

# The Gold Leaf

*Spring, 2010*



THE JOURNAL OF THE HAND BOOKBINDERS OF CALIFORNIA

VOLUME TWENTY-SEVEN, NUMBER ONE

# **The Hand Bookbinders of California Officers**

President:	Klaus-Ullrich Rötzscher
Advisor to President:	Fred Voltmer
Treasurer:	Patricia Bolt
Secretary:	Margaret H. Johnson
Membership:	C. Lang Ingalls
Exhibitions:	Joanne Page
Hospitality:	Signa Houghteling
Gold Leaf Editor:	Coleen Curry
Gold Leaf Production:	C. Lang Ingalls
Workshops:	Coleen Curry
Webmaster:	Nigel Gore
Advisors:	Tom Conroy Signa Houghteling Barbara Land Eleanore Ramsey Robert Rosenzweig

*Note that board member terms with HBC run annually,  
September to September.*

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Volume XXVII, Number One

## Contents

Message from the President	3
The Gold Leaf	4
The Hand Bookbinders of California	
Members' Exhibition 2010	5
Membership Updates	5
Monthly Meetings	6
Minutes of the Board Meeting: April 6, 2010	8
Member Profile: Margaret H. Johnson	10
Articles & Reports	
“A Volunteer at the Guild of Bookworkers Standards Seminar” <i>by Colyn R. Wohlmüt</i>	14
“Gabrielle Fox’s World of Small” <i>by Lyall F. Harris</i>	15
“Two Workshops at Patmos” <i>by Colyn R. Wohlmüt</i>	18
Calendar	
Exhibits	21
Events	22
Call to Entry	22
Study Opportunities	22
Books	25
DVDs	26
Notable Websites	26
A Special Notice to HBC Members	27

On the cover: “Guess who?”

Photo from the GBW Standards of Excellence Conference, held in conjunction with Hand Bookbinders of California.

(Hint: all are members of HBC!)

# Message From the President

Dear members and friends:

Well, where to start? It has been a very busy and exiting time since the last issue of the *Gold Leaf*.

The 2009 Guild of Bookworkers Standards Of Excellence was a terrific success. A heartfelt THANK YOU to all the volunteers who made this happen. I believe I speak for everyone who came from near and far when I say it was very well organized and everything went smoothly. We walked away with newly acquired knowledge, newly forged friendships and an overall good feeling. Do the Hand Bookbinders know to throw a party or what!

Our annual exhibition at the Donohue Rare Book Room was well attended. It was encouraging to see many young people at the opening. The exhibition went to Santa Rosa afterwards with a warm welcome.

In the last few months we were “on the road” due to the renovation of The Book Club’s rooms. We met at different locations each meeting, which added to the usual lively settings. The talk by Don Glaister comes to mind; it was supported by images and actual books, which was a rare treat indeed. I am happy to report that Don is giving a workshop in March. (Oh, this just in--it is already full. Super!)

Do not forget to support The American Bookbinders Museum by telling your friends, offering donations or making a visit. It is the only one in the country and it is right here in the Bay Area. It is important to have a depository of and for our profession.

On a personal note, this is my last message as your president of The Hand Bookbinders. It is time for passing on the gavel. It certainly was my honor and privilege to be of service to you. Thank you board members for standing by me. I can assure my successor that he or she has a very competent group of supporters at his or her disposal.

-Ulli Röttscher, HBC President (klausbinds@aol.com)

# ***The Gold Leaf***

## **From the Editor**

Greetings to HBC members and friends, and to all our extended “family.” I’m honored to have been asked by the Board to take on the responsibility of editing the *Gold Leaf* in 2010.

This newsletter has certainly come a long way from its origins as a typewritten, hand-folded sheet of local club news. Now including color photos and articles that are of interest to our readers around the world, the *Gold Leaf* offers more than ever. Its success is due to the contributions we receive from you—so please send us your articles, profiles, tips, and reviews.

In this issue we have a report from the GBW Standards meeting, and an exciting “travelogue” on a workshop journey to the Greek island of Patmos. Also be sure to see articles on two well-known binders: Gabriel Fox and her “world of small,” and our featured profile on Margaret Johnson.

It’s a great start to another busy year! Keep the *Gold Leaf* in mind for a note or article whenever you attend workshops, visit other binders’ studios, or come up with a great working tip to share.

Peggy DeMouthe

## **Deadlines for Gold Leaf**

Autumn/Winter Journal – September 15, 2010  
Spring/Summer Journal – March 15, 2011

## **Submissions Guidelines**

Please submit each item as a separate Word document or email. Save with subject in the file name (e.g., GlaisterWorkshop). If photos accompany an item, please indicate subject in name (e.g., GlaisterDemo.jpg). Contact the Editor if you need tips on submissions. Many thanks!

Submissions to Peggy DeMouthe ([pdemouthe@mindspring.com](mailto:pdemouthe@mindspring.com))

## **Corrections, Errors, Omissions**

Corrections from the Autumn Gold Leaf: none submitted.

# Member Exhibition 2010

New Exhibition Chair: Vanessa Hardy

The job of Exhibition Chairperson is passing into the very capable hands of Vanessa Hardy. When new commitments made it difficult for Joanne Page to continue, Vanessa generously agreed to take over sooner than expected, and she brings a wide range of experience to the position. She started her working life in the book department at Sotheby's in London, Tokyo and New York, and later at Butterfields in San Francisco.

Vanessa started buying and selling books on her own when she left Butterfields, and learned binding and restoration as a natural progression. She has been binding for about ten years, studying with Anne Kahle and Tom Conroy. She began working at San Francisco Public Library several years ago, working mainly in Special Collections. She particularly enjoys working for a public library where everything is available to everyone. Vanessa will be a great addition to the HBC Board, and to the post of Exhibition Chair.

*Reminder:* Early dates for submissions this year! (See Calendar 'Exhibits', page 21.)

## Membership Updates

HBC welcomes new & reinstating members:

Rebecca Chamlee ☺ Monique Moore-Racine ☺ Michael Thompson  
Peggy DeMouthe ☺ Vanessa Hardy

Membership Changes:

Cathy Adelman's mobile phone is now 310-993-1794

Melinda Padgett's mobile phone is now 831-566-4736. She no longer has a work number and does not take commissions.

