

## To Have and/or to Hold

Curators and conservators communicating in long-term partnerships

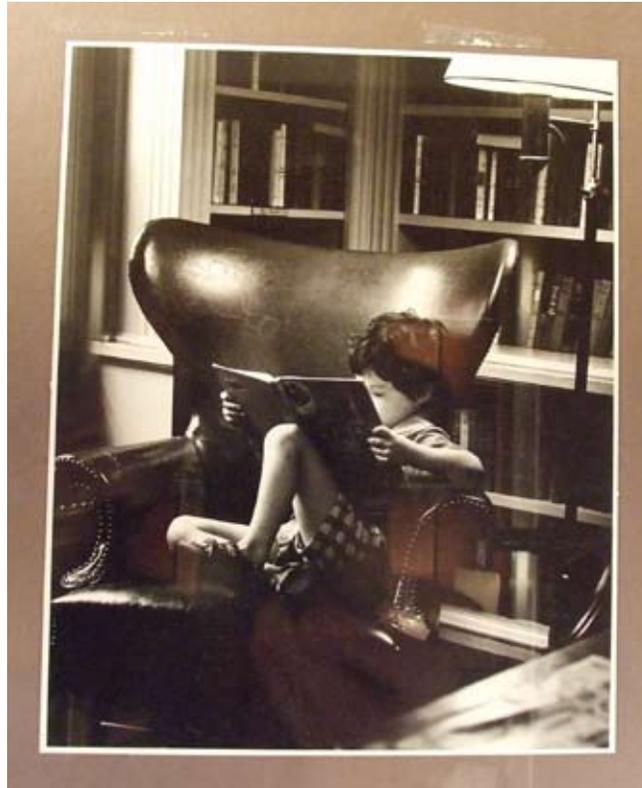
Marcia Reed

The success of a marriage or almost any partnership rests on communication, shared values, and commitment – some kind of long-term plan or vision. Not surprisingly, a base of agreement is also essential to collecting, curation, and conservation. In these fields, where the root goal is the retention and transmission of information, the ongoing conversation ends up being about processes, which sometimes seems to set protection at odds with dissemination.

While collecting could be seen as a passive activity – in the worst case, close to hoarding – there are distinctive roles for collectors, curators, conservators, and catalogers in the process. It is about commitment and making relationships, not just living together. My title, “To Have and/or to Hold,” outlines the choices that institutions and their staffs undertake in caring for their collections.

### To Have

To have an object is to own it, to assume responsibility for its care (or less passively stated, to take on stewardship). Ownership implies that the work is in the appropriate place and being taken care of knowledgeably and with respect. Ideally, the collector or collection makes a commitment to store, preserve, and provide access to a historical work that has a legacy (though some private collectors do not feel that they have an obligation to provide access). Access is not only making the object available for consultation, but also providing descriptive information: without full and accurate cataloging information, items



cannot be effectively shared.

I happened to be in Japan last year at the time when the National Treasures were on display to the general public. The Japanese people feel that they have a right to see the Treasures in part because they contribute towards their care. I liked this militant stance! It is evidence of the way they consider custodianship of signal objects (which represent Japanese cultural identity) a duty. Not only do they prefer that objects be preserved in museums and other repositories, they want them displayed. There were long lines of visitors snaking through the museums, reading scrolls on the walls and displayed in cases.

### To Hold

Considering the collections of libraries, archives, museums, and even private collec-

tors, we could also say that to hold could connote not only ownership of an object, but that one might be able actually to hold (or touch!) it. It is an idea that I have heard collectors express, and it is certainly the reason I wanted to be a curator. I was drawn to the idea of reading and handling original books and prints. It helped me to gain a better understanding of their history and significance. But this idea of physical access is open to interpretation. In fact, for museums, touching is almost never allowed, except in a children’s section, or in sessions often indicated as “hands-on,” and usually employing surrogates.

Frequently, museums put priority on the exhibition, preservation, and storage of their objects, putting higher value on preserving the collection than in making it accessible to the public for whom the collection exists. In general, museums feel they have a responsibility to protect, and not to allow touching or actual holding. On the opposite end of the spectrum – which can certainly include rare books, prints, archives, ephemera, multiples, and photographs – stresses materiality, implying a haptic relationship: the in-depth analysis of the physical qualities of works that frequently reveal historical and other information. At some point this means that a digital surrogate or photograph won’t suffice. What researchers need to see and perhaps even be able to hold

*See TO HAVE/HOLD, page 2*

Marcia Reed is chief curator of the Getty Research Institute and chair of the program committee for the Bibliographical Society of America. This article has been adapted from her talk at the Caxton Club/Bibliographical Society of America/Newberry Library Symposium on “The Ethics of Book and Paper Conservation,” held April 18, 2015.



