

Quarto

Guild of Book Workers Midwest Chapter Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 12, Number 4
Fall 1999

To the GBW Executive Committee Open Letter

On August 28, 1999, Annie Wilcox wrote *The Quarto* editor:
Eric,

This is the only letter I have gotten from a chapter member in my tenure as president. I think it brings up some important issues to be addressed. Of course, I might feel this way since I am #26 on the waiting list for the Standards Seminar.

Thanks!

Annie

Annie forwarded the following letter from David Lawrence dated August 20, 1999:

Dear Annie,

As you're listed on the GBW page as a president for our Midwest Chapter I'm sending this to you in the hope that you will bring it up with Gabrielle and the Executive Committee of the Guild. I have e-mailed the following to Karen Crisalli.

Dave.

Dear Karen,

I have been giving the "waiting list" for the GBW conferences a lot of thought, and decided

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Midwest Chapter Annual Meeting Minutes

May 23, 1999: Yes that was a long time ago and no one took formal minutes, so this is being made up from my notes.

Members present: Gabrielle Fox, Annie Wilcox, Andrea Klein, Ellen Strong, Cris Takacs, Constance Wozney, Jana Pullman, Chip Schilling, Jeanne Drewes, Barbara Weathers, Richard Baker, Chris Parrish. [The Missouri contingent had already left, but we volunteered them for projects, so they are listed. And if I left you off the list, I apologize.]

The first act was to present Julia Welles of the Minnesota Center for the Book Arts with a bouquet of flowers and thank her for setting up the program for our Midwest Meeting.

It was decided that next year the business meeting should take place during the lunch break on Saturday. It was also suggested that we coordinate the weekend of the meeting *not* to coincide with other book arts meetings-i.e. AIC (we'll try, but keep the editor informed of these dates.)

We discussed where to hold the next meeting. We got out an atlas and figured out that the center of the ten state Midwest Chapter was Springfield, Illinois. We then checked the roster and found two members, Linda Runkle and Bonnie Parr and wondered how to they them to start preparations. (Relax, Ladies, we have since set up dates and places through 2002.) Then after more discussion and Gabrielle's chagrin, we found ourselves planning a meeting at The University of Kentucky in Lexington, with Jeane Drewes arranging an exhibit and talk on Cuban Book Artists. Other suggestions for workshops were Paper Washing and Cleaning, Tape Removal, Japanese Tissue Repair (Don Etherington) and Linen Backed Japanese Tissue (Bill Minter). Jeanne Drewes volunteered to set up a tour of the Cranbrook Academy for the Arts near Detroit, Michigan. (And she did, but no one attended. Why?)

The members present went over the Midwest Chapter brochure. Suggestions and corrections were noted. The brochure is being revised by Pam Rups. [Note: They are done. If you would like some to hand out at workshops, book fairs, etc. contact Cris Takacs 440-286-9773, crisctakacs@alltel.net]

Sue Toth had written that she no longer wished to be Membership Secretary and stated that the position no longer seemed necessary. Jeanne Drewes said that she had appreciated receiving the note from Sue when she had rejoined the chapter. No one volunteered to take on the position so it was made inactive. Midwest Stationery that Sue had had printed was split between Gabrielle Fox and Cris Takacs.

After the meeting, the members went off in different directions to take advantage of the weekend's ART-A-WHIRL open studio tour of artists in Northeast Minneapolis. The first stop for everyone was Chip Schilling's bindery and print shop, The Indulgence Press. The letterpress shop is located in a fabulous building what was once a veterinarian's office and kennel. Chip keeps his ephemera "caged" what was once the operating room. His wife, Trish Carney Schilling, has her studio, Minneapolis Millinery, in the same building. They rest in the human living quarters upstairs. After that, the Cleveland contingent got lost among the studios and galleries of the North King Complex Building (the structure was most complex), ate real bratwurst cooked by real artists and headed home to Ohio.

Open Letter to the Exec. Comm.

that I should get this down in writing and send it off to someone who actually had the wherewithal to give it a public airing. I hope this is received in the spirit in which it is intended – creative critique. And, as with all free advice, it may be worth exactly what it costs! Please give this a look-see and share it with the Executive Committee if you see fit.

I'm wondering if now it might be a good idea for the Guild to consider adding on another full day to our annual Conference to allow more people to be able to attend? Break us into 6 groups over a period of 3 days of sessions instead of the current 4 groups over 2 days. I've reread the history of the GBW that came out in the GBW Journal 35:1 and found nothing concerning when the Guild may or may not have gone from 1 to 2 days of sessions, etc.; so I have no historical timeline to refer to concerning if this might be a reasonable course of action.

