

# the Gold Leaf

THE JOURNAL OF THE  
HAND BOOKBINDERS OF CALIFORNIA



VOLUME THIRTY, NUMBER TWO  
FALL 2013

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## President's Letter: Once You Have Wrestled

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In the mid-90s, I started wrestling.

To be more accurate, I was thrown over someone's shoulder, tossed on the mat, and got pounded on until I told him to stop. I thoroughly enjoyed it, discovered an interesting and close-knit community, and spent the next several years meeting fun new people and fighting them, usually losing.

Along the way, something funny happened—I started winning, first against people my size and later against bigger opponents. Ultimately, I successfully threw an arm bar on the guy who got me into wrestling in the first place and made him tap out. He proceeded to pummel me in the next five rounds, but the first one was mine.

What does this have to do with bookbinding?

In 2009 I walked into the bindery at SFCB not knowing anything about how books were constructed. I walked out with two complete blank books, which I'm still using to take my bookbinding notes and thoroughly captured by the tangibility of bookbinding.

A week or two after that first class, I ran into the instructor at a paper show and started asking questions about working on my next book because I wanted it to be perfect. She replied with the most freeing advice, "Oh, your first ten books are going to suck, so just sew them and get them out of the way." I count this among the most important instruction I've ever been given in bookbinding.

I started sewing, and they sucked. But they all sucked in different ways. Too tight, too loose, and—still my favorite—cigar-shaped spine from over-tightening the kettle. And when I mentioned that to my next instructor, she suggested focusing on correcting one flaw at a time sewing each text block.

I didn't stop at sewing and cased them all in, so I had a rather large stack of complete if not perfect blank books I had no use for. I decided to take them to a craft show and see what I could get for them. The answer surprised me, and the reaction of people walking up in stunned amazement that there are people who still make books brought a smile to my face. Didn't machines do that now? Well, no. In fact there's a close-knit and interesting community of people who do still make books by hand.

Two years and a lot of classes later, I began wondering, how deep is this rabbit hole? The answer, of course, is that it's bottomless, particularly once you start working with leather, a wonderfully frustrating material with a mind of its own.

The fact that I didn't really know how to pare leather didn't deter me from entering the 2012 Designer Bookbinders UK International Competition. I'm glad I didn't realize exactly how prestigious the competition was or how little business I had entering it until much later, but I've always learned the most wrestling outside of my weight class. Thanks to the extended deadline, I finished. And I lost.

When the message arrived, I thought mine was the only submission not accepted and went into a bit of a funk. Then I saw photos of some of the other pieces not selected, as well as, some of the honored pieces (In a delicious bit of symmetry, the winner was Dominic Riley, Past President of HBC and the person who taught me the full leather structure). And I realized I suck at bookbinding.

The most useful response was from one of my dearest friends who said, "Of course you suck at bookbinding. Less so than the overwhelming amount of people, but you still do. Anything worth mastering won't be mastered right away, but it does give you satisfaction now, and is therefore worth doing. 10,000 hours. Until then, everything you do is for fun." I'm a bit over a tenth of the way there.

I'm not entirely sure how I got from that class at SFCB to writing the President's Letter in the *Gold Leaf*. I am sure that the organization is in a period of change as the landscape of books changes in a digital world.

Between now and the 45th and 50th exhibits I hope that HBC will grow, and that you will invite your colleagues, friends, and students to join us. I hope that we will embrace that the rabbit hole is bottomless and there is always more to learn and more to teach. And most of all, I hope that the membership, new and long-standing, will use the annual exhibit as an opportunity to share their work.

The 2013 show featured work by about a third of our members. Our 42nd will be in the lovely new gallery space at the San Francisco Center for the Book, and I want it to be as varied as our membership and so full the exhibits chair won't know how to stuff everything into the available display cases.

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# Letter from the Editor

*The  
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Finally, you're holding the coveted Fall issue in your hands. You thought it'd never get here, and you hope it's been worth the wait. Frankly, you could use a little break right now.

Go get that steamy cup of tea, or that impishly fortified glass of eggnog. Have a seat. Put your feet up. Prepare to take some side trips with your imagination as you meander among the articles and stories.

You'll travel back in time, looking through archives at the ledgered inventories of an era when a bottle of whiskey was a dollar. You'll visit the ateliers of Paris, learning from a respected Spanish binder. Or to Leeds, for glimpses of the Society of Bookbinders Conference this past August.

You'll discover what other bookbinders consider their indispensable tools. And Karen Zukor's interview will broaden your view of the role that conservation basics can play in your own work.

Many thanks to Juliayn Coleman for her design and production help, and for her savvy in shepherding me through editing this first issue.

By request (it's a great idea), we're starting a "Looking for..." section, where members can list that elusive material or piece of equipment they'd like to find. And if describing it isn't quite enough, send a picture. As always, we welcome your ideas and submissions.

With pleasure,

Laine Tammer, Editor

[laine@batnet.com](mailto:laine@batnet.com)



# Minutes of the November Board Meeting

*Tuesday, November 5, 2013; Present: Brian Lieske, presiding, Signa Houghteling, Rhiannon Alpers, Tom Conroy, Norman McKnight, Margaret Johnson; Brian opened the meeting at 6:00 pm in the San Francisco Center for the Book.*

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The Treasurer's report had been sent by email just before the meeting and was not yet available to members at the meeting. It is now available online. Sabina's report noted that there had been no changes at all in September due to her absence on vacation. She reported 9 people signed up for Karen Zukor's workshop in November using PayPal. Income in October is as follows: \$26.63 in catalog sales, \$120.00 in donations for the Scholarship fund, \$495.32 in membership dues, and \$580.16 in Workshop fees, amounting to \$1,221.11. There were no expenses in October. So far, \$3,553.90 in membership dues has been received, short by \$1,567.00 of reaching the budget figure of \$4,400.00.

