

# The APHA THE AMERICAN PRINTING HISTORY ASSOCIATION Letter

---

No. 51

1983, No. One

This newsletter, a publication of the American Printing History Association is sent without charge to all members. See back page for mailing address information. Edited by Prof. Catherine Tyler Brody. Assistant Editor, Philip Sperling.

ANNUAL MEETING. The Ninth Annual Meeting of the American Printing History Association was held on January 29th at Columbia University's Butler Library. Dr. Morris A. Gelfand, the President, welcomed the audience and introduced the officers for their reports on APHA's activities during the past year. Dr. Gelfand announced that the APHA Bylaws have been revised, resulting in several modifications in APHA procedures. Important changes include a provision that officers now have a stated term of office and do not succeed themselves. The intention is to give more members the opportunity to participate in organization activities. Moreover, new regulations for local chapters do not require each member of a local chapter to belong to the national organization. Officers of local chapters, however, must be members of the national group. APHA publications, such as the APHA Letter and the journal, Printing History, will be sent only to those with full national membership. Also, the new Bylaws provide for an elected representative of the Chapter to sit on the national Board, to have a hand in policy making.

REPORT OF THE PROGRAM VICE PRESIDENT. Marie Korey, Vice President for Programs, reported on the Annual Conference of last September. Under the committee chairmanship of John Lancaster, the day-long conference was devoted to 19th century American printing and publishing. Vice President Korey announced that the 1983 conference will be held on September 24th and again will be presented on the campus of Columbia University. Francis Mattson of the Rare Book Division of New York Public Library is chairman of the planning committee. The topic is to be 20th century typography and typographers. Dr. Susan O. Thompson (editor of Printing History) will deliver the keynote address on "American Typography at the Threshold of the 20th Century." Ms. Korey also announced that other speakers are to include Abe Lerner (on Bruce Rogers), Herbert Johnson (on Frederic Goudy), and two additional speakers that have not yet been named. Mark your calendar now: September 24th will be a red letter day.

REPORT OF THE PUBLICATIONS VICE PRESIDENT. John Hench, Vice President for Publications, submitted the following report: "During the year just past, APHA published six issues of The APHA Letter, Number 6 of Printing History and, to close the gap, the double issue Number 7/8 of Printing History. We are now up-to-date with these publications and begin 1983 right on target. During this year we will strive to continue to produce a newsletter and journal of high quality in a way that will discharge our responsibilities for timeliness to our members. The APHA Letter will be sent out as usual and Number 9 of Printing History is scheduled for June and Number 10 for the end of December. Another primary task for the year will be the publication of A Directory of Printing Museums by Mildred Lowe. I am grateful to all those people who have assisted in the publications work of APHA during 1982."

TREASURER'S REPORT. The following Treasurer's Report, prepared for the Annual Meeting, covers January 1, 1982 through December 31, 1982. (All figures are rounded to nearest dollar.)

CASH BALANCE AS OF JANUARY 1, 1982

\$12,117.00

INCOME:

Membership Dues, New and Renewals	\$21,265.00
Interest on N.O.W. Acct.	643.00
Interest on C.D. #123-532542	691.00
Registration 7th APHA Conference	4,045.00
Advertising in Printing History No. 5 and No. 6, incl. re-imbursement for paper and extra copies to Mohawk.	8,140.00
APHA publications sold	265.00
APHA Mailing Lists sold	780.00

35,829.00

\$47,946.00

EXPENSES:

Paid to New York Chapter (Dues)	910.00
Paid to New York Chapter (Spec.)	250.00
Deynor: Membership Maintenance	2,164.00
Deynor: The APHA Letter - Nos. 45-49	2,840.00
PRINTING HISTORY (APHA Journal)	
Issue No. 5	6,795.00
Issue No. 6	8,114.00
Issue No. 6 (add'l-JG/Saxon)	2,327.00
Issue No. 7/8 (paper)	2,255.00
Issue No. 7/8 (photog)	226.00
Brochure Advert. for Printing History (cover as Issue No. 5)	841.00
APHA Annual Meeting 1.30.82	240.00
Plaque - APHA Award 1.30.82	200.00
Expenses 6th APHA Annual Conference (JG)	284.00
Expenses 7th APHA Annual Conference	3,483.00
Rental P.O. Box 4922 Gr. Central Sta.	190.00
Postage	298.00
Stationery (Accurate Envelope Co.)	772.00
Sundry Supplies, Miscellaneous Exp.	1,574.00

\$33,763.00

CASH BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1982

\$14,183.00

Treasurer Sperling noted that two major expenses would be covered by this balance:  
Printing History Issue 7/8 and The APHA Letter No. 50.

REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP VICE PRESIDENT. Terry Belanger, Vice President for Membership, reported on membership progress. He noted that membership has increased and that the Philadelphia Chapter has now been fully established, and has had its first meeting. Prof. Belanger announced that he will be travelling this April to several other locations where chapters are being organized, with the purpose of assisting chapter formation. When he returns from his travels, Vice President Belanger expects to have further announcements regarding the establishment of additional APHA chapters.

ELECTION OF NEW TRUSTEES. The report of the Nominating Committee, chaired by Catherine T. Brody, presented three names for the positions of trustee on APHA's National Board. These were Edward Colker (State University of New York at Purchase), Herbert Johnson (Rochester Institute of Technology) and Virginia Smith (Baruch College). This slate was unanimously approved and the three new trustees were welcomed as Board members.

# The Transcendent Purpose of the American Printing History Association

© 1980, By J. Ben Lieberman. All rights reserved.

(An address delivered January 26, 1980, at the Annual Meeting of APHA, at Columbia University, New York City)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you, Cathy [Professor Catherine T. Brody, president of APHA] for your kind words about me and for your presentation to me of the APHA Award, which I consider a very great honor, and which, of course, I will cherish.

Before I begin my formal address, I must speak personally for a moment. As many of you know, I was quite seriously ill all last year, facing death twice from a somewhat rare and mysterious disease that left me quite blinded for some time and otherwise afflicted. I consider myself extremely lucky to be virtually recovered, as you can see, and I credit much of it not only to Elizabeth and the rest of my family, but also to the many, many wonderful friends who gave me encouragement and support. I want to thank most sincerely those of you who are in the audience today.

I say this especially to the officers and the board of APHA, who were particularly helpful.

I am delighted and proud indeed to receive the APHA Award. But if I seemed somewhat less than ecstatic at the presentation, it was not any residual effect of my illness. I was merely reflecting what I know all of you feel, too--the sadness and fear of the current world situation: the inhumane affront of Iran's holding blameless Americans as hostages, and the danger of a new world war being sparked by the Soviet Union in invading Afghanistan and threatening us and all others who cherish liberty and human dignity rather than slavery under totalitarian conquerors.

I am sure the crisis makes this meeting today less joyful than the previous APHA meetings of this kind have been. And in all candor, we have to face the question of why we should even be spending our time here today on what seems--by comparison, that is--so

trivial and ephemeral a thing as printing history.

Also, I must admit that despite my pleasure and pride at receiving the APHA Award, I find myself facing up again to a question that has been asked of me directly and indirectly through the years, and which is akin to the questions I asked myself often during my long confinement in bed. At a time like that, one asks himself: "What have I been doing with my life? Was it the best I could have done? What will I do, the same or different, if I get out of this alive?" And that parallels the quite pointed question which friends have often asked me, sometimes not too delicately: "Why are you wasting your time on hobby printing, printing history, and writing books and publishing books on typefaces and other esoteric frivolities, when you should be concentrating on the world problems that you used to deal with?"

Well, I have had an answer all along, as at least some of you know, and my self-questioning through the past year has not changed it, or caused me to want to change my activities for something else. I think that spelling out my reason, as briefly as I can, will simplify the basic message I feel my responsibility to leave with you.

I will start by making explicit the two basic principles involved in my answer:

First, I believe intensely in personal liberty, in democracy, and individualism. Without these, which are really all parts of the same thing, we are not human beings!

Second, I believe that printing without restraint--freedom of the press--is the only real guarantee of personal liberty, democracy and individualism in any society beyond the

simple one-to-one interaction of a small isolated village.