I'll have to address this point from my field of organizational reference: I am formally trained for liberal Protestant pastoral/congregational leadership.

One of the principles of organizational growth: subdivide to multiply. Organizations whose *active* memberships stagnate numerically die. I'm not saying that the Guild is in danger of dying! What I am trying to say is that in order for us to continue our remarkable growth and to further promote the book, we ought to consider if this might be an excellent time to consider expansion to increase the possibility of greater active participation.

I believe the basic corollary is also applicable to a secular organization such as ours. The fundamental similarity between the two are that we have *no* attendance requirements – all attendance at formal functions is elective.

In a Protestant congregation, if 25% of the membership at large is active (attends worship, etc. on a regular basis), that congregation is considered to be "successful." I don't think we should institute "required" attendance for the Guild, but in order for continued growth as a group and to increase interest in the book we may need to provide the opportunity for more members of the National organization to be active in our sole annual formal function.

Congregations that plateau at the 25% mark begin to decline unless there are opportunities for new members to "break in" to the established group. This is variously accomplished by the creation of additional worship services, education classes, service groups, etc. Congregations that perform this kind of intentional and considered 'subdivision' for growth usually do experience growth. I think we may need to look at the Guild's history of attendance levels and the number of people who don't get to attend the Conference to see if it might now be beneficial for us to institute just such a "divide and multiply" tactic. I think the addition of the Foundations section is an excellent example of this already in action by the Executive Committee.

This would mean a commitment by the Guild leadership to give this a real tryout over, say, 3 to 5 years – not just a "it didn't work the first time we tried it so we won't be doing that again." If after a long-term period of time it is decided

that it's not feasible, we simply go back to the two days of sessions format.

Pros and Cons

Cons: 1. Doing this will probably create an increased burden on the GBW's leadership and the Organization both financially and time-wise.

2. Initially, 6 workshop sessions will create a smaller number of attendees in each session

3. An extra day of sessions means increased costs for the members, presenters, and vendors attending (hotel, meals, time away from work, etc.)

4. Conference venues may be more difficult to obtain due to increased attendance

Pros: 1. More members of the Guild will have an opportunity to be active in their membership

2. As more members attend they will go back to their friends and associates and foster greater interest in attending the Conference.

3. Smaller session sizes will provide better sight lines for the attendees and a chance for greater (more intense and varied) interaction between binders who might otherwise not have that opportunity to meet and get to interact

4. Increase in active membership translates into an increase in people capable and willing to assist in all levels of leadership.

It would also be prudent to hold the first such expanded conference in a fairly central part of the country that also had some kind of tourist appeal. Perhaps next year's conference in Salt Lake City might be the time to start this process. And future conferences in equally accessible and destination-popular cities (*not* in East Jesus, North Carolina, as the American Theological Librarians Association did a couple years ago – people stayed away from that year's meeting in droves).

Another idea whose time might be right is the institution of some kind of certification program by the GBW for its members who wish to pursue such. Not having any kind of nationally recognized training program in the US also has both its pros and cons, some of the same ones also listed above.

The Handweavers Guild of America (www.weavespindye.org) has a certification program whose aim is to increase the level of skill and artistry among its membership. If you like, I will contact the HGA and get a copy of their "curriculum" for the Executive Committee. It is, by the way, a correspondence/distance learning program so there are no formal gatherings for classes, everything is accomplished by submitting completed projects and slides and papers. It may be that this kind of certification program can be adapted to the needs and desires of the GBW's mission.

Well, as I stated at the beginning, these issues I've brought up came free of charge and may also be worth what they cost. And the Executive Committee may already have discussed them. Just wanted to let my feelings be known.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

David J. Lawrence

Dallas, Texas

Wanted: One Chair for the Midwest Chapter

Well, actually two...

After two years of setting up annual meetings, giving workshops and attending book fairs, Annie Wilcox is stepping down as co-chairperson of the Midwest Chapter. Her duties as mother to two, cafe manager at a Barnes & Noble (mother figure to dozens) and book signings (*A Degree of Mastery*, have you bought your copy and read it yet? It's great!) will once again be allowed to take precedence over chapter chores. We thank her for volunteering to help with the chapter duties and for introducing us to the Book Arts activities in Iowa and Missouri...