Hannah Tashjian's email is now hannahtashjian@gmail.com

# The Hand Bookbinders of California

## Monthly Meetings

HBC meets the first Tuesday of the month, excluding summertime. Generally the board meets at 6pm, with the Program at 7pm.

### OCTOBER

Joanne Page, Exhibitions Chair, announced a change of date for the Annual Members' Exhibition held every third year at the Main Branch of the San Francisco Public Library. It will be held this year in June, July and August, instead of November to January, as usual. Therefore, the deadline for books to be sent for entry is May 15, 2010. (This date was later changed to May 1.) The GBW Seminar was the main item discussed as everyone was getting ready for HBC's work in running the local committee. Coleen Curry reported on Gabrielle Fox's workshop in October and on Don Glaister's workshop to be held in March. The death of Roland Pitschel, long time member of HBC, was reported. The meeting was followed by members working on wallets to be given out at the Seminar.

### NOVEMBER

At a meeting at the Center for the Book, Signa Houghteling gave a report on the GBW Seminar, which had been a great success. Also highly successful was Gabrielle Fox's workshop, which will be reported on in the *Gold Leaf* by the recipient of the scholarship given for the workshop with money donated by Jane Aaron. The Board meeting was followed by a slide talk given by Don Glaister on his work.

### DECEMBER – Holiday Party

The December meeting was the Annual Winter Party, held this year in Barbara Land's new home with lots of wonderful food supplied by attendees.

### JANUARY 2010

The meeting was held in the OddFellows Hall behind Klaus Röttscher's shop in Berkeley. Joanne Page reported on the move of the 2009 Members' Exhibition from the Doyle Library at Santa Rosa Junior College to Santa Clara University. The show was greatly appreciated at both venues. Vanessa Hardy has agreed to take Joanne's place as Exhibitions Chair. The Santa Rosa Library will again take the show in September through October 2010. Joanne did an outstanding job and we thank her for all her work. Danya Winterman has agreed to take on Programs. The Board meeting was followed by a tour of Klaus's Pettingell Bindery, always an interesting look at past and present bookbinding methods.

### FEBRUARY

The meeting took the form of a potluck dinner at Signa Houghteling's, and included a really interesting talk by Lester Capon, president of Designer Bookbinders, about his trip to Ethiopia to repair an ancient Ethiopian bible. The talk, with slides of the underground—or dug-into-the-earth church—showed the difficult circumstances Lester encountered while working on the book. His work table

was an upended coffin set up in an outdoor courtyard, shaded by a tent. Church officials followed every move. This meeting followed the opening reception two days before at Bonham & Butterfield's Auction gallery for the International DB exhibition of bindings on the book of poetry, "Water." There was no Board meeting.



Lester Capon speaking at the opening of 'Water' at Bonhoms & Butterfields

## MARCH

Our March meeting was hosted by Bob and Regina Rozenzweig and featured a show-and-tell that included a huge collection of exhibition catalogs donated by Judy Houghteling. Margaret Johnson brought several vintage (1930s) Grabhorn Press books in sheets that she had acquired, and offered them "at cost" with the stipulation that binders would get to work on them for display at the Book Club. We also admired a beautiful box that Sally Kaufman had made for her binding of the Rubayat of Omar Khayyam.

## APRIL – HBC History & Elections

Margaret Johnson kindly hosted the meeting, and showed the large collection of slides and disks that were assembled for a talk about Early Bookbinding in California, which was given at the GBW 100th Anniversary Seminar in 2006 by Signa and Margaret. The photos can be used in making the calendar, and a committee will be formed for that work. Tom Conroy was the first to volunteer. The evening ended with a lively discussion of horror stories about flying in these times.

## MAY - Pool Picnic

Sunday, May 2.

Picnic by the pool at Jane Aaron's home: 101 Alma Street, Palo Alto.

# **The Hand Bookbinders of California**

## **Minutes of the Board Meeting**

*Tuesday, April 6, 2010*

Present: Klaus Rötzscher, presiding, Margaret Johnson, Barbara Land, Coleen Curry, Signa Houghteling, John DeMerritt, Vanessa Hardy, Joanne Page, Robert Rosenzweig, Peggy DeMouthe, Sandra Good, Nigel Gore, Tom Conroy

The meeting was convened by Klaus at 6:15 pm in the home of Margaret Johnson in San Francisco.

The slate of officers and committee chairmen, with the exception of Workshops, was approved by the Board for nominations, and was very informally voted on later in the evening.

President: Coleen Curry

Treasurer: Patricia Bolt

Secretary: Margaret Johnson

Budget: Robert Rosenzweig (for one year only)

Exhibitions: Vanessa Hardy

Gold Leaf Editor: Margaret (Peggy) DeMouthe

Gold Leaf Production: Lang Ingalls

Membership: Lang Ingalls

Hospitality: Signa Houghteling

Programs: Danya Winterman

Webmaster: Nigel Gore

Workshops: (Unfilled)

Fred Voltmer resigned as Advisor to the President.

Board Advisors:

Klaus-Ullrich Rötzscher

Sandra Good

Eleanore Ramsey

Barbara Land

The financial spreadsheet and record of fiscal activities to date, sent by Patsy Bolt, were distributed. Bob presented corrections to the 2010-11 budget, having consulted with Patsy. The revised budget will be approved at the next Board meeting.

The Minutes of the last meeting were corrected to read under “Eddy Hood’s request for payment for photographing exhibition books for the catalog”: It

was agreed that HBC will pay for any expenses incurred, including mileage at \$1.50 per mile.

Also, during the Show & Tell at the last meeting, Sally Kaufmann showed the beautiful box she had made.

Coleen reported that the workshop given by Don Glaister had been highly successful. Everyone had found it exciting and inspiring. Although Coleen will not handle Workshops next year, she has set up a workshop in November with John DeMerritt on Alternative Techniques and Using Stamping Presses to be held at the Center for the Book. She will check with the Center on the charges.

Coleen has also been exploring the possibility of a workshop with Carol Barton for the following year. When a chairman has been found for the committee, she will pass on that information.

Lang has sent out reminders for entering the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Members' Exhibition and has sent the entry form to Nigel for inclusion on the HBC website. Deadline for submission is May 1, 2010. The spring issue of *Gold Leaf* is currently being worked on by Lang, as reported by Peggy DeMouthe.

