

## It's my turn and am happy to be here!

When I joined the APA 12 years ago I had no thought of becoming a board member or an officer. I was quite content with just bundle participation and going to the annual Wayzgoose. But now it is time to take a turn at serving as your president, and I'm glad to be doing so. Believe it or not, in 1999, the APA officers were pleading for bundle pieces and member participation.

Having an outlet for my letterpress-printing hobby has been great, and I'm just as glad today that I joined as I was back then. So, with that said, I would like to welcome our new members for 2011, and wish them all the enjoyment possible from their participation in the APA, and getting to know the other members.

In this organization — as with other groups or clubs, it's not just the bundle printing and the Wayzgoose that make the APA great — it's the wonderful and talented people that make it up. Some of my most cherished and life-long friendships were



started in the APA. Letterpress brought us together — and friendships keep us together.

Sadly, I lost one of those good friends, and the letterpress realm lost a tremendous patron and supporter when Hal Sterne passed away last October.

And then I look at probably our youngest member — Luke Preussner — a fellow Iowan and I see another Hal Sterne in the making. Luke's talent and his love for the letterpress craft will be so enjoyable to watch evolve and grow over the years.

Yes, our future in the APA looks bright

and encouraging, and I'm glad to be able to serve you for the next couple of years (I don't think this is a life-sentence, is it?),

So thanks to Howie Gelbert and Mike O'Connor for their service as president and secretary-treasurer, and to Don Tucker for his stint as mailer. Don finished out a busy year as mailer, and unlike when I joined and the APA was begging for bundle pieces, Don was faced with the seemingly endless challenges of getting all of the pieces in the bulging envelopes. Again, the sign of a lively and talented APA membership.

I am glad to welcome new fellow officers Jim Horton, Vice President; Phil Driscoll, Secretary-Treasurer; and Mailers Ky and Sara Wrzesinski. We, along with Archivist David Kent and Directors Ernie Blitzer, Dick Niehaus and Howie Gelbert, look forward to serving you well in 2011 and beyond.

Now let's get printin'!

## *The Prairie Press*

# Working to carry on traditions

By CHUCK WENDEL, APA 611

My interest in printing came along early in life. I saw a rubber stamp printing outfit in the Sears catalog, and hounded my folks to death for one; it came on Christmas 1947. Before long I had rubber stamped my name into every book I had!

As a kid, I thought it would be really cool to be a printer. My dad's cousin was a machinist at the *Gazette* for awhile, and was telling about how new hires in the pressroom often got initiated by having both arms plunged into a bucket of news ink. The poor devil spent all of his lunch time getting cleaned up whilst the crew enjoyed their lunch. I listened in on this conversation, and decided this was a rite of passage that I'd not be a part of.

I never lost interest though, and got acquainted with Wayne Harger at Star Printing Co. in Cedar Rapids. This firm went back to the 1870s and still had much of the original equipment, including a special press for litho stones. There were hundreds,

perhaps thousands of them stored in racks. There were dozens of ancient type catalogs, and these fascinated me immensely. Wayne died an untimely death. The successors had no interest in all this stuff, and it was all hauled to the dump. After that, I started looking for old type in the 1960s. Sometimes it was free for the taking, otherwise maybe a buck a case. Wood type was usually free. My first press was an ancient old Peerless 10 x 15, but I soon decided that I needed something better.

Initially, I learned from a Kelsey Instructions to



Chuck is standing by a huge 1923 Wesel hand press. He picked up the press dismantled and in "pathetic" condition. After, cleaning, painting and reassembling—like a new press. Chuck said the press is now a part of the Printers' Hall collection.

printers book about the rudiments of printing. As time went on I got tips from other books and other printers. Setting good lines was never a problem, but the fact was that I yearned for a Linotype, finally buying a Comet with about ten magazines of mats for fifty bucks. So, by the 1970s I was setting everything of 12 point and under on the Linotype.

Eventually I also wised up and found a nice Hammond Glider saw. I can't imagine why any printer would be without one! I simply use  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch pine and cut furniture and blockouts to fit the job. Sometimes



Hammond Glider saw.

standard furniture works fine, but if, for instance, you're setting wood type to say, a 34 pica length, it's much easier to cut out the furniture to length and not futz with odd spacing, or worse, cutting up good furniture. When the job is done, toss it in the scrap bucket for kindling.

Sometime in the 1980s I found a nice Vandercook No. 4 for fifty bucks. After a new set of form rollers, it proved out to be one fine press. Then about 2002 I found a Vandercook Universal 1 with all-electric drive and adjustable bed. It was sitting in the back of a large printing company, covered over with cartons of old magazines and junk. About the same time I found a Heidelberg 10 x 15 platen. Although it was



Heidelberg 10x15 platen.



Vandercook's Universal 1.

a bit intimidating at first, I soon became enamored of it. As a result, I no longer have anything but this one and the Vandercook.

