



# Caxtonian

Journal of The Caxton Club of Chicago

Volume V, No. 5

May 1997

## For the Love of Letterpress, a Tradition Continues in Chicago

In 1952 a letterpress workshop was started by the Society of Typographic Arts (STA), which had been founded in 1927 by what is now known as the American Center for Design (ACD). The first location of STA was in a loosely partitioned room in the basement of Chicago's Newberry Library. After having been in two locations when belonging to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, it is currently an integral part of the Chicago Center for Book & Paper Arts of Columbia College.

The workshop was assembled through contributions of material and equipment from individuals and firms in the graphic arts trades, and this assistance has continued throughout its existence as an STA activity. The STA board of directors conceived of a graphics workshop where members might set type and print without the burden of rigid courses of instruction. A search was made for a rent-free, heated, and well-lighted room in a convenient part of the city. Stanley Pargellis, director of the Newberry Library, was approached and, with Harold Tribolet, STA president, decided on a corner in the basement of the Newberry that was acceptable to both. The workshop survived its first 30 years through the generosity of the Newberry in providing this rent-free space.

Donations of equipment were then sought for the shop. The entire board solicited local printers and suppliers. The workshop began with a good supply of Monotype and a few cases of foundry type. A 1952 listing of equipment shows that 30 cases of Futura were to have come from A-1 Typesetters, four cases of Bodoni from Runkle, Thompson, Kovats, and nine galleys of Garamond from Poole Brothers. Ludlow Typographic Company donated leads and slugs. R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company gave empty



*STA Workshop in the basement of the Newberry Library in 1976. Ralph Creasman and Muriel Underwood are at work in the shop. (Photo used with special arrangements with the Newberry Library.)*

California job cases and cabinets, an imposing stone, a Vandercook proofing press, and other miscellaneous equipment necessary for typesetting and printing. Sarah Taylor Leavitt, chair of the Education Committee at STA, coordinated the collecting of equipment and setting up the shop.

Another need for the beginning shop was to find an instructor — a printer with not only considerable experience, high standards of performance, and knowledge of printing history, but also the willingness to share these assets with others. That person was close at hand — STA member Gordon Martin. His wife Jessie, an equally fine printer, also helped.

There has been no formal course of instruction at STA. Members bring in their own projects and are shown how to set type, lock up, and print. While at the Newberry location, a very small annual registration fee was paid for running expenses — wash-up fluid, inks, and other miscellaneous supplies. For the first few years, instruction was available two evenings a week, and at the first year's registration 25 members signed up.

### STA and The Caxton Club Experience Heady Time In Final Years of Letterpress

In 1952 when the Type Workshop began, the Society of Typographic Arts (STA) was 25 years old. It had been started as an offshoot of the American Institute of Graphic Arts and was originally focused on design as an activity almost exclusively typographic, although establishment of the Institute of Design, which brought Bauhaus to Chicago in the 1940s, resulted in new directions and approaches.

It was a heady time for bibliophiles and for two organizations, The Caxton Club and the STA, who shared many important people and garnered support from two great organizations, the Art Institute of Chicago and the Newberry Library. Offset printing became the new technology, but the type was metal.

Many of the activities of the two organizations were intertwined. A particular example was the publication by The Caxton Club of *Faust* in 1953. The book was written by Harry J. Owens, long-time secretary of the club. It was organized by R. Hunter Middleton, a member of both organizations, and bound by Elizabeth Kner. It was designed and typeset by Victor Hammer, one of the period's greatest private printers and a particular friend of RHM, and was printed by Hammer's son. Greer Allen and Harold Tribolet also shared their talents and contributed to the project.

Many of The Caxton Club's members and, in particular, those concerned with the production of *Faust*, were also

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## Caxtonian

The Caxton Club  
Founded 1895



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# Musings...

Sister Carrie, Studs Lonigan, Bigger Thomas: names from the imaginations of three American novelists who helped shape our perceptions of the city — and particularly of Chicago. Theodore Dreiser, James T. Farrell, and Richard Wright saw the city as a demoralizing, even destructive, force in human life against which the individual coming innocent into it had little or no power to elude. These names echo synonymously in our collective conscience with the pervading dangers of urban life.

Northwestern University professor, Garry Wills, wrote recently: "The city in the American imagination has played roughly the role of hell in Christian mythology." American cities lack the "sacred center" of ancient cities, he explained, and Chicago, "our very own," was a "place of risk identified with catastrophes: the Chicago fire, the Haymarket bombing, the Pullman strike, the stockyard stench, the Capone mob, ..."