Rhiannon reported the number of official applicants for Karen Zukor's workshop short by one person. Vanessa Hardy suggested offering a scholarship to a new member who is keen to take the workshop but unable to afford it. She offered to pay half the cost herself. The proposal has been made to the Board, which will no doubt approve the full scholarship.

It was noted that at least 4 new members have been signed up this year. (I count 9. MHJ) Pursuing lapsed members has taken time this year but has been quite successful. Lang has the new roster almost ready for printing.

Signa reported a great success for the 41st Exhibition. She is returning the books to the binders now. It is imperative that a new Exhibitions Chair be found for the coming year. Signa has the next exhibition lined up and ready for the new chair to take over.

With the Codex event coming up this year, a discussion took place as to whether HBC can afford to take a table there. We will ask if a non-profits rate is available for this important event.

The Christmas Party was discussed: where to hold it? Sally Kaufmann Cowan's, Klaus Rötzscher's? Rhiannon's studio? More later.

Signa reported success in ordering aprons. The first order came in upside-down but those will be replaced.

The meeting ended at 7:00 pm and was followed by the excellent refreshments provided by Norman McKnight and a very interesting talk and demonstration regarding photographing your work, given by a professional photographer.

*Submitted by Margaret H. Johnson for Juliayn Coleman, Secretary*

# In Memory: Barbara Jane Land

August 25, 1943 to September 8, 2013

*The  
Gold  
Leaf*

Barbara Land, our dear colleague, succumbed to pneumonia on Sunday, September 8, 2013, after several years of poor health. She will be missed terribly by book-related organizations near and far, and by numerous library and horticultural institutions as well. She was a living encyclopedia of knowledge about them all.

The following is an updated version of a profile that appeared in *The Gold Leaf* some time ago:

Had she gotten the name of the church right, Barbara Land would have been at the first meeting of Hand Bookbinders of California in 1972! Barbara was no stranger to books and binding, and had many friends and mentors among the book community in San Francisco, like Duncan Olmsted and Bob Bell, so she was informed about what was happening. But, uncharacteristically, that March evening she was at the wrong church so she missed the organizational meeting. There have been few missed meetings since, and Barbara has worked for HBC in various ways, including giving talks on the Book Club of California collection, which includes many fine bindings and books on books. She has graciously hosted HBC's annual December holiday potluck dinner at her beautiful home in Sea Cliff for as long as anyone can remember. The first Tuesday of December is the official opening of the holiday season.

Barbara was born in San Francisco of an English mother and an American father, with the genes of book collecting in both branches of her family. She developed a love of horticulture at an early age. Her family had orchards in Sebastopol, and she loved to be on the "land." After attending public schools in San Francisco, she attended Oregon State Corvallis, and not only studied horticulture there, but was also the secretary of the Horticultural Club for three years. Routine academic testing also revealed an interest and aptitude in English so she graduated with studies in both fields.

After Oregon State, she earned a master's degree in library studies from Texas Women's University, Denton. Her first job was as a reference librarian at the famed 52nd Street branch of the New York Public Library. While in New York, Barbara took lessons with the noted bookbinder, teacher, and writer of books on binding and restoration, Laura Young. Mrs. Young taught at her own bindery, but Barbara found her at the West Side YMCA on West 63rd Street. (Our own Margaret Johnson studied book repair with Mrs. Young.)



When Barbara returned to San Francisco, she launched her career as a rare book librarian and special collections cataloguing consultant. She single-handedly catalogued the huge Sutro collection of rare documents, and donated her time unstintingly to the many organizations to which she belonged.

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While in New York, Barbara had joined the Book Club of California. She has been a very active and valuable member ever since returning to San Francisco. For many years she was Chairman of the Library Committee and guided acquisitions and donated to the collection. The Book Club has published several of Barbara's writings on the collection and related subjects.

Barbara was a founding member of the Colophon Club in the 1970s, along with a few other renegade members of the local book world who felt there ought to be an informal supper club which welcomed all of their brethren—printers, paper makers, binders, calligraphers, conservationists, librarians and repairers—not just the 100 (male) bibliophiles of the Roxburghe Club. To this day, Colophon meets the second Tuesday of the month, with dinner and a speaker at the Julia Morgan-designed Berkeley City Club. Barbara was the secretary/treasurer for fourteen years.

In 1982, Barbara Land was elected to membership in the Roxburghe Club, its third or fourth female member. There, she succeeded Duncan Olmsted as archivist of announcements and keepsakes.

Throughout the years, Barbara has been active in the American Library Association as a member and committee chair. She has been active in the local horticultural scene, among other duties heading the orchid section of the yearly plant sale of the Strybing Arboretum (38 years). In 1995 she became Congregational Librarian at Temple Emmanu-El where she served as Temple and Children's librarian, Sabbath-school teacher, and Torah study group leader.

Barbara Land attended every significant book event in the Bay Area and beyond, usually working at a table representing some organization, or otherwise being significantly involved. She knew the background and history of so many organizations related to books, and the horticultural world as well. She was often called upon at meetings for her institutional memory because she knew so much about everybody and everything about the book community, and books in general.

*Contributed by Signa Houghteling*

*Edited by Peggy DeMouthe, with additional material from the San Francisco Chronicle, September 12, 2013.*

# The Labor and Legacy of Five Brothers: Preservation of an Archive

*The  
Gold  
Leaf*

*Eddy Hood*

There are many ways a story may be told. Stories can be long (a novel), convoluted (gossip), or interpretive (history). And certainly some are more interesting than others. A box of fifteen ledger volumes dating from 1906, documenting dam building and bridge and irrigation projects over several hundred square miles of the North Sacramento valley in the first decade of the 20th century when a bottle of whiskey was a dollar and the Sacramento Bee was a nickel, well, this box might contain some interesting bits.

Stored together for more than a hundred years, a couple of them look like they'd ridden in an open wagon from Marysville to Oakland during a wet December. The archive is in need of some climate control, some gossamer Japanese paper, and some carefully executed treatments suggested from a responsible assessment. Nonetheless, generally, the ivory-colored paper throughout the ledgers is in good condition, as are letters and documents found interspersed between pages and sometimes crammed just inside the covers, distressing the joint and bowing the boards.

