

## Youngest member loves letterpress



Luke Preussner sets some type in Craig Starr's printshop.



Left, Craig Starr shows Luke make-ready tips on his Kluge. On the right Craig points out some of the finer points on lockup.

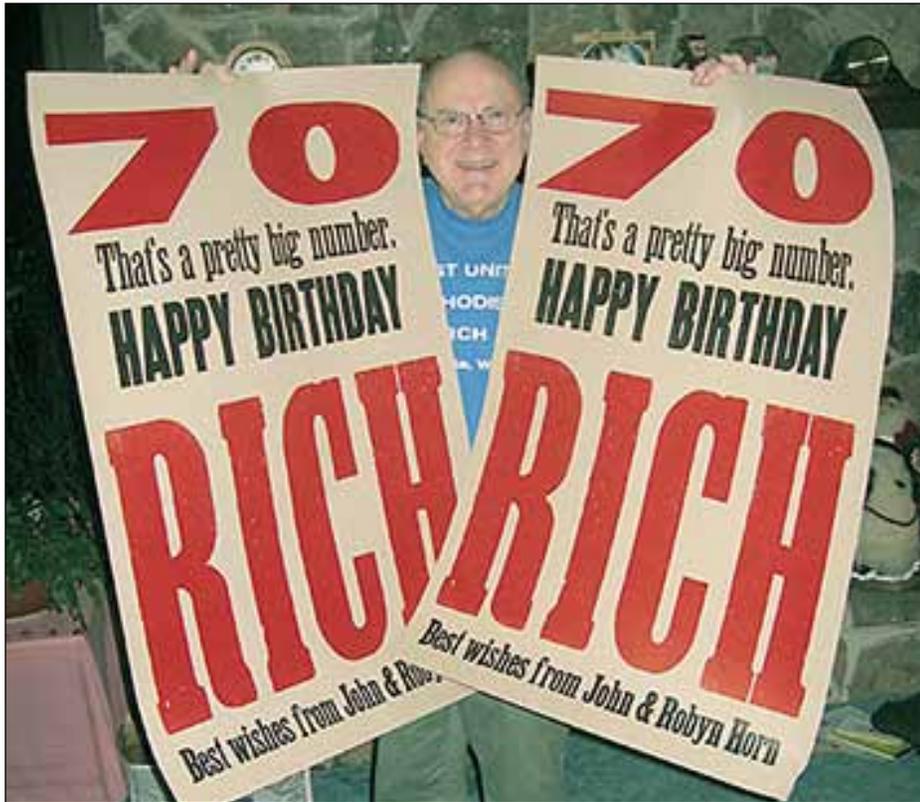
Luke Preussner is not only one of our newest members (#849) but also the youngest. Luke is 14 years old and has just recently become enamored with letterpress thanks to APA member Craig Starr.

Luke said he had known Craig “for as long as I can remember” as they go to the same church and they had built dulcimers together.

During conversations, the subject of printing came up and Luke said he was curious about it so Craig invited him over to his shop. That was it for Luke to the point that he says he drools when he goes into a print shop now. (He’s hooked!) Luke now owns a small tabletop press but it needs further repair work done and currently he and Craig are looking for another press for him.

Luke stated that he likes being able to print in just about any style he wants and that letterpress is three-dimensional and “puts a bite on the sheet.” He said he hopes to keep letterpress alive for generations to come.

He is homeschooled and also a student of the Korean martial art, Tae Kwon Do. Luke has an older sister and a younger brother. If you want to contact Luke, you can [email](#) him.



## That special BIG 70!

Special birthdays only come once in one's lifetime (well, okay, they ALL only come once!). Rich Hopkins celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> late last year and received a bit of an unusual birthday card.

John Horn sent Rich the card shown in the photo. It was 26"x40" and printed on John's 30"x45" sign press. Here are John's comments on the card he printed:

"The "Rich" line was 17 inch wood type. A couple of years ago, I bought out one of the last old-time poster shops in the country. It was Walters Show Print in Bentonville, Arkansas. The largest type I got was 22 inch gothic bold and it was not condensed. The letters are so big, I can't print a four letter word with it on any press I own. Much of the big type that came from Walters was hand-carved on basswood. They had an artist on staff who would cut beautiful four-color wood cuts and type as needed."