The Board then went on to discuss John DeMerritt's suggestions for attracting new, younger binders to HBC. He mentioned the lack of programs of instruction and the lack of private binding teachers in the Bay Area, and cited the Mills College's MFA program as the only one locally. A discussion about the mission of HBC and the possibilities for providing a series of short lectures, presentations, workshops, clinics, or even an open bindery for perhaps a night a month, probably at the Center, brought lively suggestions. It would need a feasibility committee to get things started. A great deal needs to be done during the next few months to get this working.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm for refreshments brought by Judy and a discussion of illustrations for making a calendar.

Respectfully submitted, Margaret H. Johnson, Secretary

# The Hand Bookbinders of California

## Member Profile



Margaret & Judy at the Standards Masquerade Ball

### Life at the Gallop: a Brief Overview of the Life of Margaret Hilliard Johnson *by Signa Houghteling*

Margaret Johnson came to book repair after many other endeavors spurred by her interests and abilities, geography and circumstance. She was born and reared in Salem, New Jersey, the daughter of Quakers. She married during World War II. Her pathologist physician husband seemed to have wanderlust—anyway, that’s how it turned out, as they first moved to New Orleans where he was in medical school, then to Brooklyn to continue his training, and then to an internship in San Francisco. He was called back into the Army during the Korean War and that meant a move to Texas for two years. After that, back for a postgraduate fellowship at Memorial Sloane Kettering in New York—and then out west to Palo Alto, California, where he was invited to become the resident pathologist at the Palo Alto Clinic.

Let’s pause here because in the course of all this moving household and car trips across the country, Margaret found time to have three children, sew most of the family’s clothes, and still have enough energy left over to train to become a pathology tissue technician, preparing tissue samples for slides to be studied. Oh yes; she also set up the pathology lab at the Palo Alto Clinic.

Back to New York, and Margaret taught herself very high definition photography of pathology samples in the only available darkroom at Sloane

Kettering—a closet with no running water. She was very good at this craft, and she was awarded funds to establish a real working darkroom, with running water and other necessary amenities. Margaret was replaced by two employees when she left with her wandering husband and children for Fort Madison, Iowa where her husband became partners in a pathology lab serving several hospitals. This was a novel concept at the time, but is now a common service. Iowa was pretty tame after living in some of the most exciting cities on the planet, and Margaret used her time and energy to design and oversee the building of a house on a high bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. (She also did some gourmet cooking for a local high end shop on the side.)

Now it gets really interesting. Iowa was not a perfect fit for the liberal Johnsons. (It was the time of the Watergate Hearings, and they found little to talk about with their conservative colleagues and friends except the weather). Thus, in 1975, the Johnsons moved back east to Philadelphia. This city is the home of the historic Pennsylvania Hospital, the oldest hospital in America, which also hosts the oldest American medical library. It dates from 1752 when Ben Franklin, Benjamin Rush and others saw the need and filled it. Various early important contributions were made by British M.D. John Feathergill. Interestingly, as early as 1763, student fees were proposed to pay for the establishment of the library.

At about this time, the hospital library had to be moved as the building was being remodeled to install a heating system—for the first time in 200 years—plus welcome air conditioning. Margaret landed a job assisting Ruth Brown, a librarian, sharing a grant to catalogue all the books, many of which were irreplaceable. (Ruth has remained a close friend of Margaret's to this day.) Yet as they handled the books, nearly every cover fell off. Margaret and Ruth tied the books together with cloth tapes and strings. In addition to having no heat in the building for more than two centuries, little attention had been given to the care of the books. Margaret saw a need for somebody to repair and conserve these treasures, and took charge rather than wait for someone to come forward.

New to this book business, Margaret searched out a teacher with her usual diligence, and after a week of basic bookbinding with Betty Lou Beck (Chaika) at UC Santa Cruz, started bi-weekly classes with the noted binder, Laura S. Young, in New York. Mrs. Young was also president of the Guild of Book Workers. Margaret joined the Guild and eventually became editor of the bi-monthly Newsletter, a post she held for 20 years. Through searching for articles and news of interest to Guild members, she met everybody active in the bookbinding community, including Joanne Sonnichsen and others in California. She joined the Hand Bookbinders of California while living in Philadelphia, and met and became friends with Heidi Kyle and countless

on the East coast. She also took workshops in many aspects of bookbinding and conservation procedures from Fritz Eberhardt, Bernard Middleton, Don Etherington, Don Guyot, Lage Carlson, Tini Miura, Maureen Duke as well as many others.

Continuing her work at the Pennsylvania Hospital Library, Margaret had cleverly placed examples of some of the most valuable and most decayed volumes—complete with those tapes and strings holding them together—in the glass cases in the restored building near where the Chairman of the Board of Managers sat at hospital board meetings. Predictably, he wondered where these dilapidated books came from and what was being done about them. Margaret was only too delighted to inform him and the rest of the board about the valuable collection right under their noses, and how it had been neglected.

With her persuasive manner and great concern for the collection, it was no accident that Margaret went on to found a conservation program at the Hospital Library. She had the support not only of the librarian but of the nursing faculty, who wanted to preserve the only extensive collection of books on nursing and support a museum of nursing.

In 1989, the Friends of the Library was formed to raise money for the collection. Margaret arranged for displays of some of the most valuable and interesting books and demonstrations of their repair at Friends' meetings. This was new territory for many of the library's higher ups and other visitors, they ate it up with enthusiasm. Their support helped Margaret to establish conservation workplace in the top floor of the library. Margaret ran the conservation lab, but needed help; through her many contacts, she found Jane Aaron in nearby Bryn Mawr. Jane was just retiring as a librarian and had been studying bookbinding with Trudi Eberhardt; she worked on the collection as a volunteer until 1992, when she moved to California.

Margaret also found time to volunteer at the Library Company of Philadelphia for two years during this period.

Margaret's beloved husband Duncan died in 1989. By now, the Johnson children had all earned doctorates and were established in their chosen professions (medicine, marine biology, law) and had moved away, two to California. Margaret stayed in Philadelphia until 1993 when she moved to San Francisco. She began volunteering as book repairer and conservator at the Strybing Arboretum Library upon arrival and continued this work with Jane Aaron, who was now widowed and living near her children in Menlo Park.

They continued this work until recently when all the library collection was in safe condition, either repaired or in protective containers. Concurrently, on arrival, Margaret became active in HBC, serving as secretary

from 1993 to the present. She joined The Colophon Club and became president, then secretary of that organization. She joined The Book Club of California the same year, becoming a board member in 2000 and a member of the Library Committee. Locally, she is a member of The Roxburghe Club and the Pacific Center for the Book Arts.

