

# The WAYZGOOSE GAZETTE

*of the International Printing Museum, Los Angeles, California*



FOUNDED IN 1988 BY DAVID JACOBSON, THE PRINTING MUSEUM IS A PUBLIC CHARITY DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF PRINTING HISTORY, AND FEATURES THE ERNEST A. LINDNER COLLECTION

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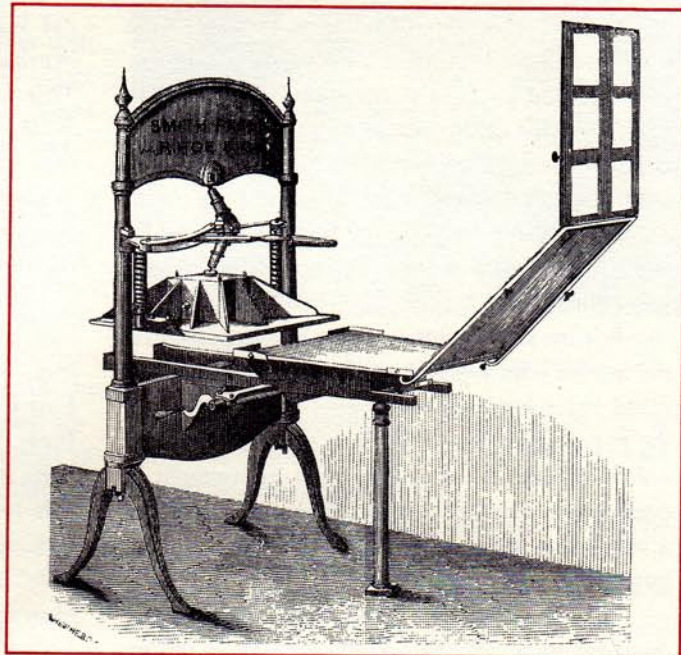
JULY 1999

## *The Smith Washington Press: Striking Gold in the California Motherlode*

My curatorial adventures through California's gold mining towns two years ago produced another treasure for the Printing Museum's collections. Decorated tastefully with a simple wreath on the front and two small acorn-and-oak-leaf motifs on the sides, this antique hand-lever press immediately caught my attention during a visit in Amador City on historic Highway 49. The press was unusual and yet very familiar. If you are knowledgeable about 19th century hand presses, this press appeared to be a Washington Hand Press, circa 1850. Yet the toggle (the mechanism in the center of the press which produces the squeezing pressure for printing when the bar is pulled) was certainly not the Washington-style; in fact, only two sections of the apparently 5-piece toggle were with the press, making the press even more of a mystery.

Though unsure of its origin, I became acutely aware of the press's weight as I worked on moving the press from its comfortable home in a shed and into my trailer. Cast-iron machines in general do not like to move. With much sweat and bodily strain, the former owner and I carefully lowered the 3/4-ton machine on its side with a makeshift rope-and-pulley combination. With myself balancing the press vertically on its side, holding and steering with one set of the legs, the beast was slowly winched onto the trailer. Beside it rested another hand press, a Washington Press from 1869 (one of two with sequential serial numbers to have survived from the Sacramento Bee's pressroom).

My research on this unusual press began as soon as I arrived back in Southern California. The



*The Smith Washington Press, as illustrated in an 1856 catalogue.*

toggle pieces intrigued me since I had never seen them associated with a Washington-style press. The mystery was partially solved a few weeks later—the press was a combination of two styles and was technically known as a Smith Washington. I found a line drawing of the press in an 1856 Bruce Typefounders catalogue in the Museum's research library. No name plate survived with the press so I couldn't be sure of its manufacturer until a letter and photo arrived from a curator at the Smithsonian. In response to my request, she had located an identical press in a museum in the Northeast, one that was complete with the acorn-and-oak leaf motifs in the casting and with a R. Hoe nameplate. Mystery solved.

The story of how this press came to exist is a colorful and entertaining one, dating back to the

beginnings of our nation's greatest press manufacturing company—R. Hoe & Co.