In 1970 I worked on an archeological dig for the Smithsonian Institution in St. Mary's City, MD, the fourth colonial settlement on this continent. I learned then that the greatest discovery one can make in archeology is the site of an ancient city — such as Heinrich Schliemann's discovery of Homer's Troy in 1876 — for the city embodies the highest achievements and all that is important in a culture.

I think of that often as I move daily about Chicago or occasionally visit other metropolises. It gives me a cognizance for what the city is and for what it can be both in imagination and in reality. I realize that The Caxton Club is possible only because of our urban setting. I recognize that the Art Institute, the Field Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry, the Newberry Library, Orchestra Hall, the Goodman Theater, the Lyric Opera House, and our great universities would not be possible outside the urban elegance that we know as Chicago.

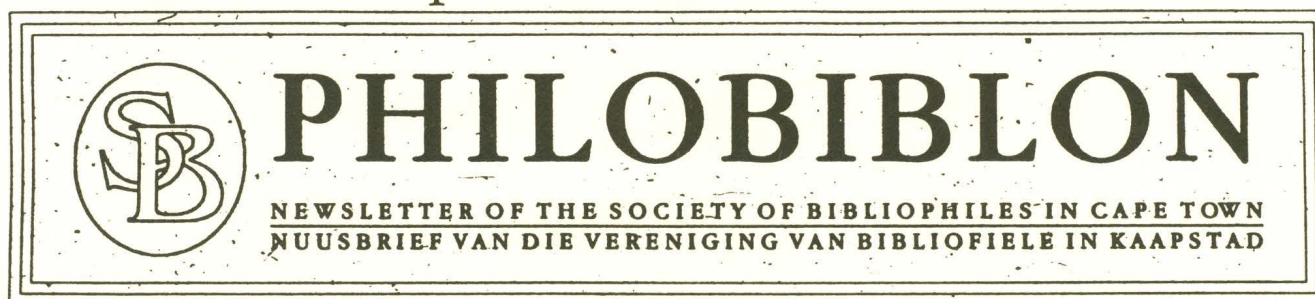
These institutions at the heart of our city are our own "sacred" centers, securing us as a democratic people to a heritage uniting history, cultures, and geography. They are the culmination of, in the truest sense, *philanthropy* — love of humankind — made tangible and useable. They represent the conversion of vast private wealth into a redeeming public trust. They help everyone understand who they have been, who they now are, and who they shall become. They are, indeed, destinations worthy of modern-day pilgrimages.

We welcome to Chicago this month pilgrims from Cleveland's Rowfant Club, from the Book Club of Detroit, and from bibliophilic societies in San Francisco and Los Angeles. We do so aware that the sacred centers to which they sojourn have the potential to foster a redefinition of the city in our imaginations and to inspire a new reality grounded in art and learning within our society. For every person willing and able to respond, this new viewpoint will celebrate the city as a place exemplifying ultimate human possibilities, extraordinary challenges, and unparalleled personal growth. This new vision will be worthy, it seems to be me, of both citizens and pilgrims alike, for ages to come — and may give rebirth to American dreams, as well.

Robert Cotner  
Editor



# Communications Open with South Africa in the Book Arts



*Masthead of Philobiblon, newsletter of the Society of Bibliophiles, Cape Town, South Africa.*

## Caxtonian Susan Hanes Links Club with Botha, Former U.S. Ambassador

I am sending along copies of a letter I received from J.S.F. "Frikkie" Botha, as well as the January 1995 issue of *Philobiblon*, the newsletter of the Society of Bibliophiles in Cape Town, South Africa.

Frikkie served his country for many years as a career diplomat. He was the Ambassador of South Africa to the United States in the mid-1970s, a few years after my own father [William M. Rountree] served as Ambassador of the United States to South Africa. He and his wife, Monica, have been special friends of my family since that time. He is a man of many interests, foremost among them being book collecting. He is also a very talented book binder.

He was so pleased with the *Caxtonian* newsletters that I sent along to him, as well as some of the pamphlets that The Caxton Club has published. He is the founder of the Cape Town club,...has been president, edits the newsletter, and remains a bulwark of its structure. To me, this is one of the most delightful aspects of The Caxton Club: to be able to share the love of the book arts with other enthusiasts the world over! I thought that perhaps other Caxtonians might enjoy his note and the sample newsletter he sent (see above).

