. These are the eternities with which I build. They bind us, it seems to me, as a crew aboard our flagship, The Caxton Club, recognized among people of books throughout the Western World.

Robert Cotner  
Editor

*A Personal Essay*

# A Bibliophile's Significant (If Bookish) Birthday Observance

I have long since tried to ignore my birthday, much less celebrate it, but this year was different. It was my 65th, and I was looking forward to all of the benefits that that milestone brings with it: taking the CTA bus at half-fare, sitting without guilt in the seat reserved for senior citizens on my daily commuter train ride, signing up for Medicare, and the like. I was born on December 13, St. Lucy's Day, the patron saint of wisdom and light. I like to associate my birth with those two virtues, but more often the day has other connotations. I am usually reminded on the eve of that day of the opening stanza of John Donne's poem, "A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day, Being the Shortest Day":

*'Tis the year's midnight, and it is the day's,  
Lucy's, who scarce seven hours herself unmasks;  
The sun is spent, and now his flasks  
Send forth light squibs, no constant rays;  
The world's whole sap is sunk;  
The general balm the hydroptic earth hath drunk,  
Whither, as to the bed's-feet, life is shrunk,  
Dead and interred; yet all these seem to laugh,  
Compared to me, who am their epitaph.*

December 13 is not a date associated with happy thoughts, especially in 1996, because it fell on Friday. Each passing year, I think of those unfortunate souls who lived when the world passed from the old Julian Calendar — when December 13 was the shortest day of the year — to the present Gregorian Calendar — when December 21 is the shortest. Reflecting on how I feel robbed each spring when I lose an hour passing from standard to daylight saving time, I can hardly imagine the trauma associated with losing eight days.

But 1996 brought an unexpected surprise: after only a mildly losing day in the cattle pit of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, I left early for the monthly Friday Luncheon of The Caxton Club. We had a fine turnout for a splendid presentation by Caxtonian Susan Levy, executive editor of the Lakeside Classic series for R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company.

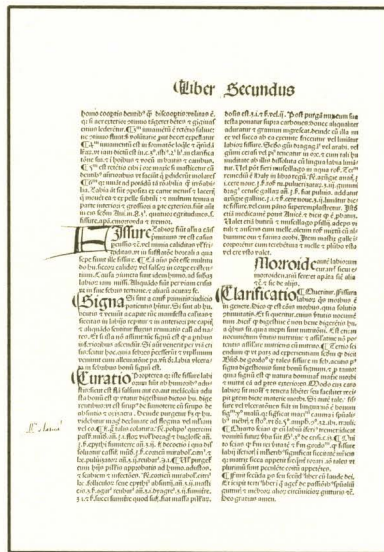
After the luncheon, I went to the

Newberry Library to continue research on a project I had begun a couple of years ago, when I presented a paper on "Thomas More's Italian Connections," at the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Binghamton, NY. Although I have been a reader at the Newberry and a student of Thomas More's *Utopia* for

It is a stretch of the imagination, of course, to believe that a seaman could tote such a library half way around the globe, but More's fictional account of the "Best State of the Commonwealth" is not meant to be realistic. Such a feat is not quite so difficult to imagine if we consider the influence that Aldus Manutius and his Aldine Press had on More, and indeed on all of Western Europe. Manutius' innovation in printing octavo size editions had an incalculable influence on the dissemination of learning throughout Europe. Whereas almost all other printers at the time published scholarly books in folio or quarto size editions, Manutius produced many of them in great numbers in the smaller, octavo, size, making them portable and relatively inexpensive.

In addition to the works of Plato, Aristotle, Galen, and Hippocrates, Raphael mentions several others: "Of grammarians they have only Lascaris, for I did not take Theodore with me. They have no dictionaries except those of Heychius and Dioscorides. They are fond of the works of Plutarch and captivated by the wit and pleasantry of Lucian. Of the poets they have Aristophanes, Homer, Euripides, together with Sophocles in the small Aldine type. Of the historians they possess Thucydides and Herodotus, as well as Herodian."

More wrote his *Utopia* in 1515, and the first edition was published in 1516. Raphael's imaginary voyage with Vespucci was about 1504. Copies of all of the books mentioned by Raphael, as well as the first edition of the *Utopia* itself, are in the special collections of the Newberry. All of them were published before More wrote his *Utopia*, and most were published before 1504. Moreover, all but three of the books were published by Aldine Press. Need I say — I had a marvelous 65th birthday!