With hopes of new prosperity, Robert Hoe set sail from native England in 1803 at the age of 19. He arrived in the city of New York as a carpenter and soon fell into partnership with Matthew Smith, who along with his father was engaged in the business of making wooden printing presses and supplies. A partnership was formed in 1805 to continue this enterprise: Smith, Hoe & Co. Actually young Hoe's partnership with the Smith family went a bit deeper. He took interest in Matthew's sister Rachel and married her that same year.

In 1822, Peter Smith (younger brother of the now-deceased Matthew) developed an acorn-framed hand press with toggles. For the newly named R. Hoe & Co. (see what happens with your company name when you die!), this "Smith Press" became its first unique offering to the trade. With its heavy, strong frame in the shape of an upside-down acorn and powerful toggle, the press was a good seller.

But by 1829, another hand press appeared on the market with superior qualities, the Washington Hand Press invented by Samuel Rust. Instead of the heavy acorn frame, the Rust press had upright, hollow cast-iron sides, making it lightweight in comparison. The Rust toggle, three pieces forming a shape like the number four, proved to be more powerful than the Smith toggle.

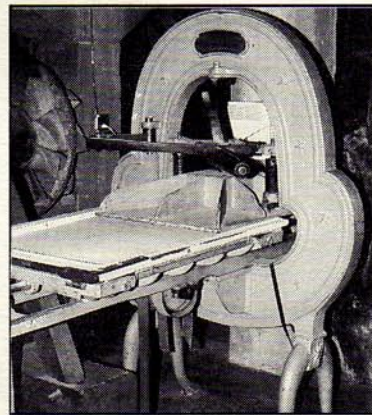
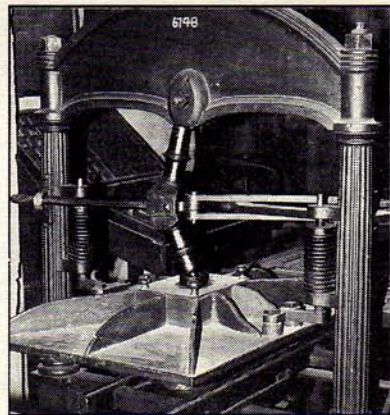
With a bit of deception and cunning, Hoe managed to acquire the Washington Press design from Rust. Since Rust disliked Hoe and refused to sell him the patents for the Washington Press, Hoe sent his foreman to talk with the elderly Rust. After being convinced that the foreman would

enter into competition with Hoe, Rust sold him the rights to his press and business with an added caveat not to compete. Upon completing the transaction for a nominal sum of money, the foreman then walked back up the street to the Hoe factory, into Hoe's office and presented him with his competitor's business. As the leading printing press manufacturer of the 19th century, R. Hoe & Co. sold over 6,000 of those Washington Presses, including numbers 5627 and 5629 to the Sacramento Bee in 1869.

But Hoe wasn't ready to abandon the Smith press outright. Realizing the advantage of the vertical Washington Press frame, Hoe adapted the Washington Press for use with the Smith toggle. This hybrid press was given the name "Smith Washington", being offered for sale by Hoe until the 1880's. It is assumed that the Smith Washington Press we just acquired arrived in the Sacramento Gold Rush Area sometime between the 1850's and the 1880's.

With the identification of the press solved, we now have the task of restoring it to working condition. With the help of the Mercer Museum on the East Coast who has the other Smith Washington Press, we have made plastic patterns of the toggle parts our press is missing. Hopefully, we will be able to have them cast this summer and bring this historic California press back into full operation.

The press is featured in the Country Newspaper Shop display at the new Printing Museum facility located in Carson, CA. Nearby the press are the other players in this story including the Washington Press and an acorn-framed press. Come for a visit and you'll enjoy the many colorful stories you'll hear.



