



*Kwakiutl House Pole. Wood engraving by Alistair Bell*

## NEWS & NOTES

The first note is an unhappy one since it marks the passing of two well-known Alcuin members. First we were sad to hear of the death of **William C. (Bill) McConnell** on December 6th 2001. Bill was a founding member of the Alcuin Society and he incorporated it. He pioneered literary publishing on the west coast when, in 1954, he established Klanak Press, a private press devoted to producing limited editions by Canadian writers, and featuring fine design and typography. Klanak Press published eleven titles in all, the last title in 1978.

We were also sad to hear of the death of former Alcuin Society Chair **Madeline Williams**. Madeline was our Chair from 1987 to 1991. Anyone who worked with Madeline will remember her graciousness and her warm sense of humour.

On a happier note congratulations are in order for current Board Member **Ralph Stanton**, who has recently been appointed Head of Special Collections at the University of British Columbia.

Congratulations are also in order for long-time Alcuin member and treasurer **Gene Horvath**, who has just published his two-volume study entitled *A Canadian Collection of Hungarica*. Volume one covers Books, 1494–1819 and volume two Maps and City Views, 1493–1817. For ordering information please contact bookseller John King at [antbook@aol.com](mailto:antbook@aol.com)

On a giddier note I have news for all avid Anglophiles out there. The London *Sunday Times* of September 30th carried an advertisement proclaiming that “Now you can become one of only 450 owners of the *Millennium Domesday Book*. This

THE BOOK DESIGN COMPETITION  
COMMITTEE OF THE ALCUIN SOCIETY  
INVITES ALL CANADIAN PUBLISHERS  
AND / OR BOOK DESIGNERS TO  
SUBMIT ENTRIES FOR THEIR BOOKS  
PUBLISHED DURING THE 2001  
PUBLISHING YEAR  
DEADLINE MARCH 15

FOR ENTRY FORMS OR MORE INFORMATION  
PLEASE E-MAIL RICHARD HOPKINS AT  
[rhopkins@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:rhopkins@interchange.ubc.ca)

book  
design  
competition  
2002

perfect facsimile copy of Domesday is bound in a replica of the earliest-known binding dating from the 12th century.” To become one of the lucky 450 owners of this treasure you need only send along “6,750 pounds, payable in a lump sum or by up to 18 instalments of 375 pounds a month.” For more information please see [www.Domesdaybook.com!](http://www.Domesdaybook.com!)



The completion of another major publishing project was mentioned in the November 15th edition of the *New York Times International*. “Fifty four years after the discovery of the first of the **Dead Sea Scrolls**, a sensation in 20th-century archaeology, all the ancient texts have finally been published, or nearly so. The announcement of the virtual completion of the project – involving some 900 scrolls and commentaries in 38 volumes, two of them in final stages of preparation – is to be made today at the New York Public Library by Dr. Emanuel Tov.”



And then there was this serious plea from Canadian writers in the November 24th *Globe and Mail*:

“As a Canadian reader, you’re probably aware that it’s been a tough year for **Canadian publishers**, but perhaps you don’t know how tough it’s been.

Our presses publish world-class writing that’s read all over the planet, but here at home, many of these same companies are struggling to stay alive. They’ve all suffered, but the hardest-hit are Canada’s small presses, regional presses, and those that are independently owned. These publishers support a great deal of this country’s poetry, drama, and emerging fiction, as well as

grassroots, experimental and critical writing. Many of Canada’s best-known writers were first published by them.

This year, all publishers – large and small – have been hit hard. Lots of them have had to cut back on the number of books they publish, many have been brought to the brink of financial ruin, and some have even closed. We are worried that more may close. As readers and writers, we have taken out this ad to ask Canadian book-buyers to remember Canadian publishers this holiday season. Please join us in showing our publishers that we support them in their struggle to keep making books and that we affirm that their survival is essential to our culture.” (signed by 367 Canadian writers). Please take note!



From the *New York Times* for October 15th comes this news story about gutsy American publisher **Morgan Entrekin**, president of Grove/Atlantic. It seems that one outcome of the tragedy of September 11th was the withdrawal of a number of American publishers from the prestigious Frankfurt Book Fair. Apparently “more than 30 of the American exhibitors pulled out completely,” and “most of the larger houses reduced their staffs from dozens to handfuls.” But not Morgan Entrekin. “Me? Not coming? Are you kidding?” Mr. Entrekin said. “...George Bush himself would have to hold me down. This is my favorite week of the year...this is my life. I pour my heart and soul into what I do – I live and breathe it.” Bravo Morgan!



Work is beginning on the **Art of the Book ’03 exhibition**, which will open at the York Quay Gallery, Harbourfront, Tor-

onto, in September 2003, and tour across Canada to Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, and two or three other locations to be confirmed. Jurors are Carol Barton, Alan Stein, and Michael Wilcox. Deadline for submissions by slides is June 30, 2002. The call for entry application form is now available to be downloaded on the CBBAG Web site (see below). In order to view the call for entry you will require Adobe Acrobat Reader. Or to request an application form e-mail the curators — forms will be mailed in February 2002.



Bibliographical discoveries seldom make the newspapers, but a recent revelation by two Princeton University researchers created such a sensation that it was featured in a January 2001 issue of the *New York Times*. In a talk given in London in late 2000 and a month later in New York, Dr. Paul Needham, Librarian of the Scheide

Library at Princeton, and his co-researcher Blaise Auguera y Arcas unveiled the results of their recent research of the metal type used in **Johann Gutenberg's printing shop**. It has long been thought that Gutenberg's most important invention was the creation of a system of casting multiple pieces of identical type using hardened punches and a metal matrix. But in superimposing images of letters from the Gutenberg Bible and other early printing, the pair found variations in letters inconsistent with mass production. "Looking at individual pages carefully, using high-detail digital photography and very clever mathematical software analysis, what we found is that in this earliest printing no two letters are absolutely identical in the way they would have to be if they were all cast from the same matrix," Needham remarked. He and Auguera y Arcas have concluded that Gutenberg must have used a less sophisticated process, such as sand-casting, to produce the type used in the making of the Bible."



