

# CAXTONIAN

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## 'One-day' and 'Someday'

The late Caxtonian Jay Marshall's love of book projects pulled him in many directions

David Meyer

Dear Mr. Marshall:

I represent Dai Vernon and F.W. Ross in connection with the book they authored titled "Revelations." I am informed that their manuscript of this work was delivered to you by Mr. Vernon twelve years ago pursuant to an agreement under which you were to publish the book, but you have not done so.

– Excerpt from a Los Angeles attorney's letter, December 17, 1974

Anyone who happened to stay with Jay and Frances Marshall for any length of time, as I did in 1974, (and there were others before and after me) was likely to witness one of those occasions when Jay would get caught up in an unplanned project that carried him through the day. When that occurred he became so completely immersed in what he was doing, every obligation was set aside – and there were usually many, for Jay seldom minded an intrusion on his time or said no to, say, a lunch invitation or a proposal to do *anything*. But on a "one-day project" phone calls went unanswered – and his days were filled with phone calls, from friends, associates and strangers sharing or wanting news related to the show business world in which Jay played a prominent part – nor could attempted interruptions by Frances or employees and customers of the magic shop dislodge him when a one-day project took over. The outside world simply dropped away: there was only Jay doing whatever it was that held his interest.

One summer day in 1974, while I was living at Magic, Inc., Jay became engrossed in the repair of book jackets. He had found a product that could strengthen and protect the



Not a café in Paris – a kitchen in a suburb of Chicago: Jay Marshall with David and Margo Meyer, July 1999.

often fragile and damaged dust wrappers of books he had purchased at thrift stores. Books with torn or partially missing dust jackets that had been piling up around the kitchen area in the living quarters above the magic shop, and on top of the washer and drier in the nearby hallway, suddenly received the care that Jay felt they deserved. Breakfast dishes on the kitchen table were replaced by book jackets, linen tape, scissors and Mylar covers, keeping Jay busy through the lunch hour until late that afternoon. Hundreds of books with imperfect book jackets in his various collections required repair and covers but never received them, suggesting that Jay never took up the practice again with quite the same intensity.

Another time I watched him spend a day angrily assembling a list of the names of magicians who had *not* been mentioned in the newly released book, *The Illustrated History of Magic*, by Milbourne Christopher. Jay had never been fond of Christopher. Their ages

were only slightly apart but their personalities were widely different. As collectors and professional performers in the tight-knit world of magic, they were competitors. Jay and his close friend and fellow magic collector, Robert Lund, frowned on Christopher's methods of obtaining books and prints for the collection that served as the basis for his book.

According to Jay and Bob, Christopher was known for persuading many old-time magicians to give him their treasures rather than offering to buy them. In Jay's and Bob's opinion, the camaraderie extended by Christopher was false, and his patently friendly expression was "a put on" that led them to call him "Smiley." The two also griped about the fact that Christopher routinely announced his latest acquisitions in a monthly column in one of magic's largest circulation journals. The sly implication of these announcements was that Christopher's collection was *the* "repository"

See JAY MARSHALL, page 2



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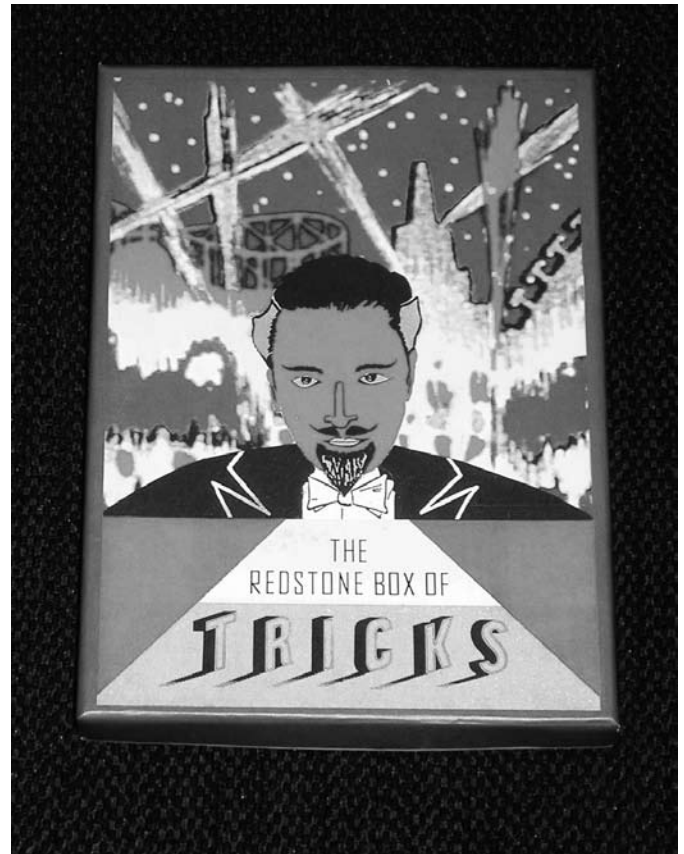
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JAY MARSHALL, from page 1  
for books and ephemera relating to the history of magic.