Annie's resignation takes effect at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve. If the world doesn't end that is (and don't count of *that* happening—there will still be books to bind come January 2, no matter what your digital clock says).

Gabrielle will be looking for another voice to give advice. Step right up. Gabrielle has also been Chapter chair for two years and is having a book on binding published, and is preparing her presentation for the next GBW Standards of Excellence. She needs to be relieved also.

The person taking on the task should have internet access and the ability to listen. The GBW has an online Executive Committee listserv. This is in addition to the GBW Member online bulletin board. Chapter meetings are already being planned for the next three years, so that task is easier. Think about it and then volunteer. It's a great opportunity to learn more about the chapter and take part in shaping the future of the Guild.

Annie Wilcox has stated that it is her intent to keep contributing articles to *The Quarto*. Once again, thank you Annie. We have enjoyed your insight and humor. The new editor will appreciate the contributions. *New editor?* We'll let Eric explain that one...

New Exhibit My House on the Move

My House, the limited edition artists book by East Lansing book artist Susan Hensel, has joined a traveling show that opened on the internet in September with the debut of the new web page for the American Print Alliance.

This national organization, with the sponsorship of Barnes & Noble, has mounted a multi-faceted show of artists books. The first venue, on the web at www.printalliance.org, is entitled "Scrolling the Page."

A national call was sent out for book artists to submit work for the site. The "real live" books will be on display during the "Turning the Page" festival in Baton Rouge. The show will then travel to Savannah College of Art and Design for the November conference of the APA.

The construction of *My House* was illustrated in the new book *Making Memory Books by Hand* by Kristina Feliciano. A copy of *My House* and copies of the Feliciano book can be found at Trillium Gallery in East Lansing.

Wanted: One editor for the Midwest Newsletter

Eric Alstrom, who has been editing your Chapter newsletter, *The Quarto*, for two years, has moved from his beloved Midwest to the hinterlands of New England. This is not new news, but his wanting to step down may be news to you all. He does enjoy editing *The Quarto* and would continue to do it if he was still in Ohio (or Michigan...). But being rather isolated from the happenings of the Midwest has made Eric think twice about the editorship.

"I think that someone in the heart of it all would be more effective as newsletter editor. I feel that I can't keep up with current events and don't have much contact with the Chapter members."

The job is fairly simple. For two months and two weeks you sit back and relish the power you have as Chapter newsletter editor. Then for those last two weeks, you gather the "News from you Studio" forms you have received, pester a few people to contribute articles (Annie would be a good source...), put it all together however you wish (currently it is laid out in PageMaker 6 on a Mac, but you could use anything you want to, including letterpress print it!?!), make copies for all the member and mail them out. Very easy indeed.

If anyone who is at all interested in becoming the Midwest Chapter's newsletter editor wishes to contact Eric (info on the back page of this issue) he can explain in more detail what goes on behind the scenes here at *The Quarto*. By contacting Eric, you are not obligating yourself and no one will call on you.

Workshop Report Quill Cutting

by Cris Takacs

During the Midwest Annual Meeting, held at the Minneapolis Center for Book Arts, Dennis Rudd taught us how to make quill pens in fourteen quick steps. I found that I was only capable of doing the first three. These consisted of selecting a pre-soaked goose quill and scraping the inside membrane out, filling the hollow with warm sand to temper the quill and then making the initial slanting cut. The next step was to make a slit with a neat little click of a quill knife. I destroyed many a feather in the process and realized that there was much more to pen making than plucking a bird and drawing a knife. However, it was a good workshop. No one was good at it, after all, we are binders, not quill makers. Once again, I was reminded that it takes time to master a skill. Dennis provided detailed instructions, tools *and* completed quill pens for the participants to take home. He also demonstrated how and why to write with a quill at a slanted writing desk.

Dennis Rudd is a skilled pen maker and patient teacher. He teaches several workshops at MCBA. He also makes those nifty fat teflon folders that you see in the better binderies. I don't have one yet, but everyone who uses one loves it.

New Book Offerings

The Ten Commandments



On the occasion of the year 2000, what better way to mark the Millennium? *The Ten Commandments* – the historic message which addresses everyone.