Margaret is a member of Book Arts Press, Friends of the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia, and the American Printing History Association. She is also a member of British organizations Designer Bookbinders, The Society of Bookbinders, and The Institute of Paper Conservation (ICON).

Without Margaret, no gathering of the book community is complete, here or abroad! She is an enthusiastic, contributing participant in every organization of which she is a member. She knows everybody in the book community and beyond, having made lasting friendships everywhere she has been and in every field in which she has worked. Margaret has hosted innumerable cozy gourmet dinners for friends, family and book workers both domestic and international in her stylish Victorian flat near Fillmore Street. Her still very busy bindery shares space with the dining table, just another reason to feel very much at home with Margaret Johnson.

# Articles & Reports

## **A Volunteer at the Guild of BookWorkers ‘Standards of Excellence’ Seminar**

*by Colyn R. Wohlmüt*

The Japantown Kabuki was a magnificent locale for the Standards of Excellence Seminar, San Francisco. Attendees were provided with many walkable options for shopping and dining; the charm of Japantown being in full effect. Extracurricular events were exciting and well attended, and also took full advantage of the compactness of the city. A do-it-yourself walking tour included a stop at Thomas Goldwasser Rare Books where over 30 miniature books were on display in a single multi-tiered case. It was truly a pleasure to see some of the greatest fine and designer bookbinders of our time treat the same subject, Bernard Middleton’s *You Can Judge a Book by its Cover* in this treasured format.

The opening of the Marking Time exhibition at the San Francisco Public Library proved to be hob-knobbing event of the weekend. As exciting as it is to see the GBW Members exhibition in person, the chance to discuss a binding with the binder who executed it enriches the experience beyond expectation. Outgoing Exhibitions Chair Karen Hanmer was there to enjoy the fruits of her labor and to reflect on the process with colleagues.

This year’s presenters represented a wide array of talents and backgrounds — Dominic Riley with exciting approaches to cloth rebacking, Carolee Cambell on her creative process, Tatiana Ginsberg in the Japanese tradition of paper dyeing, and Tom Conroy’s insights into tool repair. Being one of the local volunteers, I missed most of the presentations by being at the registration table. Lest you weep too severely for my loss, several hours in the company of Judy Houghteling, Margaret Johnson, and Sandra Good is its own reward. The visibility of the job enabled me to meet new members and eavesdrop on some very interesting conversations—just kidding, but I can’t recommend volunteering for HBC events enough. The satisfaction of helping the event take shape is nothing compared to the pleasure of the company.



**Gabrielle Fox's  
World of Small**  
*by Lyall F. Harris\**

Whoever said “bigger is better” hadn’t come across the work of Gabrielle Fox. Not only her books, but her handmade wooden tools—miniature plows, presses, sewing frames—conjure a fascinating, magical world. One might imagine this world existing in some gnome realm, little hands crafting jewel-like creations in the night. Upon waking we marvel to discover exquisite hand-bound books in leather and special papers, some housed in boxes. But the little hands in the night do not belong to a gnome; it’s Gabrielle Fox and she works by the light of day.

Gabrielle Fox is a Cincinnati native with family ties to England. After graduating from the University of Cincinnati with a BA in English Literature with emphasis on Writing, she moved to England to attend Guildford College of Technology for two years where she earned a Diploma in Fine Binding and Conservation. She then began working in conservation in London. She returned briefly to Ohio where she initiated the Conservation Lab at the University of Cincinnati. She then returned to England, spending most of the 1980s in the UK. In 1990, she moved back to Cincinnati where she still holds a part-time position at the University.

Gabrielle also began teaching in England; this would become a lifelong endeavor. In fact, it was one of her early British students who planted the seed for miniature books when she sought consultation with Gabrielle about her own collection of miniatures. The miniature book appeals to Gabrielle for a number of reasons, among these:

- Because she is a conservator, she needs to keep her level of precision sharp, and working in miniature achieves this.
- This work allows her to experiment with expensive materials such as leather because only a small amount is required.
- She is keenly interested in the history of miniatures, the impetus behind their making and their historical use.

Gabrielle is the author of *The Essential Guide to Making Handmade Books* (2000, North Light, reprinted in 2004) and is currently working on a

guide to making miniature books. As another of her book-related pursuits, she is the sole US representative of Australian handmade miniature equipment.

On October 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> at The San Francisco Center for the Book, in conjunction with the annual Guild of BookWorkers' conference, HBC sponsored Gabrielle Fox's workshop, "Panoramic Miniature and False Floor Box." Seven lucky women gathered for her sixteen-hour class and learned step-by-step how to create a 2 1/2" book with fold-out boards in the front and back and an accompanying box with an unexpected way to remove the book. The book and box were small, but the time to make them was comparable to a similar endeavor on a larger scale. Smaller does not mean faster.



An array of miniature books, some in boxes made out of a variety of materials, was spread out on Gabrielle's worktable. The smallest of these was just under one inch: a book on herbs housed in a box, complete with hand-sewn endbands. Gabrielle began the workshop with a quote from the Trevor Jones article *Getting Down to it: Binding a Miniature Book*: "There is no need to feel that these modest dimensions will stunt your imagination!"

We began by binding a delicate group of signatures. The content was a collection of haiku and other short poems published by Larkspur Press (KY). Gabrielle had created a limited edition of these, preprinting and collating the signatures using Kwikprint and colored foil on fine Tanai Kozo Japanese paper. We sewed on fraynot fabric tapes with 30/3 thread. We made a liner, hand-rounded the 3/16" spine, and created a hollow tube for the spine. From 140 lbs watercolor paper we cut six boards of slightly different

widths (to accommodate the multiple, folded covers) and glued these, along with a spine from the same watercolor paper, to our chosen decorative paper. The strip of decorative cover paper was quite long as this would be wrapped back around the boards to create the interior of the covers. But before this step, we adhered the text block to the spine. Next, we prepared the tapes and liner with adhesive and affixed them to the cover. Then we pasted down the remaining flaps that would cover our three boards on the inside, with enough left over to create endpapers.