Left: detail of the acorn and oak leaf pattern in the leg. Middle: detail of Smith toggle, similar to a knuckle. Right: the original Rust press with an acorn frame and the popular Rust number-4 toggle (photographs courtesy of Mercer Museum, PA).

## Letters from the History in Motion Outreach Program

This past school year, the Printing Museum's traveling educational program, *History in Motion: A Museum on Wheels*, visited 130 schools and destinations, nearly double the activity from the previous year. Most of the presentations were in the Southern California area, but this year we experimented successfully with taking the program into more distant areas, including San Diego, Big Bear, Santa Barbara, even a week in Phoenix and in San Francisco. We plan to continue expanding the program in these areas during the coming year.

The two-hour assembly features one hour with Ben Franklin, learning about his life and many inventions; the second hour explores the 5,000 year history of books at the traveling colonial printing shop.

As part of our follow-up with the students, we ask them to write us letters highlighting what they learned from the presentation. The responses from the students are usually very refreshing, insightful and often very entertaining. More importantly, they reflect the impact the Museum's programs are having on audiences young and old, helping students understand our history and the importance of printing and literacy to their lives. The following excerpts are from this year's students:

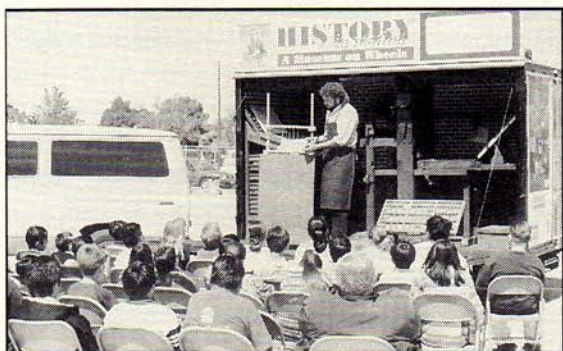
Dear Printing Museum

The presentation was a very excellent one. You made it entertaining and gave us a lot of useful information as well. Keep up the good work!

Brandon Grossberg, 10th grade

I enjoyed this field trip very much and it is I think the best and most educating field trip I've ever gone to. I will never forget it.

Sincerely, Megan Lee, 5th grade



Curator Mark Barbour demonstrates bookbinding to students at the *History in Motion* exhibit during a recent visit to Phoenix.

Dear Sirs:

I really enjoyed the actors. They gave us a real feeling toward Benjamin Franklin. It gave us a better look at his life than any other textbook could have described.

Sincerely, Emily, 10th grade

Dear Museum:

I found the historical presentation on the printing press to be very creative. I find visual explana-



Dr. Benjamin Franklin prepares a student to touch his static electrical generator during a *History in Motion* assembly.

tion such as exhibits in a museum to be the best form of learning. I now realize how cherished books and literature should be.

Faythe Gutierrez, Big Bear High School

Dear Mr. Franklin:

I just want to thank you and the others for providing my class and me with a most enjoyable, educational day. I can't believe how much I learned, and I've taught U.S. history for some time.

Sincerely, Jill Henderson, teacher

Dear Ben Franklin,

Thank you for teaching us about Ben Franklin. I really liked learning about him. It was cool how you make music playing with the glass cup.

From, Erick Cheng, 5th grade  
Informative—good interface with audience—great opportunity to see bookbinding and learn the origins of dust jackets. Please come back again!

Visitor, Arizona Book Festival

You were the best assembly all year!

Sean Joseph, student

Dear Printing Museum

I've learned a lot from you. Some of the things you taught me was how books are made, and that only kings, queens and priests are people that mostly owned books. But the most, best part of the

program was when I got to stand on stage and crank Ben's invention (static electrical generator), then he put a light bulb to my head and it lit up!

Sincerely, Adam, Quail Summit Elementary

Dear Ben,

I learned a lot of new things today, such as the rocking chair which you invented was called the unsteady chair; I learned that you didn't invent electricity; that you earned all your money from printing, and last but not least I learned that people can act so good these days!!! (I was pretty sure you were dead!). Thank you,

Kimberly Briones, student, San Bruno

Dear Printing Museum,

We had lots of fun learning about Dr. Franklin, he was so realistic it felt like he was really in the room with us.