J & J Sobota's Book Arts Studio has published *The Ten Commandments* in ten languages: Latin, Czech, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish,

Portuguese, Dutch and Slovak. (Unfortunately, the book could not be published in the original Hebrew, due to the difficulty of obtaining a Hebrew font for the computer.) *The Ten Commandments* is a miniature book, 3 x 2 inches, in the shape of a cross. The book is enclosed in a "medieval pouch," which monks used to wear at their waist. This is a limited edition of one hundred numbered and signed copies, published and bound by Jan and Jarmila Sobota at their studio in Locket, Czech Republic, in 1999. Each book is printed in gold on handmade paper and bound in various colors of goatskin or calfskin. The binding of each copy is done with a multi-colored onlay and finished with gold tooling, thereby making each copy unique. The elegant design resembles a jewel. The cost of *The Ten Commandments* is US\$200 plus postage of US\$10 within Europe and US\$15 outside of Europe. Equivalent checks in major currencies, including Eurochecks, VISA and Mastercard are accepted. Jan & Jarmila Sobota, Radnicni 1, 357 33 Locket, Czech Republic, Tel/Fax: +420 168/ 684 154, Email: j.sobota@iol.cz

MCBA Winter Book

Fifteen new poems by Robert Bly are collected in "Saturday Nights in Marietta," Minnesota Center For Book Arts' 11th Winter Book. The annual project, initiated in 1988 to promote greater understanding of the creative potential inherent in book-as-art, begins with text by an established Minnesota author and involves printers, designers, papermakers, binders, and visual artists in production of a limited edition volume.

Realized in traditional codex form, "Saturday Nights in Marietta," is available in deluxe, standard and chapbook editions designed by Amy Kirkpatrick under the direction of Mary Jo Pauly. Deluxe (A-Z) and standard (1-125) editions are signed by the author and include fifteen illustrative prints executed by book artists/printers nationally recognized for their interpretive vision and technical skill. Text in all editions is letterpress printed from monotype Van Kijk on Mohawk vellum under the supervision of MCBA Printing Artist-in-Residence Michael Fallon.

For more information on the Deluxe, Standard or Chapbook editions, please call 612-338-3634 or write 24 North Third Street, Minneapolis, MN 55401.

News from your Studio

Constance K. Wozny writes that the 18th Annual Kentucky Book Fair invited me to host a seminar on bookbinding and minor book repair. The Book Fair invites approximately 150 authors to autograph copies of their latest book. The estimated amount of patrons to attend is between 4,000-5,000. The event was on November 20th at Kentucky State University.

Jan and Jarmila Sobota write:

Hi Eric,

Greetings from Czech Republic. Here is the info about our new book, *The Ten Commandments*, we have published. [Ed. note: See accompanying article **New Books**.] I am attaching also pictures, maybe you will be able to get them from computer. Also, I am putting here my report from our visit in France in September.

Report from Sobotas' trip to France to see V.Biennial exhibit in Saint Jean de Luz. We are finally back from France. It was a nice, interesting trip. We certainly could not complain of being bored. First we went to Saint Jean de Luz. During the drive we had visited a castle, one from hundreds build around Lore River. We came to Saint Jean de Luz on Friday. The ceremony was on Saturday. San Sebastian, the Spanish city, was only 50 km far-away, so we decided to go there, to see Spain. San Sebastian was beautiful, as Saint Jean de Luz was. Jan was only one who swam in the ocean, he doesn't mind cold like normal people do. Evening, when we started to drive back, our car broke. In the middle of the city, where nobody spoke English. We don't speak Spanish or French, so it was rather difficult situation. After about two hours, thanks to a few very helpful and nice people we had managed to have our car towed to a nearest service station, after all. It was 7:00 P.M. at that time. Service station was closing. We had to leave our car there, with no idea when it will be fixed. Mechanics were nice, but they had refused to get disturbed by telling us anything exact as for the time. It was Friday, after all. They don't work on Saturdays or Sundays. They would check the car on Monday. Than order the parts from Madrid. Maybe on Wednesday, Thursday, or after one week they will know more. They had taken us to France though, for certain amount (rather big) of money, to which we were thanks full.

We went to see the exhibition on Saturday. It was overwhelming! So many great bindings! So many ideas. There were about 600 bindings from binders from all over the world. I would not want to be in judges shoes. Many bindings would deserve prize.