We then proceeded to create the box. Here we had the option of using a heavier, 300 lbs watercolor paper. The “trick” to this box is a window in the bottom (of any shape) through which a finger can fit in order to push the book up and out of the box. Because she is a conservator, Gabrielle always has an eye on the best way to handle—in this case extract—a book in the long-term. This clever “false floor” solves the problem of having to get at the book, possibly damaging the binding, nestled in its tiny box. We created a panel to place in the interior of the bottom of the box in order to cover the hole; the panel was covered with the same decorative paper used throughout, so that from the outside, the hole is not as evident and might not be immediately noticed.

Gabrielle had examples of this box and book where she used differing materials so that, for example, different kinds of paper might be featured in one ensemble or tooled leather and cloth in another. The long strip that forms the covers and flyleaves were hand painted in yet another example of the book we made. She further proposed the idea of using the folding interior covers for content, as a preface and addendum to the content in the book. This structure is tiny, but the content and decorative possibilities are vast.

Gabrielle Fox has carved out a place for herself as a conservator, trainer and teacher, and authority in the field of miniature books. The seven of us came away from the workshop with a bundle only 2 ¾” x 2 ½” x 5/8”, but the experience was exponentially larger.

\*Editor’s note: Lyall F. Harris is the recipient of the HBC scholarship.

Resources:

*Miniature Books: Their History from the Beginnings to the Present Day*, Louis W. Bondy

*Miniature Books: 4,000 Years of Tiny Treasures*, Anne C. Bromer & Julian I. Edison

*The Neale M. Albert Collection of Miniature Designer Bindings*, Neale M. Albert

*More Making Books by Hand: Exploring Miniature Books, Alternative Structures and Found Objects*, Donna & Peter Thomas

*The Essential Guide to Making Handmade Books*, Gabrielle Fox ([www.gabriellefox.com](http://www.gabriellefox.com))

## Two Workshops at Patmos

by Colyn R. Wohlmut\*\*

In September of 2009, I had the privilege of participating in the Workshops on Historic Bindings which are held in the Monastery of St. John the Theologian. This unique and wonderful experience exists in response to the need to conserve and maintain one of the oldest continuously held monastic libraries, which is located on the island of Patmos, Greece. For devout Greeks, Patmos is one of the two most sacred sites in the country, a fact which is evident in the large numbers of pilgrims who visit the island every summer. The cave to which St. John was exiled and in which he received the Revelation of the Apocalypse is preserved as a chapel. The monastery of St. John the Theologian developed around this sacred site.

During the 1980s, the librarian of the monastery, Father Chrysostomos, sought help from international conservators (and training for himself) to create a working conservation studio *in situ*. Although Father Chrysostomos has passed, the legacy he left is continued by Nikolas Sarris, the current conservator at the monastery. Since 2006, with the support of the Holy Abbot and Patriarchic Exarch Archimandrite Antipas, he has been most gracious in opening up his studio and the library for a month-long series of theoretical and practical workshops.

Class was held in the original library location which now houses the modern research library. A new library location was designed with specifications for the preservation and care of the collections, which we would visit later in the week. The first week was a theoretical course, “Early Coptic Bookbindings” taught by John Sharpe. Mr. Sharpe made his career as a rare book librarian and international scholar of early bookbindings. He has also edited several canonical books in the field. In this context I would like to call the reader’s attention to the publication of Roger Powell: *The Compleat Binder: Liber amicorum* (Bibliologia #14, 1996). Without John Sharpe’s dedication, we would not have this incredibly rich source for students of conservation. I am personally indebted to him for ensuring the availability of that festschrift.

Mr. Sharpe’s attitude towards teaching is one of extreme generosity. He approaches each class as a collaboration, welcoming all manner of comments, questions, and anecdotes from students which enriches the learning process of the participants. His years of experience provide the student with ground for an incredibly fertile discovery process based on photographs and sketches which he has assembled through his work in collections around the world. His unique insights flow constantly. For example, he has never seen Coptic bindings whose wooden boards were covered with leather. Ethiopians would leave these bindings uncovered, placed in a double box with straps. Although

it was once believed that these straps would allow the book to be suspended from the shoulder for carrying, it has been shown that these straps were used for storage purposes. Early codices were hung from pegs on walls to protect them from damage by vermin.

Without hyperbole, I assert that Mr. Sharpe is an absolute bibliographic machine. His knowledge of the literature is unbounded, and he offers his students succinct analysis of existing scholarship; its evolution; refinements to and evolutions in historical theories; and the current state of the art. He provided us with copies of many of the most important works on the subject, including his own notebooks which are a testament to his tremendous skill as researcher and scholar. His approach is one of true love of knowledge; a scholarship which is not afraid of being stolen or supplanted. He willingly offered his students the materials which would further their own research, believing that there is nothing to loose in the free exchange of information and much to gain through active and healthy discussion. Being personally in line with the principles of information access, it is inspiring to see a scholar of such renown manifest this type of generosity. Those of us who benefited from this openness are thereby encouraged to do the same.

As some of the participants left at the close of the first week, I was greeted by new faces coming to the next workshop: Traditional Gold Tooling with Trevor Lloyd. This practical course took place in the conservation studio, and as the class was filled to capacity, students spilled over into a second room. Some ingenuity was required to rig up enough burners to keep the tools hot for the full class; we used a combination of propane and electric stoves to make sure each room had enough heat for tooling projects.

As if we were apprentices, the first day we received a lesson in cleaning tools. This was an important task, as the tools are little used in the Mr. Sarris' conservation activities. An effective way for each student to get to know the tools and rolls we had at our disposal through the period of the course, students gave to their blackend faces a reflective shine. We prepared our spines and plaquettes, and dove straight into tooling. In discussing materials, Mr. Lloyd expressed dismay of the inability to find leather appropriate for restoration work. The chemicals used in the tanning process are simply no longer produced. His response has been to obtain natural skins and dye them in his shop. This raises essential questions about the future of restoration, since the fundamental importance of matching materials and styles is often dependent on the stock of suppliers.

Mr. Lloyd's career is detailed on his website ([www.trevorlloyd.co.uk/](http://www.trevorlloyd.co.uk/)), and I encourage you to explore his writings and the interview featured there. During class he shared further anecdotes about his training, explaining how when he began working at Sangorski and Sutcliffe, binders would cover their

workbenches and hide their techniques to guard against theft by prying eyes. His processes have been perfected over time. To discover the techniques used in various periods, he began with historical research and refined what he learned through practice and experimentation.