The acid-transfer items I have isolated in archival poly sleeves and left where initially found until a page reference index can be made for them. A cache of this much material should be judiciously undertaken much like an archeological site. Loose item locations can provide narrative clues to the comprehensive topography of the chronology.

The several styles of cursive manuscripts presenting themselves, particularly in the volumes from the turn of the 20th century, exhibit the confident, uniform slant and the thick and thin fountain pen strokes typical of the period. Costs of labor and equipment: Chinese cooks, blacksmiths, teamsters, veterinarians, saddle and harness makers, horses, mules, wagons, are detailed throughout, as well as necessities like powder, caps, tobacco, whiskey, and "roadhouse treats." (?) Of particular interest is the volume commencing March 1st, 1929. Interestingly, there are no accounts recorded for October, the month of the actual crash, but this volume is otherwise well recorded every year through 1934. Of course there isn't any accounting for ale or whiskey in this one, though prohibition was repealed in 1933.

All of these road-worn time travelers are airing out, dust debris vacuumed from their gutters, rusty paper clips removed: the preliminaries. Some cranberry skiver is indicated for corners and missing spines digested by those furtive species that stalk our collections in the quiet of the night. Some of the loose documents from 1921 and 1922, which as a group tell an interesting tale, appear to have been torn from a nail on a wall.

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There is tissue mending, discrete damping and wicking out under blotter and weights to be done. The majority of the inks are proving to be waterfast. The Victorian-looking Bank of Italy deposit slips have entry space for gold and silver ahead of currency and checks. Primitive ancestor of our massive earth-moving tractors, the Fresno Scraper, requiring a teamster and his four mules to pull it, appears as a frequently recurring expense recorded in these pages. \$3.50 bought 20 lbs. of ham, thirteen dozen eggs were \$3.25, a sweater was \$2.85, and an umbrella, \$2.50.

These materials span the first long distance telephone call between New York and San Francisco, the advent of Ford's Model T, World Wars one and two, and the Great Depression. The beginnings of the long enterprise they document were undertaken while four-masted sailing ships were still docking at San Francisco and Oakland.

But all the economic, historic, and genealogical information one might glean from them is quite beside an informed assessment of their physical condition, and the accomplishment of appropriate treatment strategies and techniques to stabilize and send them forward in time. The realization of this last activity will entail far more time than it took me to draft this brief introduction to the items at hand. So please consider this a journal entry.



# Society of Bookbinders Conference

by Coleen Curry

*The  
Gold  
Leaf*

*Leeds, August 2013*

I had the good fortune to attend the Society of Bookbinders conference in Leeds for three days at the end of August. Other HBC members visiting included Sabina and Udo Nies, Lang Ingalls, Cathy Adelman, Monique Lallier, Don Etherington, and Cali Anderson.

Lang and I travelled from London to Leeds by train – a journey normally completed within three hours – however electrical problems extended our trip to nearly eight hours! The scene at each station was comical as hundreds of passengers would shuffle from one train to another with luggage in tow competing to gain a seat on whatever car would accommodate them. We arrived safely just in time for the welcome reception on the patio at Leeds Metropolitan University. What fun!

The conference is set up similarly to GBW Standards; however, the presentations are shorter -- 1 ¼ to 2 ½ hours in length. Consequently, more presentations are offered. I managed to see the following presentations:

Don Etherington: Stiff board vellum with slotted spine

Tracey Rowledge: Gold tooling on paper

Karen Vilder: How to read leather

Peter Jones: Composite boards – wood, acrylic, and carbon fibre

Stephan Ortbauer: Small books, big books – twenty years of custom made books

The vendors' room is always a favorite place to spend free time, not to mention hard-earned dollars. On Saturday evening, an Award Ceremony was held to present prizes to the winning bindings in the SOB Exhibition. This was followed by the Gala dinner and auction. Dominic Riley, a former HBC president, was the auctioneer.

Post-conference, I joined Monique and Don, Lang, Sabina, and Udo in the Lake District for a four-day extravaganza at the home of Dominic Riley and Michael Burke. I had the pleasure of meeting Designer binder David Sellars and his wife, Jill, along with Phillipa and Dieter Radar. Phillipa works in Windsor Castle as a conservator for the Royal Collection, and her husband Dieter is

an accomplished bookbinder, conservationist, and box maker. We all shared fabulous tours of interesting sites in the area during the day, followed by show-and-tell of our work, stories of love, and enjoyment of good food and wine.

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My trip culminated with two days in London, touring around with Cali. This included a visit to St. Bride's to view the Designer Binder Shakespeare Exhibition, as well as a trip to Shepard's before she headed back to Australia and I headed home to California.



*From left to right: Monique Lallier, Dominic Riley, Coleen Curry, Lang Ingalls*

## Interview with Karen Zukor

The  
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*Gold Leaf Editor Laine Tammer interviews conservator Karen Zukor in her Oakland studio on the occasion of her HBC workshop on the topic of adhesives for conservators*

*How long have you had a studio in this area?*

I've been in this present studio space for almost 24 years, and then another studio not far from here for 11 prior to that. So West Oakland has been my workplace for quite some time.

*How did you come to work in conservation?*

I started teaching art history, and I couldn't find a teaching job when I moved out here, so I thought I'd better find something a little more portable. To learn, I apprenticed. And then studied printmaking, letterpress printing, bookbinding, papermaking, and chemistry. Sort of cobbled together my own education.

*How would you explain the difference between conservation and restoration?*

Our work is supposed to be as unintrusive as possible. We honor the piece as it was originally manufactured to the best of our ability to discern what that is. We'll put things back together as much as possible, but we won't try to pretend that damage did not occur. That's the big difference between conservation and restoration. We don't try to necessarily make things look the way they did on the day of manufacture. For example, a print comes in with a big, long, tear. We can clean it, we can mend it as unobtrusively as possible, but we would never try to put something over that join to make it less noticeable.