*A quarto-sized page from Practica quae alias Philonium dicitur, 1490 (reduced 65% here), the medical textbook restored by Scott Kellar (see story on preceding page). The book is from the University of Chicago, Special Collections Department.*

over 40 years, not until writing my paper did I become aware of the rich collection in the Newberry of rare books associated with More's most famous work. And it was on my birthday that I was able to catalog the number of incunables in the library's collection.

In the opening of the first book of the *Utopia*, Raphael Hythlodæus, a Portuguese seaman and More's narrator in the fiction, mentions that he accompanied Amerigo Vespucci on his last three voyages, and on the fourth he was dropped off with 24 others in a remote land, whence they made their way to Utopia. In the second book of the *Utopia*, Raphael explains that he took with him to Utopia a large cache of books: almost all of Plato's works and several of Aristotle's, as well as various works of 15 other classical writers.

## Caxtonian John Flanagan Dies in Salt Lake City

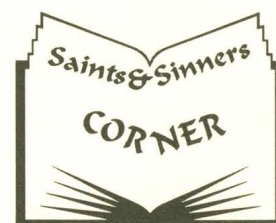
Word has just been received that long-time Caxtonian John T. Flanagan, 90, a Non-Resident member living in Salt Lake City, died last March. A member of The Caxton Club since 1955, Mr. Flanagan was an American literature specialist, who taught English at the University of Minnesota, Southern Methodist University, and the University of Illinois.

Mr. Flanagan was a Fellow of the Newberry Library, a Phi Beta Kappa, and a scholar in Middlewestern literature. All Caxtonians regret the loss of this fellow bibliophile, and extend to his family our deepest sympathy.

## Exhibition Set to Honor Bruce Beck and Turtle Press

Chicago Center for Book & Paper Arts at Columbia College will honor Honorary Caxtonian Bruce Beck and his Turtle Press, which has produced much beautiful letterpress printing over the years and has been the site of camaraderie among printers with master printer Beck. The exhibition is scheduled for March 7 through May 9.

Caxtonians are invited to attend a reception for Beck on March 7, 5 to 7 p.m. at the center, 7th floor, 218 South Wabash Ave., Chicago. For more information about this or the wide range of classes and workshops at the center, phone 312/431-8612.



**Caxtonian Connie Goddard**, correspondent for *Publishers Weekly* and columnist for *Skyline*, is co-author of a new book, *The Great Chicago Trivia & Fact Book*, published by Cumberland House Publishing. She and Bruce Hatton Boyer have given us all the facts about our great city — to which all roads lead!

**Caxtonian and club Secretary Glen Wiche** has opened Wiche Antiquarian Books, P.O. Box 10788, Chicago, IL 60610-0788. His phone and fax number is 312/280-4847. Congratulations to Glen and best wishes.

**Caxton Club members** are invited to join the American Printing History Association, an organization encouraging the preservation of printing artifacts and the source materials for printing history, as well as the development of museums and libraries to house them. Membership is \$40 a year and may be arranged through the Association, P.O. Box 4922, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10063.

**The Marion E. Wade Center** of Wheaton College, announces two new publications: the *Poetry of Dorothy L. Sayers*, chosen and edited by Ralph E. Hone, and Volume 13, *An Anglo-American Literary Review*, containing articles on G.K. Chesterton, C.S. Lewis, Dorothy L. Sayers, and others. For information or ordering, write the center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187-5593.

**The Associated Press** reported recently that four drawings of Winnie the Pooh and his friends by Ernest Howard Shepard sold for \$346,000 at Christie's auction house. This was four times the anticipated selling price for the 1926 pen-and-ink drawings.