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and manipulate is “the original work.” It is important to understand that interest in materiality means that in order to understand its historical nature, a work needs to be experienced not just theoretically, but in practice. It benefits researchers to experience the work (a book, a print, a photograph) in the same way it was in its time.

Physical access to collections is important because it allows people to have a direct relationship with the object. Recently at the Getty Institute we had a class of fourth-graders looking at rare books from the periods of historical characters whose identities they had assumed for their yearlong class projects on the Renaissance. We had Leonardo, Galileo, Isabella d’Este, and Grace O’Malley (the Irish pirate) present around the table. For such elementary school beginning-research seminars we display the books and talk about them, but don’t allow a lot of touching. At a certain point during this class, the students all wanted to touch the books. My colleague, rare book curator David Brafman, lined them up, checked their hands, and we let them touch (very lightly) the paper pages of a 16th-century book. The kids were so excited! One raised his hand energetically and said, “This is so cool! We are in an amazing place.” At first this might seem silly or superficial, but it points to the importance of holding a book: the holder has a physical relationship with the object, beyond simply reading or imbibing knowledge. We found this testimony rewarding; it made our preparation and time spent absolutely worthwhile.

This class left me thinking about the challenge of access. What does this serious commitment “to have and to hold” mean? How do we manage to preserve, organize, and yet allow some physical access – a haptic (sensual) relationship of touch and sound, and even smell – to help develop a true understanding of historical material?

And here is a big complication. The more time passes, the less of the original object remains. Although contemporary conservators stress that they do not do restorations, almost anything which happens to a book or object changes it in some way, even what we call “stabilization” or a “reversible” treatment.

Conservation has always had period styles and fashions. Binding used to be what every book needed, especially if it was destined for an estimable collection. Nonbook materials (letters, drawings, prints, and photographs, for example) were traditionally collected and arranged in albums or bound in volumes. This collecting vehicle or repository (for example, a portfolio made of leather or paper) tells how the works were collected and contextualized, perhaps adding an intentional narrative or an inferred biography or history of the collector or

organizer. At present we hesitate before rebinding, and we appreciate “original” condition. But this swing in preference also means that sometimes old albums and frames are removed. Frequently they are discarded, only sometimes recorded or kept. True, they are often acidic or dirty. They may appear shabby, like a decrepit frame on a valuable painting. When the container is demonstrably detrimental to the items it houses, aggressive rehousing and reorganizing follows naturally. But shucking the containers risks throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Sometimes what makes a particular collection useful is the connection the original collector saw between items. Cleansing prizes information present in the written, printed, or visual material in the collection, but can fail to acknowledge the characteristic ways in which the owner collected and filed her papers and other related items.

Another example is seen in scholars’ books that frequently come with archives. Personal copies bear marks of rough reading – cracked open, with coffee rings and cigarette ashes. They are liberally bookmarked with that signal 20th-century scholarly sticker, the Post-it, and annotated. Frequently they have other papers inserted in pages: the book was used as a file for related information.

Here’s the rub: a book’s provenance may be noted, but if it is processed for the general library, not special collections, the Post-its are removed, and the curator’s notations are lost. Books with exceptionally heavy annotations may be flagged for special collections and kept intact, but in general books like this – we could call them contemporary low-tech Grangerized editions – are stripped back to their pages and covers when processed.

Typically, ephemera in books are thrown away, viewed as refuse. Removing all extraneous paper is standard practice, but who is to judge the connections and history to which these are witness? In the early 20th century, when periodicals were bound, all advertising was removed! Now our colleagues search in vain for the advertisements. A recent example: one of Frank Lloyd Wright’s commercial advertisements, for which a friend searched for years.

When books have been winnowed, even if locations of the ephemeral printings and notes have been marked and then stored separately, the historical links will still have been lost because the filing system of the owner is lost; the scraps, which in place on a particular page might have told us something important, have become orphans. Basically the books have lost their past lives: stories of ownership, owners’ interests and uses, and their contexts.

Years ago at the Getty we acquired a scholar’s small collection of the books and papers of foundational art historian Heinrich Wölfflin. The scholar



Swiss curator Harald Szeemann in his working archive, which was subsequently purchased by the Getty.

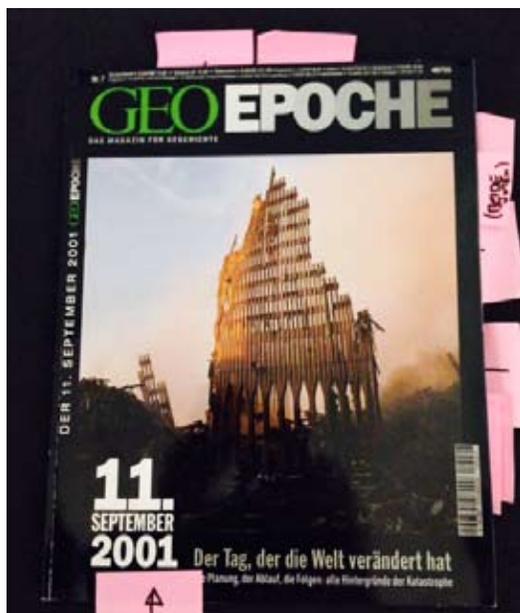
Joseph Gantner edited Wölfflin's papers, and he had been given a selection of books and original papers from Wölfflin's library. When it was processed, the collection was separated according to specific media (books, papers, manuscripts), as was customary for processing at the time. The books were carefully preserved: for two copies of the art historian's dissertation, the paper copy's covers were placed