A review copy of Christopher's *Illustrated History of Magic* was sent to Jay by a Chicago newspaper. I remember him sitting down to read it one afternoon and by the next morning he was raging around the second floor of Magic, Inc., reading portions of the text aloud to Frances and me and announcing, as he went, the names of magicians who should have been included in particular chapters of the book but had not been. By the time he finished the book, he had inscribed the volume's rear endpapers with columns listing the names of 94 magicians whom Christopher had failed to include in his history and 16 names of prominent magicians who had received only a one-line mention. Jay listed his own name among the missing.<sup>1</sup>

He then wrote a letter to the editor of the newspaper: "I regret I must decline to review [the book] for your paper, despite the flattering things you say about my qualifications. Mr. Christopher would claim that I was prejudiced, and he would be right. I feel anyone who would blow off his mentor, John Mulholland, a great magician and scholar, with a single almost disparaging sentence of text... could not be fairly reviewed by me. I would further have to say Mr. Christopher was guilty of much prejudice, disparagement and omission in this volume of self-glorification. Please assign this [review] to someone else." Copies of this letter were sent to Christopher and John Mulholland's widow; another was passed along to me.

As many of his friends knew, Jay was an ardent Anglophile. For many years he stayed in London for a month at a time in order to visit friends and museums, perform magic and, of course, buy books. His library on English history, customs, music halls and showmen was extensive. In 1995 he acquired from England a boxed assortment of magic tricks, reproductions of posters and optical illusions collectively called "The Redstone Box of Tricks." (The assortment was compiled by the American author Daniel Stashower, who was living in Europe at the time. Mr. Stashower mentioned that the set was distributed in several countries under various names, including the long-winded *Shambala Redstone Editions Magic Box*.) Included in the box was a pamphlet which pleased Jay enough to want to share it with several friends. He made photocopies, bound them in stiff paper covers and labeled each cover by hand with the title: "Charles Dickens, Conjuror."



Cover of *The Redstone Box of Tricks*. Courtesy of Daniel Stashower.

I assume this project took him most of a single day. Having seen him in action, I can envision him going downstairs to the copy machine in the back of the magic shop just long enough to make three sets of the ten-page text. Upstairs at the kitchen table, he folded the pages carefully: probably using a bookbinder's bone folder to make sure the crease ran straight. Downstairs again, he searched and found cover stock in the print shop; upstairs again he used a heavy marking pen for the title and a smaller pen for the author's name, Heathcote Williams. Then, for as long as it took, he sat at the kitchen table sewing.

I don't know who received two of those three little booklets he put together, but the one I was given has the following inscription on the last page: "This little booklet was in an item titled 'The Magic Book' (\$25.00) and has more information on Dickens the magician than anything I have previously read. I copied and hand sewed 3 copies. Jay Marshall February 1996."

The opposite of Jay's "one-day projects" were his "someday projects" – including the book on card magic titled "Revelations" which was eventually issued by another publisher. (In between these two categories were the many books and pamphlets Jay published under the imprint of Magic, Inc.) The "someday" projects might best be characterized as inspirations that did not come to fruition due to his other pursuits. I doubt that that he ever gave up the

notion that he would one day, someday, get back to every project he conceived and often-times actually began but never completed.

One of these was Sidney W. Clarke's *The Annals of Conjuring*, a seminal history on magic and magicians that had appeared serially from 1924 to 1928 in the English publication *The Magic Wand*. In 1965 Jay decided that it would be a good idea to have an index for *The Annals*. Bob Lund offered to compile it if Jay would print it. Jay agreed and he may have even considered reprinting the entire 291-page *Annals* in conjunction with the much-needed index. In March of 1966 Lund reported to Jay that he had "spent several hundred hours in compiling the index," and "as a matter of interest, the index runs to 2,638 subjects and 5,707 references, not counting the illustrations."

The project languished soon after the index was turned over to Jay. *The Annals* was eventually reprinted in 1983 by a Brooklyn rabbi who published reprints of books on magic and Sherlock Holmes as a hobby business. Lund's index was reproduced in the rabbi's edition in its original, typed manuscript form.<sup>2</sup>

Jay must have been relieved to be released of responsibility when he finally turned the index

over to the rabbi, for Lund's involvement in the project was clearly based on his friendship with Jay. Evidence of this can be found embedded in the index.