Kelsey, 5th grader

Dear Dr. Franklin and Mr. Barbour,

Thank you for the wonderful morning. My experience going on field trips must number in the 100's. My "all time" favorite was your Printing Museum. You bring that same quality to your mobile presentation.

Sincerely, Patty Rowe, teacher

Dear Printing Museum,

I loved seeing Franklin and hearing the stories of his inventions. I will never forget this wonderful man in history!

Karen, 4th grader

Dear "Ben Franklin,"

I learned many interesting facts that I hadn't known before. You were a great teacher. I didn't know you invented all those things.

Daniel Woodall, 5th grader, San Jose

Dear Ben Franklin,

I liked the part where you showed us how you captured electricity. I really like that you came to our school. You were the best assembly this year.

Sincerely, Sean Joseph, 5th grader

Dear Mr. Barbour,

Thank you for coming to teach us about printing. I did not know that printing originated from China, or that apprentices were counted as indentured servants. I also enjoyed when you printed that one side of the book. I really, really liked this and I thank you for your time to come to San Jose and teach us!

Cordially, Cameron Brown, 5th grader

Dear History in Motion:

Excellent—you captivated the audience.

Visitor, Arizona Book Festival

Dear Mr. Barbour,

Thank you very much for bringing your printing museum to our school. I learned a lot about how much books cost when they were first made and how to make one. I hope other kids get to see this and have a fun & educational time like we had.

Sincerely, Matt Evans, student

## *The New Printing Museum Display in Carson*

After having the Printing Museum's collections confined to cramped storage in the desert for the past two years, we experienced a great homecoming this past winter as we worked on reopening our public display. It was the feeling of reuniting with friends as we rolled the decorated Columbian Press and the Linotype Junior onto the display floor.

And though the current display space is very tight by comparison to what we had in Buena Park, we have managed to bring out most of the gems of the Lindner Collection. On display are the beautiful cast-iron hand lever presses of the 19th century, the early Linotypes and typesetting machines, the 1936 4-color Webendorfer Offset Press, platen presses, tools of the trade, type and bindery equipment.

One of the two featured period displays is the working colonial printing shop, complete with the

1806 Ramage Press. Though this press technically falls outside of the colonial period, it represents the basic concept of wooden presses used by Ben Franklin and those before him. Adam Ramage was one of the first press makers in America, and our 1806 Ramage is believed to be the third oldest American-made wooden press. The press and the exhibit are one of the main focuses during guided tours through the Museum.

The second period display is the Country Newspaper Shop, featuring the Prouty "Grasshopper" cylinder press, the Ruggles Job and Card Press from 1850, and hand-typesetting area. The period wooden walls were aged appropriately in the curator's backyard over the past twenty years, and became available just as we were building the set—basically, his fence fell down in December!

Since the open house celebration in January, we have had a dozen or more group/school tours through the new facility, giving us an opportunity to work out a new method of giving tours within a more confined space. We have been able to handle groups in size up to 60 people, comfortably and efficiently: half the group first experiences Ben Franklin in our Heritage Theatre while the other half receives a guided, working tour.

This summer we are working on improving the display space, making room for our most recent and very exciting addition, the Gutenberg Press. We will be adding more spot lighting to better highlight the displays as well as installing large wall displays to make use of our vertical space. Our landlord has made the comment that we are the most efficient user of space he has ever seen! Our philosophy is simple: if a space cannot be used for display, then we will use it for storage, and if we cannot create any more horizontal displays, then we will go vertical!

And though our space is very limited, it was a priority of the curator to bring the Museum Library of Printing History out of palletized storage and into a usable space. A majority of 5,000 books in the Museum's collection are now back on the shelf and will be accessible to visitors as soon as the Museum docents and curator have a chance to sort them.