in mylar because they had fallen off and were crumbling. The text block and the mylar covers were stored in a pamphlet binder. The leather-bound special copy with annotations was placed separately in another board binding. The material is very well protected, but doesn't it seem like it has been mummified? Does it give a good idea of how 19th-century scholarship proceeded? Not really.

The Wölfflin collection included annotated books with inserts. An archival folder holds the slips of paper removed from one the books, presently stored in the archives of special collections. Book catalogers meticulously identified the pages containing ephemera, wrapping them in a printout that basically created a whole new object. Unfortunately, the significance of their contextual placement has been lost. The rationale for this is that if the scraps had been left alone, they probably would have been lost – yet here, they are lost anyway. A visiting scholar recently announced his "discovery" of these unknown sources.

This well-intended, labor-intensive cosmetic treatment (which one should note is reversible with considerably more work) was based on institutional policy: procedures that make media distinctions. However, both policy and treatment also evidence a lack of sensitivity to the subject of the collection and the integrity of diverse

See *TO HAVE/HOLD*, page 4



*The book would belong in the general collection, were it not for the Post-it notes, which tell the story of Szeemann's working process. How can one possibly preserve Post-it notes?*



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materials with considerable value for research. The result is a fundamental disconnect with an object's historical identity, its subject, its former uses and connections. Condition and material have been preserved, but at what cost? The adjacencies have been lost! Can we preserve all such evidence? No. Is it interesting and also possible to consider saving *some* of the evidence of reading and research practices? Yes.

It is important to say that I am not certain there is a wrong or right way to handle these things and would stress that I am presenting *challenges* since almost all books, manuscripts, archives, prints, and photographs bring their own unique physical attributes. Let me give you more examples.

With a recent donation from the family of architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner, we have just received a fascinating group of 111 diaries. These were written by Pevsner from age 14 to 22 when he was still in Germany, before he became the famous author of the Buildings of England series and other foundational works in architectural history. The challenge is to make these diaries accessible in the way the young writer composed and organized them. Not only are they written in German, they're also written in code! Most difficult are the enclosures – at certain dates, there are pages glued together holding small missives from friends. The notebooks themselves are small and fragile, yet they convey a sense of the person: very intelligent but also an adolescent. They reveal his thoughts, his reading, his daily activities. What seems important here is not to dissect them in order to preserve the material properly, since this would lose the order and the sense of how Pevsner assembled his diaries. This is a project in development; digitizing may help as well as video.

The artist Joseph Cornell was an inveterate correspondent whose cards and notes were collaged and decorated with stickers. We have a small archive in a special box of his notes written to Susanna De Maria Wilson when she worked as his assistant. Cornell carefully chose the box for them. The letters and cards are not unlike Pevsner's. They have close internal connections; they have many layers; and they share a unique enclosure. Again, the challenge is to present the integrity of the box of letters, to allow some contact, but also to preserve these fragile, increasingly-valuable, intentionally-fragile works.

A set of books published by GLM (Guy



Some of the Getty's 111 diaries from architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner.

Lévis Mano) editions in wartime France from the Jean Brown Archive is a Dada-Surrealist work with four small classic publications housed in a plexiglass box with a slipcase attributed to André Masson. When we acquired the collection, the plastic had deteriorated and split apart; its seahorses and butterflies were slowly drying out. It is a hauntingly beautiful piece. We have exhibited it once, displaying it like a small jewel in a covered case with black velvet curtains.

I worked in collaboration with our conservators to figure out how to make the piece accessible while at the same time protecting it. We developed a system we called "the Periodic Action Item" in a box with special alerts prominently displayed. This system seems especially appropriate to the interiorized and private perspectives of viewing and reading as frequently proposed by Surrealists like Duchamp and Masson. Here access is very

limited because the objects are demonstrably fragile, light-sensitive, and in the ongoing process of physical deterioration. This was a very complex project for which we asked help from one of the Getty Conservation Institute scientists. He stabilized the plexiglass case. As a butterfly enthusiast and collector, he identified the species in the book case. He did ask if we wanted them replaced. This seemed to us inappropriate. With objects like these, I feel there is a secondary life that should be interfered with as little as possible.