*Susan R. Hanes  
Librarian/Head of Technical Services  
Buswell Memorial Library  
Wheaton College*

## J.S.F. Botha, Bibliophile, Book Collector, and Editor

What an unexpected joy to receive your most welcome package, full of bibliophilic goodies....Many, many thanks for introducing me to The Caxton Club and for your very generous gift of some of their publications. It was instructive and interesting to see the sort of activities they are engaged in. I shall circulate them to other members of our Society of Bibliophiles in Cape Town who I am sure will be as thrilled to see them.

Our own society is a rather informal one; not at all as sophisticated as The Caxton Club, which seems to have the advantage of being able to call on the infrastructure of the Newberry Library. We have to do everything ourselves; even down to the printing (by one of our members) and envelope stuffing! Ours was formed only seven years ago; I took the initiative by writing to the three local newspapers inviting those interested in an association of booklovers to contact me. I had 25 replies. Some thought it was a sort of book club for people interested only in reading new books, while for me *that* is only the beginning! I love everything about books:

their history, bindings, restoration, typography, paper, collecting, publishing, the history of booksellers — one of our members said she even loved the smell of books!

Anyway we started off with 15 members, now grown to 85. On an impulse I also started a quarterly journal six years ago with original articles by members; the latest has one on Isaac Newton's library; one on collecting early Afrikaans Africana, a review of recent books about books, and illustrations of publishers' devices. Many of the articles are written by me on subjects such as Jerome Kern, the Book Collector; The Bohn Library; The Gentleman's Magazine, 1732-1929, and A Checklist of Bibliophilic Periodicals. (I was happy to welcome the publication of *Biblio*, the new magazine for bibliophiles published in Oregon.)...

Thanks for the invitation to speak to The Caxton Club. It would be an honor, but I doubt that my travels will take me to Chicago again. I am a member of the Association Internationale de Bibliophilie and try to attend their annual conferences — Prague in 1995 and later this year in Holland. I notice in the membership list that the Newberry Library is an institutional member and I would be pleased to meet up with whomever attends the conference in the Hague/Amsterdam in September from the library.



*On Jonathan Fiddle:  
ON THE EVE OF JUNE  
JONATHAN FIDDLE  
WENT OUT OF TUNE  
EARTHWORM*

*Page from Comic Epitaphs from the very Best Old Graveyards*

*Detail from Cape Town Philobiblon.*

*J.S.F. Botha  
Society of Bibliophiles  
Cape Town, South Africa*



## A Review

### Columbia College Extends Caxtonian Beck's Exhibit

Honorary Caxtonian Bruce Beck is being honored with an exhibit at the Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts, Columbia College. The exhibit is of work produced during the last 15 years at the Turtle Press, Evanston, by Beck, who believes "Slower is better than faster and letterpress is the best of all."

The magnificent body of work on exhibit from Turtle Press consists of books, booklets, personal holiday greeting cards, awards, recognition certificates, keepsakes, broadsides, and much more. Many of the pieces are left unshielded and are thus accessible for the viewer to explore and more fully enjoy.

One need not be knowledgeable in letterpress printing and design to appreciate the artistry and inspiration in this awesome collection of printing. And it provides an important education for young people, who have grown up not knowing the smell of hot lead and the clack of linotype machines in printing shops. The most casual viewer will immediately be aware that this is not the kind of printed matter we are accustomed to seeing on a daily basis these days.

Although it was originally announced that the Turtle Press Exhibit would close on May 9, it will remain open, as planned now, until early June because of the great interest it has generated. Caxtonians will want to see Beck's exhibit at 218 S. Wabash, 7th floor. Details are available by telephoning 312/431-8612.

Norma Rubovits



## RED RED ROSE

ROBERT BURNS 1794

~~~~~

O, my luve is like a red, red rose,  
That's newly sprung in June.  
O, my luve is like the melodie  
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonie lass  
So deep in luve am I,  
And I will luve thee still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun!  
And I will love thee still, my dear,  
While the sands o life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve,  
And fare thee weel a while!  
Oh, I would come again, my luve  
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

Now fifty year gaed by, sweet wench,  
Wi' friend and family ever close.  
I'll take this time as heaven fent,  
And treasure my Red Rose.