We try to remove any damaging effects from age, mishandling, poor framing, exposure to light, heat and humidity. But if printing inks are faded, we can't recolor them. We can't enhance a signature on a document, although we get asked to do that a lot. I guess the best way to explain it is, if a museum owned a Greek vase that was broken, but did not have all of the pieces, they would reassemble it as best as possible, using a reversible adhesive, and for that missing section, they would fill it in with a close to matching material. But it will immediately be discernible that there's a chunk missing and that this is a replacement. So it's an honest repair; it keeps the piece intact, but should that piece ever be discovered, they'd be able to dismantle the whole thing and put the correct piece in. In order to do so, the adhesive used in

the original repair would have to be reversible (easy to dissolve without further damage to the vase).

Restoration, historically, would color that replacement piece to match the adjacent areas as closely as possible. And if it was a design that they could mimic because it was a recurring pattern, they would paint it back in. But conservators would not necessarily do that.

So it's not to say that we don't do some minor restoration. We have a map right now, and it has one little corner that's been ripped off, and what's missing is just the black border. So we're going to replace the paper, with something very close to 1806 paper, and we're going to paint in, on the fill, the missing border. That's, I think, totally fair.

In the spirit of reversibility, we're also only supposed to use pigments that can be removed, like watercolors. But in fact, on that missing corner, for example, we're painting on a replacement paper, and we're going to use acrylics because we don't want a water-soluble pigment. Because if it were ever taken apart again, that would bleed.

*Do these limitations ever cause you to turn work away?*

What's interesting in conservation, to me, is that you really have to believe in the code of ethics. You have to really believe there are reasons for them, and that to abide by these somewhat narrow restrictions, you have to be both inventive and you have to know when to say, "no".

For example, a print that comes in that has a collector's stamp which is in red vermilion ink. The print is perfectly stable and can withstand the treatment that we would propose. But that little red vermilion ink stamp is the impediment. And, so we have to say we can't do it. Because we would risk that red ink sinking into the paper more, bleeding out. It would effectively ruin it.

Now, if we feel we can somewhat isolate it and treat the rest of it in a less dramatic fashion, of course we'll do it. On the other hand, we don't want to risk something for either ourselves or for the client that could potentially result in some adverse reaction. If we don't think it'll survive the treatment, we just talk them out of it and say we can't do it. Or we won't do it—which is one of the great beauties of private practice. You can say, no.

*It sounds like either from theory or from experience, you end up getting a great background in physical and organic chemistry. Is that accurate?*

Well, you do... specific to paper. We know a lot of cellulose chemistry, and a fair amount about bleaching procedures. And we also know a fair amount about the kinds of solvents needed to remove stains or adhesives, for example. But the majority of what we do is mechanical. Meaning, it's us with a scalpel or a spatula, scraping away or lifting off, or removing from a board. So, the chemistry part of it is certainly important, but just a portion of what we do.

The solvent we use primarily is water. That's it. We deal a lot in the pH of water, because the thing that most adversely affects paper is acidity. So we're very often trying to remove as much soluble acidity as possible from an older paper by putting it through a series of increasingly alkaline baths. Ideally, the paper retains some of that alkaline compound so that it leaves here in better shape, and better able to withstand an acidic environment.

One thing that's hard for people to understand is that the air—the atmosphere—is very acidic. It has all kinds of compounds—like sulfur dioxide and ozone—that are really deleterious to paper. Paper is not inert. Paper is responsive, reactive, absorbent, and it will take on the properties of whatever it's adjacent to. So unless it's against completely inert material, and in an environment that replaces oxygen with an inert gas, paper will continue to age.

*What can someone do to mitigate paper's aging process, or stabilize it?*

Well, you can slow it down, but you can't completely arrest all deterioration. It's just not possible. The best you can do is remove the damage and then store it, or frame it, in good quality materials. And be knowledgeable about what will damage it—heat, humidity, big fluctuations in temperature and humidity, sunlight, insects, of course, and bad handling. Just take as good care of it as possible.

We teach a fair amount of preservation techniques, and we also take on the responsibility of educating our clients so that the piece can maintain its good condition for as long as possible. We do a fair amount of consultation—this is how it should be framed, this is what it should be up against, this is how it should be attached into a mat.

*Do you actually do the matting and framing also?*

We do some matting. I have a couple of clients who are big collectors. They don't frame everything, but they store everything



in archival boxes and they prefer the items to be matted. In a way, I kind of like it because then you're making this lovely presentation of the finished piece and you know it's done correctly.

It also makes sense for collectors to try to have certain standard size mattes that they can put in archival boxes so that everything isn't moving all around. So we try to standardize that for them, but framing is much messier and we don't do it anymore. But it's really important because whatever we may do to put the piece, the artwork, into relatively good shape, how it's framed will definitely define how it lasts for the next 50 years.

So our relationship with framers is really, really important. We confer with them a lot, and usually once a year I have a workshop where I invite framers to come in and talk about their worst nightmares. And hopefully they all talk to one another. I'm trying to promote a certain exchange because I think it's really crucial.

And I guess one other thing I should add—I talk a lot about art, but not all of our work is art, by a long shot. I would say the majority of it is, but maybe 25 to 30% is archival in nature. We do a lot of correspondence and journals, maps, manuscripts, letters, and especially family documents.