The Printing Museum's display in Carson is certainly not as grand as the former display in Buena Park which covered 25,000 square feet, but at the same time, we do not have the major benefactor who paid \$30,000 per month for that space. The current display brings out the essence of the

Printing Museum and allows the Museum to continue to fulfill its mission to preserve the history of printing and use that history to impact the public on the importance of printing and literacy through its educational programs.

We have plans to grow into a larger space, either here or in a permanent building within the historic district of downtown Los Angeles. Those dreams and plans are merely subject to the amount of support we receive from those who are motivated and excited about our vision. Because of the

politics of the County of Los Angeles, who owns the historic Plaza House in downtown which we are interested in, we expect the project to take several years to come to fruition. At present, the County needs for us to demonstrate our ability to raise the funds necessary for the project.

This is where our Friends and Supporters come in. We need you to consider becoming a Lifetime Friend (\$500) or a Franklin Fellow (\$1,000). The preservation of our history and the impact on education we can make with that history, makes your support more than worth it. Our general fund is approaching \$500,000 which is impressive, but not enough to engage in

a building project. We need your dedicated help over the next few years to develop an appropriate and permanent home for the Printing Museum. Many of our Friends are Sustaining Supporters, pledging \$25/month until they reach their goal. It's an easy way to help. All donations made above your basic annual membership of \$25 are cumulated each year until you reach each level of support. Make the Printing Museum a part of your planned, annual charitable contributions.



*Pictured above in the new Printing Museum display, docents Gene and Barbara Lee demonstrate colonial printing techniques on the 1806 Ramage Press donated by Rand McNally; below, students watch intently as the Museum curator tells a story about Ottmar Mergenthaler and demonstrates a Linotype machine.*

## Curator's Notes

I think I noticed a slight glimmer of hope in my beloved wife's eye after I mentioned in June that I was finished with the major moving of the Printing Museum's collection, again, and finished with the initial development of the new display in Carson, and at the end of our season of outreaches to the schools, and...

Of course, I've dashed her hopes more times than I care to admit during the past two years. This time I had to demonstrate it with my actions by actually coming home, staying at home, and not working at home on Museum projects. None of those requirements are easy, especially when my Museum office is still at home, and my hobby of letterpress printing certainly has all the appearances of being "work." But this time, I think her hope will turn into a confirmed fact, and none to soon as she has just given birth to our fourth child in five years!

Our move out of storage in Riverside into Carson definitely felt more strenuous and taxing than the move out of Buena Park into Riverside. The latter only took three months, the former nearly eight. We began the move into Carson back in September, which required the careful sorting of the crammed collection in storage into what we could put on display, what we could put into accessible Carson storage, non-accessible Carson storage, and finally, non-accessible storage to remain in the Riverside facility.

To understand the magnitude of this sorting process, what was originally housed in 35,000 sq. ft. in Buena Park had to be squeezed into 15,000 sq. ft. in tight storage in Riverside. Then from Riverside to Carson, 15,000 sq. ft. had to be further reduced to 5,000 sq. ft. of formal display/storage, and then 5,000 sq. ft. of storage in Riverside. And because we are dealing with historical items of an uncommon collection, each step of the sorting process required curatorial input so that important artifacts were not lost or destroyed.

With several last minute late nights and the combined effort of many volunteers, the grand reopening celebration on January 16th was a major success. Some of the exhibits were completed only hours before the beginning of the festivities; the signage on the door was being adhered even as guests were walking in.

Over 120 friends and supporters enjoyed a day filled with guided tours and demonstrations, fantastic barbecued chicken prepared by the collector Ernie Lindner and his family, live music, some magic demonstrations, and even Ernie's restored 1900 Yale automobile. Guests also experienced first-hand the Museum's traveling educational program, *History in Motion: A Museum on Wheels*.