Evening was the ceremony with fantastic food and wine. There were 300 people. I was happy for my prize, of course, but I am sure that many binders hated me, because they felt that they were the ones, who had deserved the prize instead of me or others who received the other prizes. Competition brings many bad feelings. There are more unhappy people that happy ones. There were three first prizes: One for a professional's binding, one for an amateur's binding and one for an original book object. I had that for the original book object, although I had not thought my binding to be a book object. Than there were second and third prizes and many prizes given by different cities and organizations. Prize giving ceremony took two hours. We were given wine during that time but no food. The Japanese binder (First professional) and I were called first, so after that I

could enjoy good wine. We had a great company of British and Dutch binders, who were good companions, so it was fun and we even had managed not to show how drunk we were after two hours of: Mayors of surrounding cities speeches, the organizers' speeches, the honored binders' speeches (here is my speech in full: "Merci"), Basque choir singing. We were really hungry when we, finally, could go to get our food. It was self served style, buffets one. Many beautiful looking plates with hundreds of different and exotic stuff on them. I finally understand old Romans. I felt like I had to taste everything and I did my best in that way. (I gained only 3 kilos).

On Monday, we went to Spain, with a train. Our car was already transferred from San Sebastian to another city. We managed to understand where it was and went after it to that city. Than for two more days, while waiting on the car to be fixed, we took a train to see ocean. It was so windy and cold, that even Jan didn't swim this time.

We were in a hotel, where was no Menu list. It was interesting to wait at our food, without having slightest idea of what it would be. We even had no idea about prices, except of a hotel. We had tried to ask several times, but they had no idea what we wanted, so they always showed us that dinner is on our room number. We had learned only when we were paying our bill. It was on Wednesday, after only two hours of trying to get our car from a garage. We spent my prize money on the car repairs and hotel.

We went directly to Paris. After stopping our car in front of the first hotel, the our car's battery died. Fortunately, a hotel was not full and the price was not outrage. On another hand, the car was not standing exactly on parking spot. It was half on crossing path, on a very busy street. We managed, however, to find gasoline station and we bought a new battery. We couldn't find parking place anyway, so Jan felt it would be safer to leave our car on that spot without battery. We had dinner in that hotel, watching our car from hotel's window.

Hotels in France or Spain, as we have discovered, are easy going styles of hotels. At least cheep hotels, which we were using. Owners don't disturb themselves with too much renovations or deep cleaning. That Paris hotel also belonged to this category. On top of it, nothing which was supposed to be attached to wall held. Shower curtain was missing completely, probably because an iron handle was holding on one nail only. All other holders, such us towel, soap, toilet and paper holders were in the same pitiful situation. I rather didn't use my hair blower after I pulled cord out from a plug and half meter of wires went out from a wall.

Second day, 5 AM, Jan went out to put a new battery to the car and he drove away, to find a legal parking place. At 8:30 A.M. he was back. He didn't find parking place, so he was not parking properly again. We had a breakfast at the hotel and we sew from our window one car, leaving its spot. Jan jumped out from hotel and run to our car while I was ready to defend the free parking spot with my life. We had managed. Than we went to see Paris and to continue with stuffing yourself with great pates, cheese and all goodies which French offer.

Friday morning, we left Paris and went home. We slept only one night in Germany. We had stopped when our car seemed not to function with all its speeds. Jan thought that a spark-plug is not good. It was late evening already and we decided to wait till morning. We were getting used to fixing the

car in all countries where we were driving during our trip. So what was new? Fortunately, morning, the car was OK. Jan had some explanation about this, but I didn't understand it. We went home and we had actually arrived that evening.

We spent a lot of money, taken from our house repairing account, but it was worth it. Who needs a roof for the house anyway?

With best wishes,
Jarmila

Gabrielle Fox has moved her studio! Her new address is 3200 Linwood Avenue #2, Cincinnati, OH 45226. Her new phone is 513-321-5200. Gabrielle hosted an opening reception on November 19. [Ed note: Maybe you will give us a nice report on your opening!]

She also hosted Maureen Duke, the well known bookbinder from England who also presented at this year's Standards Seminar in Chicago. Maureen gave a presentation and workshop at the King Library Press at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.

Gabrielle is also working on a book on basic book making techniques. The manuscript was handed in at the end of September and should be out in October 2000. She writes: "When it happens we'll have a really big party! Thank you to all of you who have helped and contributed and thank you to all the rest of you who have put up with my craziness!"

And despite all of the above, she is teaching small group classes on Saturday's and Wednesday evenings at her studio and still is teaching for the Cincinnati Art Academy.