*Why have you picked adhesives and Japanese papers as workshop topics?*

Teaching workshops is a really good thing and also a real can of worms. It's a long enough time to introduce the issues and some of the problems that participants need to address, but it can never be sufficient to cover everything they would need. For example, mending tears in paper. I can talk about the adhesives we use and the kinds of Japanese papers we use, but the object that you are trying to mend is always going to be different. You really need to know the characteristics of that paper and what media is on that paper, should you have to mend over text or an image or illustration. So, it's actually not at all straightforward. You also need to know—even if it's a perfectly blank sheet of paper—whether it's aged and somewhat discolored because the stain might move a little bit when you apply the adhesive you've chosen. I'm always teaching from a straight conservation viewpoint. As I mentioned before, conservators have a code of ethics that says anything that we do to an object or anything we attach to an object has to be reversible. That sometimes greatly limits us as to what we can do and, in some instances, it stops us from doing a repair altogether. But it also ensures that we're using an extremely narrow range of adhesives, because we can't use

anything that becomes insoluble upon drying. That pretty much leaves us either rice starch paste or wheat starch paste. It comes out of the tradition of the Asian screens and scrolls, which were all put together using these flour pastes, as many as a thousand years ago. You can still dampen them and the layers will separate. So it's very safe for the paper, doesn't usually age poorly, and doesn't yellow or discolor particularly. Because it's a starch, it is attractive to insects, so that's a little bit of a drawback.

I chose adhesives to teach because I think it's a little known subject amongst bookbinders, and I think it's really important that they understand their nature. And I also think it's important to introduce adhesives that they've never used before that might be more appropriate for their work, and how to mix them together, and to really understand their properties. Not just choose them because they dry fast or don't warp very much. People often choose adhesives for how easy they are to work with and what the initial results are. But they often have no idea what the aging properties are—whether the bond will last, or become inflexible, or discolor. That's very practical information.

For Japanese papers, it's because I really love them and couldn't work without them. And I want to introduce on a different, deeper level, how to use them, and appreciate them, and have access to them. I don't know how much repair bookbinders do, but I just want to make sure they understand Japanese papers (handmade in particular) because they're extremely versatile. Very, very important, I think. And that's a fun class to teach.

*Are your classes for any particular skill or experience level?*

No. Not really. They're pretty basic, and they can get as complex as people want them to. What's important is just understanding the information and knowing where to find more. I give out a lot of handouts, a lot of definitions and vocabulary.

*What do you think are the points of convergence between book conservators and paper conservators, and what are the points of departure between the two?*

We're all working with essentially the same materials, just in a different format. We're working with flat sheets of paper and they're working with objects that are a composite of the same kind of material. They also are working with animal skins or cloths, but if they're working with boards and any kind of text, it's paper. I think having a better understanding of papers is really crucial.

In some ways, bookbinders have a more difficult job because a book is a composite object that they can't really take apart without knowing what they're doing. Bookbinders are working with something that is three-dimensional and has to function, whereas we rarely are working with something that has movable parts. But I think there's a huge overlap. And in fact, I studied bookbinding for four years, many, many years ago, and I still utilize a lot of the techniques I used in bookbinding. Even just little tricks of how to handle things I definitely learned from bookbinding. I think that those are great skills.

*Are there any particular techniques that come to mind?*

The way bookbinders learn how to guard signatures to repair them. Definitely how they measure things. Instead of using rulers, we used pieces of paper that we would mark, and part of that was because the paper was flexible. If we needed to determine the width of a spine [for leather], the most accurate measurement was taking a strip of paper with a pencil and marking it and then transferring that mark to however many other stations you needed. Sewing techniques, I still use. Occasionally, rarely, I do re sew a book.

*What things do you come across that bookbinders ought to consider doing differently?*

I was always taught to score and crease and burnish with a bone folder, but that very often leaves a burnish mark.

Now they have Teflon folders, which are infinitely better and easier to use and you don't always have to have an interleaving layer in between to burnish. I think in terms of adhesives, they're still a little bit behind the times. I find most of the time when I ask bookbinders what they use, they say, oh, PVA. And when I ask, which PVA (there are hundreds), they answer, oh, the one so-and-so gave me. Oh dear.

*So there really is a difference in PVAs?*

Oh, absolutely. Huge. Both in terms of viscosity and flexibility on drying. And some are reversible. Then there are archival quality PVAs that don't yellow or lose their flexibility and can be mixed with other adhesives so you get the best qualities of both. You can actually mix a cooked paste with some PVAs so you get a longer working time, but you get the strength of the PVA. Or maybe you want your paste to dry a little faster but you want some absorption of the paste into the paper so you get a better bond.

# Indispensables

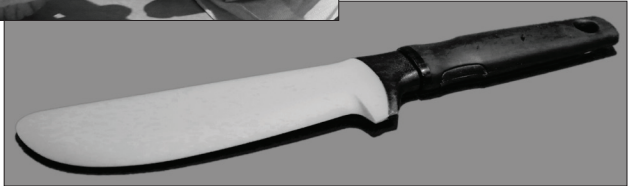
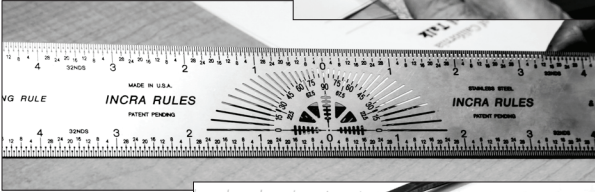
*The  
Gold  
Leaf*

What are the tools you can't live without? At the October meeting, we discussed and showed the tools we like to use. Here's a recap; photos follow on page 22.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Tool</b>	<b>Use</b>
Sandy Good	Carbon steel spatulas	Lifting Leather, cloth, & paper
Sandy Good	Carbon steel tweezers	Applying repair tissue
Brian Lieske	Silicon Spatula	Making paste
Brian Lieske	Incra Ruler	Precision measurement
Juliayn Coleman	Spatula	Lifting leather, cloth, & paper
Peggy DeMouthe	Small Bone Folder	Headcaps, small details
Peggy DeMouthe	Small French-style Paring knife	Fine Paring: headcaps, corners, etc.
Vanessa Hardy	Plastic Spatula	Investigating edges of paper or leather you are going to lift; turning the pages of a book; lifting the edge of a piece of paper; laying down paste
Vanessa Hardy	Small sharpening stone	idly sharpening my spatula throughout the day
Margaret Johnson	Lifting blade	lifting board papers, cover materials when repairing or rebacking books