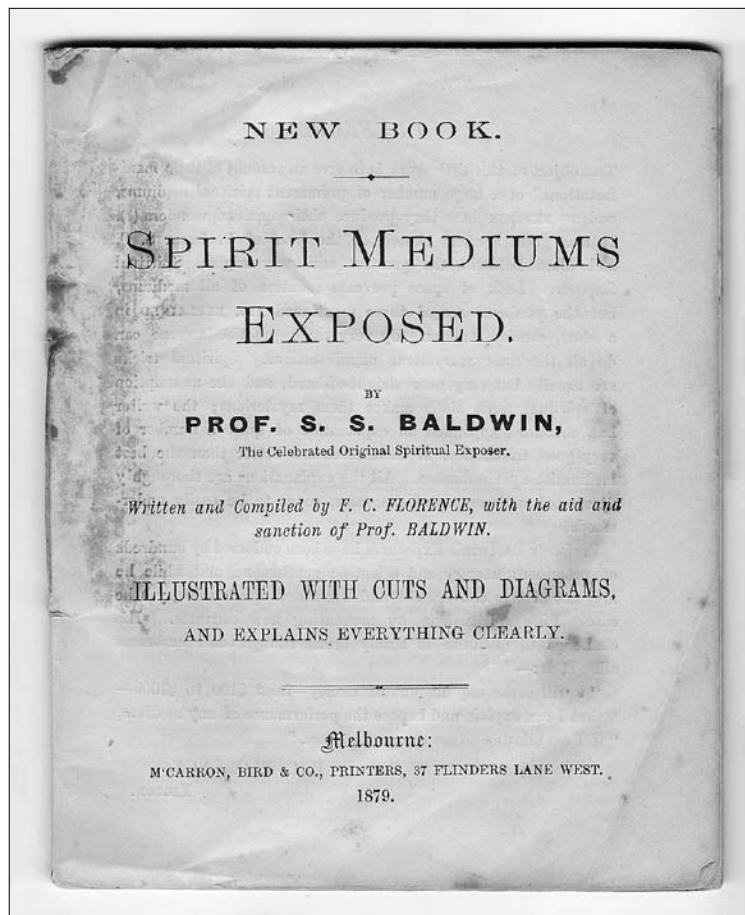
In a letter to Jay dated May 8, 1966, Lund wrote: "You will find a Sullivan listed in the index, page 76, with 'Malu' after his name. Clarke does not give Sullivan's first name and Malu stands for Marshall-Lund. If anybody cops the index, I want to know about it. The addition of the name Malu will not be noticed

because I have added dozens of first names

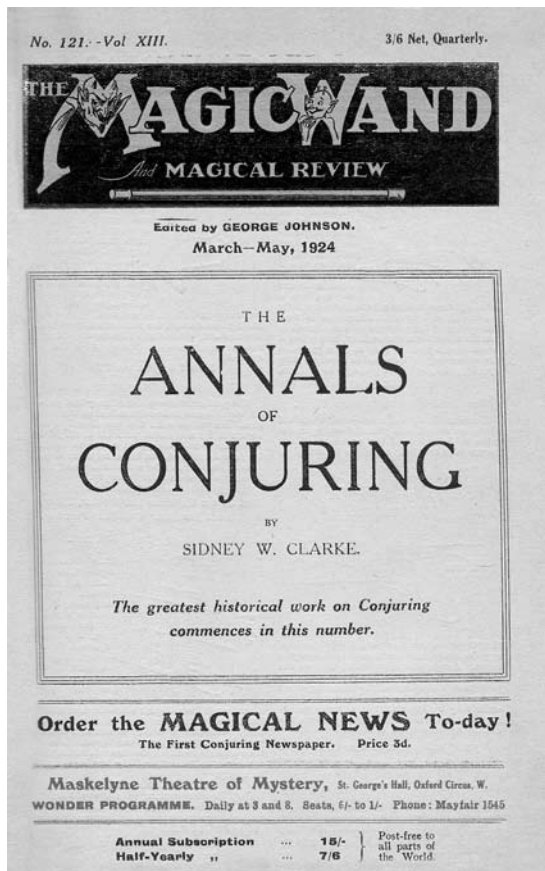
and identifications that do not appear in Clarke's text."

Lund's logic for doing this is evident, for after all the effort he put into preparing the index, he obviously felt pride of ownership for the work. He apparently did not object to the rabbi's publication of the index seventeen years after its completion, but had he heard rumors about photocopies of the index circulating in the magic-collecting community before then, he would have been writing hot-tempered letters to those he thought guilty – beginning with Jay.

Another "someday" project of Jay's was his intended reprinting of a 64-page pamphlet titled *Spirit Mediums Exposed*, "by Prof. S.S. Baldwin, The Celebrated Original Spiritual Exposer." This rare pamphlet, of which only two copies are now known among magic collectors, was published in Melbourne, Australia, in 1879. I purchased my copy by mail after reading a one-line description (i.e., title and author) in a mimeographed list issued by a Toronto book dealer. I paid one dollar



Title page for *Spirit Mediums Exposed* showing residual damage leached from the front cover.



Cover of the first issue of *The Magic Wand* announcing serial publication of "The Annals of Conjuring" by Sidney W. Clarke. Although running in consecutive issues from 1924 to 1928, an index was not included in the series.

for it, including postage. Jay wanted to see my "great find" and as soon as he saw it he wanted to reprint it in time to be given to attendees at the next convention of collectors to be held at Magic, Inc.

There was one unfortunate problem. The front cover was soiled and damaged; and at the time, the mid-1980s, no other copies were known to either of us. Jay suggested he hold on to the pamphlet until another copy with a clean, undamaged cover could be found and coupled with my copy for the reprint, and I, in a moment of weakness, agreed to let him place it, for safety, in a drawer of his roll-top desk.