### Caxton Budget Offered for 1997 and Compared with Previous Year

	95-96 Budgeted	95-96 Actual	96-97 Proposed
<b>Income</b>			
Dues	\$36,625	\$32,150	\$36,625
Initiations	2,000	100	2,000
Merchandise	200	378.41	1,000
Interest	600	1,179.45	1,000
Club History	5,000	4,808.70	2,500
Dinners	25,000	24,181.50	25,500
Liquor	<u>1,485</u>	<u>1,502</u>	<u>1,500</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$71,410</b>	<b>\$64,300.06</b>	<b>\$69,425</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Dinners	\$34,412	\$32,109.58	\$36,000
Invitations	7,500	5,316.87	6,000
Secretarial	2,100	2,100	2,100
<i>Caxtonian</i>	11,000	9,721.73	11,000
Speakers	3,000	3,123.26	3,000
Accounting	2,250	1,750	1,500
Liquor	800	0	800
Publications	5,000	0	4,500
Postage	500	51.20	300
Office Supplies	750	15.23	350
Miscellaneous	1,000	1,017.14	1,025
M/C Xmas Fund	300	0	300
Archives Contrb	0	0	500
Brochure	500	0	500
Directory	<u>1,500</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,500</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$72,612</b>	<b>\$55,205.01</b>	<b>\$69,425</b>

## Contemplations of a Rare Book Conservator

This morning I bathed a child of the Western World. Like all beings born of water, it was rejuvenated and cleansed; glowing in contentment and ready to share its ancient secrets for another half millennia.

My child is *Practica quae alias Philonium dicitur* (see illustration with story on next page), the intellectual offspring of Valescus de Taranta, an eminent Portuguese physician and teacher. This celebrated medical textbook was given life in censorship-free Lyon, according to the imprint, on May 19, 1490.

The connection between the bather and the bathed is naturally intimate. Both soothing and comforting, the act of bathing allows a special bond. Curiously called an incunable (meaning “infant,” referring to its era within printing history), the book contains pages that seemed to speak to me as they released the soil and stains left on them well before the birth of our nation. The fractur type was chiseled against the soft paper in perfect black. Touching the impressions, I felt the pride of the printer, Johann Trechsel, a German emigre, whose craftsmanship would be passed on eventually to the press of scholar-printer Henri Estienne.

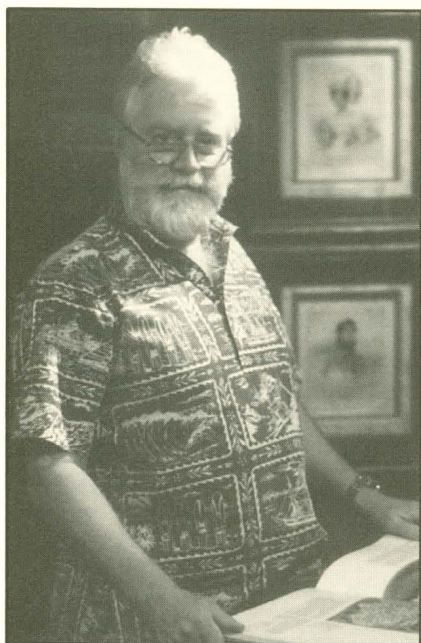
I marveled at what I was touching. The looping rubrication stood out richly like wet blood, perfectly accenting the regimented rows of barbed type. The rag paper was cast with an almost imperceptible gold, receptive as a blanket of snow at sunrise. A feast of senses, this being spoke to me of yet more — much more. Here was an impossible collision of intellect, craft, and freedom of ideas — each reality mutely honoring its fellows: a trinity of human wholeness and excellence held within the discipline of — a book.

In the years to come, many will behold this book, each receiving from it according to his or her own education

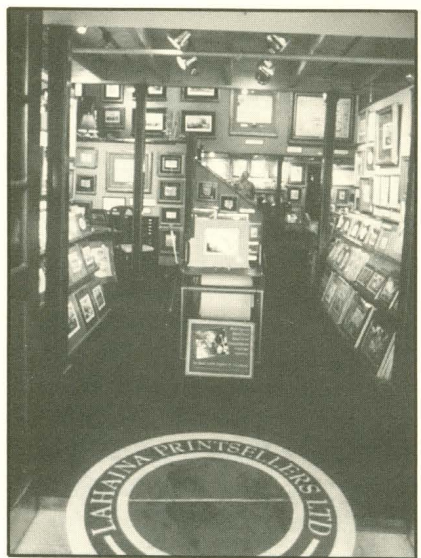
and inclination. The academician perhaps will see only a body of knowledge, intricately linked and referenced to an entire other world’s culture. The bibliographer will see a fantastic time machine that has hurtled through the vagaries of history unscathed, ripe with information from the realms of book-making and literature. The craftsman will see...well, perhaps the sort of thing I’ve just described. Only those, however, who have pierced the vale of the mundane within their meditations will share the pleasures that I received this morning — the pleasure of a bibliophile.