<b>purchased from</b>	<b>why you prefer it</b>
Art Supply Store	ease of use. Good in the hand. Successful.
Art Supply Store	Ease of control
www.gatzies.com (made by Good Cook)	It's effective in creating lump-free paste. Easy to clean and cleans thoroughly.
incra.com, japanwoodworker.com	Easy to read, easy to use, and very easy to get consistent & accurate measurement marks
polistini.com	Very comfortable to use, well-balanced, and good thickness
made from deer rib bone	Very thin and smooth. Slight curve fits finger nicely.
Made from old metal-cutting sawblade, with rosewood and cherry grip	Thin, smaller blade won't snag leather. Smooth wood handle is comfortable for extended use.
Art Supply Store	Cheap! Surprisingly flexible and sensitive
Grainger	Handy to have on hand for a quick touch up to an edge
Made by Peggy DeMouthe from a hack-saw blade	Thin, can be sharpened, cheap, easily made

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Leaf*



*continued from page 4*

Whether your work is so traditional it makes Bernard Middleton look like a radical or so “out there” even you’re not convinced it’s actually still a book, whether you’ve harvested oak galls to make your own ink or you’ve run imposition software on a software manual PDF through a laser printer, whether you’ve been binding since before HBC existed or you’re not done with the certificate sequence at the Center yet, I invite you, I encourage you, I challenge you to share what you’re doing. I promise you there will be someone who sees it who will be moved or inspired by it.

For myself, I’m working on books that suck less than the last ones I made. Please join me on the trip down the rabbit hole, because the one thing I have learned with certainty is that the journey is greatly improved by good company.

*Brian Lieske*

*continued from page 19*

*And would that kind of adhesive be reversible?*

Depends on the PVA you use. There’s also a limited range of acrylic adhesives which can also be mixed together and can be reversed. It’s a question of how essential that reversibility needs to be. So it’s about thinking about the long-term implications. That really is what defines what conservation is.

*How would someone who does only bookbinding and no conservation benefit from learning about conservation?*

Just a better understanding of materials and what they’re using. And what the long-term implications of their choices are.

*continued from page 27*

three! At times, the opposite would occur—leaving me with a sense of not really believing in the clock, just leaving it all to be. Often I would sit at the end—already—of an evening, or sit—amazed—that only five minutes had ticked by and I was done sanding my spine (!).

I end with this Rilke quote (Letters to a Young Poet, 1934), one that has spoken to me for years and perfectly describes the binding life, the “fabric” of being a binder, particularly for this binder visiting Paris:

*No experience has been too unimportant, and the smallest event unfolds like a fate, and fate itself is like a wonderful, wide fabric in which every thread is guided by an infinitely tender hand and laid alongside another thread and is held and supported by a hundred others.*

***Montage of indispensable tools on facing page***

***(from top):*** carbon steel spatulas of varying shapes and sizes; spatulas demonstrated by Sandy Good; Incra ruler; small, handy sharpening stone; bone folder and lifting blade made by Peggy DeMouthe; silicon spatula for making smooth paste.

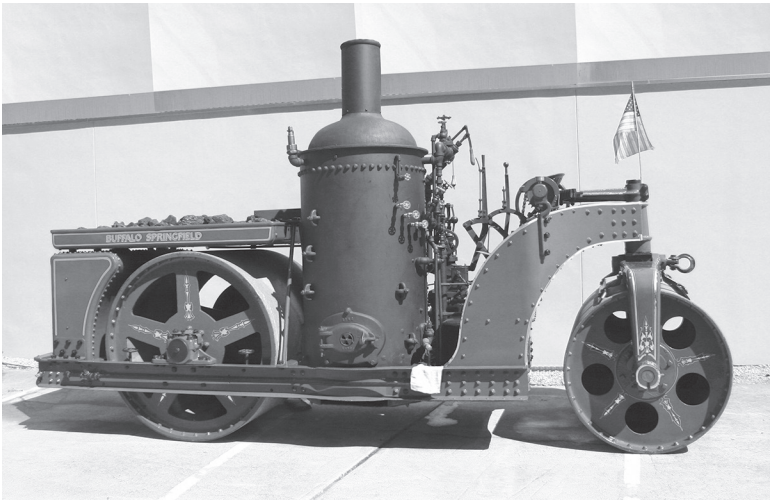
*photos by Laine Tammer*

# Let the Good Times Roll

*Kathleen Burch*

*The  
Gold  
Leaf*

Imagine a sunny autumn street in San Francisco filled with 4000 book arts fans breathlessly watching while a 7-ton 1924 Buffalo Springfield steamroller (with a calliope-style paint job) fires up, toots a decorative cloud of steam and coal smoke, rolls, and appears to crush a 3x3-foot sandwich of ink, linoleum, and Rives BFK right into the asphalt. And then, imagine the crowd's oohs and ahhs as a pristine, large-scale print is pulled out of the sandwich for their astonished admiration. This was the scene, repeated nearly 50 times, at the tenth anniversary of Roadworks: A Steamroller Printing Festival, which took place on Rhode Island Street on Sunday,



September 29, 2013, and in front, around, and inside the new facility of the San Francisco Center for the Book.

Besides the team of steamroller drivers and the “inky hands” and “clean hands” printmakers’ brigade that does the actual printmaking, several hundred book arts volunteers, artists, teachers, vendors, institutions, donors, and SFCB staff members all come together each year to put on this free, public street fair. Even though the star attraction is the drama and beauty of the steamroller printing, it’s also a great way to bring all the book arts to the attention of the general public, as well as a way for the greater book arts community to spend time together. This year, there were all-day indoor demonstrations of calligraphy, bookbinding, personal journal making, and letterpress printing, as well as outdoor veggie printing





*SFCB Studio Manager Chad Johnson in the new bindery*

for the younger crowd. Forty outdoor booths had a goodly number of browsers checking out printmakers and institutions such as HBC, the Book Club of California, and the PCBA.