While that is the essence, I know it is not explanation enough. But to give you a useful explanation, I have had to conclude, as I thought through the writing of my address, that it could best be done, at least in part, in personal terms which normally might be inappropriate. I hope you approve in the end, because my message has to reach you in personal terms if you are to come to understand and realize the importance of APHA in your own personal terms. Thus: How did I get into printing? How did you get into it? How important is it to me? How important is it to you? What do human liberty and freedom of the press really mean to you? At any rate I decided the approach is worth trying, and I hope you, my audience, will make it successful.

\* \* \* \* \*

I start, then, with how Elizabeth and I got into personal or hobby printing, and then into our efforts to push personal printing as a major hobby.

Our direct involvement in printing began in San Francisco in 1952, when I was Assistant General Manager of the San Francisco Chronicle. My boss, Paul C. Smith, the general manager and editor, had started a private press, inspired by the pervasive California interest and activities in fine printing and private presses. Until then it had never occurred to me that I could have a press of my own. I had been make-up editor on other newspapers and on the Chronicle, and had been frustrated by the very strict ITU rule that kept me from touching the type, especially when we were half a minute from closing and I knew I could get that form filled up faster than the make-up man across the stone from me. Suddenly seeing my boss's press, I realized I could have my own type, touch it all I wanted, make up my forms any way I wanted, and print anything I wanted. And thus was started the Herity Press--with the enthusiastic partnership of Elizabeth, who had had the same frustrations in her own journalistic career.

As it happened, I had just finished writing my doctoral dissertation at Sanford University, with "Changing Concepts of Freedom of the Press" as my subject. As part of my research, I had probed into what

editors, reporters, printers, and Stanford students thought freedom of the press meant--and what it ought to mean. I had been shocked to find that none of these groups really knew what freedom of the press meant--in the United States or elsewhere--and that most of them couldn't care less. Reporters and printers alike thought it might be a good idea for government to have control over the press to prevent its excesses, which they said were caused by the venality of publishers and their greed for the profits that rest on high circulation which is to be achieved only by shoddy and unethical practice.

Not so, incidentally, I found the same feeling among students in the Graduate School of Journalism here at Columbia, where I was a professor some years later.

\* \* \* \* \*

And just a week ago, there was a meeting in Philadelphia, called the First Amendment Congress, attended by about 250 educators, lawyers, and journalists--but no representative of APHA--to deal importantly with the question of freedom of the press. A Gallup Poll released at the meeting showed that three of every four Americans asked did not know what the First Amendment is or what it deals with, and that six of every ten persons with a college background lacked awareness of the provisions of the First Amendment. I found this very disturbing.

Equally disturbing was the finding that 37 percent of the respondents--more than one-third of the American population on a projected basis--felt that the present curbs on freedom of the press are "not enough." Since 14 percent had no opinion--meaning that at best they were not committed supporters of a truly free press--we have to face the fact that more than half the people in the United States are not committed supporters of freedom of the press.

I was not only shocked but worried by what I learned in my research for my dissertation, because as a journalist I already had reason to believe that most of the general public either felt the same way or could easily be persuaded that government control would be a good thing. Besides, the press was just then opening itself to a new threat--which still exists--of a logical demand by the press itself for government control through its introduction of the concept of "freedom of information." This concept means that the public has a "right

to know." Given that basis for providing news, cannot the public rise up and say, "The press is not doing a proper job of informing us, so, since we have a right to know, the government must take over to insure that right"? The day may still come when that question will threaten freedom of the press very seriously indeed. And on top of all that, during the time I was doing my dissertation, America was in the middle of the McCarthy era, which caused justifiable fears that we were being swayed into a dictatorship that would end not only freedom of the press but all our other freedoms as well.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then, one night as Elizabeth and I were doing some printing in our own basement (really the ground floor in the typical San Francisco house) something else hit me: working the Herity Press, what Elizabeth and I were doing, was freedom of the press in its purest and simplest form. We had not had to ask anyone's permission to have and use our press, and nobody could stop us from printing what we wished and felt. In short, no licensing or censorship was involved. Here, we suddenly saw, was an answer to much of what was worrying me.