John said that he printed 10 copies but only produced four that were decent. He said he used about a half pound of red and black ink.



After many requests, APA members were invited to do posters and we saw the first "tube mailing" in 2008, thanks to John Horn. Last year APA increased its dues by \$5 so we could have such a mailing every other year. The time is here! **Start thinking up ideas for your poster now! July 8th will be here before you know it!**

Here are the details:

Minimum poster size: 180 square inches (approx. 11x17)

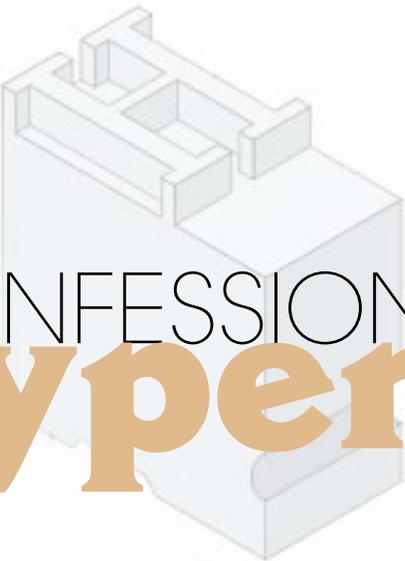
Maximum: 24" in one dimension

Deadline: July 8th, 2010

Send to: Melanie Mauro

254 West Madison Street, Easton, PA 18042

[Email Melaine](#)



# CONFESSIONS OF A typenut

By RICK VON HOLDT

After high school I started at a community college and was interested in what was then called “Commercial Art”. After a year or so of this I enlisted in the Navy with five of my buddies and did two tours of duty in Viet Nam. After that I went back to school at San Jose State University and got a BA in Graphic Design/Illustration. While there, I had a job as Lab Assistant in the Typography Lab, which mainly consisted of cleaning and distributing handset forms that other students set and proofed and then abandoned. I got a job upon graduation at a small design studio. I had been there for two weeks when they fired their production manager. Since I was the newest guy there, they told me I was now the new production

manager, but not to worry because they would soon get somebody that knew what they were doing. Somehow, I never lost the mantle of Production Manager for the next three and half decades, but I did get to do some design as well, working in small studios for several years.

As a way to stay creative, I acquired a little 5”x8” Kelsey and five cases of type in trade for a gumball machine. I was working in downtown San Francisco around that time and dealt with the major typography shops in the city, who did our typesetting for us. This was the mid-70s and phototype had pretty much rendered handset and machineset type commercially obsolete. The typography shops were starting to dispose of their linecasting and handset operations. There was one glorious font of handset type

at Timely Typography and I would mention 3  
from time to time that if they ever decided to get rid of their handset type, there was one face that I really wanted. Their salesman came in one day and told me they were simply going to dump all of their handset type and exactly what was it that I wanted. I told him and he asked if there was anything else. He had no idea what it would cost me. I tentatively selected a half-dozen or so other ornate fonts that I would like, but told him it would depend on the cost. A week or so went by and he called one day to say that the type I wanted would cost \$36. I asked “For which one?” and he said “For all of them!” I wasted no time in literally running the four blocks to their building and making two or three trips back to my office with galleys of handset type, before they could change their mind. This was the big hook that got me started collecting handset type.

I mentioned the thrill of getting this type to another typographer in town and he said that they were eventually going to be auctioning off all of their type. I asked if they would consider selling some of it to me. They said yes and set a 25¢/lb cost for me. I literally spent several months raiding that place, before work or during my lunch hour, every time I had some additional money to spend. I think I got the crown



Rick von Holdt and his POCO proof press. The blanket and packing have been removed from the cylinder in this photograph because Rick was using a tympan and frisket setup that was built for him by Neil Giroux. This is very much like printing on a handpress, but using a cylinder to create the impression.

time. There have been a few times that I have acquired more type in large batches, but for the most part it has simply been a few fonts at a time here and there over the years. I remember wondering if I would ever be lucky enough to have enough type to fill one type cabinet. A little here and a little there, and over three decades later I find myself with over 2,000 fonts of handset type in the shop. Much of it is stored in cases in cabinets,

jewels as far as fonts, borders, etc. The guys working there soon called me "The Bandit." Eventually they did hold an auction.