Raising the creativity bar is the example set by Rik Olson, the renowned wood engraver of Sebastopol, who has created a new print each year, with each print a chapter of a witty, overarching narrative that follows the fantastic adventures—voyaging through space, time, and various civilizations—of the steamroller that his grandfather “Ole” Olson drove for the city of Oakland at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Although other communities host steamroller-printing events, the SFCB is the only organization that pulls off making gallery-quality steamroller prints. This is due to the superb artists who participate coupled with the expertise of the SFCB studio managers—Katherine Case, Rhiannon Alpers, and this year, Chad Johnson. Altogether, over the ten years of Roadworks, 99 suites of prints have been pulled, with as many artists.

Press on!



*SFCB Director of Operations Jeff Thomas in the new print studios*

# Paris in September

Lang Ingalls

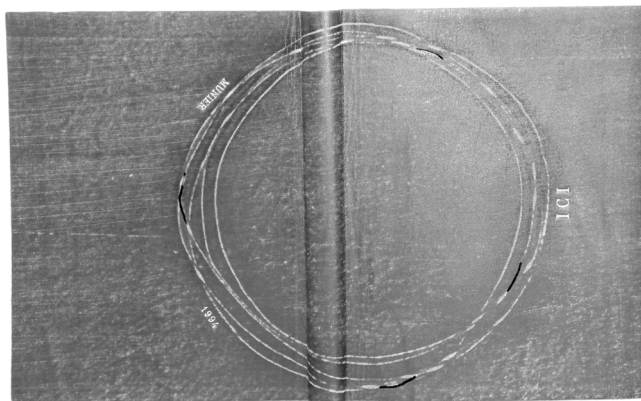
The  
Gold  
Leaf

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And Heaven in a Wild Flower,  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour.  
William Blake (1803)*

I am reminded of this famous Blake poem, as the lines resonate with my recent visit to Paris. I spent the month of September there, studying bookbinding with the vibrant and experienced Ana Ruiz-Larrea at her atelier. I had few expectations, as I really had no idea (or imagination) of how this time and these binding structures would unfold—I arrived ready to work. The plan was to make two structures: the first a traditional French case binding with a suede pastedown and flyleaf called *Bradel gardes daim*, and the other, a structure called *reliure à cru*, a finely made soft cover binding. I preferred to ride the *Velib* (the Paris “city bike” system) to Ana’s atelier, a fifty-minute sojourn one-way. I saw so much, a world opened up before me, and the more closely I looked, the more the city gave. *Bonjour, City of Light!*

Ana Ruiz-Larrea is a Spanish binder, trained in Brussels at *Le Cambre Arts Visuels*, eventually marrying the French binder *François Brindeau* and moving to Paris. She speaks several languages and while I was there, instructed in Spanish, English and French. She has four stools in her atelier, occupied by students of all levels and each working on a different structure—that she teaches this way, and in many languages, astonished me. I was able to see the progress that others made over the month, and finished my own books by the time I left, except the titling. I made friends. Working with Ana reminded me of the many other teachers I have had: she is generous in the way a beautiful vista is, giving and giving. And she thrilled in answering and discussing my questions about board warping, paring, titling and design decisions.

The days I was not at the atelier, I roamed the city and explored—always directed by book-related curiosity. Paris could never be compared to a grain of sand—but bear with me here. There are worlds inside the city, and within each one, another and another. It is an extraordinary experience to walk out the door into the Paris streets and simply get lost. The places you encounter! I was amazed at the atelier of an artisan who makes bespoke handbags—his display window had all the tools of the book trade laid across a goatskin, the hook that led me into his shop—but no books here, all



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2013

*Description of Lang's book — Made in France*

*formal description:* Roger Munier. Ici. Paris, France: La Pionnière, 1994. 13cm x 16.6cm x 2cm. Edition in French: copy #13 of 47, signed by the author.

*Binding description:* Bound in the 'reliure a cru' technique, this fine binding has a pliable cover with cut and colored edges. Other design elements include suede doublure and flyleaf, with matching endbands. Bound 'montage sur onglets' in 2013.

one-of-a-kind, exquisitely detailed purses. His enthusiasm reflected my own bibliomania, but his focus is on what a woman clutches. I walked into any Reliure I saw, and met the proprietors. I visited too many libraries and galleries to record here, but here is a brief list of recommendations: Librairie Blaizot, Librairie Nicaise, Librairies Maeght, Les Éditeurs Associés, Villa Browna Livres Anciens, Librairie Alain Brieux, and Michèle Broutta (gallery). It goes without saying that trips to Relma and Sonnelier are worth all the time you can give them. "Les Puces," an enormous flea market north of Paris, is interesting for almost anything you could imagine—from high-end antiques to paperbacks—but especially for little parts of things that may be interesting to incorporate into a binding's design. I found myself exploring different parts of Paris: city parks, streets and lesser-known museums. I had the time, and experiences away from the tourist crowds are unparalleled and always surprise. Parisians embrace the book on so many levels—I saw window displays everywhere that used books or skins in eye-catching ways: altered-book lanterns hanging willy-nilly around clothing, stacks of coverless tomes acting as display stands for perfume, even Hermès had gorgeous goat skins nailed up as backgrounds to emphasize and feature a particular handbag or scarf. (Yes, I went in...)

Again and again, time would elude me: whether in Ana's atelier or out for dinner, the clock would stop. I have had this experience before, but I was simply amazed at how an hour would whiz by, or

*continued on page 23*

## WORKSHOPS AND STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

### *2014 California Rare Book School*

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Apply through their website: <http://www.calrbs.org>  
Week 3 classes will be held in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Some courses of interest to bookbinders:

August 4-8:

Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts, with Justine Andrews  
History of the Book: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,  
with Jeffrey D. Groves

November 3-7:

Books of the Far West, with an Emphasis on California,  
with Gary Kurutz  
History of the Book in East Asia, with Peter Zhou &  
Deborah Rudolph  
History of Typography

### *San Francisco Center for the Book*

375 Rhode Island Street, San Francisco  
415-565-0545  
[www.sfcfb.org/workshops/binding](http://www.sfcfb.org/workshops/binding)

*A very partial sampling of upcoming workshops—visit the website  
for course costs and registration information.*

Clamshell Presentation Box, with Andy Rottner

April 13

In this one day class, construct an elegant and durable full-cloth covered clamshell presentation box for your suites of prints or books.