A year or two or three passed. I will never know if Jay made much, if any, effort to find another copy. I admit that I didn't. However, I do know that when I insisted he return my copy, he did so reluctantly.

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<sup>1</sup> The book is now owned by a prominent collector of magic books in Chicago, who provided this information to the author.

<sup>2</sup> It is said that the rabbi did not trust his aged typesetters to set the index without errors as their routine work was the composition of religious tracts.

# Festival of the Architecture Book, 1511-2011

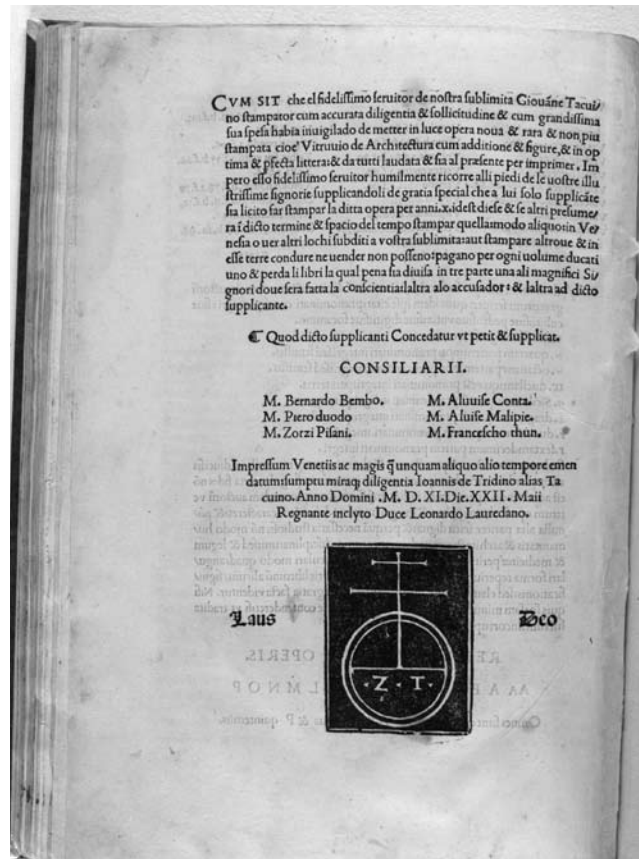
Jeffrey Jahns

Organized by several Caxton Club members, a coalition of Chicago area universities, libraries and other institutions will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the publication of the first illustrated architecture book with a variety of exhibits and other programming throughout 2011 under the banner "Festival of the Architecture Book, 1511-2011."

At this writing, programming is still in the planning stage, but the current list of activities is set out below in alphabetical order by institution. Since these events will be held several to many months hence, readers are encouraged to check periodically the Festival website described below for additional details and updates.

It was on May 22, 1511, it has been reported, that Fra Giovanni Giocondo, an eminent architect of his day, published in Venice his edition of Vitruvius' *De Architectura libri decem* (Ten Books of Architecture), especially noteworthy as the first printed illustrated architecture book. Marcus Vitruvius Pollio was a first century B.C.E. Roman architect whose "ten books" were well known before Fra Giocondo's edition, although it was not until the work by the Benedictine monks of Monte Cassino Abbey in southern Italy that the Latin text was standardized from the numerous versions that had been hand-copied since antiquity. The original Roman text is lost and Vitruvius' original illustrations did not survive even in copy form. Thus, the woodcut illustrations in Fra Giocondo's edition are entirely his own, and he went far beyond the few illustrations Vitruvius called out in the text, providing numerous additional historical and explanatory drawings. This book, along with Fra Giocondo's 1513 octavo version of the same book with new, reduced size woodcuts (printed with Frontinus' *De aqueductibus* and the first illustrations for that work as well) and many of their progeny, will be featured at the University of Illinois at Chicago exhibit described below. The 1513 exemplar to be exhibited has inscriptions suggesting previous ownership at Monte Cassino and numerous written and drawn marginalia, and was previously displayed at the Caxton Club exhibit at the Newberry Library in the 1990s.

**1. American Institute of Architects (AIA), Chicago Chapter:** Planning articles on the program and the subject matter for its



Colophon page from the first illustrated architecture book, Fra Giocondo's 1511 (Venice) edition of Vitruvius' Ten Books of Architecture, which will be on display at the University of Illinois at Chicago exhibition described below.

journal. Will also initiate a question or two among its members, in the nature of, "What books have been the most influential to you?" and/or "What are the great architecture books of all time?" and will collect the responses, perhaps as an article in its journal.

**2. Art Institute of Chicago:** From September 6 through November 1, the Burnham Library will be exhibiting either 19th century American builder books or Vitruvian Man through the centuries.

**3. Caxton Club:** Planning a lecture in the fall of 2011 on Modern Rome as seen through books of the 16th-18th centuries, perhaps also a lecture in May, 2011. The Caxton Club is a proud sponsor of the Festival.

**4. Chicago Architecture Foundation:** Programming is being developed. A bus trip to Milwaukee to include the RIBA Palladio exhibit at the Milwaukee Art Museum is being considered, as is programming addressing architects and their libraries.