### Special Needs

This is a term from outside the field that I think can be used sensibly in special collections. Here's an example: Ben Patterson's *Hooked*, also from the Jean Brown Archive, is a Fluxus object. It is filled with everyday items, including a sardine can. Composite works like this are carefully stabilized and repacked by our objects conservator, but when the box was paged several years ago, it smelled and was oozing. The can of sardines had exploded.

Canned goods have shelf-lives;

this one had expired years ago. We have specialized conservators, and Albrecht Gumlich (the conservator who deals with the three-dimensional objects and multiples) discussed the situation with me. What to do? At least clean up and check the other objects. These were doing quite well, and only needed to be protected. Take a picture. Throw out the can? Albrecht the conservator and I talked, and I recommended that we ask the artist. Benjamin Patterson is actually a former librarian (NYPL Performing Arts) himself. He told us that unless we had some sentimental attachment to the sardine can, we should consider it "garbage." Speaking for himself, since most other Fluxus artists had passed away, Ben said that he felt that most Fluxus artists accepted the idea that their works would deteriorate. Albrecht became fascinated by the possibilities, some recreational and funny, but also just to emphasize again that we did not want



What to do about the sardine can in Ben Patterson's *Hooked*? The original can exploded. Should it be replaced with an identical one?

to re-create something that was intended to have a limited lifespan. One of the principles of curating our Fluxus collections is to respect the idea of change. Fluxus means change; Fluxus objects will change. Stopping this, freezing their moment in time, is not appropriate. Just for fun, Albrecht bought a new can of sardines on the internet almost identical to the original, but we didn't replace it. In the end he stabilized and protected the work. *Hooked* is enjoying its golden years in our vaults. We check on it annually to see how it's doing.

How it is possible to have a real relationship with a historical work, and what is that? When books are stripped of their enclosures, or lose their covers; when archival files are reorganized, refolded, and boxed; when photographs are taken out of their original albums; or when prints are removed from frames – in all cases to protect them from the dangers of detrimental housing or adjacencies – in effect they have lost part of their past lives, their identities, and clues to their contexts.

This includes information about how and by whom they were collected, and perhaps used and valued. Someone collected the printed works and bound them together; someone put prints in a portfolio, or frame, and even though we don't see the enclosure as important, this could be from a lack of knowledge about the owner, the dealer, or the reader.

In the case of books, luxury housing or binding reveals the respect or even veneration of the texts or images as well as the tastes of their owners. These should be discarded with care and after discussion, not as a matter of course. Some book collectors have also preferred their books to be clean; both collectors and dealers spruced up copies by rebinding, erasing annotations, removing bookplates and ownership marks, even bleaching the paper to the point of its falling apart. We should learn from the well-intended mistakes and mistreatments of the past.

Libraries past and present have tended to focus on texts in both cataloging and conservation at the expense of documenting and preserving physical qualities, not seeing

them as evidence. (For examples, see David Pearson, *Books as History: The Importance of Books Beyond Their Texts* [London: British Library, 2008], page 94.) Viewing historical works presently housed in an archival box or taken out of the frame and refolded or under mylar is a different experience which decontextualizes the material. It is sometimes unavoidable. Whenever archives are moved from the author's study, the professor's office, or the artist's studio, they are reorganized or sometimes organized for the first time. Thanks to this systematization, labeling, cataloging, and rehousing, researchers can actually find things, but what could be lost is a second kind of life, the materiality of the collection. It is a bit like seeing animals in cages in a zoo rather than in their native habitats.

Perhaps this perspective is an impossible idea. We cannot bring back historical periods, centuries past, but we can be aware of the history-erasing, sanitizing effects of rehousing and processing. I want to suggest that we not do it in the same way all the time, but only as appropriate and only when needed. In the best situations, curation, processing, conservation, and access involve ongoing discussions that bring different perspectives. They meld treatments of paper, adhesives, leather, and other materials of which books and other works on paper are made with the curators' knowledge of the history of the work as well as current contexts. They take into account

how researchers use the collections, using new technology to best effect. In almost all cases and on a daily basis, judgments must be made, and so they should be as informed, but also as flexible and as practical, as possible.

While there is a certain authority that comes with collection management, cataloging rules, and archival practice, these change and should be questioned. Likewise there have always been fashions in collecting, organization, cataloging, and housing. There are two conflicting issues: 1) preserving a period approach in collecting: gathering material, assembling a coherent group; and 2) providing appropriate access or visual display of the material. As more reading is done on screens, formats of historical books lose their familiarity. Design of books and pages is one issue, but displaying a book or pages on a flat screen accomplishes an essential reductive transformation that alters the experience of the text and the work.

There are ways to mitigate this loss of past lives of books and other objects. One is to record the owner speaking about the collection, videotaping or photographing the original context. We have done this a number of times, and it is helpful for understanding the roles that books and other collections played. Only lock-key museums and historic houses seek to freeze frames and keep history in a bell jar, but frankly they lack the kinds of engagement essential to bringing history into the present in a meaningful way.