Tunnel Book, with Bettina Pauly

One session: March 1

In this course, participants learn the accordion fold, and use postcards and /or photographs to make a 3 dimensional tunnel book.

Millimeter Binding, with Juliayn Coleman

Four Wednesday night sessions: April 23 through May 14

Revisit and refine your leather paring techniques in this special class for those who have completed the bookbinding certificate

Hand Tooling for Bookbinding, with Dominic Riley

Two sessions: July 19 & 20

A thorough introduction to the art of hand tooling—in blind, with carbon, and with real gold foil. Enjoy a feast of tips, tricks, and techniques.

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The Ideal Album, with Michael Burke

One session: August 3

A perfect accompaniment to The Ideal Sketchbook, this workshop features a binding inspired by elegant Victorian photo albums—minus their flaws.

## ***Ab Haa School for the Arts/American Academy of Bookbinding***

Telluride, Colorado

For more information, visit their website: <http://bookbindingacademy.org/> or call 970-728-3886.

Binding In Stone Veneer, with Coleen Curry

June 13 – 15

This three-day class will explore binding structures using real stone veneer in the techniques learned from Sün Evrard. The structure is simple but is executed with a lot of care and attention to detail. Students will create one book and, if time allows, explore uses of the stone veneer as a decorative element for bindings or boxes. Creating a simple box enclosure may also be covered. Familiarity with simple bookbinding techniques preferred but not necessary.

Contemporary Decorative Techniques, with H el ene Jolis

May 5 – 9

This class is open to students who are studying with H el ene for the first time. It is also open to students who have studied with H el ene before, but who might be out of practice and need a refresher. H el ene will have new designs that will challenge both new and returning students. The techniques taught in this class open real possibilities for creative work in contemporary decoration. They are adapted to the need of most designer bookbinders, from beginners to professionals, without requiring an investment of costly tools. Students will focus on a number of techniques including onlay, inlay, relief and juxtaposition. Each student will work on one or two leather-covered panels, following a design pattern created by H el ene. Students will begin with

simple exercises that will lead to more complicated inlay designs as the week progresses. Using a variety of materials such as wood, metal, different kinds of leather and small objects, students will learn a new way to approach inlays. The techniques taught are easily accessible to everyone and will lead to precision, finesse and an improved quality of work. The objective is to lead the student to a technical understanding that will serve to stimulate creativity.

### ***GBW California Chapter Sponsored Workshop***

For further details such as location, cost, and how to register, visit <http://gbwcaliforniachapter.wordpress.com>. You do not need to be a Guild member to attend.

**Streamlined Style: Contemporary decorative techniques for leather bindings with Karen Hanmer; March 8-9, 2014**

Learn a variety of decorative techniques for use on leather bindings. These techniques require minimal equipment and modest leatherworking skill, and some can also be applied to cloth or paper. Techniques demonstrated will include: backpared onlays, inlaid lines, stamping texture into leather, feathered onlays, Lacunose (abstract sanded leather collage), various inlay techniques, laminating a paper illustration for use as an inlay, various methods of creating sculptural boards, transfer of computer-printed onlay shapes from paper to leather, and laser printing on leather.

## **EXHIBITIONS, CALLS FOR ENTRY**

### ***Hand Bookbinders of California 42<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Exhibition***

Our exhibit this year will be held in the new gallery space at the San Francisco Center for the Book. As always, the show is open to all members, and the deadline for us to receive your book(s) will be April 15. Look for the Intent to Enter form coming soon, and for more timely updates please check our website, [www.handbookbinders.org](http://www.handbookbinders.org).



## **LOOKING FOR...**

Eddy Hood is looking for a good pair of used band nippers. You can contact him via email at [eddyhood@hotmail.com](mailto:eddyhood@hotmail.com).

## Join us!

*Membership in the Hand Bookbinders of California is annual, beginning on May 1 of each year. The Membership Fee is \$30, and a second member in the same household is \$5.*

*Benefits of membership include regular presentations & workshops, the opportunity to exhibit in the annual members exhibition, copies of the bi-annual Gold Leaf and the annual membership roster, invitations to special events, and dialogue through our monthly meetings and the HBC mail group at Yahoo! Groups.*

*There are three ways to join:*

*visit the HBC website: [www.handbookbinders.org](http://www.handbookbinders.org). You may now join or renew with our convenient Paypal option. If you are a new member or a renewing member with any changes in contact information, please also download and print the membership form. Fill in the necessary information and mail it back to us at the address below.*

*write us:      The Hand Bookbinders of California  
                    P.O. Box 193216  
                    San Francisco, CA 94119*

*or, contact our Membership Coordinator, Lang Ingalls:*

*[membership@handbookbinders.org](mailto:membership@handbookbinders.org)*

*Appearing on [www.handbookbinders.org](http://www.handbookbinders.org), the biannual Gold Leaf is being offered in pdf format. Once the newest issue goes to print, the previous issue shall be posted on our website, plain for all to see. Please let Lang Ingalls ([membership@hbc.org](mailto:membership@hbc.org)) know if you would prefer to save paper and receive it solely in this manner. If she does not hear from you, you will continue to receive the printed copy.*

*Members are encouraged to submit material to the Gold Leaf in the form of articles, reviews, announcements and news. For more info, fill out the contact form on our website, [www.handbookbinders.org](http://www.handbookbinders.org)*

## COLOPHON

The *Gold Leaf* is produced bi-annually by the Hand Bookbinders of California. This issue was set in Sabon, a font designed by Jan Tschichold. The *Gold Leaf* is printed at Community Printers in Santa Cruz, California, a cooperatively owned, certified Monterey Bay Green Business. For every ton of paper Community Printers uses, an equivalent number of trees are planted through the organization Trees for the Future.



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