

WHAT I'M UP TO!

Session Eleven: Wed • Jul 1 • 6pm

The group discussed ongoing letterpress and printmaking projects, upcoming historical exhibitions, and technical challenges in their respective shops.

Project Showcases

- Meander Book Workshop: Ray shared a collaborative project with a local poet involving a "meander book" format. The design features an "American sentence" (a 17-syllable form developed by Allen Ginsberg) printed with hand-rolled ink on a text sheet, with handset metal type for haikus composed by the workshop attendees.
- Protest Posters: Ray is developing a series of 30 protest posters using a scanned and laser-cut "Caslon E" from a great student project from 1927. He used AI to source evocative words with definitions starting with "E" to pair with the large initial cap.
- Historical Engravings: Randy shared a famous 1800s engraving he found in a wash tub buried in the basement of a print shop. The artwork depicts the Ephrata Cloister in 1843, showing the buildings in pre-restoration disrepair.
- Dry Point & Etching: Skip is working on dry point prints, including his own and those of his mentor, Mitchell Jameson. He explained the technical difference between dry point (which produces a blurred, intense black line due to the metal burr left by the sharp needle) and acid etching.

Historical Context & Exhibitions

- Ephrata Cloister: The group discussed the history of the Cloister, including the "Gunwad Bibles"—Martyrs' Mirrors—confiscated by Revolutionary soldiers and used as musket wadding.
- America 250: Members are participating in various "250th Anniversary" events. Lauren is hosting a traveling exhibition titled Freedom of the Press: Revolutionary Maryland through August.

- Shelburne Museum: Skip recounted a visit to the Shelburne Museum in Vermont, praising the high quality of their historic print shop and their restoration of iron press tympan.

Shop Updates & Logistics

- APHA Website: Ray is building portfolio pages for APHA members. He suggested that members submit five high-quality images of their work and accompanying text for their personal pages along with an artful self-portrait (avoid mug shots if you can possibly).
- Technical Repairs: Randy reported breaking a 6x10 chase and looking for a specialized welder or blacksmith in Lititz who understands the pressure requirements of printing equipment.
- Studio Expansion: Randy has expanded his shop into the other half of a carriage house, increasing the space by roughly two-thirds.