With those two opportunities, I had a relatively decent collection of handset type, borders, etc. and soon acquired a little proof press to start playing with these materials. Thus The Foolproof Press was born. At that point I was literally a fool with a proof press. I have always kept my eyes and ears open for more handset type ever since that

but maybe half of it is stored on galleys in galley cabinets. This works very well for the larger point sizes, set in rows with strips of chipboard between the rows.

I moved from California to Iowa in 1983 and bought the largest old farmhouse in the county. I also started a job as a production manager in custom publishing with Meredith Corporation (*Better Homes & Gardens*, etc.). This was the big-time and I was really now a full time production person with

no chance at design there, so the Foolproof Press really took on the position of being my real creative outlet. The farm is amazing. I have several outbuildings for storage, but the shop is located in the basement, which is 1,500 sq. ft. of floor space and the floor joists for the first floor are over eight feet above the basement floor, which allows me to stack type and galley cabinets on top of each other. There are 33 type cabinets and nine galley cabinets in the shop, plus letterboards, presses, other cabinets and furniture etc. My library for foundry catalogs and books on printing, etc. is on the first floor.

In my capacity as a production manager for Meredith, I often traveled, doing press-checks and quality control at various printing plants around the midwest. I would often spend days at a time in various different cities and this always gave me the opportunity to haunt the bookstores and especially the other smaller print shops in pursuit of type. The plants I did business with were almost all web-offset and rotogravure so I would usually have to look elsewhere for handset type. This paid off very handsomely for me over the years. I wouldn't say there was a steady flow of things to my shop, but every once in a while I would be in the right place at the right time and be lucky enough to acquire some really nice gems along the

way. I would also try to elect to drive to various cities instead of flying. I would get reimbursed for my mileage, and this was often enough to pay for a nice bunch of type. The added bonus was that I also had a way to get it back home as well as being able to stop once in a while when a print shop was spotted enroute. Sometimes it is simply word of mouth that leads to type and printing acquisitions. If people know what you do and what you are looking for, they sometimes can give you leads on bizarre locations where so-and-so uncle used to print, etc. Some of my best types and things have been dredged out of the most awfull nasty moldy dank basements and backrooms. I always try to take a flashlight and a change of clothes that I can get filthy in.

The other thing needed is patience and a good eye. I try to take my time and look in absolutely every nook and cranny. I don't care what is labeled on a case or box because that isn't necessarily what is inside. Some of my better finds have been totally mislabeled. Also, if your are raiding a shop and find something good, be sure to look in the standing gallies to make sure that more of it isn't already standing on forms that haven't been distributed yet. Can't tell you how many times this has yielded great stuff that would have otherwise been overlooked.

How do I keep track of everything? The

first thing is to know the name of my faces. The foundry catalogs in the library and other reference materials really help in establishing the original names of things. I keep a 3"x5" card file of all my type in alphabetical order, a card for each face. The card will tell me what sizes I have and the location of each font. It also tells me the foundry, de-

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“Some of my best types and things have been dredged out of the most awfull nasty moldy dank basements and backrooms.”

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signer, design/patent date etc. All of this information is also kept on the computer on Excel spreadsheets and I print-out updates occassionally. Each cabinet, galley cabinet, etc. in the shop has a number on it. If the location of a font is 7/15, I know it is in cabinet 7 in the 15th case. If the location is G7/82, it is in galley cabinet 7 in galley #82. There are other such codes for a few odd-ball storage containers and locations. Basically all the type is in the basement and easily accessible. The only trick is to remember the name!