Here was printing, a wonderful hobby, if a largely unknown one for various reasons that could be overcome. What if we could help make printing into a major hobby? Wouldn't that be an education, not only for the personal printers themselves, but their families and friends, and ultimately the general public, as to what freedom of the press really is? Newspapers and television, after all, are not the only powerful mass media. In the same sense that we have an industrial complex, there is a communication complex in our society that lets us transmit information and opinions in a variety of ways, many unsuspected. In the end, the whole communication complex is far more powerful than the mass media as such. The private press, as a form of personal expression, could be a powerful part of that communication complex, once it became a major hobby.

So Elizabeth and I decided we would give our efforts to helping make printing a major hobby. After all, if we had a million private presses (not a large number for a popular hobby in the United States), even if we couldn't help stop a dictatorship

from forming, wouldn't we have a ready-made underground press to fight that dictatorship in the same way the underground press had helped fight the Nazis in World War II? A dictatorship would have a fine time trying to locate and destroy all those million presses! Out of this resolve came the chappel movement, my little book Printing as a Hobby (which has had and continues to have a lot more effect than even I dreamed), our International Register of Private Press Names, the worldwide traveling exhibit of private press printing under the title "Personal Printing: A Modern Folk Art," which I did for the United States government, the push for printing museums, ideas to enrich the traditions and customs of personal or hobby printing. Plus our publishing firm, The Myriade Press, Inc., to publish needed books in the printing field. And our initiation and founding of APHA.

Well, we haven't quite got our million hobby printers yet. But we are increasingly confident that there is a snowball rolling, and that they will come. There are more personal printers now than might be suspected. Printing is an ideal hobby--educational, fun, useful--ranging from simple and inexpensive to very expensively complicated, and from modest to show-off. We are confident that the snowball will keep rolling, because, happily, we have been joined by others in helping push the snowball--persons who understand what is at stake.

\* \* \* \* \*

What is at stake?

Only our liberty, our existence as human beings.

There was a time, not too long ago, when that simple statement--that our liberty is at stake--would have been enough to alert us to thought and action. Today, it sounds platitudinous and hackneyed, and we are not even necessarily sure that we want liberty, if we have to fight to maintain it, or if we can have a paternal (or maternal?) government to take care of us instead.

Many Americans today do not seem to cherish--or perhaps even understand--personal liberty as much as earlier generations did. It is taken for granted, much as the air is taken for granted. But there is a sobering, even threatening, difference. When our naturally fresh air became polluted, we could and did take steps to reverse the situation. But by the time we recognize the erosion of our

liberties, it may be too late for reversal. An authoritarian control is very hard to overcome.

Our forefathers came to America in search of freedom, fleeing religious and other shackles. They instilled the conscious feeling for liberty in their children. But for perhaps the large majority of Americans today, the immigrant generation is long since forgotten, and the freedom fervor long since dissipated. In my case, however, the immigrant generation included my own mother and father, and the lesson is still fresh. I do hope all APHA members, as a special case, have the same feeling for liberty.

\* \* \* \* \*

But how do we preserve freedom of the press, much less have it powerfully able to serve as protector of our other freedoms?

Not simply by the press demanding it, or even quietly trying to explain its importance in serving democracy.

No, the message has to be more pervasive than that: It has to hit everyone where he or she lives, not simply where the owners of the mass media live. Fortunately, and inevitably, in the United States, at least, the free press is more pervasive than that, in the great resource of nongovernmental printing equipment and its unhampered use.

However,, the pervasiveness of printing is not in itself a blessing. Printing can be used for not only pervasive but also most persuasive propaganda, evil as well as good. And there is no doubt that sometimes the failings of the press are egregious indeed.

But the First Amendment does not say "freedom of the press, so long as the press is responsible and behaves itself." It says "freedom" period. Why? Because once qualifications are put on, someone has to judge whether the qualifications are met, and that means government. And that means government control--and that means goodbye freedom, because government inevitably uses the press not for individual human good but rather for its own purposes, requiring control and other force because its policies are in fact harmful to human good. So, for the benefit of a press free to speak out against the government, we have to take the bad side as the price.