### Assisted Living

I like to call the later phases of the life of a book assisted living – just as we visit our elderly relatives and enjoy them, even as we assure their continued care. We do want to take care of these works. We want people to be able to see and when possible to touch them, opening and untying boxes, turning pages, allowing pieces to work in the way they were intended. Conservation stabilizes their present condition; their housing protects them. There should be regular checks on certain kinds of material. There is an inherent respect that allows collections to age gracefully, not "museumifying" them, allowing them still to play a role in research and exhibitions as touchstones of intellectual heritage. We should see this as a relationship, an ongoing conversation.

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# Annual Report to the Membership

Given by the president, Susan Hanes, at the May 2015 dinner meeting

Good evening, and welcome to our annual meeting and a very special evening with Dr. Christopher de Hamel, who comes to us from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

When I assumed the presidency of the Caxton Club, one of my primary commitments was to forge new relationships and build on long-standing ones. Welcoming members of the Board of Trustees of the Newberry Library this evening thus gives me great pleasure, for it is our mutual support and the celebration of our long relationship that will keep our organizations strong as we move through the 21st century.

The Caxton Club added 21 new members this year: 12 Resident and 9 Non Resident. I am especially pleased that we now have 9 Junior Members. Four new Caxtonians were voted to membership just this evening at our Council meeting. Perhaps our online presence has helped, as Alice Cameron and Lisa Pevtzow keep things up to date on Facebook. Membership Chair Donna Tuke has done a fine job of welcoming new Caxtonians into our midst.

In February, we celebrated 120 years of the Caxton Club at a memorable evening at the Newberry. The evening was especially meaningful as we recognized our own Bob McCamant as an Honorary Caxtonian, not only for his continuing work as editor of the *Caxtonian*, but for his many contributions to the book world.

Many of our talented grant recipients were there, and we enjoyed seeing their work displayed in cases around the room. This year, we presented grants to five students from five institutions in three states: Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska. Martha Chipplis heads an extremely dedicated Grant Committee, with Eileen Madden, Kathryn Tutkus, Michael Thompson, Jackie Vossler, and Lisa Pevtzow.

These grants have been possible through the generosity of our members, who have made record contributions during this year's development campaign, once again ably

led by Matt Doherty.

The Dinner Program Committee, headed by Jackie Vossler, has brought us remarkable presenters this year, including this evening's distinguished speaker, Christopher de Hamel. Thank you to Alice Schreyer, Steve Woodall, Michael Thompson, and Jackie.

I'd like to thank Dorothy Sinson, Bill Locke, and Doug Fitzgerald, who have continued to bring a wealth of excellent speakers to the Caxton Luncheon meetings. These meetings are extremely popular as they encourage bookish conviviality in a more informal setting.

Caxton on the Move, an initiative by Jackie Vossler, inspired by John Chalmers and supported by many others, including Leora Siegel, Steve Woodall, Terri Edelstein, Kurt Gippert, and Michael Thompson, has added a whole new dimension to Caxton Club offerings. We began early last fall, when Caxtonians met for

a delightful evening with Ed Valauskas at the Lenhardt Library at the Chicago Botanic Garden. In October, Steve Woodall and Miriam Schaer gave us an evening tour of the studios at Columbia College Center for the Book. In November,

we were treated to the special exhibit at the University of Chicago in conjunction with the publication of *En Guerre: French Illustrators and World War I*, by Neil Harris and Teri

Edelstein. The Caxton Club cohosted an accompanying reception with the Chicago Art

Deco Society. We supported UNESCO World Book Day with a mini book fair with members of the ABAA at the Cliff Dwellers.

And finally, in April, Caxtonians travelled to Cedar Rapids and Iowa City to visit fine collections at the Czech and Slovak Museum, the University of Iowa, and in private libraries.

The 8th Annual Caxton Symposium was held at our Newberry home this year, and in partnership with the Bibliographic Society of America, brought in scholars from across the country to discuss "Preserving the Evidence: The Ethics of Conservation." We had the added treat of a pre-symposium tour of conservation labs at the Art Institute of Chicago, the University of



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Chicago, and Graphic Conservation Company. A strong committee headed by Paul Gehl, Jackie Vossler, and Marcia Reed of the BSA ensured that this was one of the best symposia ever. But I think I say that every year!

I would like to thank our class of 2015 Council members whose terms expire in June: Bob Karrow, Michael Thompson, Steve Woodall, Ed Bronson, and Jeff Jahns. I would also like to recognize the executive officers with whom I have had the pleasure to work: Vice President Michael Gorman, Treasurer Don Chatham, and Secretary Jackie Vossler.

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**1** Virginia Harding and Kurt Gippert at UNESCO World Book Day.