In his bindery, Mr. Lloyd relies on albumen tooling. The basic building blocks of the process are albumen powder and water in a ratio of 1:5 with a few drops of vinegar and a very thin paste wash with a few drops of vinegar (in both cases to freshen the mixture). He insists that the moisture content in the leather is the key to a crisp and bright product. Two pages of gold leaf at a minimum of 22 karat are laid directly on the surface and tooled by eye. Only small marks are used as guides. No blind tooling is done to secure the pattern. One reason for this is simple efficiency. In production mode, there really isn't time to do multiple passes. We were each strongly encouraged to develop an eye for composition, rather than rely exclusively on techniques of measurements. Over a professional lifetime, the trained eye will prove a much better investment than the best available tool. Other techniques he shared included the use of thermal fax paper as a design and practice surface. The correct tool temperature will leave a crisp image on heat-activated paper. I discovered several sources on the internet and have been practicing tooling without needing to waste precious leather or gold. For a student, needing thousands of hours of practice, it is an economical way to develop the necessary sensitivity and confidence. He also suggests using the paper backing on gold leaf as a backing when tooling labels. They are abundant on a finisher's bench, and nothing need be wasted.

Once again, the best part of any course at Patmos was the quality of the instructor. Mr. Lloyd exhibited with every demonstration the level of professionalism and perfectionism which has made him one of the leading restorers in the United Kingdom. While dealing with each of us, however, he was encouraging, enthusiastic, and forgiving of mistakes. "Keep at it, there is no disaster that can't be recovered from." His frequent and sincere pep talks gave me the feeling I could go home and continue the learning process which I had begun in Greece without falling into traps of discouragement or frustration. The most valuable thing an instructor can do is inspire his or her students to strive in the discipline, and his love of tooling was certainly transmitted to everyone in the course.

Information on the Patmos Workshops on Historic Bindings can be found at [www.patmosworkshop.com/](http://www.patmosworkshop.com/).

\*\*Colyn R. Wohlmuth is Assistant to the Curator, History of Science and Technology Collections and Film and Media Studies Collections, Stanford

# Calendar

## Exhibits

### **GBW California Chapter Members' Exhibition** Northridge, California

*April 13 - May 26 \*\*new dates*

The unexpected demand for extended viewing time for its preceding exhibition required the library to push the dates for this show into April and May. The new dates offer the advantage of extending through the university's graduation celebrations, which always draw a large number of visitors to the library. With residual interest from a highly successful show immediately before, and the promise of many new visitors to come, the library anticipates an excellent response.

Information: Bob Gohstand (vcgeg00i@csun.edu)

or Joe Giangrande (rinnovi@cox.net)

### **'Bound for Success' Exhibition** New York, New York

*May 19 - July 31, The Grolier Club*

The first Designer Bookbinders International competition; an exhibition of 117 bindings selected from the competition. This will be the last US exhibit.

### **'Artist in Residence' Exhibition** San Francisco, California

*Until April 17*

Gail Wright: Artist in Residence Exhibition, explores the making of "Restless Dust", created during Wright's 2009 residency at the San Francisco Center for the Book.

Information: [www.sfcbook.org](http://www.sfcbook.org)

### **'Our Struggle: Responding to Mein Kampf'** San Francisco, California

*Until June 15*

Artist Linda Ellia's exhibition of the altered pages done by artists and others of the book.

At the Contemporary Jewish Museum.

Information: [www.sfcbook.org](http://www.sfcbook.org)

### **"Marking Time" Exhibition** Salt Lake City, Utah

*March 5 - April 23, 2010*

The Guild of Book Workers juried exhibition.

At the Marriott Library, University of Utah.

Information: Joe Giangrande (rinnovi@cox.net)

### **San Diego Book Arts 3<sup>rd</sup> National Juried Exhibition** San Diego, California

*May 29 - July 18*

Juried by Kitty Maryatt, Scripps College Press.

At UC San Diego Geisel Library, Special Collections.

Information: [www.sandiegobookarts.org](http://www.sandiegobookarts.org)

## Events

### Book Arts Program 2010 Salt Lake City, Utah

Spring Lecture Series

*April 8:* Emily McVarish

*June 10:* Julie Chen

*September 23:* Alicia Bailey

*August 18:* Cynthia Thompson

Above lectures free and open to the public.

At the Marriott Library, University of Utah.

Information: [www.bookartsprogram.org](http://www.bookartsprogram.org)

## Call for Entry

'HBC 38<sup>th</sup> Members' Exhibition'

*Deadline:* May 1, 2010

The 2010 HBC Members' Exhibition will be held in the Skylight Gallery of the San Francisco Public Library Main Branch (June, July & August), and the Santa Clara Library (September & October).

(See "2010 Members Exhibition", page 9.)

## Study Opportunities

### American Academy of Bookbinding

The American Academy Bookbinding offers classes in conservation and fine binding, as well as alternative classes.

Information: [www.ahhaa.org/academy-bookbinding/](http://www.ahhaa.org/academy-bookbinding/)

### The Society of Bookbinders Education & Training Seminar 2010

*April 8:* David Vickers lecture: The Harmony of Art and Craft: Fine Printing at the Gregynog Press

*April 9:* Paul Delrue: Tudor Style Binding, Mark Walmsley: From Doomsday to Discs –Some Conservation Approaches, Michael Burke: Binding the Nag Hammadi Codex, Simon Haigh: Board Attachment: Historical and Modern

*April 10:* Stephen Conway: Decorated Papers – a Personal Approach; Clare Prince: The Use of Japanese Paper in Conservation; Benjamin Elbel: Innovative Album Structures; Nicky Oliver: A Simple Approach to Creative Onlays.

Held at the University of Chester, England.

Information: [www.societyofbookbinders.com](http://www.societyofbookbinders.com)

**Illinois State University** Normal, Illinois

The Center for Conservation and Preservation at the Milner Library is now offering workshops on the Book Arts, Bookbinding, and Book Repair.

Course & registration information: <http://www.library.ilstu.edu/page/1562>

**KALA Art Institute & Gallery** Berkeley, California

Classes in printmaking, monotype & monoprint, woodcut & relief printing, lithography, letterpress & book arts, and more.

Information: [www.kala.org](http://www.kala.org) or 510-841-7000

**Palo Alto Art Center** Palo Alto, California

Fine Art classes in book arts, as well as much more.