~~~~~

Margaret & Bruce Beck

1947 - 1997

*The text of Bruce and Margaret Beck's 50th Anniversary card, designed by Beck, printed at Turtle Press, and one of the items now on display at Columbia College. The last stanza is Beck not Burns, in case you missed it!*

## STA and The Caxton Club

(Continued From Page One)

members of STA. So the decision to form a study group for embryo typographers was of interest to both groups and the project moved ahead. Chicago at the time was blessed with two wonderful letterpress operations, the Acorn press of John and Jean Michael and the Printing Office of Gordon and Jesse Martin, both of whom were Caxton members. Jesse quickly became everyone's type-mother. But even this kind of talent was not quite enough to stay the movement from a hands-on craft to the freer world of offset and, later, digital.

Bruce Beck  
Honorary Caxtonian

## Former Caxtonian Herman Fussler Dies

Herman H. Fussler, former director of the University of Chicago Libraries, died March 2, 1997, in Raleigh, NC. Mr. Fussler enjoyed a long and distinguished career in academia. He joined the staff at the University of Chicago in 1936 to establish its department of photographic reproduction, where he pioneered in developing processes for the use of microfilm in research libraries.

During World War II he was associated with the Manhattan Project which created the first sustained nuclear reaction. He served as director of the University of Chicago Libraries, 1948 - 1971, when he was named the Martin A. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor of the Graduate Library School.

More than any other individual at the university, he was responsible for guiding the architects in creating the Regenstein Library, a state-of-the-art institution. When the library was dedicated, Edward Levi compared it to the Library of Alexandria, created by Ptolemy I, king of Egypt. Levi said, "The organization of that library was not due to the king. It was due to his man, Demetrius of Phaleron. Herman Fussler is the university's Demetrius."

Mr. Fussler joined The Caxton Club in 1950 and remained an active member for more than 30 years. He served on the Council (1952-57) and on the Program Committee and Publications Committee. He was Librarian of the Caxton Club (1953-54), after which the club's library was sold and the office discontinued. He became a non-resident member upon retiring and moving to Chapel Hills, NC, in the late 1980s. Those who had the privilege of working with him remember Herman Fussler as an inspiring teacher with a formidable intellect, a man who was admired greatly throughout the academic library community.

Frank J. Piehl  
Historian



## For the Love of Letterpress

(Continued from Page One)

At the start, the workshop had five hand-operated presses: three 6 x 9 Sigwalts, one 7x10 Chandler & Price Pilot, and one antique (even for 1952) press, the huge, lumbering Vandercook proofing press. All were considered to be good "school presses," easy to operate and capable of producing good printing within their size range. In 1956, under the leadership of Norman Cram, STA acquired an 8 x 10 Chandler & Price treadle-operated press. It was just the addition needed — a larger press with three rollers for better ink distribution. It was acquired, along with 20 English cases of type in a cabinet and a new STA member, Edward Kahn, who has been a very valuable member ever since.

A 1956 listing of typefaces shows a modest increase of type on hand, especially in foundry type — 27 fonts, over half coming from Kahn. The list also shows the addition of 12 cases of Grotesque and four fonts of wood type of various sizes and styles. One special addition was Perpetua Titling, a gift from Beatrice Warde after she had lectured at the Newberry and was shown the workshop. In 1964 STA member Emil Klumpp became type director of American Type Founders and remembered the workshop with an assortment of about 20 fonts of foundry type, including Murray Hill (his design), DeRoose, and Cheltlenham Open.

During Rhodes Patterson's year as president of STA (1962-63), a press became available from Crerar Library, then in the process of relocating from Michigan Avenue to the campus of Illinois Institute of Technology. Kahn took the responsibility for moving what is now the largest press in the workshop — a 10 x 15 Chandler & Price treadle press — one much easier to operate than the ancient Vandercook, which was then discarded.

As the typesetting industry changed from metal to film composition, metal type was relatively inexpensive, and a number of purchases of new and used type was made when enough money was in the workshop account. Through a chance meeting in

1973, one small shop, Dealers Press, changing from metal to film, donated approximately 40 cases of foundry type — all the workshop could store in the corner room.

In the late 1970s Pearson Typographers Corporation, through Dave Pearson, offered to cast in Monotype the Univers series in text sizes, with the STA workshop furnishing the metal. The opportunity to have four different weights with matching italics was too good to pass up, and it was decided to sacrifice most of the Grotesque and Futura for the metal and cabinet space needed. Also a large range of sizes in roman and italic Monotype #248 Garamond had been replenished from time to time by the University of Chicago Printing Department, arranged through STA members Greer Allen and Cameron Poulter.