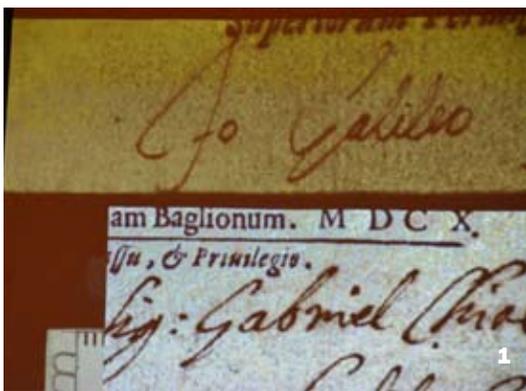
**2** Christopher de Hamel.

**3** Donna Tuke and Rob Martier

**4** Martha Chipplis and Don Allen.

# Nick Wilding, Detective

The world authority on the *Sidereus Nuncius* forgery wows the April Caxton crowd



**1** Hand signature on the questionable *Sidereus Nuncius* compared well against known true copies. **2** Nick Wilding. **3** Recent Caxtonian Robin Rider came in from Madison to introduce Wilding. **4** The broken “d” and “a” very likely occurred in an electronic process. **5** Sem Sutter has returned to resident member status. **6** Wilding keeps Rob Carlson, Ronald Corthell (Purdue University – Calumet), and Paul Gehl entertained.

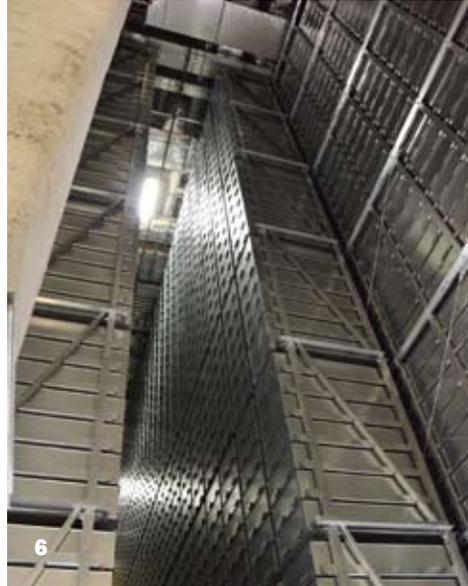
photographs by Robert McCamant



## *Two Days of Book and Paper Conservation*

Symposium 2015: Friday—four visits and a dinner; Saturday—four speakers and a panel.





FACING PAGE **1** Successfully conserved items were spread out in the Ryerson and Burnham libraries at the Art Institute. **2** Virginia Meredith demonstrates sewing at the Newberry Library conservation center. **3** Conservator Ann Lindsey, at the University of Chicago's Mansueto Library, explains factors taken into consideration when deciding what should be conserved and how. THIS PAGE **4** Book bins used in the U. of C.'s robotic storage system. **5** David Bottorff explained the U. of C. system. **6** Thousands of book bins in their spots in the system. SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS **7** Jeanne Drewes, of the Library of Congress, was the keynote. **8** Marcia Reed (see page 1). **9** Sheryl Ogden, of the Minnesota Historical Society. **10** Michele Cloonan, of Simmons College. PANELISTS **11** Bookbinder Scott Kellar. **12** Russ Maki of Graphic Conservation Co. **13** Collector Ronald Smeltzer and dealer Bruce McKittrick. **14** Lauren Luciano displaying work at the Graphic Conservation Co.



photographs by Susan Hanes and Robert McCamant



# Book- and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Lisa Pevtzow

(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit.)

**Art Institute of Chicago**, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600: **“Ireland: Crossroads of Art and Design, 1690-1840”** (explores art and culture of Ireland, including many fine bindings), Regenstein Hall through June 21. **“Spreading Devotion: Japanese and European Religious Prints”** (explores the rich printed traditions fostered by devotional practices in the East and West), Gallery 107 through June 21. **“The Midcentury Mood: Milton Schwartz in America, 1953-1965”** (Chicagoan Schwartz’s award-winning hotels and motels reflect the image and attitude of the automobile and jet age), Gallery 24 through July 5. **“Elena Manferdini: Building the Picture”** (Manferdini’s manipulation of an iconic Mies van der Rohe grid blurs lines between fashion and pattern in an architectural context and introduces a new contemporary landscape), Gallery 286 through September 20.



Art Institute / Milton Schwartz  
320 OAKDALE APARTMENTS, CHICAGO.

**Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library**, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: **“Keep Growing”** (Chicago Horticultural Society’s 125th anniversary exhibition), through August 16.

**Chicago History Museum**, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-266-2077: **“Railroaders: Jack Delano’s Homefront Photography”** (the federal Office of War Information assigned photographer Jack Delano to take pictures of the nation’s railways during World War II), through January 31, 2016.

**Harold Washington Library Center**, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, 312-747-4300: **“Journey to Empowerment: 110 Years of the Chicago Defender”** (images and memorabilia that show the impact of journalism on the African American community), through June 28.