Information: 650-329-2366

**Wells Book Arts Summer Institute** Aurora, New York

*July 11 -17:* Session I: Andrew Huot's binding class will cover the basics and look at innovation; Katherine McCanless Ruffin students will explore printing on the Vandercook; Cheryl Jacobsen will teach engravers' script, also known as copperplate; and Michael Bixler offers Monotype at his shop in Skaneateles teaching keyboarding and typesetting.

*July 18 -23:* Session II: Julia Leonard will teach historic binding structures in contemporary contexts; printer Barbara Tetenbaum leads her students through alternative image-making processes; Sharon Zeugin's calligraphy students will learn how to develop their own script.

Information: [www.wells.edu/bookarts](http://www.wells.edu/bookarts) or 315-364-3420

**Book Arts Program 2010: Workshops** Salt Lake City, Utah

*June 9 - 12:* Julie Chen - A space to Make Your Mark: Complex Multi-level Boxes

*June 26:* Amber Heaton - Peep Show: Design & Construction of the Tunnel book

*July 31:* Chris McAfee - Flex-a-sketch: Crafting the Custom Sketchbook

*August 19 - 21:* Cynthia Thompson - Layer Upon Layer: Utilizing Stencils in Papermaking & Printing

*September 24 - 25:* Alicia Bailey - Binding the Strange and Unusual: Books with Rigid Pages

*November 13:* Marnie Powers-Torrey - Press-to-Post in a Day: Letterpressed Personal Greeting Cards

At the Marriott Library, University of Utah.

Information: [www.bookartsprogram.org](http://www.bookartsprogram.org)

**Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artist's Guild**

Information: [www.cbbag.com](http://www.cbbag.com)

**North Bennett School** Boston, Massachusetts

Information: [www.nbss.org](http://www.nbss.org)

**Garage Annex School** Easthampton, Massachusetts

*April 10 - 11:* Concertina Spine Sewn on Tapes with Daniel Kelm.

*July 5 - 10:* Leather Intensive with Daniel Kelm.

*July 20 - 21:* The Glazier Codex with Julia Miller.

*July 22 - 23:* The History of the Book for Book Artists with Martin Antonetti (held at the Mortimer Rare Book Room, Smith College).

*July 24 - 25:* Coptic Cover Decoration prior to the 11<sup>th</sup> C. with Pamela Spitzmueller.

*July 26 - 28:* Animated Pop-up Structures with Shawn Sheehy.

*July 29 - 30:* Board Reattachment using Japanese Papers with Eric Alstrom.

*August 21 - 22:* Box Design & Construction with Daniel Kelm.

*September 18 - 19:* Vellum Binding over Boards, taught by Peter Geraty.

Information: <http://garageannexschool.com/indes.php>

**Eleanore Ramsey** San Francisco, California

Lessons in Fine Bookbinding.

Contact Eleanore at: 415.221.5176 or [eleanore.ramsey@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eleanore.ramsey@sbcglobal.net)

**San Francisco Center for the Book** San Francisco, California

Information: [www.sfcbook.org](http://www.sfcbook.org) or 415-464-0545

**School of Formal Bookbinding** Northern Pennsylvania

*April 26 - 30 & July 19 - 23:* Foundations of Hand Bookbinding

*May 3 - 7:* Introduction to Case Binding

*May 15 - 16:* Introduction to Edge Gilding

*June 7 - 11:* Introduction to Leather Binding (Quarter Leather)

*June 14 - 18 & September 20-24:* Full Leather Binding

*June 21 - 25 & October 1 - 15:* Conservation of Cloth Bindings

*June 28 - July 2 & October 18 - 22:* Conservation of Leather Bindings

*July 10 - 11:* Introduction to Titling and Tooling

*July 26 - 30:* Introduction to Case Binding

*Sept. 13 - 17:* Introduction to Leather Binding (Quarter Leather)

Information: Don Rash: [studior@epix.net](mailto:studior@epix.net) or 570-821-7050

**Scrub Oak Bindery** Salt Lake City, Utah

Information: email [scruboakbindery@gmail.com](mailto:scruboakbindery@gmail.com)

# Books

## *Book + Art: Handcrafting Artists' Books*

by Dorothy Simpson Krause

*Book + Art: Handcrafting Artists' Books* by Dorothy Simpson Krause has just been published by North Light. The book focuses on content and suggests simple and elegant ways of presenting ideas in book form. Topics include an introduction to bookmaking tools and common materials, basics of selecting paper, simple handmade book and alternative presentations including unbound collections, boxes and sculptural forms.

## *A Festschrift*

A Festschrift Honoring Hedi Kyle and her work was recently published in conjunction with the Hybrid Book Conference in Philadelphia. Many of the articles include drawings and photographs of book structures of interest to book artists. In addition, a number of articles address theoretical and historical issues in the field of book arts. Copies are now available for \$25 plus shipping. See <http://rutherfordwitthus.com/festschrift/orders>.

## *Fine Bookbinding: a technical guide*

by Jen Lindsay

This is a comprehensive manual that guides you through each stage of making a book bound in leather—a 'fine' binding. *Fine Bookbinding* provides a structured, sequential method of making a book bound in leather. It can be used by anyone with an elementary knowledge of bookbinding to teach themselves, and by practicing bookbinders who want to improve their skills or knowledge. The guide is designed to be used as you work, and is arranged as a numbered index of the processes involved in making your book: the sequence of operations. Jen Lindsay is a bookbinder of extensive experience in teaching, lecturing and writing on bookbinding and the history of the book. Available at [www.oakknoll.com](http://www.oakknoll.com).

## *The Thread That Binds: Interviews with Private Practice Bookbinders*

by Pamela Leutz

Pamela Leutz, Guild member and former president of the Texas Chapter, has interviewed 20 well-known American binders, including Eleanor Ramsey, Don Glaister, Monique Lallier, Tini Miura, Dan Kelm, Don Etherington, and many others. Available at [www.oakknoll.com](http://www.oakknoll.com).

# DVDs

## Society of Bookbinders DVDs

[www.societyofbookbinders.com](http://www.societyofbookbinders.com)

### “Maureen Duke - The Life and Work of a Bookbinder”

Maureen Duke is one of the most respected bookbinders and teachers of our time. Over a career spanning more than sixty years, she has introduced many students to this special craft. Ms. Duke has travelled widely, taking bookbinding to new audiences around the world; she has written extensively on the subject and has also been a pioneer in book restoration. With a combination of modesty, humor and a sure command of her subject, Ms. Duke gives a rare and enjoyable glimpse into her fascinating world.