At stake is personal liberty for each of us--and APHA has, in my own opinion, the opportunity if not the responsibility for great public service, to bring to bear the history of printing in a way which demonstrates clearly and forcefully to the general public how liberty is at stake and how freedom of the press came about and how it works to insure our liberty.

\* \* \* \* \*

Specifically, printing needs to be understood in terms of the whole communication complex--that is, all the media (including word-of-mouth as a medium), laws, customs, languages, equipment, and so forth that we use in a society to get and give information and to hear and pass along opinions. It might surprise some persons to learn that the mass media--whoever controls them--do not have as much power as does word of mouth in a truly urgent and emotional situation, and that union papers and newsletters and church papers and even student papers often influence readers more directly than the mass media. This has never been truly researched, yet printing cannot be truly understood without knowledge of the communication complex of which it--printing--is a strongly influential part.

And, most importantly, the public needs to understand that limiting freedom of the press means limiting the whole communication complex. We need to demonstrate and constantly remind the public what I am sure we know as a gut feeling: that it is better to suffer whatever distortions the mass media may set forth than open to censorship not only the mass media but also every piece of paper that goes through a Xerox machine or Mimeograph, every union and school and church paper--and in time, every personal letter and telephone call.

\* \* \* \* \*

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

THANKS TO RETIRING TRUSTEES. Special thanks were extended by Dr. Gelfand to Stephen O. Saxe and Lilli Wronker, who were retiring from the Board after several years of generous and valued service. By acclamation the membership adopted a motion expressing APHA's thanks and gratitude to these two individuals for their contributions to the organization.

TESTIMONIAL SCROLL AWARDED. On behalf of the APHA Board of Trustees, E.H. "Pat" Taylor, Chairman of the Board, presented a testimonial certificate to Catherine Tyler Brody for her contributions as an officer of APHA and as editor of APHA Letter. The beautifully framed certificate had been handsomely printed by Morris Gelfand at the Stone House Press, and embellished with the splendid calligraphy of Lilli Wronker. Your editor, quite overcome with the sentiment of this tribute and generosity of the praise, responded briefly. Let me repeat once more my appreciation to all who have helped and encouraged and enriched my work with APHA over the years!

APHA ANNUAL AWARD(S). Breaking with precedent, this year two APHA Awards were presented, to Leona Rostenberg and Madeleine B. Stern whose remarkable careers as antiquarian book dealers, scholars and authors have extended over more than 30 years. Both Miss Rostenberg and Miss Stern have written and lectured extensively on the history of printing and publishing. Dr. Gelfand presented identical plaques to each of the two recipients and read the inscription: "The 1983 Annual Award of the American Printing History Association is presented to Leona Rostenberg and Madeleine B. Stern in grateful recognition of their important services advancing understanding of the history of printing and its allied arts." (As Miss Rostenberg remarked on receiving hers, "We won't have to fight.") Miss Rostenberg's acceptance speech was entitled "My Two Lives in Rare Books" and reflected in a witty fashion her long-time concern, dating back to the time of her doctoral dissertation, with the history of early printing. Madeleine Stern's talk, which she entitled "Connections With Printing History," recounted some of her research projects involving the history of printing. APHA intends to publish these papers at some time in the future for the benefit of all those not fortunate enough to have been present on this memorable occasion.

MEMBERS' QUERIES. Frank O. Walsh, III (Yesteryear Book Shop, 256 East Paces Ferry Road, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30305) requests some helpful assistance from fellow APHA members. He writes as follows: "I am doing some research into the galley proof presses produced under the contract of Dr. Miles of Indiana. The "Miles Nervine" proof press is part of my printing press collection and has always fascinated me. I have at present two different examples of the little press: one is cast "Miles Pain Pills" while the other is "Miles Heart Cure". How many other variants are there? Also exactly when and for how long were they made? Were they made by the R. Hoe Co. or someone else? What was the biographical background on Dr. Miles? And finally, what reference articles, books, etc. would discuss the subject at length of Dr. Miles and his presses?"