#### **Canadian History of the Book Project**

— A project to study the history of the book in Canada received a \$2.3-million grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada in 2000. The three-volume project will explore the writing, reproduction, distribution and reception of the book in Canada from the 16th century to the present as well as the role that Canadian authors, readers, book trade workers and publishers play within the international community.

The five-year grant will support collaborative research among a national network of scholars, said Professor Patricia Fleming

**DON'T FORGET**

*Twenty-fourth Annual*

**WAYZGOOSE  
2002**

*April 27, 2002 at the  
Grimsby Public Art Gallery  
in Grimsby, Ontario*

**A CELEBRATION OF  
THE BOOK ARTS**

of the Faculty of Information Studies of the University of Toronto, project director and co-editor of Volume 1. “[It will] bring together specialists in a variety of disciplines, enable students to broaden their experience and engage participants in sustained collaborative scholarship,” she said.

Specialists in areas such as literature, history, technology, economics and information studies as well as students and post-doctoral fellows will be involved in the editing, writing and researching of the project. The grant will support a project office at the University of Toronto, research sites at Dalhousie University, Université de Sherbrooke and Simon Fraser University.

The volumes will be available in French and English and will be published by the University of Toronto Press and les Presses de l’Université de Montreal. Volume 1, which oversees the history of the book from the beginnings to 1840, is slated for publication in 2002. (Originally reported by U of T public affairs office.)



Some incredibly useful Web sites, one British, one American, one Canadian and one international:

#### **HoBo**

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~hobo>

Formerly History of the Book at Oxford; currently aims to provide comprehensive coverage of all UK seminars, lectures and conferences related to the history of the book; also contains some European and (in the case of the annual SHARP conferences) American events.

#### **The Center for Book Arts**

<http://centerforbookarts.org/>

The Center for Book Arts is dedicated to preserving the traditional crafts of

book-making, as well as exploring and encouraging contemporary interpretations of the book as an art object. Founded by Richard Minsky in 1974, it was the first non-profit organization of its kind in the nation (US), and has since become a model for others around the world. Its work is channeled through five program areas: exhibitions related to the arts of the book; lectures on topics of interest to book artists and craftspeople; a modest publication schedule; services to artists, both established and emerging and – much the most prominent currently – an extensive offering of [book arts] classes.

#### **The Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild**

(CBBAG: – pronounced “cabbage”)

<http://www.cbbag.ca>

CBBAG was founded in 1983 by a group of professionals and amateurs from all branches of the book arts: bookbinders, calligraphers, paper makers, letterpress printers, paper marblers, and book artists, as well as archivists and conservators. CBBAG presents workshops and courses on a wide variety of topics, including bookbinding and box making, paper making and decorating, letterpress printing, paper conservation and more. Check out their Web site for an incredible number of links to other book arts organizations.

#### **Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing**

<http://www.sharpweb.org>

The Society was created in 1991 to provide a global network for book historians, who until then had usually worked in isolation. SHARP now has

over 1000 members in over 20 countries. Each year SHARP holds an annual conference that brings many of these scholars together for stimulating discussion on an enormously wide range of issues.

## PAPER EPHEMERA

### *Eminently Collectible*

THE vast amount of paper that passes through our hands during our lives is the printed ephemera of future generations, if only some of it gets saved for them to discover later. That is not as certain as it used to be, what with the less spacious accommodations people have and their propensity to throw things away out of necessity.

Luckily for present generations, 200, 150, 100, even 50 years ago people had attics, basements, garages, barns in which things of all kinds accumulated, including paper ephemera. And it's all collectible, once it comes to light.

Things got saved for sentimental reasons, such as invitations to weddings, graduations, and other social gatherings, as well as postcards, tickets, programs and the like. The most gorgeous piece of printing I've seen in that category was a large broadside proclamation of George IV's coronation. Who wouldn't have saved that?

Another powerful incentive is historical events; the first moon landing; the sinking of the Titanic, royal coronations and deaths, wars. Newspapers and magazines cover these events with drama, and all get saved, even today. Who didn't save something

about the World Trade Center disaster?

But we can all remember things we didn't save, like the first Superman comic I bought for 25 cents at a drug store in Mission that is now worth hundreds of dollars. But some saved it, and it is now collectible.

The heroes in all this are the ephemera dealers who find this stuff and take it to the great ephemera shows in Allentown, Hartford, Atlantic City, and Greenwich, where thousands of collectors gather to search for additions to their collections, or start new ones.

In Vancouver there is one such dealer, Antiquarius, in the old Dominion Bank Building, and I've made some great finds there. There are a few dealers down at the harbourfront in Toronto, but the really big treasure trove is in America, where there is more interest in saving things and more interest in collecting them.

I started collecting when I lived in New York, where there are paper ephemera shows every weekend in high school auditoriums and church basements in the winter and empty parking lots in the summer. My own collections will give an idea of what's out there to tempt the unwary with a bit of spare change in his or her pocket, because ephemera is not all that expensive. But it's like a dripping faucet – the drops can add up over time into a flood.

First I was attracted by the wonderful old Sunday comics, from the teens through the 1920s and 30s. Don't think newsprint doesn't last; there are perfect copies of the great coloured broadsheets of Terry and the Pirates, Mutt and Jeff, Flash Gordon, Pete the Tramp, Ella Cinders, Maggie and Jiggs, Prince Valiant, Tarzan, the lot. I had to have them for sentimental