**Newberry Library**, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: **“Ephemeral by Design: Organizing the Everyday”** (highlights from an ongoing project to catalog nearly 30,000 items from the Newberry’s John M. Wing Foundation on the History of Printing), through June 3. **“Chicago’s Great 20th-Century Bookman: The Newberry Career of James M. Wells”** (memorial exhibit featuring Wells’ contributions to the Newberry, including significant acquisitions), through June 3. **“Katherine Mansfield and the Blooms-berries”** (selection of her letters and notebooks), through June 3.

**Northwestern University Library**, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, 847-491-7658: **“Midwest Renaissance: Printed Books at Northwestern from Shakespeare’s Time”** (exhibit showcases some of the interesting and unusual early printed works at the Charles Deering McCormick

Library of Special Collections), through June 21.

**Oriental Institute of Chicago**, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, 773-702-9520: **“A Cosmopolitan City: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Old Cairo”** (documents and artifacts from Old Cairo’s multi-cultural society, 7th to 12th centuries), through September 13.

**Pritzker Military Museum and Library**, 104 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, 312-374-9333: **“SEAL The Unspoken Sacrifice”** (features photographs from Stephanie Freid-Perenchio and Jennifer Walton’s 2009 book and artifacts on loan from the Navy SEAL Museum), ongoing.

**University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery**, 1100 E. 57th Street, Chicago, 773-702-8705: **“Closeted/Out in the Quadrangles: A History of LGBTQ Life at the University of Chicago”** (examines the range of experiences lived by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer students and faculty on the University of Chicago campus), through June 12. **“Mapping the Young Metropolis: The Chicago School of Sociology, 1915-1940”** (key records of the research methodology, tools and analyses of the Chicago School of Sociology), June 22 to September 11.

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Rare Book & Manuscript Library**, 346 Main Library, 1408 W. Gregory Drive, Urbana, 217-333-3777: **“A Nation in Tears: 150 Years After Lincoln’s Death”** (books, photographs, documents, and other artifacts related to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and its aftermath), through May 4.

Send your listings to [lisa.pevtzow@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lisa.pevtzow@sbcglobal.net)



Newberry Library / Katherine Mansfield  
FRENCH CASINO MATCHBOOK.

Art Institute / Elena Manferdini  
ELENA MANFERDINI, BUILDING THE PICTURE, 2014. © ELENA MANFERDINI..

## And if you find yourself in New York City:

Pierpont Morgan favored Caxton over Gutenberg as a founder of printing and strove to acquire a premier collection of his work. The Morgan has the third largest collection of Caxtons in the world, preserved for their literary, linguistic, and historical significance. They’ll be on special display at the **Morgan Library** May 29 to Sept. 20.



# Caxtonians Collect: Anne Royston

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

I met Anne Royston in the back seat of Michael Thompson's car, riding to Iowa City for the Caxton outing there to visit book collections, collectors, and makers. The fourth passenger was Londoner Anthony Davis, whom Thompson had invited along.

Although Royston has been in the United States for most of her adult life, she speaks with a British accent. But not a current one: Davis pointed out that she sounded like the 50s. In getting to know her, I have come to think that emblematic of her view: she is firmly grounded in the world that shaped her, though she frequently embraces the new and current when it can make life better.

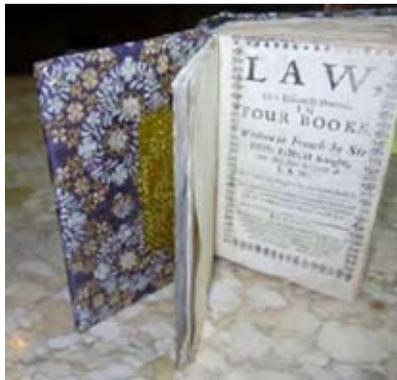
She was a child in Guildford, Surrey, southwest of London. Her mother had her own ideas about education, and enrolled her in a PNEU (Parents' National Educational Union) school, based upon the thinking of Charlotte Maria Shaw Mason. Mason's methods (influential to this day, mainly championed presently by home-schooling parents) were not exactly what young Royston needed: had her school not hired a more conventional teacher at the ninth hour, she suspects she would have failed her national exams.

She studied at Guildford School of Art and worked briefly for a London textile firm. But jobs in the field were hard to find, so she went elsewhere for secretarial studies. That led to a job as an editorial assistant at an architectural magazine. Shortly thereafter, however, she was married, and as was then the custom, took herself out of the job market, although she did free-lance project work from time to time as it turned up. Two daughters soon augmented the domestic unit.

Every summer in the 70s, she and her daughters would escape to London for summer vacation. "I wanted them to keep in touch with their English heritage," she explains. But she had an epiphany one day, riding in a cab up Clark Street. Though she had been a U.S. citizen for some time, that day she finally felt she had become an American.