Scott Kellar

*Editor’s Note: Caxtonian Scott Kellar is a rare book conservator working in his own shop in Chicago.*



Alan Walker, proprietor of Lahaina Printsellers Ltd., with his copy of Ken Nebenzahl’s *Maps of the Holy Land* (1986). Photo by Robert Cotner.



Entrance and interior view of Lahaina Printsellers Ltd., Maui. Photo by Robert Cotner.



“*Moby Dick*” sperm whale plaque, 35-inches-by-seven inches in boxwood, Number 28/100 (1995), by Wick Ahrens. From the collection of Robert Cotner.

### Caxtonian Sparks Memories

Thank you for the [December 1996] *Caxtonian*. Phantoms of my life spent in Indiana gently entered the room as I read the pages. Happy days at Culver Military Academy, contested mind space with puzzled early days in Muncie, as I struggled to come to terms with the nobles of Hoosierland. As Fred Lamb, the black butler at my home on Minnetrista Boulevard once said, “Master Ken, just do what that old White River do, take it one day at a time.” Good, simple words, given one morning at breakfast on the terrace of the E. B. Ball home in 1961.

Thoughts of my Amish friends came to mind, good people from the Geneva-Decatur part of the state. Their kind offer of help and accommodation on the farm while I got my bearings. Good, sweet, hard-working people who took pity on a stranger from outside their world. Who listened intently over a dinner table laden with the fruits of their labors as I tried to explain with the aid of an apple that the world was round. People who in the end were driven off their land by the dark shadows cast by Vietnam on every acre of America. God bless them; they are down in the jungles of Brazil. If they have survived, they have cleared the land. I hadn’t planned on this journey today, but thanks for the ticket.

Kenneth Houston Paterson

# Book Marks

## Luncheon Programs

All luncheon 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.

### February 14.

Caxtonian John Notz will speak on "Jens Jensen and His Prairie School Contemporaries." Notz will focus on Jensen, the Danish landscape architect who came to Chicago in 1884, and his early private clients.

### March 14.

Caxtonian Lynn Martin will present an illustrated discussion on her life as a graphic designer, working in all print technologies, but with particular emphasis on graphic design and the computer.

*Ed Quattrocchi  
Leonard Freedman*

**Important Note:** Members planning to attend luncheons must make advance reservations by phoning either the Caxton number, 312/255-3710, or Quattrocchi at 708/475-4653. Luncheon for members and guests, \$20.

### Special Note

Because of a schedule conflict at the Mid-Day Club, the February dinner meeting will be held on February 12 rather than the originally scheduled February 19, 1997.

## More Names Added to Caxton Club Ranks

A hearty welcome to the following new members of The Caxton Club:

### David Redden

Nominated by John Chalmers  
Seconded by Karen Skubish

### Margaret Lee

Nominated by Peter Stanlis  
Seconded by Edward Rosenheim

### Margaret Kulis

Nominated by Robert W.  
Karrow, Jr.  
Seconded by Paul Gehl

### Jane Conlan

Nominated by Janis Notz  
Seconded by Toni Harkness

### Steven Masello

Nominated by Robert Cotner  
Seconded by Michael Grace

### Howard Will

Nominated by Thomas J. Joyce  
Seconded by Leonard Freedman

### JoAnn Baumgartner

Nominated by Frank J. Piehl  
Seconded by Robert Cotner

### Marilyn Sward

Nominated by Muriel  
Underwood  
Seconded by Barbara L. Metz

## Dinner Programs

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

### February 12.

The Caxton Club observes Black History Month with Caxtonian Sherman Beverly, professor of English Emeritus, Northeastern Illinois University, speaking on "The Harlem Renaissance: U.S. History through Black Literary Eyes."

### March 19.

Kate Ridler Wilson will read the poetry of her mother, British poet Anne Ridler, the only living poet represented in the *Oxford Book of English Poetry*. Anne Ridler, a Yorkshire native, is, as well, the god-daughter of T.S. Eliot.

*Karen Skubish*

*Advance reservations, which are absolutely necessary, may be made by phoning the Caxton office at 312/255-3710. Any special meal requirements (such as vegetarian) need to be made in advance. Members and guests, \$35.*

*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