After surviving the open house, I then set myself to the task of consolidating the remaining items located in Riverside into one 5,000 sq. ft. enclosed room we were going to be allowed to use longer term. To make use of the room's 35 feet of vertical space, I created three levels of pallet rack storage, complete with plywood platforms on each level. Considering this to be long term, non-accessible storage, I then proceeded to carefully pack each level from the back to the front, leaving only one narrow, 12" aisle to allow myself to walk to the back (if I inhaled). I don't think it was possible to make better use of the cubic space within a 100'L x 50'W x 35'H room. With some effort, I could close the roll up door at the entrance of the room!

So I went home and told my wife in the middle of February that the long nightmare, filled with late nights, machinery rigging and truck driving would be over. And she reluctantly believed me.

But three weeks later, it became evident that we had a definite urgent crises on our hand. Due to circumstances beyond our control, the donated warehouse space in Riverside was no longer available and we would have to find a way to vacate the space immediately. Basically, what took me two months to carefully pack into that room now had to be undone and moved within three weeks!



*Ernie & Harriet Lindner together with Museum Friend Ray Mossler worked the barbecue for the the open house.*

Besides moving all the stuff, we had the added serious dilemma of not knowing where it would be heading to since our Carson facility was already packed. The decision was made to rent 48' long truck trailers, which could be moved off the property after loading (though we still didn't know where they would heading).

And to make this story even more compelling, the day we learned of our crises, we received a call from the Smithsonian. They informed us that the 6,000 pound Potter Drum Cylinder Newspaper Press, formerly used by the Los Angeles Times in 1886 and which was featured in the Smithsonian's Centennial Exposition since 1976, was now in a crate and would be arriving on our doorstep in three weeks—what was the address of the door we wanted it delivered to, they asked!

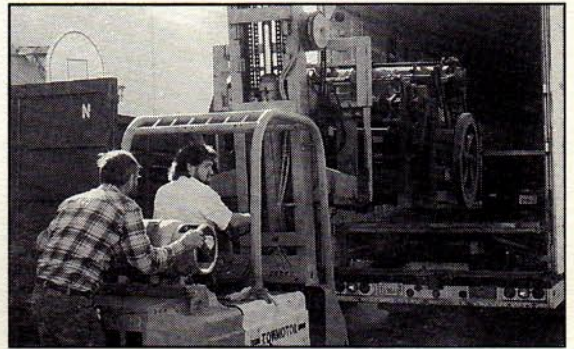
Delaying my answer to the Smithsonian as long as I could, I focused my attention to undoing my beautiful storage feat in that room. After separating out surplus items like desks, chairs and duplicate hobby presses, I managed to pack the remaining items into four trailers. One trailer we brought to Carson and somehow, to the amazement of the landlord, packed into the already full space. A second trailer we purchased and loaded with our three heavy, cylinder newspaper presses and rolled it out to the Railway Museum in the desert. The remaining two trailers and the soon-to-arrive crate presented a problem.

One of our board members, Al Merkel, who was with Times Mirror Press before he retired, was given the task of pursuing The Los Angeles Times for possible storage space and even the display of the press on its way back from the Smithsonian. Having been outside long enough to have lost many of his key contacts at The Times, Al was having little success in getting a firm answer from them. Monday morning, four days before the Smithsonian said the crate would arrive, I called Al at nine o'clock to find out where we stood. Al mentioned they had interest in displaying the press but the key decision-maker was elusive on giving a firm answer. I hung up the cell phone after reminding Al that we were only days from receiving the press. Thirty seconds later my phone ringed. It was a truck driver calling from Barstow, CA; he had a 6,000 pound crate on his truck and wanted to know what was the address I wanted it delivered to! I immediately called Al back up and informed him

my earlier estimate of days was now reduced to but a few hours.

By the end of the day, we managed to create a back-up option at a printing shop in downtown; the owners, Don and Earl Witscher, agreed to create some temporary space on their ground floor, but it also required bringing in a machinery rigger with a large forklift. Everybody waited anxiously for 9:00am the following morning, the time the Vice President at The Times would get into the office and could render his decision: the truck driver was waiting overnight in San Bernardino for my call, Earl Witscher waited at his shop to clear out the necessary space, and the rigger waited to schedule his day around our eminent need. Dropping off the crate to a secondary location would involve the added expense of moving it again, since it would only be a temporary solution.

