

Editor's letter

NO AMOUNT OF PLANNING can prepare one for the unexpected, either the good or the bad. While the vagaries of a volunteer production crew—such as *Amphora* has—immediately come to mind, the real-life concerns of printers and designers are very much at the fore of this issue.

This year saw printer and poet John Pass and designer Chip Kidd address Alcuin Society events in Vancouver regarding the challenges of their particular pursuits, and the opportunities these present for creativity and innovation (extracts from their presentations are elsewhere in this issue).

Pass approaches his work with a poet's eye, and so the challenges he faces are largely with how to reflect the sense of a text in its visual arrangement, and enhance the reading experience. While poems are spoken, making the language perform on the page is a challenge for the printer trying to find the best way to set type (and anyone who remembers lyrics on an overhead projection or PowerPoint slide will know how badly laid out some poetry can be, distorting and mangling its meaning).

Kidd, on the other hand, often works closely with authors, as well as publishers and marketers, who are less concerned with reflecting the content of a book than creating an image that sells the content. During an uproarious presentation to the New-Old Book Symposium held in Vancouver this fall, he regaled his audience with the challenges, and some of the potential solutions to the demands the designer faces. The best editors are adept at managing a publisher's relationships with authors; the best designers are equally adept at managing relationships between the various parts of the production team as well as the marketplace.

Jonathan Shipley rounds out the major features in this issue with an article on cookbooks and those who collect them. Publishing is a grand kitchen, with no single recipe, but Shipley makes progress towards finding out what appeals to the tastes of one segment of collectors.

And what of *Amphora*?

We cultivate our own tastes and strive to satisfy them, but this issue found itself short a quarter of its committed content when deadline rolled around at the end of September. While work on assembling content for the issue began in early summer, much of that work began all over again in October. And with the social whirl of autumn, and the allure of high-paying work (which triggered a change in our layout team), this issue was delayed.

Our challenges are small versus those of Library and Archives Canada, however. Ongoing concerns regarding how collections are managed and maintained (or not), funding cuts that are driving further changes, and more recently concerns over what staff can and cannot do, deserve the attention of all parts of Canada's cultural community.

Michael Peterman offers a personal take on the impact of the changes in this issue. To take action yourself and speak up in defence of Library and Archives Canada, write your local Member of Parliament or directly to

Hon. James Moore
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Official Languages
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And while you're at it—don't forget *Amphora*. Have you read a book you think others would like to know about? or maybe attended a book arts or collectors' event of particular significance? Perhaps there's a new press that's doing cool things in your part of the country. We would love to hear what's going on. Drop us a line at pmitham@telus.net.

Peter Mitham, editor