



NEWSLETTER

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2012 Conference Update

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE, *At the Crossroads: Living Letterform Traditions*, will be held at Columbia College Chicago, Center for Book and Paper Arts, on October 12–13, 2012. The Call for Papers deadline was March 15. More than forty proposals are being considered are currently being considered by the Program Committee, which consists of Program Co-Chairs: Martha Chiplis, Paul Gehl, and Celene Aubry. Individuals whose proposals are accepted will be notified by April 15, with their final response due before May 1. Speakers and their bios will be announced on the website after May 1. We expect a lively set of presentations and enticing places to visit in Chicago.

Kitty Maryatt

Undated postcard of the Ludington Building, location of the 2012 APHA onference and the current home of the Center for Book and Paper Arts at Columbia College Chicago. Commissioned in 1891, by Mary Ludington Barnes for the American Book Company, it is the earliest-surviving, steel-frame building in Chicago and is on the National Register of Historic Places. When it housed a publishing company, there were presses running on floors 4–6. It was engineered to distribute the weight of equipment and to withstand the vibration of the presses. The architect was William LeBaron Jenney (1832–1907), known as the father of the American skyscraper. Image courtesy of April Sheridan.



2012 Lieberman Lecture

WE ARE PLEASED to announce the Lieberman Lecture for 2012, to be given by type designer and letterpress printer Russell Maret. It will be given on June 2 at 11:00 a.m. in Chicago at the Newberry Library in Ruggles Hall at 60. W. Walton Street.

The annual Lieberman Lecture commemorates J. Ben Lieberman (1914–1984), founder and first president of the American Printing History Association. The lecture is a moveable feast, given at a different institution each year, by a figure distinguished in the history of printing or the book arts. Past speakers include John Bidwell, Betsy Davids, Jack Stauffacher, Johanna Drucker, John Randle, and Claire Van Vliet.

The title of the lecture is “Time, Technology, and the Shapes of Letters.” In this lecture, Russell Maret will discuss his recent attempts to apply digital drafting technology to industrial-era manufacturing processes to create new, historically inspired typefaces for letterpress printing. He will touch on the relationship of letter design to art historical periods, the rapid technological change of the twentieth century and its impact on letterpress typography, and his own efforts to create typefaces based on pre-typographic letterforms. Through these assorted lenses, Russell will sketch a proposal for the twenty-first century private press based on the development of new, proprietary type designs.

Russell Maret is a type designer and private press printer working in New York City. He is the current North American Chair of the Fine Press Book Association. In 2009 he was awarded the Rome Prize in Design from the American Academy in Rome to study classical vernacular lettering. His books and manuscripts are collected by many of the world’s great libraries, including the Library of Congress, the Newberry Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Bodleian.

Kitty Maryatt

W. H. Auden passage set in the typefaces Roma Abstract and Cancellaresca Milanese from Specimens of Diverse Characters by Russell Maret, 2011.

Harrison T. Chandler (1840–1912)



IT HAS NOW been one hundred years since of the death of Harrison T. Chandler, founding president of the Chandler & Price Co. Chandler & Price is remembered as a manufacturer of platen job presses, paper cutters and other printing machinery in Cleveland, Ohio.

Born in Chandlerville, Illinois—a town founded by his lawyer-businessman father—Chandler fought for the Union during the American Civil

War. Upon returning home he entered the banking business and eventually became president of the town bank. In 1881, he purchased an interest in the Cleveland Type Foundry and in 1884 formed a partnership with William H. Price, for manufacturing printing machinery.

Writing in 1977, Fred Williams, editor of *Type & Press*, reminded us that the design for the C&P platen press was not original since it was based on several expired patents granted to George Phineas Gordon in 1850:

“The press building business of the [18]70s and 80s was a speculative and highly competitive one, over 100 platen press models being built by scores of companies. Many were cheap, lightweight machines for use in small country printing offices often of the “clam shell” variety with bolted frame and a stationary bed. The platen, hinged at the bottom, offered no dwell for feeding, simply flapping open and closed, exerting more impression at the bottom of the sheet than the top. Many of these presses and their manufacturers had short lives. The C&P was able to outlast all its rivals by concentrating on building quality into its presses. It’s not unusual to find them still operating profitably after over 50 years of daily use.”

Chandler’s obituary* in the February 1912 issue of *The Inland Printer* noted that during his career, he sold 42,562 presses and 5,505 paper cutters, “and it is said that not a single machine proved to be defective.” Williams estimated that 100,000 presses had been built before the company ceased production in 1964.