And at 8:45, Al called me up to say The Times would be more than happy to receive the press, put



*The weight of this 110-year old newspaper press was enough to require a human counter-balance on the forklift to get the press into the storage trailer.*

it up on display and possibly even open up some space in their warehouse for our storage needs. How's that for a last minute angel? It turns out this Vice President of Operations had been developing plans for a historical exhibit in the new, marble-floored lobby of The Times but had recently shelved the idea due to cost concerns. Then Al Merkel called up and mentioned the possibility of displaying not only an interesting press, but one of the first presses used by The Los Angeles Times, in perfect display condition.

Our crisis is turning into a wonderful opportunity to create another display on printing history with items we were merely faced with storing. And hopefully it will also open the door for much needed major support from a corporation who has expressed interest in our museum over the years.

Of course, several weeks later, when it came time to move the final two trailers off of the property in Riverside, we still didn't have a firm answer from The Times to accept the trailers and give us inside storage space. They vaguely said yes, but nothing was definite. At 5 pm. the evening before the trailers had to be moved, only minutes after I hung up the phone with a printer who agreed to temporarily store the trailers, the Vice President returned my call and said, "Sure, just bring them down. We have plenty of room in the yard!" Nothing like living on the edge.

So this summer, after recovering from a stressful year of moving machinery, developing a new museum display and completing our busiest and most successful year of educational programs, we will be working on setting up a mini-museum on printing history at The Los Angeles Times, as well as completing and fine-tuning our new display in Carson.

We will also be getting back to our plans for the permanent home near historic Olvera Street in downtown. The initial requirements of the project is developing a building campaign which will convince the County of LA we have the ability and support to raise the \$2 million necessary. The support of The Times will be critical to this, but we also need our many Friends to become Lifetime

Friends (\$500) and Franklin Fellows (\$1,000) to make this dream a reality.

I apologize for the six month delay in getting this latest *Wayzgoose Gazette* out to our supporters. Hopefully, you can understand the hectic schedule we have had over the last eight months as we have gone through a dramatic transition from storage to an active public museum again. Though we have been very active with our *History in Motion* program during the past two years (and will continue to be in the future), people just didn't think we were alive while we didn't have a display open to the public. And I'm amazed at the positive response now that we have reopened. I hope the prediction of the Printing Museum's board is true, regarding the ability to raise the necessary funds for our building and endowment: that it will be easier to accomplish our goals from an open, visible facility (albeit temporary) rather than from a storage space with stories of the way the Museum used to be.

I hope you will join in our excitement as we transition into this new period for the International Printing Museum. And I truly hope that you participate financially to help us reach our important goal of *Education Through Preservation*. We truly need your help to succeed!

#### PRINTING MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

The following item is available by mail order.

Please make checks payable to The Printing Museum; add 15% to cover postage & sales tax.  
PO Box 6449 Buena Park CA 90622

*Before Photocopying: The Art & History of  
Mechanical Copying 1780 to 1938*  
by William Streeter



Published price: \$75

**Special Friends of the Museum price: \$60**

(This recent, thick volume is THE definitive book on copying or "book" presses; includes info on materials, methods, patents, and catalogue of every model known. A great book!)

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#### THE WAYZGOOSE GAZETTE

is issued regularly for the Friends of the International Printing Museum, founded in 1988 by David Jacobson and featuring the Ernest A. Lindner Collection of Antique Printing Machinery.

The term "wayzgoose" dates back to the 17th century and refers to a traditional printers' celebration.

Membership into the Friends begins at \$25 annually and goes to support the programs of the Museum. As a public charity, contributions to the Printing Museum are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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**Museum telephone: (310) 515-7166**  
**Museum hours: Saturdays, 10 am to 4 pm**  
**or by appointment during the week.**

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