*The real hero of the Caxton Club's Faust, 1953.*

When the Newberry started its remodeling project in 1981, the workshop was put in storage in another corner of the basement while renovation plans were being completed. After a couple of years, it was apparent that no space was going to be allotted for the workshop. After two more years and much searching, the equipment was given to the School of the Art Institute, which was then expanding its Visual Communications Department, with the provision that STA members could continue to have their workshop. Cathie Ruggie Saunders, a former student of Walter Hamady of the University of Wisconsin/Madison, was named instructor for the school. The school's equipment consisted of a Vandercook, a proof press, and several cabinets of type, including

Helvetica, which was missing from the STA's collection of type.

After two moves and the addition of a small Vandercook #1 Proof Press, a 25-inch Chandler & Price guillotine, two Chandler & Price Pilot presses, and several cabinets of type, negotiations were completed to move the workshop to the newly formed Chicago Center for Book & Paper Arts at Columbia College in 1995.

The CCB&PA had been formed a year earlier when the Paper Press and Artists Book Works were combined. The Paper Press, begun in 1980 by Caxtonian Marilyn Sward. Linda Sorkin-Eisenberg, and Sherry Healy, was primarily a papermaking studio and gallery and offered classes in printmaking and photography. Artist Book Works, formed in 1982 by Robert Stennhauser and Caxtonian Barbara Lazarus Metz, offered courses in typesetting, printing, bookbinding, and the making and exhibiting of artists' books.

The CCB&PA is contained in large, well-lighted space for exhibits, complete papermaking facilities, a large area for lectures and community classes, bookbinding and letterpress workshop, and a photographic darkroom. Sward serves as the director, Audry Niffenegger as assistant director, and Metz as summer program director.

And so the Type Workshop for STA/ACD members continues with the same structure it was founded upon: a workshop where members can conceive and produce their own projects through the medium of letterpress. It allows those used to computer designing the chance actually to hold the real stuff. The importance of the workshop today is that it produces works of art — artists' books of limited editions combining original prints with type, handmade paper, and hand binding.

*Muriel Underwood*

*Editors Note: Type Workshop Chairs: Gordon and Jessie Martin, 1952-57; Edward Kahn, 1957-59; Nettie Hart, 1959-60; Muriel Underwood, 1960-64; Allen Port, 1964-66; Jerry Killie, 1966-67; Ralph Creasman and Lloyd Altera, 1967-80, and Muriel Underwood, forever after.*



# 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.*

### May 23.

This noon luncheon will be at the Newberry Library. Caxtonian editor Robert Cotner will present "Robert Frost — A Poet for All Seasons," a program of poetry and slides from his Frost collection.

*May marks our final luncheon for this program year. We will resume our Friday Luncheons in September. Thank you all for your attendance and support.*

*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.*

### The Caxton Club on The Web

Internet users may communicate with The Caxton Club at the following address:

<http://www.caxtonclub.org>

Webmaster of the Caxton website is Caxtonian Paul Baker.

## New Slate Proposed For Caxton Leadership

A Nominating Committee composed of Charles Miner (chair), Ann Dumler, David Easterbrook, and Tom Joyce (ex officio) proposed to the Council, in special session April 21, the following Caxton members for a new administration:

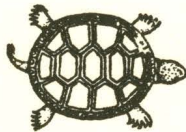
President - Karen A. Skubish  
Vice President - C. Frederick Kittle  
Secretary - Glen N. Wiche  
Treasurer - Christopher D. Oakes  
Past President - Thomas J. Joyce

The Council Class of 2000:

Edward C. Hirschland  
Robert W. Karrow  
Kenneth H. Paterson  
John S. Railing  
Peggy Sullivan

William Drendell was chosen to replace Christopher Oakes in the Class of 1999.

The slate of new officers will be presented to the full membership at the Annual Meeting, scheduled to be held during the May 21 dinner meeting.



## 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.*

### May 21.

Robert Jackson of Cleveland's Rowfant Club will share his collection of Charles Dickens and other Victorian treasures. Jackson's recent Victorian exhibition at the Grolier Club in New York City, was the most visited exhibition in the club's history.

### June 18.

Donald Terras, lighthouse keeper at Grosse Pointe, Evanston, will talk about the literature of lighthouses and their lore. Terras is the author of a recent award-winning history of Grosse Pointe lighthouse.

*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

*The Caxton Club ... Acclaiming the book arts and literature in society*