As a beginning to a response to Mr. Walsh's question, your editor can supply the information that Miles was Dr. Franklin Miles of Elkhart, Indiana. His first home remedy was a sedative called Miles Nervine. The company he founded in 1884 went on to much greater renown when it launched Alka-Seltzer in 1931. In 1978 the company was taken over by Bayer of West Germany. Until then the company had never had a chief executive officer who wasn't a Miles, a Beardsley or a Compton (the names of the original three partners). Annual sales now are about \$537 million. Other Miles products are One-A-Day Vitamins and S.O.S. scouring pads.

EXHIBITS. The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City. "Holbein and the Court of Henry VIII." April 21-July 30. This remarkable exhibition will include some 70 drawings by Hans Holbein (1497/8-1543) on loan from the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. The drawings are being shown for the first time in America at the Morgan Library and the J. Paul Getty Museum, where they will be on view until March 27th. The Morgan is including much Tudor material from its own rich collection, such as illuminated manuscripts and early editions of printed books illustrated by Holbein.

AND MORE RHYMES ABOUT PRINTERS AND THEIR ANCESTORS. From "Unjustified Lines" by Paul Beaujon" (alias of Beatrice Warde) comes still another delightful set of verses:

#### HOW PRINTING CAME

"O caravans from far Cathay, what treasure do you bring?"  
 "We've spices for the Emperor and silks to robe the King,  
 And twisted horn of unicorn, and other precious freight,  
 And a battered pack of playing-cards, that tell the ways of  
 Fate."

Then answered Hans of Nuremburg, A Master Limner he:  
 "Your playing cards are made of stuff that's new and strange to me  
 Not vellum skin, but "paper" thin, and look how it is dinted:  
 'Tis not the trace of any pen, but wood-engraved and printed!"

So printing came to Western Lands, in dusty gipsy-dress,  
 And tarot cards were cut and rubbed before the earliest press;  
 And all out store of written lore, that Print alone can guard,  
 Was once the Fortune clear foretold upon a playing-card!

J.B. POMFRET DIES. We were saddened to learn of the death of Jen Pomfret on January 24th. 1983 was her 50th year in book publishing and production. A dedicated and serious professional, she was one of the pioneer women in the graphic arts field. At one time, she maintained offices in Boston at Copley Square and in New York on Fifth Avenue. Her two volumes of New England Short Stories (1934, 1936), published with The Pontefract Press imprint, are in the collection of the New York Public Library. In 1948 she moved to Yonkers. Over the years she was a staunch supporter of APHA, the Typophiles and other organizations. In a recent letter she wrote to your editor, "Once upon a time I also wore several hats and was juggling a half dozen duties, all the while lamenting that I had 'only two hands.' As it was largely brain work that was entailed, and nothing dexterous or physical was required, I should have regretted lack of a richer brain or mind." In actual fact, Jen Pomfret never lacked for any of these things, nor for a great and generous spirit.

BOOKS NOTED. Under Cover, An Illustrated History of American Mass Market Paperbacks by Thomas L. Bonn. Penguin, \$12.95. This Penguin original treats the history of cover art and design in mass paperback publishing and its place in the progress of the paperback industry. Illustrated.

PUBLICATIONS FOR 1983. With the good news that the double issue of PRINTING HISTORY No. 7/8 (for 1982) has been distributed to our membership, we start 1983 right on target. The first newsletter for 1983 is this current issue (No. 51) and No. 56 will be issued at the end of year. Issue No. 9 of PRINTING HISTORY is already scheduled for June and No. 10 for December.

#### HAVE YOU MAILED IN YOUR 1983 RENEWAL DUES?

#### MAILING ADDRESSES FOR APHA

**NEWSLETTER ONLY:** Send news items, announcements, comments and other materials for inclusion in APHA Letter directly to the Editor: Prof. Catherine T. Brody, NYC Technical College Library, 300 Jay Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

**DUES, CONTRIBUTIONS, CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICES, AND ALL OTHER CORRESPONDENCE:** Send to APHA, P.O. Box 4922 Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

**MEMBERSHIPS** are for the Calendar Year and include all publications for that year. Annual individual membership for 1983 is \$15.00 and \$20.00 for institutions. Copies of back issues of The APHA Letter are available to members at \$2.50 each, while the supply lasts. APHA Letters Numbers 1 through 20 are now out of print. Back issues of our journal are all available at \$7.50 each copy. Send your orders to our Box Number.