**5. Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation:** A dual exhibition, featuring the books written

by Frank Lloyd Wright and the books from his library that were meaningful in his career will take place at the Oak Park Public Library (Main Facility, across from Unity Temple) in October 2011. The exhibit, created for the Festival, will first be shown at the Wisconsin Art Museum (West Bend, WI).

**6. Glessner House Museum:** Scheduling an exhibition in this H.H. Richardson landmark building highlighting architecture books owned and used by the Glessner family, likely for Fall 2011.

**7. Graham Foundation:** Will host, on its website, the webpage for the series of programs. The webpage will have a unique URL: [www.1511-2011.org](http://www.1511-2011.org), which will be operational late January 2011. Will also have an exhibit and perhaps a lecture on the new work, *Artistic Appreciation of the Arch*.

**8. Lake Forest College:** Will stage an exhibit employing books by/about Chicago and upper North Shore architects who followed classic form and sometimes style in their work. These include David Adler (Howard Shaw associate, books in 1970 and 2001), Stanley D. Anderson (former Howard Shaw associate, 1930s monograph), William Peirce Anderson (D.H. Burnham & Co.; Graham Anderson et al.), Edward H. Bennett (less known plans, Minneapolis and Brooklyn, for example), Jerome Cerny (Adler associate, 1930s and 1960s monographs), Delano & Aldrich (NY), Howard Van Doren Shaw (Market Square, Lake Forest), Bertrand Weber (Bertrand was a former Shaw associate). Intends to employ some earlier books to illustrate motifs recurring in these designers trained directly or indirectly at the Ecole, Paris, including Palladio, the Adam family of 18th C. Great Britain, French classicists of the 17th C. (Blondel). Will also plan one or two talks around these programs, including perhaps Stephen Salny on David Adler (10th

anniv. of Salny's book on Adler) and Franz Schulze on Mies van der Rohe as classicist (new book on Mies coming out in 2011). The exact timing may depend some on the speakers' schedules, etc.

9. **Illinois Institute of Technology:** The Graham Resource Center will exhibit a collection of inscribed books providing patrons rare evidence of an architect's intention to transmit architectural thought and craft.

10. **Loyola University, Donavon Reading Room of Cudahy Library:** Staging an exhibit in the Cudahy Library Reading Room, May 1 to November 1, 2011, to focus on notable Chicago architects, specifically those who have designed buildings for Loyola including Andrew Rebori, who designed the library and chapel, and Narine Fisher, who designed the Mundelein College Skyscraper. In addition, Loyola recently received the Cuneo Mansion and Gardens with the house designed by Benjamin Marshall and gardens by Jens Jensen, so the exhibit will probably include that, as well as the award-winning Information Commons by SCB. The history of architecture will be represented throughout the exhibit by volumes from the library's rare book collection.

11. **Milwaukee Art Museum:** During the period January 27 to May 1, 2011, it will have an exhibition originated by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) on Palladio, which travels from the Morgan Library in New York. This exhibit was planned independent of Festival programming.

12. **Morton Arboretum:** The Sterling Morton Library will mount a Jens Jensen exhibition that will run from June 28, 2011 through September 1, 2012. Consideration is being given to having one or more speakers during the exhibit period to address topics related to Jensen's life and works. A kiosk alerting people to that exhibit had been installed in the library before Jensen's 150th birthday anniversary, September 13, 2010.

13. **Newberry Library:** Will stage an exhibition on military architecture books of the 16th and 17th centuries, to run from approximately August 10 to October 15, 2011. The Newberry will also digitize each item and maintain a virtual exhibit on its website.

14. **Northwestern University:** Will have an exhibition to be curated by Professor David Van Zanten, running from April 26, 2011 to October 28, 2011, title and described as follows: "Rene Binet And Ernst Haeckel's Collaboration; Magical Naturalism and Architectural Ornament [*Esquisses Decoratives*] 1902-1903." Northwestern University

Library's Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections possesses one of the few complete copies of the French architect René Binet's *Esquisses decoratives*, published in increments as loose plates in 1902/1903. Before dying at forty-six in 1911, Binet had received the prestigious commission to design the principal gateway to the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900 – which he did from coral structures as they had been elucidated by the German biologist Ernst Haeckel, with whom Binet was in correspondence. Subsequently he was named architect of the second block of the Printemps department store, executing a remarkable interior environment (today unfortunately modified).

Binet's work parallels the broader Art Nouveau style but is unique in its geometric developments taking off from Haeckel's studies of biological morphology. It has come to be increasingly admired and documented during the last few years along with the parallel design experiments of Claude Bragdon, Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin, and finally Buckminster Fuller.

15. **Society of Architectural Historians:** Ingrid Rowland has agreed to write a short article on the 50th anniversary of the illustrated architecture book for the November 2011 issue of the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. SAH has also installed a Festival weblog for its members and interested public, which can be located at <https://sahcommunities.groupsie.com/discussion/topic/show/406821>

16. **University of Chicago, Regenstein Library, Special Collections:** The Special Collections Research Center is installing, in part to herald its new facility, "Firmness, Commodity, and Delight: Architecture in Special Collections, Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery, May 2011-July 2011."