This begs the question: how many C&Ps are in use today? Fritz Klinke, owner of letterpress supplier NA Graphics, says that they are relatively abundant. “I would say in a rather general way several thousand and these were widely exported, to Canada, Mexico, Australia and elsewhere. There were

almost exact copies made in India until recently and those may number in the thousands. Worldwide there are maybe 10,000 C&P-style presses.”

Paul Moxon

* Chandler died of natural causes, unlike his partner William H. Price who was murdered in his home by burglars. *The Inland Printer*, January 1895.

Call for Submissions for Book on Letterpress

APHA INLAND CHAPTER MEMBERS, Cathie Ruggie Saunders and Martha Chiplis, are writing a book about letterpress printing for A&C Black Publisher, UK and have recently issued a call for submissions to gather images.

The authors are seeking examples of the best in international contemporary letterpress printing. They are particularly seeking work that speaks to the relationship between structure and concept, and examples of contemporary processes which expand the media’s boundaries and highlight its compatibility with the digital environment. Formats considered will be: artist’s books, fine press publications, single sheets, and ephemera. Images of dummies (including pencil, computer-generated, first proofs, and revised proofs) are encouraged.

In addition to the global gallery of professional and student work, the book will address teaching and learning this vintage technology, particularly within art and design school curricula.

Both authors are on the faculty of Visual Communication Design Department of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). Deadline for submissions is April 23, 2012. <http://www.letterpressluminaries.com>.

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Book Review

Typographical Tourists: Tales of Tramping Printers. Alastair M. Johnston, editor. 178 pages, paperback 6"x9" (Berkeley: Poltroon Press, 2012). \$20 postpaid from Poltroon Press, PO Box 5476, Berkeley, Ca 94705.

THE ERA from the American Civil War to the end of the century saw newspapers spring up across the country, usually following the railroad lines. The workers in these printing offices were a mix of trained printers, young apprentices ("printers' devils") and "subs"—compositors occasionally employed to fill the place of absent regular compositors. In this last group were the "typographical tourists" of Alastair Johnston's new book. These were men who for one reason or another preferred to work for a while in a printing office and then to move along to another, either by walking or riding the rails. They were a colorful lot, often more

skilled at typesetting than print shop regulars, but often also hard drinkers, backsliders, and con men.

More staid printers were fascinated by these free souls and tended to romanticize them. Trade publication writers regularly described their comings and goings, and these articles were picked up as "exchanges" by other trade papers. Thus the lore of the transient printer grew, and from their ranks came American writers and humorists Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, Opie Read, Bill Nye, and Bret Harte—among many others.

Typographical Tourists is Alastair Johnston's tribute to the itinerant compositors, consisting mostly of short pieces culled (in scrapbook style) from printing trade papers in the US and UK. Written for the trade, their style was often extravagantly colorful, and peppered with current slang and printing jargon. These words and phrases are sometimes explained and sometimes not, but the reader can usually figure them out: "pushing a Faber" for writing, "practicing pedestrianism" for

walking. These nuggets are liberally scattered through the book, and make for enjoyable reading.

Not all the pieces are about itinerant printers; there are occasional articles about women in printing offices and printing in the bygone era. I particularly enjoyed F. Hayden Caruth on "Greeley's Handwriting." Greeley, a great but eccentric editor, had an almost indecipherable handwriting, and only one compositor on the *New York Tribune* was allowed to set type from his copy. Composing room hands inked the feet of two of Greeley's pet hens and had them walk on blank copy paper; these tracks were puzzled over and then duly set in type by the compositor. (The absolute truth of this story is, I suppose, open to question.)

Typographical Tourists is a most enjoyable book that will transport the reader to the world of nineteenth-century printing as it was practiced, but not usually described.

Steve Saxe

New and Returning Members

Paul Aken, Beach Park IL
Albert Aldham, Hawley PA
Anna Alquitella, Pomona CA
Tia Blassingame, Silver Spring MD
Laura Capp, Iowa City IA
Robert Carlson, Chicago IL
Charles Carter, New York NY
Jackson Cavanaugh, Chicago IL
Bradley Coulter, Iowa City IA
Adam Doskey, Urbana IL
Jennifer Farrell, Chicago IL
Gary Frost, Coralville IA
Jessica Gahres, Wernersville PA
Michael Garabedian, Whittier CA

Nancy Gil, Aurora NY
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