About 1904, several of us conceived the idea of Printers' Hall at Mt. Pleasant. It has enjoyed phenomenal growth, due in part to our mission to help preserve the printing arts and serve as an educational tool. At present we have three Linotypes, an Inter-type, a Ludlow, and finally have most of the bugs out of our Elrod strip caster. Presses include several platens, three Heidelberg 10 x 15 presses, and three hand presses. The oldest is an 1869 Hoe. There's also a 1923 Wesel; it is one of the heaviest hand presses ever built. There's also a Fields handpress in restoration. Always popular is the Vandercook Universal I. Another gift to Printers' Hall was the 40-inch Seybold cutter. Built in 1910, it is still going strong.

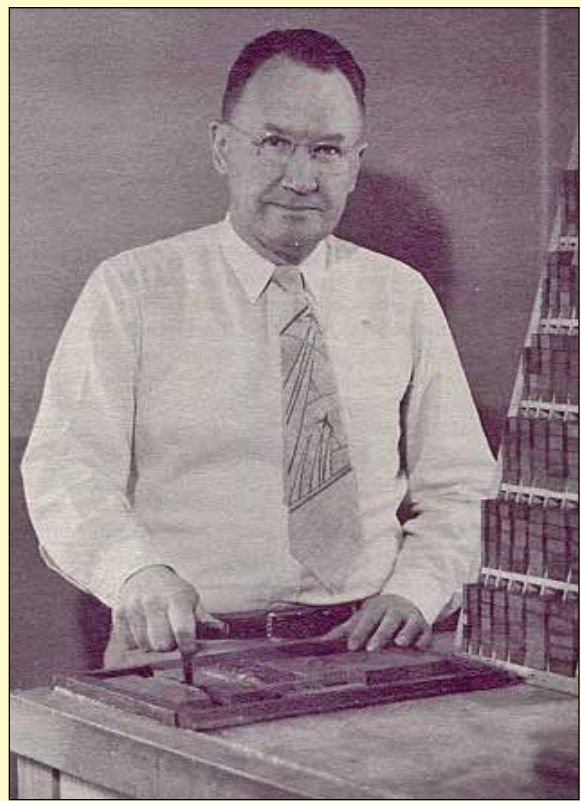
The Babcock Reliance newspaper press is operated by steam power, but can also be operated electrically if necessary. The Babcock and the Mentges folder were rescued from an old printshop at Ossian, Iowa. In 2011 we plan to provide the folder with an 1885 Fritz steam engine. It was built by Geo. J. Fritz at St. Louis.

Coming this next year to Printers' Hall is a No. 00 Miehle two-revolution press. It weighs about twelve tons; this 1906 example is in amazing condition. Also coming is a Kelly B 17x22 press that is in fine condition. These activities help to keep me busy in retirement. We also have located an ancient folder that was operated with a flat belt from a lineshaft, but we're not sure yet if it will be restorable. Now that it is freezing cold in Iowa, it'll be the perfect time to do some bundle pieces and a *Treasure Gems* page.



Miehle, maximum sheet, 38x55.

## *Purchasing Carroll Coleman's Prairie Press has been my most significant event as a printer*



Carroll Coleman at the University of Iowa.



Carroll Coleman of Muscatine, Iowa spent his entire life as a printer. Between 1935 and 1970 he published about 150 different books by writers as diverse as James Norman Hall, Wendell Berry and Wallace Stegner.

He was personal friends with most of the important people in typography and book making, including Robert Hunter Middleton from Ludlow, Paul A. Bennett at Linotype, Will Ransom, and numerous others. He was a close friend of Steve Watts from American Typefounders, Victor Hammer, the famous type designer, and William A. Kittredge at Lakeside Press, famous printers like William Berkely Updike, W. A. Dwiggins, Alfred A. Knopf, and many more.

Coleman also designed a great many books printed by others.

Acquiring the Prairie Press was undoubtedly the most significant event in my avocation as a printer.

After Carroll's death in 1989 I endeavored to help his widow, with no plans whatever of buying the press. Eventually she offered me the entire caboodle, and I spent several months making one or two trips a week. I highly prize the type collection, and a great many rare books, but the prize of all is a *Decretorum* printed by Johann Amerbach at Basle in 1487. It still has its original, intact leather binding going back almost 425 years!



**MichiGander 'Goose**  
**Lansing, Michigan**  
 The Annual Wayzgoose of Amalgamated Printers' Association  
 June 23-26 2011

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# SEND DUES

The January APA bundle contained a notice and a return envelope regarding the 2011 APA dues. If you missed it, check your bundle again, write out a check to the Amalgamated Printers' Association and mail it to the new secretary: Phillip Driscoll. 135 East Church St., Clinton, MI 49236. Questions? **E-mail Phil.**

**APA's Wayzgoose coming June 23 – 26, 2011**

**THIS YEAR'S GOOSE:**

**MichiGander 'GOOSE**

**Click the above photo to go to the web site!**