Her husband was a mathematician. His work took the family to many places: Chalk River, Ontario; Oxford; Chicago; Switzer-

land. When she came to Chicago a second time, in 1972, with young children, she studied communications at Roosevelt University. In the eighties, she parted company with her husband and took a job as writer at an architectural firm downtown for seven years. Later she was able to do similar work in the suburbs,



providing writing and promotional materials for architecture and engineering firms.

Then in 1996, a flood in the basement of her home caused her to renew an interest she'd picked up while back in her first art school: bookbinding. While there, she had made friends with the influential bookbinder William Matthews, mentor to the legendary binder Bernard Middleton. "He enjoyed my company because I was willing to listen to him

talk about his horse," Royston explains. "I had taken him a book, hoping that he would teach me how to rebind it myself. I did get to watch him do it, but he didn't seem to want me to do anything except listen to him talk about his racehorse."

She had been storing older family books in boxes in the basement following her house move. When she discovered them soaking wet, she consulted an expert at the Chicago Historical Society, who advised her immediately to wrap and freeze any she wanted to preserve. She did that, then located a firm that would freeze-dry them. When she got them back, they were out of danger but not in anything like their original condition.

She explored the regional bookbinding workshop scene, and also learned that (at the time) the Newberry Library was accepting weekly volunteers in the conservation department. So every Thursday morning for ten years she reported there and learned from the staff led by Giselle Simon. "It was a great learning experience, and they were very patient with me."

She has also taken binding lessons from Glenview design

bookbinder Karen Hanmer. "Mind you, I don't do bindings that are anything like hers," she says. "My books are mostly family hand-me-downs: several date to the 17 century but are not particularly distinguished editions. Having been re-bound previously, contemporary materials and methods are quite in order." She compares bookbinding to dentistry: both require excellent hand skills. She wishes she were younger, at least in that respect. Nowadays, many of her binding projects are to solve problems for friends: a group of items crying out to be bound, or a cherished family volume that is falling apart.

Royston has long been a resident of Western Springs, though she has moved into a smaller home there. She calls herself a "keen" gardener. She joined the Club in 2014, nominated by Eileen Madden. But she has been a member of the Friends of Dard Hunter (a national association of papermakers and book related activists) for longer.

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## Bookmarks...

**Luncheon: Friday, June 12, Union League Club  
Glenn Humphreys on the Special Collections  
of the Chicago Public Library**

June offers you a special chance to go behind the scenes at the Chicago Public Library, through a lavishly illustrated journey to the inner sanctum of its special collections. Caxtonian Glenn Humphreys, who serves as head of rare books and manuscripts at special collections, will reveal the origins, holdings, and unexpected treasures that lie within. From its humble beginnings in a water tank that survived the Great Chicago Fire, the Chicago Public Library has grown into a system that spans 80 communities across the city. Along the way it has gathered a remarkable collection and you'll be given an exclusive look at highlights that illuminate Chicago politics, plays, parks, paintings, and more. You'll see political cartoons by Chester Commodore, one of the most influential African American cartoonists of the 20th century; a marked-up script and photographs from *Glengarry Glen Ross* the David Mamet play; Millennium Park construction photographs documenting the transformation of the area from rail yard to stunning urban park; plus so much more.

*June luncheon: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Luncheon buffet (main dining room on six) opens at 11:30 am; program (in a different room, to be announced) 12:30-1:30. Luncheon is \$32. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or e-mail [caxtonclub@newberry.org](mailto:caxtonclub@newberry.org). **Reservations suggested by noon Wednesday for Friday lunch.***

**Dinner , Wednesday June 17, Union League Club  
Arnold Hirshon on  
“Alice at 150: Artistic Visions as Visual Translation”**

Arnold Hirshon is Associate Provost and University Librarian at Case Western Reserve University. He has written extensively for scholarly publications and lectured in over 40 countries on six continents. Dr. Hirshon will use the 150th anniversary of the first publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to examine the visual expression of this classic story. Significant attention has been paid to the work's wordplay, philosophical and mathematical concepts, puns, ambiguities, and nonsense words. Much attention also has been given to translations of the complex text into other languages. But until recently there was little popular, scholarly, or critical exploration of the illustrated Alice, despite over 200 illustrated versions and Alice's portrayal in other visual media – stage, film, television, and fine art. In a richly-illustrated program, Dr. Hirshon will focus the looking glass on artists' and illustrators' many efforts to portray Alice's story beyond John Tenniel's iconic standard.

*June dinner: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. This program will follow our new format: spirits at 5, program at 6 with dinner to follow. Drinks are \$5 - \$9, Dinner is \$48. **Reservations are essential to attend either the program only or the program and dinner combination.** For reservations call 312-255-3710 or e-mail [caxtonclub@newberry.org](mailto:caxtonclub@newberry.org). Please reserve no later than June 12 at 5 pm.*