I used to have a Washington handpress setting in the middle of my living room on the first floor, but my wife tolerated that for

about a year before it “had to go”. It is now on loan to the print shop at Living History Farms. The shop in the basement houses a 10"x15" Challenge Gordon, a No.2 Poco (which I do 99% of my printing on), a Pilot, a Golding Official, an Adana Quatro, a 5"x8" and 3"x5" Kelsey, a tray-style Challenge proof press, a Kingsley foil-stamper, a couple of Showcard proof presses, a few more miscellaneous proof presses, about 10 copypresses, a Rouse verticle miterer, a Rouse hand-miterer, various slug cutters, probably 50-60 composing sticks, a paper drill, a 19" Paragon paper cutter and a 19" Hero paper cutter, and a myriade of other bits and pieces of letterpress paraphernalia. There is a Kelsey Union, Lightning Jobber, and C&P out in the garage. There is also a few cabinets and miscellaneous materials out in the barn. I think I'm hooked!!!!!!!

I obviously have way more than my fair share and have honestly tried to slow down on acquisitions for quite sometime now. I do still occassionally find something that I don't already have and add that to the collection, but I am not actively seeking more things like I used to. The thrill of the hunt hasn't diminished, but the need for acquisitions is not as strong as it used to be. I am also involved in the Printers' Hall museum at Mt. Pleasant, IA, so now some of the thrill can be directed at finding more or bet-

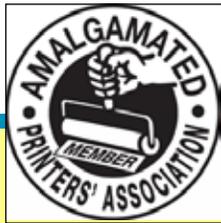
ter things for that museum.

What will become of this collection some day? We are only custodians of all of this stuff as long as we are holding on to it. I would honestly like to see the bulk of my collection distributed to dozens and dozens of other printers who will experience the same thrills I had when I acquired these things. I never started collecting “just

to collect” or as an “investment’. I acquired all of these things simply because I loved them and want to be able to play with them. It was mainly a matter of grabbing things before they dissappeared. I was very fortunate to have acquired things from printers that wanted to see it get into good hands. Many of them have passed on already and I am very thankful to them and would like to return the favor for those that follow after I am gone. God knows I have enough stuff to make a *lot* of people very happy. My biggest desire is that it goes to places where it will be loved and used, not locked in the basement or warehouse of some institution where it will never see the light of day again. There is just something about the physicality and tangability of it all that is hard to describe. I have been in the right place at the right time way more than any one person has a right to, so there must be some sort of grand scheme that allowed me to save all of this stuff so that it can be passed on.

This “stuff” is still out there. I have been thinking for the past two decades that everything has pretty much dried-up, but then this stuff bubbles to the surface in the darndest of places. While I’m rambling here, I might also say that in all of the years I have been collecting, things have always been sky-high or very reasonable. Hardly ever any middle-ground. Obviously I acquired

almost everything very reasonably, but I did pay a King’s ransom on more than one occassion for something I was passionate about just having to have. I have no regrets about anything I have ever acquired. My only regrets are a few things that I passed-up over the years, and on a few occassions those regrets were errased as I found an opportunity to acquire something I thought I would never see again.



# HERITAGE GOOSE

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- ✓ Your name **MUST** be on the submission.
- ✓ It must fit in a 6x9 envelope. The maximum folded sheet: 5.5x8.5.
- ✓ For each bundle submission you must send **AT LEAST 155 pieces.**

**Failure to do any of the above means that your piece will not be mailed.**

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## Setting Declaration proved to be challenge for Hopkins

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Setting up the Declaration of Independence (this would be the Goddard version) exactly as it was originally printed in metal type is not a job for the weak of heart. Nonetheless that's what Rich Hopkins did last year and you can read all about this very interesting episode, complete with detailed photos by downloading this [PDF file](#) (3.7 MB).

Rich said he did it and wrote the article for three reasons: the first just as a personal challenge and doing the article so he had a record. He set the type for the National History Park in Philadelphia for their Franklin print shop. Secondly, the article (PDF) was written to assist volunteers working at the shop. Lastly, it may appear in *Parenthesis* (a journal of the Fine Press Book Association).

The article is a great read and worth a long download for those who you are lacking internet speed!



## Stan Nelson on the Type Dressing Bench

Sky Shipley has done up an illustrated discussion by Stan Nelson about the Type Dressing Bench and its use. Stan is one of the few around these days who has practical and historical knowledge of this essential but extraordinarily rare typesetter's tool. The interview was taped at the Skyline Foundry in October 2008 and was recently transcribed and edited into a PDF file.

You can download the [PDF file](#) (672 KB) here.

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