### “70 Years in Bookbinding: A portrait of Bernard Middleton, M.B.E, F.S.A”

Bernard Middleton’s extraordinary career has now spanned some seventy years, as bookbinder, teacher and writer. Here, he looks back on his long and varied life in bookbinding, which began at the Central School of Arts & Crafts in 1938. He discusses his writings, which include many articles, introductions to books and catalogues, two major works of scholarship and a fascinating memoir. He talks about his travels as a teacher (he was one of the first British binders to give master classes in North America ) and his experiences in the flood-damaged libraries of Florence. Mr. Middleton also reflects on the history of the craft over the last century and how it is adapting to survive in an ever-changing world. With his characteristically understated humour, his sharp mind and his thoughtful observations, Mr. Middleton gives us a truly fascinating, often moving and always enjoyable insight into the craft that he loves.

## Websites of Interest

### American Bookbinders Museum

[www.bookbindersmuseum.com](http://www.bookbindersmuseum.com)

### Book Arts Web

[www.philobiblon.com](http://www.philobiblon.com)

### Guild of BookWorkers (new site)

[www.guildofbookworkers.org](http://www.guildofbookworkers.org)

# A Special Notice to HBC Members

The Hand Bookbinders of California exchanges publications with several other groups in and outside the United States. Since we have no official area of our own for keeping a library, these publications have been for many years passed along to any interested member, and then disposed of. We would like to have them circulated among members and, perhaps, find a home for them. The Secretary, Margaret Johnson, now has a large accumulation of them. If you are interested in reading any of the following issues, please contact Margaret. The following publications are now available (call for information: 415-673-7130):

1) SoB, the newsletter, December 2009. The Newsletter of the Society of Bookbinders ([www.societyofbookbinders.com](http://www.societyofbookbinders.com)). This issue contains the reports on the Education and Training Conference at the University of Warwick in August 2009. Nine demonstrations and lectures, as well as reports on a visit to the Birmingham Central Library, the SoB Competition 2009, and a long list of courses, workshops and seminars in the UK, Italy and the USA.

2) Journal 2009, Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild (CBBAG) includes In Black & White: an Interview with Wesley Bates by Larry Thompson about Bates' memoir, In Black & White: A Wood Engraver's Odyssey, first published by Bird & Bull Press; "The Conservation of an Eighteenth Century Chinese Tao" by Ruth Stevens; "Contemporary Applications of Wheat Paste on Cloth", a summary by Martha Cole of the presentation she gave at the GBW Standards Seminar in Toronto in 2008 (with numerous color illustrations); and "Open Studio: an Interview with Mark Cockram"

3) Newsletters of the Association of Book Crafts (New Zealand), November-December 2009 and January-February 2010.

4) CBBAG Newsletters, (Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild)

- Vol. 27, No. 1, Spring 2009; No. 2, Summer 2009; No. 3, Fall 2009. Vol. 28, No. 1, Spring 2010.
- Spring 2009: a report by a conservator, Lizzie Meek, at Scott Base, Antarctica; Part 1 of an article by Christine McNair, Not Far from the Tree: Non-Western Single Leaf and Accordion Structures.
- Summer 2009: Part 2 of Christine McNair's article.
- Fall 2009: Stone on Stone: Designing the Book, by Cathryn Miller; a review of the catalogue of the GBW exhibition Marking Time; Peter Thomas's article The Real Accordion Book.
- Spring 2010: Lee Churchill's extensive report on Don Etherington's weeklong workshop on Vellum Binding held in Calgary last November; an article on the Magic of textiles; book reviews by Rose Newlove on English Embroidered Bookbindings by Cyril Davenport, written in 1899, still available online as part of Project Gutenberg, and Livres en broderie: reliures francaises du Moyen Age

- á nos jours, which is out of print, but sometimes available in university libraries. It seems to be worth the hunt. Ms. Newlove found its value in the extraordinary illustrations. It is written in French.

5) Ampersand, the Quarterly Journal of the Pacific Center for the Book Arts, spring 2009, Vol. 26, No. 3. and fall 2009, vol. 26, No. 5

6) Designer Bookbinders Newsletter, Nos. 147 & 148, Summer and Autumn 2009.

7) Newsletter of the Guild of Book Workers, No. 187, December 2009, with a report on the 2009 Standards Seminar in San Francisco last October, among other articles. No. 188, February 2010 includes an article on “Making Your Own Text Blocks for Bookbinding”, book reviews, Guild news, articles on parchment making, and more.

# The Hand Bookbinders of California

The Hand Bookbinders of California gathered for the first time in 1972. A close-knit group of hand bookbinders — with shared interests in creating and collecting fine bindings — joined together to promote hand bookbinding and related book arts, and to exchange information and ideas. HBC membership now includes binders, students, makers of artists' books, collectors, conservators, papermakers and paper decorators, fine printers, printmakers, writers, book dealers and other lovers of the book arts.

From the start, the goal of the Hand Bookbinders has been to share knowledge. Members now enjoy many benefits, outlined below. We celebrate the book: making books, collecting books, and the care & restoration of books.

## Membership

Membership in the Hand Bookbinders of California is annual, running from September each year. The Membership Fee is \$30, and a second member under the same listing is \$5.

## Benefits

Benefits of membership include Regular Presentations & Workshops, the opportunity to exhibit in the Annual Members Exhibition, copies of the bi-annual *Gold Leaf* and the annual Membership Roster, invitations to Special Events, and dialogue through our Monthly Meetings and the HBC Mail Group at Yahoo! Groups.

## How to Join HBC

There are many ways to join:

- visit the HBC website. The website has the necessary downloading pdf form to join.  
[www.handbookbinders.org](http://www.handbookbinders.org)
- write us:  
the Hand Bookbinders of California  
P.O. Box 193216  
San Francisco, CA 94119
- contact our Membership Coordinator, Lang Ingalls.  
[lang@eidolonpress.com](mailto:lang@eidolonpress.com)

## The *Gold Leaf* Colophon

The *Gold Leaf* is produced bi-annually by the Hand Bookbinders of California. This journal was designed and typeset in Adobe InDesign in various sizes of Adobe Garamond.

[www.handbookbinders.org](http://www.handbookbinders.org)