Vitruvius identified three elements necessary for a well-designed building: "firmness, commodity, and delight." Two millennia later, physical integrity, functional utility, and aesthetic beauty are still regarded as essential components of all successful architectural design.

Drawing on a wide range of rare books, manuscripts, archives, and graphic materials elucidating the history of architectural practice, "Firmness, Commodity, and Delight" celebrates the opening of the new Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery and the completion of construction of the Joe and Rika Mansueto Library. See <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/curex.html> for more details.

17. **University of Illinois at Chicago, Richard J. Daley Special Collections and Archives:** For what may well be the most comprehensive single showing, Professor Martha Pollak will curate an exhibit titled, "Celebrating the Illustrated Architectural Book, 1511-?." Opening early April 2011 and running through mid-summer, this program features the 1511 Fra Giocondo edition of Vitruvius and a host of prime examples of the illustrated architecture book through the centuries, taking a more Chicago-oriented turn in the 20th century. The exhibit will entail up to 40 books from the University's collection, from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign and from private collections, together with some related materials. An opening reception will be arranged.

An exhibition of all of the important published architecture books would be impossible given the immense range of Renaissance and more modern works. Architecture books are represented by numerous categories, often having quite different characters. These include books by architects, works about one architect or one style or period, military architecture, civil architecture, religious architecture, landscape architecture, construction, engineering, urban planning, city views, books for the public, books for the builder, technical treatises, representations of a specific building type, works of the imagination, promotional pieces, illustrations by wood block, engraving, photography, and drawings. The Festival's programming will demonstrate the broad range of this medium and represent many of the highlights of the Western tradition. By having numerous venues under separate curatorship, the series hopes to achieve both a fairly comprehensive survey, and several in depth "takes" on specific aspects of the medium. It is expected that in all up to 300 books will be displayed as well as additional related materials.

In addition to the many Caxtonians at the various participating institutions, too many to mention at this time, the Festival was spearheaded by your author with the assistance of fellow Caxtonians Kathryn Tutkus, John Notz, Bill Locke, Ed Hirschland and Dan Hayman. The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation is the principal sponsor of the Festival. Each participating institution will be funding its activities independently. Additional tax-deductible contributions are still being sought to help defray web and printing costs. Individuals and institutions interested in contributing should contact Ed Hirschland.

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# Book and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Robert McCamant

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

Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600: "Chicago Cabinet: Views from the Street" (seven photographers who have taken inspiration from the city's buildings, pedestrians, and vivid street life: Walker Evans, Yasuhiro Ishimoto, Ray K. Metzker, and others), Gallery 188 through January 17. "Richard Hawkins – Third Mind" (Hawkins early collages in book form), Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, through January 16.

Chicago Architecture Foundation, 224 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, 312-922-3432: "Chicago Model City" (unique models of downtown, of the Eisenhower expressway from 1950, more.) Atrium Gallery, ongoing.

Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: "Bibliotheca Sylva" (rare books depicting historic uses of trees as wood products and in forestry, featuring illustrations, photographs, and wood samples), through February 6.

Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington Street, Chicago, 312-744-6630: "Chicago and the Diana: Toy Camera Images" (Dan Zamudio's photographs are intimately scaled, hand-printed, black and white images reminiscent of the faded, vintage works of old photo albums), Michigan Avenue Galleries, through March 27.

Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, 312-747-4300: "Golden Legacy: Original Artwork from 65 Years of Golden Books" (sixty illustrations), Special Collections Exhibit Hall, Ninth Floor, through January 7; "Made by WPA: Illinois Art Project Chicago" (exhibition and film highlight the history and legacy of government-funded arts programs during the 1930s in Illinois), Chicago Gallery, Third Floor, through April 3.

Columbia College Center for the Book and Paper Arts, 1104 S. Wabash, Chicago, 312-369-6630. "Counting on Chance: 25 Years of Artists' Books by Robin Price, Publisher" (a mid-career retrospective of the contemporary book artist and fine press printer), Second Floor gallery, opens January 27.

DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 East 56th Place, Chicago, 773-947-0600: "Let Your Motto Be Resistance: African American Portraits" (photographs from the 19th century to the present, in conjunction with the National Portrait Gallery), through March 6.

Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society, 361 E. Westminster Avenue, Lake Forest, 847-234-5253: "Nature by Design: Drawings of the Foundation for Architecture and Landscape Architecture, 1926-1935" (features watercolors, measured drawings, sketches of estates and gardens at home and abroad, drawn by students from Midwestern universities), extended through January 31.

Loyola University Museum of Art, 820 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago,

312-915-7600: "Contemporary Arabic Calligraphy by Nihad Dukhan" (a postmodern interpretation of Arabic letters, contemporary designs expressing the Islamic spirit and using classical styles to create an abstract yet readable representation of words), through January 16.

Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, 312-280-2660: "Urban China: Informal Cities" (a retrospective of the magazine combined with a space transformed into a physical manifestation of its pages), through April 3.

Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: "Approaching the Mexican Revolution: Books, Maps, Documents" (documents and books, both scholarly and popular, as well as maps illustrating American interventions in Mexico during the Revolution

and U.S. business interests in the region), Spotlight Exhibition Series, R. R. Donnelley Gallery, through January 8.

Northern Illinois University Art Museum, NIU Altgeld Hall, DeKalb: "Frances Whitehead: Documents, Proposals, Installations" (the Chicago artist shares her mind in the form of maps, documents, proposed projects and material explorations), January 25 to March 11.

Northwestern University, Charles Deering Library, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, 847-491-7658: "From the Heroic to the Depraved: Mainstream and Underground Comic Books at Northwestern University Library" (featuring comic books from the Pre-Golden, Golden, Silver, Bronze, and Modern eras, as well as the Underground), Special Collections and Archives, through March 26; "Burnham at Northwestern" (documents, photographs, blueprints, and sketches of Daniel Burnham's 1905 "Plans of Northwestern," a redesign of the University's Evanston campus), Special Collections and Archives, ongoing.

Oriental Institute of Chicago, University of Chicago, 1155 E. 58th Street, Chicago, 773-702-9514: "Visible Language: Inventions of Writing in the Ancient Middle East and Beyond" (illustrations of new research on the origins of writing: artifacts from the four "pristine" writing systems of Sumer, Egypt, China, and Mesoamerica; examples of the forerunners of writing, such as rock paintings and pot marks, photographic tablets from Uruk/today's Iraq, seal impressions from the tombs of early Egyptian kings, and oracle bones used in Chinese rituals; examples of early alphabetic texts in Proto-Sinaitic, Old South Arabian, and Hebrew, all of which re-evaluate the origins of the alphabet; a video kiosk demonstrating how photographic techniques can examine sealed clay Token balls ca. 3350-3100 BC, whose previously unread contents are thought to be the ancestors of Latin letters), through March 6.

University of Chicago, John Crerar Library, 5730 South Ellis Avenue, Chicago, 773-702-8740: "Sweet Home Chicago: Chocolate and Confectionery Production and Technology in the Windy City" (drawing from items in the substantial cookery collection at the Library, this exhibit explores the history of chocolate and confectioners in the city and the science and technology of the candy making process), Atrium, through June 11.

Until a replacement exhibit editor is found, please send your listings to [bmccamant@quarterfold.com](mailto:bmccamant@quarterfold.com), or call 312-329-1414 x 11.



*DuSable Museum: African American Portraits*  
HARRY BELAFONTE BY HERSHEL LEVIT, 1960.

# Caxtonians Collect: Donald R. Allen

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

Many of Don Allen's friends know that he worked in advertising during the fifties and sixties. "Was it the way they show it on *Mad Men* [the cable-TV series]?" they always ask. His reply: "Well, it's very much the way it was. But we didn't drink as much. That was probably because we were in Chicago, and the show is about New York."

Being an ad-agency account executive was Allen's first career. He got around to it after having earned a BS degree in business from Miami University of Ohio and having served in the United States Army, working from Tokyo on information packets dropped to American prisoners during the Korean War. "They always say the Army never looks at what recruits declare they have done before entering the service," he said. "But in my case they did. I had mentioned on the form that I had done some journalism in school. I was lucky; the duty in Tokyo was a great experience."

After the army, he started in advertising in Ohio, but soon felt that he would do better with some more education, so he earned a masters in Business from Case Western. In 1960, his agency moved him to Chicago.

He started his second career in 1971, when he found that finance was more interesting than advertising. It was a business brokerage called Sigma Companies, dedicated to finding purchasers for mid-size enterprises. He was its CEO and ran it for 33 years. A quick online search turned up a couple of acquisitions the average Chicagoan might have heard of: Bressler Ice Cream by Drexel Ice Cream, and Joseph A. Bank by Quaker Oats. A *Sun-Times* article in September of 1982 lauded the latter deal and called it "proof the little guy can still succeed." In February of 1983, the *Wall Street Journal* headlined him as a "Merger Midget" and recounted the ups and downs of the business sale process.

His "retirement career" is as a literary agent. "I wasn't sure how it was going to work out," he said. "But then I expressed my doubts

to an early client. He said, 'I have complete confidence in you,' and sure enough, I found a publisher for him."

Allen has always loved libraries and librarians. ("Talk nicely to a librarian," he says. "They'll do anything for you.") It started back at Miami University, when he had a student job filing congressional documents in the base-



ment. "I made 35 cents an hour. But I found it fascinating. One day the head librarian – John King, for whom the present library is named – came down and looked into what I was doing. It made me feel that what I was doing was important."

Back in the time Allen was studying at Case Western, it was home to one of the country's most important library schools, since closed. "It was too bad, because it was a great library school. Their business school was nothing special, but now it's huge."

For many years, his office was in the Wrigley building. "I always enjoyed going down to the Chicago Public Library (what is now the Cultural Center) to browse the books during my lunch hour. And then when they made it the Cultural Center, they moved the books temporarily to the Mandell Building,

which was right in my front yard! I was there all the time."