Susan Hensel published *three* new editions in 1999. These are: *Creation, Brush Your Teeth, and Fruit Sense*. She is also a featured exhibitor for the new exhibition "Turning the Page." [Ed note: See accompanying article **New Exhibit**.] She will be attending the opening so that she can give two lectures and four workshops and will also have an additional show of her work called "Surviving the Soar."

Susan will also be teaching two places in Ohio: at the Art Continuum '99 near Cleveland and at the Rosewood Art Center in Kettering. She is also featured in Kristina Feliciano's new book *Making Memory Books by Hand* with a four page spread. For those interested in her work, she has a color inkjet printed edition's catalog available for \$1.

She can be contacted at her new email address booklady100@home.com and has a gallery of her books at www.artinspace.com.

Eric Alstrom, your faithful newsletter editor, has had a busy Fall. First, in conjunction with an established book arts program at Dartmouth College, which focuses on letterpress printing he has begun an "Open Bindery" where he has opened up the library's conservation lab once a week to interested students who want to bind books. He also taught the "Bucknaked Sewnboards Binding," a technique he learned from Cecelia Frost at this year's PBI, for Dartmouth students.

Eric is also teaching a basic hardcover binding class for a local gallery. And then during his spare time, Eric entered two art and craft fairs, selling handmade blank journals and Year 2000 Calendar date books. He is looking forward to the holidays where he can actually get some rest and relaxation!

Tina Cassler has moved. Her new address is P.O. Box 80661, Lincoln, NE 68501-0661. Her email is: RainCastles@yahoo.com.

Officers

Gabrielle Fox-Butler
Co-Chair
P.O. Box 8977, Cincinnati, OH 45208
513-381-1340

Eric Alstrom
Newsletter Editor
2 Valley Road, Hanover, NH 33755
603-646-1452
eric.c.alstrom@dartmouth.edu

Cris Clair Takacs
Programs Coordinator
112 Park Ave., Chardon, OH 44024
216-286-9773
crisbobotak@aol.com

Happenings

Happenings will focus on events occurring in the Midwest area, except for Calls for Entries, which will have broader coverage. Please send any information to Eric Alstrom, Newsletter Editor.

Instead of the usual list of events, workshops, exhibitions, etc., I am going to list a few of the for-profit and not-for-profit organizations which offer book arts classes. You can contact these places to be placed on their mailing lists for upcoming events.

Due to space limitations and the time consuming task of having to type all these happenings each newsletter, I am going to devote the **Happenings** column to workshops and other events being offered by individuals or in places which may not get as much press attention. If you want your event listed (and you fit into this category) please send me the info, either on the *News from your Studio* forms or just by mailing or emailing the information to me. If you are an organization and want your contact information included in a future **Happenings** column, please send it my way.

Any comments on this new format are welcome. My contact information is in the list of *Officers* to the left.

Ann Arbor, MI **Hollander's** 407 N Fifth Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48104; Phone: 734-741-7531; Fax: 734-741-7580; Web: www.hollanders.com

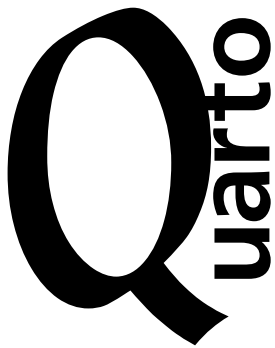
Chicago, IL **Columbia College Center for Book and Paper Arts** 600 South Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL 60605-1996; Phone: 312-344-6630; Fax: 312-344-8082; Email: book&paper@popmail.colum.edu; Web: www.colum.edu/centers/bpa

Paper Source 232 West Chicago Ave, Chicago, IL; Phone 312-337-0798 or 800-248-8035

Columbia, MO **Legacy Art & BookWorks** 1010 E. Broadway, Columbia, MO 65201; Phone 573-442-0855 or 800-776-4924; Email: legacyart@www.legacyart.com; Web: www.legacyart.com

Iowa City, IA **University of Iowa Center for the Book** 154 English-Philosophy Building, Iowa City IA 52242; Phone: 319-335-0447; Email: Center-for-the-Book@uiowa.edu; Web: www.uiowa.edu/~ctrbook

Minneapolis, MN **Minnesota Center for Book Arts** 24 North Third St, Minneapolis, MN 55401; Phone: 612-338-3634; Fax: 612-338-1562; Email: mcba@mnbookarts.org; Web: www.mnbookarts.org



Guild of Book Workers
Midwest Chapter Newsletter
c/o Eric Alstrom
Newsletter Editor
2 Valley Road
Hanover, NH 03755