Now, whenever Allen travels he stops in at a library to see what he can see. He cites a Newton manuscript he got to see at Kings College, Cambridge, and Einstein notebooks he was shown at the Morgan Library in New York. "But I never penetrated the Harvard

library," he laments. "They turned me away." He also told me about a useful resource provided by Northwestern: an electronic index of the Big Ten libraries. Type in an author and title, say, and it requests information on the book at all the Big Ten schools, plus a few others.

Lately Allen has been studying early Christianity as a business enterprise. "You heard that right," he says. "There's a huge amount of literature about early Christians, but business is not a prism which is often applied. How did '12 illiterate fishermen' manage to produce one of the world's longest-lasting and most successful enterprises? Paul was a shrewd businessman." But Allen doesn't think he'll end up writing or publishing anything on the topic. "Occasionally you run into a religious scholar who agrees that it's an interesting way of looking at it, but mostly they just look away when you bring it up." He cites Diarmaid

MacCulloch, author of the 2009 *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*, as being one of the open-minded few, and acknowledges Caxtonian Newland Smith as having been helpful in his studies.

He joined the Club in 2008, nominated by John Chalmers and seconded by Charles Miner. He had met Chalmers when the two of them crewed on a boat for Leonard Franks. (Chalmers had been introduced to Franks by Caxtonian Tom Drewes – small world!) Currently, both are active in the Evanston North Shore Sail and Power Squadron, a group which promotes safe boating and nautical education.

He has lived with his wife, Ellen, in the same house in Evanston since 1965. They have one child, a daughter living in Rogers Park.

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## Bookmarks...

**Luncheon: Friday, January 14, 2011, Union League Club**  
**Dan Crawford**  
**Flower Power: An "R"-Rated Journey, from 18th-Century Turkish Harems to the 19th-Century British Educational System, and Beyond**

Since humans first walked the earth, folklore has been filled with flowers and herbs used for secret communication. Ophelia to Laertes: "These rosemary, that's for remembrance, pray love....remember..." (*Hamlet* Act 4, Scene 5.) Caxton General Manger Dan Crawford's talk will include (1) the truth about repressed, boring 18th century Turkish harem life, with its romantic stories of escape and secret code of flowers, (2) 19th century Britain's embrace of flower language, allowing a restrained Victorian to communicate ardent feelings in a veiled way, (3) the HUGE part played in this bit of history by a truly incredible 18th century British woman, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and her graphic published work: *Turkish Embassy Letters*. Other stories involve Alexander Pope, Queen Victoria, Edgar Allen Poe, Jean Auguste Ingres, Agatha Christie, FTD, and the 1945 Dutch shipment to Canada of thousands of red tulip bulbs: ("I am on fire with love for you").

*The January luncheon will take place at the Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Luncheon buffet (in the main dining room on six) opens at 11:30 am; program (in a different room, to be announced) 12:30-1:30. Luncheon is \$30. Details of the January dinner: it will take place at Cliff Dwellers, 200 S. Michigan, 22nd floor. Timing: spirits at 5:00,*

### Beyond January...

**FEBRUARY LUNCHEON**  
February 11 Cynthia Liebow will talk about her career as owner of Baker Street Publishing in Paris, and about her father, Eli, Caxtonian and author of *Dr. Joe Bell: Model for Sherlock Holmes*.

**FEBRUARY DINNER**  
Christopher Woods of the Oriental Institute will talk February 16 at the Cliff Dwellers about new discoveries on the origin of written language, highlighting an exhibit at the Institute.

**Dinner: Wednesday, January 19, 2010, Cliff Dwellers**  
**Ian Gadd**  
**Strange formes and the typographical sublime; or, How did they do that?**

Hand-press printing type demands rigid linearity; its rectangular body discourages all but the straightest of lines. Type-setting, imposition and printing all rely on this principle: type-set lines make rectangular blocks which are then locked into a rectangular forme for printing. However, just occasionally, hand-press printers sought to stretch the possibilities of type arrangement to its limits.

Gadd looks at examples of unusual typesetting from the hand-press period, focusing in particular on two extraordinary works printed in late 17th-century London. He will seek to answer how the printers did it; why; how should they be read; and how we should classify them.

Audience members are encouraged to bring similar examples. Dr. Gadd is a Senior Lecturer in English at Bath Spa University, UK, and Vice-President of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP).

*dinner at 6:00, program at 7:30. Dinner is \$48, drinks are \$5 to \$9. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or use the newly augmented Caxton web site; **reservations are needed by noon Tuesday for the Friday luncheon, and by noon Friday for the Wednesday dinner.***

**MARCH LUNCHEON**  
On March 11, 2011, the Group will hear from Caxtonian Jack Cella, longtime manager of what often has been called the best academic bookstore in America: the Seminary Co-op in Hyde Park.

**MARCH DINNER**  
Friday, March 18 at the Newberry Library we will celebrate the launch of the club's Association Copy book with a gala party feting 25 of the book's authors and ample opportunity to claim autographs.